Moving on or Digging Deeper: Regulatory Mode and Interpersonal Conflict Resolution

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Conflict resolution, in its most basic sense, requires movement and change between opposing motivational states. Although scholars and practitioners have long acknowledged this point, research has yet to investigate whether individual differences in the motivation for movement from state-to-state influence conflict resolution processes. Regulatory Mode Theory (RMT) describes this fundamental motivation as locomotion. RMT simultaneously describes an orthogonal motivational emphasis on assessment, a tendency for critical evaluation and comparison. We argue that this tendency, in the absence of a stronger motivation for locomotion, can obstruct peoples' propensity to reconcile. Five studies, using diverse measures and methods, found that the predominance of an individual's locomotion over assessment facilitates interpersonal conflict resolution. The first two studies present participants with hypothetical conflict scenarios to examine how chronic (Study 1) and experimentally induced (Study 2) individual differences in locomotion predominance influence the motivation to reconcile. The next two studies investigate this relation by way of participants' own conflict experiences, both through essay recall of previous conflict events (Study 3) and verbal narratives of ongoing conflict issues (Study 4). We then explore this association in the context of real-world conflict discussions between roommates (Study 5). Lastly, we examine results across these studies meta-analytically (Study 6). Overall, locomotion and assessment can inform lay theories of individual variation in the motivation to "move on" or "dig deeper" in conflict situations. We conclude by emphasizing the importance of using RMT to go beyond instrumental approaches to conflict resolution to understand fundamental individual motivations underlying its occurrence.

Keywords: assessment, conflict resolution, locomotion, motivation, regulatory mode theory

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Interpersonal conflicts are an inevitable and often detrimental consequence of social life. Conflict resolution has concurrently emerged as a related field of scientific inquiry and research. Driven by the ever-pressing need to understand human motivations for mitigating conflict, the field aims to identify the conditions under which opposing parties achieve resolutions. Consistent with that tradition, our responses to conflict have largely been conceptualized as means toward (or away from) obtaining desired ends (such as restored relations or newly distributed resources); that is, they have been treated as instrumentally motivated. What has not received sufficient attention is the additional possibility that our responses to conflict are not simply instrumentally motivated in this way. This in turn raises the possibility that—for some individuals or in some situations—such responses are not merely in the service of resolutions, but in the service of other and perhaps more fundamental motivations.

What are these more fundamental motivations? Turning to the conflict resolution literature itself, there is a general consensus that resolving conflicts necessitates *change*. Researchers and practitioners alike frequently make implicit (and at times explicit) references to the role of change in conflict resolution processes. In the *Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, for example, Marcus (2014, p. 513) states that: "The process of change is, at its core, one of conflict resolution. Therefore, one can think of change as an outcome of a constructive or destructive conflict resolution process, and the process of change as a series of conflict resolution activities that lead to some new (changed) end-state." Other contemporary scholars in the field have adopted the term 'conflict transformation' (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 1995) to generally describe the complex *set of changes* that is necessary to alter the course of conflict. Researchers have also presented and developed a Lewinian model of change in the context of what makes a conflict 'ripe' for resolution (Coleman, 2000) and in the application of dynamical systems approaches (e.g., Coleman, 2006).

At the same time, social-psychological research has emphasized the inherence of change to specific postconflict constructs such as forgiveness and reconciliation. In particular, McCullough and colleagues' (1997, 1998) widely cited definition of forgiveness characterizes it as the suite of *motivational changes* that occurs following a transgression whereby the victim becomes less motivated by avoidance and revenge and more motivated by benevolence (see also: McCullough, Bono, & Root, 2007). Likewise, de Waal's (2000) use of the term reconciliation (often to describe postconflict affiliation between former opponents in nonhuman animals)[1] relies on a centrally assumed *motivational shift* wherein fear and hostility make way for a more positive inclination. But while a motivation for change represents a theoretical principle unifying disparate literatures and fields, when it comes to the potential role of individual differences, the discussion has typically not been grounded in relevant theory. Remarkably, no formal theories of human motivation have been employed to understand the relation between a stable *individual* motivation for change and conflict resolution, but an appropriate framework does exist.

Namely, regulatory mode theory (RMT) describes individual variation in locomotion, a motivation for smooth movement and change from state-to-state (Higgins, 2012; Higgins, Kruglanski, & Pierro, 2003; Kruglanski et al., 2000). Locomotion varies across people both as a chronic individual difference (see Kruglanski et al., 2000) and as an induced momentary state (see Avnet & Higgins, 2003). Returning briefly to the proposition that the resolution of conflict can be partially achieved via noninstrumental means, a motivation for locomotion regards change as *an end in itself*. In other words, rather than a means toward a particular outcome, the essential nature of locomotion is change away from a current state for its own sake. Specifically, in conflict situations, *the motivation to change the current state through resolution can be intrinsically motivated—an end in itself—when an individual has a locomotion motivation.* Consistent with field theory (see Deutsch, 1968; Lewin, 1951), locomotion can manifest itself in any region within the life space, whether behavioral or psychological. Thus, the primary concern of this motivational system is simply to move in an experiential sense. Given the centrality of that particular experience to conflict transformation, locomotion could thus represent a more fundamental motivation underlying the resolution of interpersonal conflict.

In addition to a self-regulatory emphasis on initiating movement and change, RMT posits an orthogonal motivational emphasis on making critical comparisons and evaluations (i.e., *assessment*). Building on classic theories of self-regulation (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1990), RMT treats locomotion and assessment as functionally independent, such that individuals can differ habitually or temporarily in their relative emphasis on one mode over the other. Unlike locomotion individuals (for whom change is an end in itself), people in the assessment mode value the process of appraisal as an end in itself (Higgins et al., 2003). Thus, whereas locomotion is primarily concerned with moving from a current state to a changed end-state, assessment is primarily concerned with critically evaluating the current state in reference to the desired end-state, to understand the right way to proceed. This primary concern can have secondary consequences, in that constant assessment (in the absence of locomotion) may leave people confined to the current state (Avnet & Higgins, 2003). Indeed, assessors have a tendency toward stasis over dynamic action and change (Kruglanski, Pierro, Higgins, & Capozza, 2007; Mannetti, Giacomantonio, Higgins, Pierro, & Kruglanski, 2010), potentially creating corresponding repercussions for conflict resolution. Namely, when confronted with such situations, *in their constant critical evaluation of potential actions in search of the right one, people with strong assessment concerns can become entrenched in the current state of conflict.*

Locomotion and assessment are conceptually and empirically distinguishable from other constructs with well-researched roles in conflict resolution. For example, De Dreu and Carnevale's (2003) motivated information processing model highlights individual differences in epistemic motives like need for cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982) and need for closure (Kruglanski, 1989), and reveals the conditions under which processing conflict information in more systematic, thorough ways can yield higher quality negotiation and resolution outcomes (e.g., De Dreu, Beersma, Stroebe, & Euwema, 2006). Likewise, the assessment motivation to critically analyze and weigh various alternatives could have advantages for resolution quality. However, these and other elements have never been studied in the context of *their relation to* a construct like locomotion. Importantly, prior research has shown that these modes exemplify a trade-off between speed and accuracy—whereas locomotors prioritize speed in the service of *getting things done*, assessors prioritize accuracy in the service of *getting things right* (Kruglanski et al., 2000; Mauro et al., 2009). However, *in the absence of locomotion*, the assessment tendency for critical evaluation can yield negative outcomes such as procrastination (Pierro, Giacomantonio, Pica, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2011), along with counterfactual thinking and regret (Pierro et al., 2008). Surprisingly, despite such clear implications for conflict resolution, the relation between these motives has never been studied in this context.

The independence of the locomotion and assessment modes allows them to be studied as separate motivational dimensions (each from low to high strength) or collapsed into a single dimension of *regulatory mode predominance*. We emphasize regulatory mode predominance in this paper for two key reasons. First, as implied above, we are interested in the *relative strength* of these two motivations (e.g., is it indeed detrimental to conflict resolution if assessment is left 'unchecked' by locomotion?; see Higgins, 2012). Second, following conflict situations, locomotion and assessment impose competing forces on an individual: an individual either is pulled away from the current state of conflict in the service of change, that is, 'getting on with it' (locomotion), or is pulled toward it in the service of increased evaluation and understanding, that is, 'getting to the bottom of it' (assessment). Because in this particular context, these motivational forces act in opposition to one another in their influence on what a person decides to do (i.e., these modes

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[1] It should be noted that "reconciliation" in humans typically refers to a much broader and more complex set of peacebuilding processes (see Lederach, 1997). For our purposes, *reconciliation* simply refers to a motivation to engage in friendly relations with recent conflict partners.

themselves are in conflict), regulatory mode predominance generates the clearest theory-driven predictions for the present research.[2]

In what types of interpersonal conflicts is regulatory mode predominance likely to bear important consequences? Social conflict emerges when parties perceive incompatible goals (Deutsch, 1973), and is commonly conceptualized as a process that unfolds in relationships over time (e.g., Coleman, Kugler, Bui-Wrzosinska, Nowak, & Vallacher, 2012; De Dreu, 2010; Pondy, 1967). The current research focuses on a subset of social conflicts best defined as mixed-motive relationship conflicts, which involve close and intact interpersonal relationships with both common and competing interests. In such contexts, incompatible activities often disrupt the flow of the ongoing relationship (Coleman et al., 2012), highlighting a circumstance in which getting on with it through reconciliation may be particularly important. Moreover, the present work focuses primarily on low-intensity conflicts among partners (e.g., misunderstandings between friends) as opposed to severe transgressions. These minor, everyday conflicts can threaten close relationship satisfaction as much as major conflicts (Cramer, 2000, 2002; Gottman et al., 1976), and thus warrant additional empirical attention. Importantly, in such conflicts-of-interest, there may be no *right* solution (i.e., 'resolution' may simply involve moving forward and tolerating negative feelings). Here again, locomotion's predominance over assessment would have key implications for a motivation to reconcile and thereby resume friendly relations.

Five studies, using diverse methodologies and measures, were conducted to examine the role that regulatory mode plays in interpersonal conflict resolution. The general hypothesis was that the predominance of locomotion over assessment would facilitate a noninstrumental motivation to move past conflict. If change is an end in itself for those in a predominant locomotion state, then the motivation to move on should be achieved in its service, regardless of the negativity that conflict generates. In the first two studies, we investigated this premise using hypothetical conflict scenarios, both when predominance was studied as a chronic individual difference (Study 1) and as an experimentally induced state (Study 2). In Study 3, we determined whether the results of these studies would translate to participants' recollections of their own real-life conflicts, and explored differences in the specific conflict strategies they employed. We then considered the role of locomotion predominance when people reflected upon *ongoing* difficult conflicts, affording the important opportunity to examine the emotional experiences that were present (Study 4). In Study 5, we examined the more dynamic effects of regulatory mode by prompting conflict discussions between roommates. This approach allowed us not only to analyze stable individual variation in locomotion and assessment in a relationship context, but also to determine the extent to which behavioral responses enacted during actual conflicts provided converging evidence with the results of Studies 1 through 4. Lastly, we conducted a meta-analysis (Study 6) across all five studies to compare and synthesize key findings.

Study 1

In this study, we presented participants with various interpersonal conflict scenarios to examine associations between individual differences in regulatory mode predominance and postconflict motivations and feelings. Consistent with the idea that locomotion predominance should move individuals away from the current conflict state (i.e., in the service of change), we predicted that it would be associated with a higher motivation to resolve conflict and lower negative emotions in relation to those conflict situations. Specifically, we reasoned that if locomotion predominates, the motivation to reconcile should be maintained regardless of how participants 'feel' about the conflict; that is, the motivation for *getting it done*. On the other hand, as locomotion predominance weakens, assessment should increase sensitivity to the way one feels in the service of comparisons, evaluations, and responding in the 'best' manner; that is, the motivation for *getting it right*.

Method

This study was approved by Columbia University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) under protocol AAAI1306, titled "Motivations for Reconciliation—How Regulatory Focus Influences Conflicts and Their Resolutions."

Participants. Eighty-nine students (23 men, 66 women) from the Behavioral Research Lab (BRL) of Columbia's Business School participated for $5 compensation. Participants' ages ranged from 18–36 ($M = 23.35$, $SD = 4.19$). Because the difference in locomotion predominance scores between males ($M = 0.01$, $SD = 1.08$) and females ($M = 0.42$, $SD = 1.08$) approached significance, $t(87) = -1.55$, $p = .063$, we controlled for sex in the following analyses.

Materials and procedure. We measured participants' chronic regulatory mode via the Regulatory Mode Questionnaire (RMQ; Kruglanski et al., 2000). The RMQ consists of 30 items rated on 6-point scales, which have been shown to reliably characterize locomotion and assessment. Sample items for locomotion include: "I feel excited just before I am about to reach a goal" and "When I finish one project, I often wait awhile before getting started on a new one" (reverse-scored); Sample items for assessment include: "I often compare myself with other people" and "I often critique work done by myself and others." Previous research (see Kruglanski et al., 2000; Higgins et al., 2003) has shown assessment and locomotion to be orthogonal or uncorrelated, which was corroborated by the current study, $r(87) = -.04$, $p = .744$. Consistent with prior research (Higgins, Pierro, & Kruglanski, 2008; Orehek, Mauro, Kruglanski, & van der Bles, 2012), regulatory mode predominance was calculated as a continuous measure by subtracting the assessment subscale ($M = 4.09$, $SD =$

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[2] To measure predominance between two variables, one should assume that they are psychological forces whose influences on behavior are in opposition. This would be true at both the system level and at the strategic level, which is the case for locomotion and assessment. At the system level, locomotion has control concerns with effecting change, *any change*. In direct contrast, assessment at the system level has truth concerns with doing the *right* thing. These different concerns result in different strategic preferences. Locomotion concerns yield a strategic preference for initiating movement, effecting change now—urgent. Assessment concerns yield a strategic preference for critical evaluation of alternative possibilities to find the truth and make the right decision—deliberate. As motivational forces, being urgent to effect any change and being deliberate to find what is right have different directions. What happens will depend on which force is stronger. To predict what happens, then, one needs a measure of predominance, which is achieved by subtracting the strength of one force from the strength of the other.

0.83, Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$) from the locomotion subscale ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.70$, $\alpha = .83$) of the RMQ. Analyses are based on this difference score ($M = 0.31$, $SD = 1.12$), for which a higher score indicates stronger locomotion predominance.[3,4]

Upon coming to the BRL and completing the RMQ, each participant was presented with six interpersonal conflict scenarios. Participants were asked to imagine that they and a friend were engaged in a conflict over a series of issues (see the supplemental materials), for example:

> Imagine that you and a friend are having a conflict over differing ideas of how to spend more time together. You have both recently desired 'expanding your horizons' by meeting new people, and think it would be fun and beneficial to your friendship to have these new experiences together. However, it is beginning to feel like you are seeking to widen your social circle in different ways (e.g., you are excited about going to museums and art galleries; your friend is excited about going to parties and social events). As a result, your friend is becoming involved in a somewhat different 'scene,' and although makes an effort to include you, realizes that you are not as eager. You make the effort to be inclusive of your friend as well, but feel that he or she is not as enthusiastic. It feels like your mutual goal of wanting to experience new things together and advance your friendship is being thwarted by different ideas on what those experiences should be.

As this particular conflict illustrates, the scenarios did not involve serious offenses or transgressions, but rather conflicts-of-interest (or misunderstandings) that two social partners might encounter in their everyday lives. Nevertheless, to account for the possibility that one partner was conveyed as more responsible, we also switched the 'roles' that participants played in half of the conflicts they received. For example, in the scenario above, "you" and "your friend" were switched throughout the paragraph. After reading each scenario (counterbalanced by participant), participants filled out a short questionnaire consisting of items (rated on 7-point Likert-type scales) designed to measure their conflict resolution motivations. This survey began with two items concerning the extent to which participants reported a motivation to resolve the conflict ("I am motivated to reconcile with my partner"; $M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.53$) and their negative emotional experience ("I have negative feelings as a result of this conflict"; $M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.74$).

As participants' responses to these two items varied significantly by conflict type (motivation to reconcile: $F[5, 440] = 3.86$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .029$; negative feelings: $F[5, 440] = 13.64$, $p < .0001$, $\eta_p^2 = .088$) and role (motivation to reconcile: $t[87] = -5.90$, $p < .0001$; negative feelings: $t[87] = 2.11$, $p = .019$—that is, less motivation to reconcile and more negative feelings when the friend was depicted as responsible compared with the participant), we controlled for both factors in the analyses that follow. After collapsing across all conditions (and controlling for conflict type, role, and participant sex), we investigated whether chronic individual differences in regulatory mode predominance predicted participants' postconflict motivations and feelings.

Results

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for all variables are presented in Table 1. Generalized linear mixed models (grouped by participant) were performed on the data to examine

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Variables (Study 1)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Locomotion	4.41	.70	(.83)				
2. Assessment	4.09	.83	−.04	(.86)			
3. Predominance	.31	1.12	.65***	−.78***	—		
4. Reconciliation	5.11	1.53	.13**	−.11**	.17***	—	
5. Negativity	4.56	1.74	−.14**	.17***	−.21***	−.15**	—

Note. $N = 89$. Cronbach's alpha appears in parentheses.
** $p < .01$.   *** $p < .001$.

responses across the six conflict scenarios. Consistent with our predictions, we found a significant main effect of regulatory mode predominance on the motivation to reconcile ($\beta = 0.26$, $p = .003$), such that stronger locomotion predominance was associated with increases in the reported motivation to reconcile. Further, we found a significant main effect of regulatory mode predominance on the negative feelings reported in response to the conflict ($\beta = -0.37$, $p < .0001$), such that stronger locomotion predominance was associated with decreases in negativity. When controlling for negative feelings, the relation between regulatory mode predominance and the motivation to reconcile remained significant ($\beta = 0.21$, $p = .019$).

We then examined the interaction between participants' chronic locomotion predominance and those negative feelings on the motivation to reconcile. A significant interaction between predominance and negativity ($\beta = 0.17$, $p = .006$) indicated that as the strength of one's locomotion predominance increased, the less one's negative feelings influenced the motivation to reconcile. To unpack the meaning of this interaction, we performed simple slopes analysis at one standard deviation below and above the mean on locomotion predominance. This analysis revealed that among those low in locomotion predominance, the motivation to reconcile and negative feelings were negatively associated ($\beta = -0.40$, $p < .0001$). In contrast, for participants high in locomotion predominance, the motivation to reconcile and negativity were not significantly related ($\beta = -0.07$, $p = .432$). In other words, for individuals with weaker locomotion predominance, the motivation to reconcile was diminished at high levels of negativity; for individuals with stronger locomotion predominance, even high levels of negativity did not obstruct their motivation to reconcile (see Figure 1).

Unsurprisingly, across the entire sample, the higher the negative feelings participants experienced, the less motivated they were to reconcile, $r(87) = -.15$, $p < .001$. Although this may be the general case, the reported Predominance × Negativity interaction reveals that an important exception exists in cases when locomotion predominance is strong.

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[3] Across all of our samples, more participants fell along the locomotion predominance dimension than along the assessment predominance dimension (i.e., a higher proportion of participants had positive than negative difference scores). Thus, we refer to stronger versus weaker locomotion predominance (rather than locomotion vs. assessment predominance).

[4] In all of our studies, participants also filled out a Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ; Higgins et al., 2001) either just before/after completing the RMQ. We measured promotion and prevention focus for exploratory purposes that are not germane to the present research.
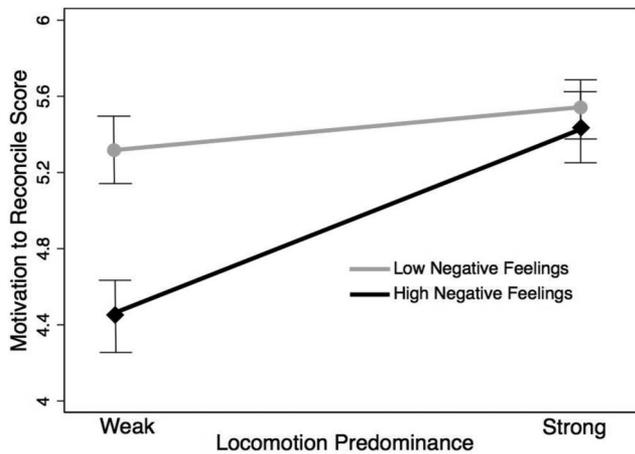
Figure 1. Interaction between locomotion predominance and negative feelings on the motivation to reconcile (Study 1). One standard deviation above/below the centered values of the predictor variables were entered back into the regression equation to compute these means. Error bars represent ±1 *SEM*.

As evident in Table 1, locomotion and assessment (as separate 'strength' scores rather than combined predominance scores) are significantly yet inversely related to our dependent measures (reconciliation and negativity). Multiple regressions simultaneously accounting for the relative influence of these two modes are available as supplementary materials (Table S1; see also Webb, 2015). These analyses provide further empirical evidence supporting our theoretical reasoning for emphasizing predominance.

Discussion

Overall, the strength of participants' locomotion predominance was positively predictive of their motivation to reconcile, and negatively predictive of their negative emotions in relation to the conflict. Interestingly, the degree of negativity that one experienced in relation to the conflict appeared *less* influential as one's locomotion predominance increased. For participants with weaker locomotion predominance scores, more negative feelings were associated with decreased reconciliation motivations. One possible interpretation of this result is that emotions can often get in the way of peoples' motivation to resolve conflict, but predominant locomotors' motivation for change (as an end in itself) provides a buffer against potential obstructions due to negative affect. However, this interaction result should be interpreted with caution, as it is not replicated consistently in subsequent studies. Rather, and more central to our predictions, it appears as if regulatory mode predominance predicts differences in reconciliatory motives over and above differences in negativity experienced. The diversity of scenarios with which participants were presented (available in supplemental materials) also goes some way in indicating the stability of these patterns across different conflict and role situations. Having explored the role of regulatory mode in interpersonal conflict (via chronic individual differences), we then sought to confirm whether similar patterns were true when regulatory mode predominance was experimentally induced.

Study 2

Results of Study 1 provided preliminary evidence for the basic relation hypothesized between regulatory mode predominance and conflict resolution. In Study 2, we aimed to provide experimental support for our hypothesis. According to RMT, locomotion and assessment predominance vary across individuals not just chronically (as 'traits') but also temporarily (as 'states'). If the link between conflict resolution and a broader individual motivation for change indeed exists, then it should be present when regulatory mode is treated both as a dispositional *and* as a situational variable. To address this, we used an established experimental manipulation to induce participants into a momentary state of locomotion or assessment predominance, upon which they were exposed to a conflict scenario. In Study 2, we expected that being placed into a state of locomotion predominance would also yield a higher motivation to reconcile, and that this result would be maintained when accounting for the chronic individual difference patterns reported in Study 1.

Method

This study was approved by Columbia University's IRB under protocol AAAK4157: "Situationally Induced Regulatory Mode and its Influence on Conflicts and Subsequent Resolutions."

Participants. Fifty-eight participants (17 men, 41 women) aged between 18 and 37 ($M = 23.04$, $SD = 3.88$) were again recruited from Columbia's BRL for $5.00 compensation. There were no significant sex differences in any of the variables analyzed below.

Materials and procedure. Upon entering the lab, participants first completed the RMQ. As in Study 1, locomotion and assessment were uncorrelated—$r(56) = .09$, $p = .457$—and a difference score ($M = 0.39$, $SD = 0.88$) was calculated as a continuous measure by subtracting participants' assessment scores ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.67$, $\alpha = .79$) from their locomotion scores ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.64$, $\alpha = .81$).

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions: a locomotion induction ($n = 29$) or an assessment induction ($n = 29$), maintaining similar proportions of men and women. To encourage the belief that the experimental induction had no relation to the subsequent conflict task, participants were asked whether they would be willing to participate in a short pilot study (titled the "Behavior Over Time Task") for a colleague at Columbia Teachers College. If they agreed to participate, they continued to the induction; if they did not consent, they proceeded immediately to the conflict task. Participants in the latter case ($n = 2$) were excluded from analyses.

Devised by Avnet and Higgins (2003), the regulatory mode induction task prompts participants to reflect on three items from the locomotion and assessment (respectively) subscales of the RMQ (Kruglanski et al., 2000). Participants read: "This task is about how people recall their behavior over time. You are requested to recall three different behaviors you have used successfully in the past and to write a short example for each behavior. These are the kind of behaviors that you find people doing in everyday life." In the locomotion condition, participants were then asked to: "Think back to the times when you acted like a 'doer,'" "Think back to the times when you finished one project and did not wait long before you started a new one," and "Think back to the

times when you decided to do something and you could not wait to get started." In the assessment condition, participants were then asked to: "Think back to the times when you compared yourself with other people," "Think back to the times when you thought about your positive and negative characteristics," and "Think back to the times when you critiqued work done by others or yourself."

Upon completing the induction instrument, participants then proceeded to the 'actual' study. Participants were randomly given one of three of the conflict scenarios used in Study 1 (see supplemental materials). These three conflict scenarios were selected because they differed neither in the extent to which participants reported a motivation to reconcile, confirmed by the current study, $F(2, 55) = 1.29$, $p = .285$, $\eta_p^2 = .045$, nor in the negative feelings generated, also confirmed in this sample, $F(2, 55) = 0.84$, $p = .437$, $\eta_p^2 = .030$. As in Study 1, 'role' was switched in half of the conflicts. However, in these particular conflicts, role did not significantly impact participants' reconciliation motivation, $t(56) = -0.74$, $p = .233$, or negativity, $t(56) = 1.13$, $p = .132$. Upon reading the conflict, participants were then presented with a conflict resolution questionnaire identical to that used in Study 1.

Results

All descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for variables of interest are displayed in Table 2. We ran linear regression models predicting our two outcomes of interest (participants' motivation to reconcile and negative feelings, respectively) by induction condition. Results of these analyses indicated a main effect of regulatory mode induction on the motivation to reconcile ($\beta = 0.66$, $p = .030$), such that those in the locomotion condition reported a higher overall motivation to reconcile than those in the assessment condition (see Figure 2). In other words, consistent with our prediction, individuals induced into a state of locomotion predominance were more motivated to resolve conflict than those induced into a state of assessment predominance. In the event that 'role' moderated this finding, we also performed a multiple regression including both main effects and the interaction term, which again revealed only a main effect of induction condition ($\beta = 1.06$, $p = .013$). There was no effect of induction condition on the negative feelings participants reported ($\beta = -0.03$, $p = .936$), again highlighting that the results on the motivation to reconcile are not merely due to differences in negativity experienced. Further, there was no interaction between condition and negative feelings on the motivation to reconcile ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = .706$), lending additional support to the notion that motivation

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Variables (Study 2)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Locomotion	4.45	.64	(.81)					
2. Assessment	4.05	.67	.09	(.79)				
3. Predominance	.39	.88	.64***	−.69***	—			
4. Reconciliation	5.27	1.17	.17*	−.04	.15	—		
5. Negativity	4.53	1.39	−.01	.20*	−.14	−.13	—	
6. Condition	—	—	.01	.05	−.02	.30*	−.01	—

Note. $N = 58$. Cronbach's alpha appears in parentheses. Condition was dummy coded 0/1 for assessment/locomotion predominance.
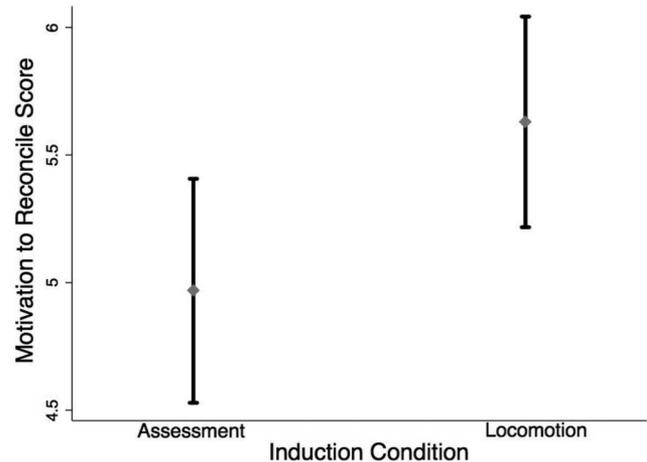* $p < .05$.   *** $p < .001$.

Figure 2. Motivation to reconcile by induction condition (Study 2). Point symbols indicate means and capped bars illustrate 95% confidence intervals.

rather than negative emotion drive these results. Importantly, these findings are also reported controlling for chronic individual differences in regulatory mode.

Chronic individual differences in regulatory mode predominance did not predict significant differences in the motivation to reconcile ($\beta = 0.26$, $p = .151$), or in negative feelings ($\beta = -0.27$, $p = .140$), though directionally results were consistent with Study 1. There were also no interactions between regulatory mode predominance and induction condition on reconciliation motives ($\beta = -0.25$, $p = .406$) or negativity ($\beta = -0.27$, $p = .462$). Multiple regressions simultaneously including chronic locomotion and assessment strength are available (Table S2).

Discussion

The results of Study 2 extend those of Study 1 by demonstrating that locomotion predominance, when experimentally induced, increases the motivation to resolve interpersonal conflict scenarios. Together, these results suggest that locomotion's predominance over assessment, both as a personality disposition and a situational state, can positively influence peoples' motivation to reconcile. Moreover, results are not merely attributable to the different emotional experience of locomotors and assessors during conflict. In Study 2, despite no effect of mode induction on the negative feelings participants reported (as one might expect from Study 1), an influence of locomotion predominance on the motivation to reconcile was still observed. In further contrast to Study 1's findings that negative feelings interacted with regulatory mode predominance to predict the motivation to reconcile, here we found no such moderation—lending credence to the idea that this is fundamentally a story of motivation. In essential yet unique ways, these studies support the underlying hypothesis that an individual motivation to effect change can facilitate conflict resolution.

One potential limitation of Studies 1 and 2 is their basis in hypothetical conflict scenarios. Because of this, Study 3 sought to determine whether similar patterns would be found when individuals recalled personal conflict events. Given that participants would be reflecting on their own experiences, we also took the

opportunity to examine the conflict responses that they enacted following these events.

Study 3

Rusbult and colleagues (1982) have identified two categories of constructive conflict response: *voice* (attempting to improve conditions) and *loyalty* (waiting for conditions to improve), as well as two types of destructive conflict response: *exit* (threatening or ending the relationship) and *neglect* (allowing the relationship to deteriorate). In addition to varying along a constructive/destructive dimension, these responses have been shown to vary in their degree of activity/passivity (Rusbult & Zembrodt, 1983). Exit and voice are considered active behaviors because the individual attempts to *change* something about the conflict situation, whereas neglect and loyalty are considered passive behavioral responses to conflict because no such attempts are made.

In Study 3, participants were recruited to describe a recent conflict episode with a close social partner (a transgression on the part of the partner) and rate their conflict resolution motivations. In addition to reconciliation motivations, we were interested in the relationship between participants' chronic regulatory mode and their conflict responses (exit, neglect, voice, and loyalty). Specifically, we predicted that participants with stronger locomotion predominance would experience conflict as less unresolved than participants with weaker locomotion predominance. We also predicted that given their motivation to make things happen, individuals characterized by stronger locomotion predominance, compared with those characterized by weaker locomotion predominance, would engage in more active and constructive confrontation (i.e., voice responses) than passive and destructive behaviors (i.e., neglect responses). Importantly, this provided an opportunity to rule out the possibility that predominant locomotors would enact *any* active response that is in the service of change. Active yet destructive responses (e.g., exit behaviors) likely cause further disturbance in close relationships that people want to maintain, leading to our hypothesis that predominant locomotors should seek active responses that limit such disruptions. Finally, we predicted that locomotion predominance would be related to a higher motivation to resolve conflict (as in Studies 1 and 2), and lower negative feelings in association with the conflict (as in Study 1).

Method

This study was approved by Columbia University's IRB under protocol AAAM0000: "Regulatory Mode Predicts Different Responses in Prospective versus Retrospective Conflicts."

Participants. Seventy-seven participants (32 men, 45 women) were recruited from Columbia's BRL for the sum of $5.00. Ages ranged from 18 to 45 ($M = 22.90$, $SD = 4.77$), and there were no significant sex differences on variables of interest.

Materials and procedure. Participants first completed the RMQ. Locomotion and assessment were again uncorrelated— $r(75) = -.14$, $p = .239$—and predominance ($M = 0.31$, $SD = 0.97$) was calculated by subtracting participants' assessment scores ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.67$, $\alpha = .76$) from their locomotion scores ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.68$, $\alpha = .83$).

Conflict experience. Participants were then prompted to recall and write about a recent interpersonal conflict experience: "Think of a time recently that you felt out-of-rapport with someone you're close to, to a time when that person did or said something that upset you. Please use the space provided to describe the experience in your own words" (adapted from Kammrath & Dweck, 2006). Upon writing a short conflict essay, participants were given a questionnaire about their postconflict motivations and behaviors. Items reflected conflict qualities (e.g., "This conflict was significant"; "This conflict feels unresolved") and relationship qualities (e.g., "I am close with my partner"; "I am satisfied with my relationship to my partner"). As in Studies 1 and 2, the first two items on this survey measured participants' current motivation to reconcile and their negative feelings in response to the conflict. Participants endorsed each item on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Participants were also asked to specify how long ago (in days) the conflict took place, in addition to the nature of the relationship (family, friend, romantic, work/school colleague, other). The average recency of the reported conflict was about 3 months ($M = 87.38$, $SD = 114.07$ days), and the most common relation was friendship (63.4%) followed by romantic partner (18.2%) and family member (13.0%).

Conflict responses. Next, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they engaged in various conflict behaviors on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*a great deal*). Three items characterized each principal response to conflict (from Kammrath & Dweck, 2006). These included *voice* responses—"I openly discussed the situation with my partner," "I tried to work with my partner to find a solution to the problem," and "I tried to bring my concerns out into the open so that the issue could be resolved in the best possible way" ($\alpha = .86$); *loyalty* responses—"I accepted his/her faults and didn't try to change him/her," "I tried to accept the situation and move on," and "I learned to live with it" ($\alpha = .69$); *exit* responses—"I talked about ending the relationship," "I considered breaking up with my partner," and "I used threats to pressure my partner into changing his/her thoughts and actions" ($\alpha = .72$); and *neglect* responses—"I sulked about the issue," "I criticized him/her for things that were unrelated to the real problem," and "I treated him/her badly, for example, by ignoring him/her or saying cruel things" ($\alpha = .71$).

Conflict tendencies. Before completing the study, participants were given a brief questionnaire about their more general conflict and postconflict tendencies. We prompted them to think of a social group (five to 15 people) of which they were currently a part and had been a part of for at least 1 year. They were then asked to respond to the following two (free-response) questions: "How many different conflicts have you had within this group in total?" and "What proportion of the conflicts that you had did you reconcile?"

Results

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for all relevant variables are displayed in Table 3. Multiple regressions revealing patterns for locomotion and assessment strength for outcomes of interest are available as supplementary materials (Table S3).

Conflict experience. As in previous studies, we regressed participants' responses regarding the conflict experience on their regulatory mode predominance scores. Regarding the conflict essays participants wrote, the predominance measure did not predict

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Variables (Study 3)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Locomotion	4.41	.68	(.83)									
2. Assessment	4.05	.67	−.14	(.76)								
3. Predominance	.31	.97	.79***	−.72***	—							
4. Reconciliation	5.56	1.41	.40**	−.10	.29*	—						
5. Negativity	4.35	1.63	−.19	.27*	−.31**	−.22*	—					
6. Unresolved	3.83	1.94	−.23*	.21*	−.31**	−.21*	.68***	—				
7. Voice	9.39	3.81	.34**	−.07	.28*	.33**	−.06	−.24*	(.86)			
8. Loyalty	11.66	2.23	−.07	−.18	.09	.02	−.28*	−.13	−.12	(.68)		
9. Exit	4.75	2.44	−.17	−.14	−.09	−.37**	.22*	.10	.03	−.34**	(.72)	
10. Neglect	7.03	2.93	−.21*	.13	−.23*	−.34**	.18	.11	−.05	−.21*	.44***	(.71)

Note. N = 77. Cronbach's alpha appears in parentheses.
* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

differences in the reported significance of the conflict (β = −0.04, p = .828) or time since occurrence (β = −24.63, p = .527). However, as regulatory mode predominance increased, the likelihood that the conflict felt unresolved decreased (β = −0.61, p = .007), confirming our prediction that locomotion predominant individuals would experience their conflicts as less unresolved than their weaker locomotion predominance counterparts. Even controlling for this factor in a multiple regression analysis, predominant locomotors still reported a higher current motivation to resolve the conflict (β = 0.36, p = .036). Importantly, these patterns are not attributable to differences in characteristics of the conflict (i.e., significance or recency) or relationship (see below) about which participants wrote in their essays.[5] They are also not attributable to the negative feelings participants reported experiencing as a result of these conflicts, which again significantly decreased as locomotion predominance increased (β = −0.51, p = .007). Negative feelings interacted marginally with locomotion predominance to predict the conflict feeling unresolved (β = −0.31, p = .064). Simple slopes analysis (at 1 SD below and above the mean on locomotion predominance) indicated that the positive relation between negative feelings and the conflict feeling unresolved was marginally stronger when locomotion predominance was low (β = 1.63, p < .0001) compared with when it was high (β = 0.99, p < .0001). In other words, more unresolved conflicts are unsurprisingly associated with more negativity—r(75) = 0.68, p < .0001— but this association is more pronounced for individuals low in locomotion predominance compared with those high in locomotion predominance. This is consistent with the general premise that predominant locomotors are less susceptible to negative feelings 'getting in the way' (see Study 1). However, we found no significant interaction between negative feelings and locomotion predominance on participants' *current* motivation to reconcile (β = 0.05, p = .740).

Regulatory mode predominance did not predict significant differences in the nature, F(4, 70) = .34, p = .848, η_p^2 = .019, or quality (closeness: β = −0.15, p = .921; satisfaction: β = .24, p = .122) of the relationship to the conflict partner. It did, however, predict participants' behavioral responses toward their partner following conflict events (see Figure 3).

Conflict responses. The relation between regulatory mode predominance and *voice* responses was significantly positive (β = 0.94, p = .014), indicating that stronger locomotion predominance

was associated with more use of active, constructive responses to conflict. Conversely, the relation between regulatory mode predominance and *neglect* responses was significantly negative (β = −0.69, p = .018), revealing that stronger locomotion predominance was associated with less use of passive, destructive responses to conflict. These relations were maintained when analyses controlled for the extent to which participants felt the conflict was unresolved (β = 0.79, p = .038 and β = −0.69, p = .022, respectively). Regulatory mode predominance was not predictive of the use of loyalty (β = 0.22, p = .382) or exit (β = −0.05, p = .828) responses to conflict. Despite a significant positive association between locomotion predominance and constructive conflict responses overall (β = 1.21, p = .009), and a marginal negative relation between locomotion predominance and destructive responses conflict responses overall (β = −0.74, p = .106), these results are clearly driven by voice and neglect responses, implicating the activity/passivity dimension in a manner consistent with our predictions.

Conflict tendencies. There was one additional regulatory mode predominance finding in this study worth noting. Although regulatory mode predominance did not predict the number of conflicts participants reported experiencing in general (β = −2.34, p = .868), it *did* predict a significant difference in the proportion of conflicts that they reported reconciling (β = 15.68, p < .0001). Overall, individuals characterized by weaker locomotion predominance reported reconciling on average 52.0% of their conflicts, whereas individuals characterized by stronger locomotion predominance reported reconciling on average 82.6% of their conflicts. Taken together, these results provide compelling evidence for our claim that stronger locomotion predominance is associated with a greater individual experience of reconciliation.

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[5] To be sure this interpretation is accurate, an objective measure of conflict severity was also obtained by having external raters code the written description of the event (on the same scale that participants used). The two coders showed considerable agreement, r(75) = .70, p < .0001 (intraclass correlation [ICC] = .70, M = 4.31, SD = 1.82), so their averaged rating was used. This rating had no relation to participants' regulatory mode predominance (β = −0.05, p = .774), helping to rule out the possibility that predominant locomotors simply recall less significant/severe conflicts.
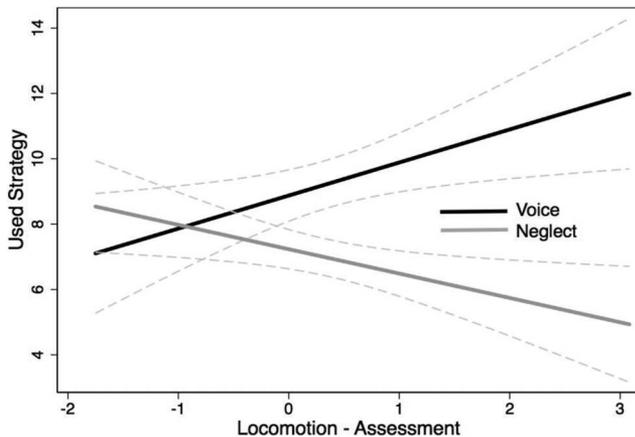
Figure 3. Locomotion predominance and conflict strategies (Study 3). The solid lines are fitted regression lines and the dashed lines denote 95% confidence intervals.

Discussion

Study 3 further supports a relation between reconciliation and a broader individual motivation for change, this time in the context of peoples' own conflict experiences. First, as locomotion predominance increased, the likelihood that the conflict felt unresolved decreased. Second, controlling for this factor, predominant locomotion individuals still reported a higher current motivation to resolve the conflict. These results reflect how predominant locomotors do not like disruptive conflict and thus work to resolve it, which increases the likelihood that they will do so (the first finding) and, to the extent that a conflict has not been resolved, will be more motivated to resolve any remaining conflict (the second finding). Further substantiating this pattern is their reports of reconciling over 30% more of their conflicts in general, as compared with their weaker locomotion predominance counterparts. Although the association between unresolved conflicts and negativity was stronger for people low (vs. high) in locomotion predominance, negative feelings did not interact significantly with the current motivation to reconcile. Again, it appears as if locomotion predominance predicts higher reconciliation motives independently from differences in negativity experienced.

With respect to the particular responses enacted during their conflict experiences, our predictions were met regarding a positive relation between stronger locomotion predominance and the use of voice strategies, and a negative relation between stronger locomotion predominance and the use of neglect strategies. This again reflects the locomotion preference for change over stasis (thus preferring active to passive responses), and the ability to overcome negativity and resolve conflict in the service of change (thus preferring constructive to destructive conflict responses). It adds an important dimension to our understanding, though, in that locomotors are not simply motivated to enact destructive responses that also yield change. Theoretically, one could make a case for locomotion and the use of exit strategies under certain conditions (see Kruglanski, Pierro, & Higgins, 2016). However, given evidence across these studies that predominant locomotors feel less negatively about the conflict, and that in this study they were prompted to recall a conflict with a current *close* social partner,

exiting the relationship would actually create *further* disruption. Unlike the movement and change that characterizes locomotion, the constant appraisal that characterizes assessment can entrench people in the current state of conflict, leading them to not *do* anything about it. Indeed a relation between assessment and rumination, counterfactual thinking, and regret has been established (Pierro et al., 2008). It is precisely this tendency to experience negativity in combination with a susceptibility to stasis over action that could lead to passive/destructive strategies such as neglect, not found with strong locomotion predominance.

Overall, Study 3 elaborated on the role of regulatory mode in individuals' experiences of their own interpersonal conflicts by showing that predominant locomotors' higher motivation to resolve conflicts was compounded with strategies that enable their successful resolution. In our next study, we prompted participants to recall an *ongoing* conflict in their lives. The objective was to test whether the relation between locomotion predominance and conflict resolution would be maintained when people reflect on difficult and persistent interpersonal conflict issues. Studying ongoing (i.e., as opposed to past) conflicts also afforded us the key opportunity to examine the relation between regulatory mode and the emotional experiences that are present *during* conflict.

Study 4

Having demonstrated that stronger locomotion relative to assessment predicts both the likelihood and nature of conflict resolution across scenario, experimental, and personalized essay recall studies, we then sought to examine this relation when participants spoke about a conflict that was still very much present in their lives. In Study 4, we asked participants to verbalize and reflect on a persistent, difficult conflict in which they were currently involved. For ongoing, persistent conflicts of this nature, one relevant theoretical approach has been to investigate whether the conflict is 'ripe' for resolution (e.g., Coleman, 2000; Zartman, 1989, 2000). The theory of *ripeness* (Zartman, 2000) is intended to explain when people in conflict are susceptible to their own or others' efforts to move the conflict toward resolution. Specifically, when people in conflict have reached a stalemate but perceive the possibility for change, the conflict is ripe (i.e., for steps toward resolution to begin). Ripeness is thus a condition of the *readiness for change*, which has clear and direct relevance to the current research. Specifically, we predicted that ripeness would be positively associated with locomotion predominance (as a chronic *individual* motivation for movement and change). Moreover, given the present nature of the conflicts under study, we examined participants' affective experience upon privately discussing these issues. Building on results of our previous studies, we predicted that stable individual differences in locomotion predominance would be associated with more overall positive affect, and less overall negative affect, when it comes to participants' ongoing conflict experiences.

Method

This study was approved by the Teachers College of Columbia University's IRB under protocol 14–168, titled: "Regulatory Focus in the Maintenance and Resolution of Conflict (5)."

Participants. Ninety-two participants (29 men, 63 women) were recruited from Columbia's Teachers College (TC) for $10.00

compensation. Participants' ages ranged from 19 to 46 ($M =$ 27.40, $SD = 5.91$). Sex differences with respect to variables of interest are addressed below.

Materials and procedure. Participants completed an online prequestionnaire prior to the study, which included the RMQ. In this sample, locomotion and assessment were weakly positively correlated: $r(90) = .24$, $p = .021$. A continuous regulatory mode predominance measure was calculated ($M = 0.27$, $SD = 0.92$) by subtracting participants' assessment scores ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.75$, $\alpha = .81$) from their locomotion scores ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.74$, $\alpha = .85$) on the RMQ.

On the day of the study, participants came to the TC lab and were prompted to privately verbalize an ongoing conflict in which they were currently involved. Specifically, they were asked to: "Please think of an ongoing difficult conflict that you are currently involved with. It can be a conflict in your family, personal life, at work, in your community or anywhere else. It is important that you are involved in this conflict, that the conflict is ongoing, that the conflict is difficult, and that the conflict feels important to you." After being given two minutes to reflect on the conflict, participants were asked to speak, during a 5- to 10-min audio-recorded session, about their current experience and reactions to the conflict. They were specifically asked to: "Please talk about your thoughts and feelings and why this conflict is important to you." Upon completing the audio recording, participants engaged in a short (< 15 min) coding exercise, which was unrelated to the purposes of this study (in brief, all participants were asked to code their conflict narratives for the extent to which they pursued promotion and prevention goals: for more information, see Coleman, Kugler, Kim, & Vallacher, n.d.).

Following coding, participants then completed a questionnaire that measured their postconflict motivations and feelings. In particular, a set of *ripeness* questions was developed to test for the extent to which the conflict was in a state of readiness for change and resolution. Participants endorsed each of the following items on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*): "It is possible to locate a mutually acceptable agreement/resolution to this conflict," "I am optimistic about finding an agreement/resolution to this conflict," "I am motivated to find a solution to this conflict," "I believe the other disputant(s) are motivated to find a solution to this conflict," "I can envision a solution to this conflict that could be satisfying for all involved," "There is a way out of this conflict." Given high internal consistency ($\alpha = .84$), these six items were averaged to create an overall measure of conflict 'ripeness' ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.37$).[6] Because men ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.27$) scored significantly higher than women ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.38$) on this measure, $t(90) = 2.23$, $p = .008$, we controlled for sex in all subsequent analyses.

Participants completed a variety of other surveys designed to capture characteristics of the relationship (e.g., quality and length) and conflict (e.g., context and intensity) about which they spoke, mainly used for control purposes in this study. The most common relation was family (29.4%), followed by work (25.0%) and friend (10.9%). The most common conflict issues concerned relationships (50.0%), values (43.3%), and resources (26.7%)—note that the issues were not mutually exclusive categories. Finally, participants completed the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The PANAS was used to gauge both positive (e.g., active, proud, determined) and negative (e.g., upset, guilty, distressed) emotional responses to the conflict. Specifically, participants used a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*) to endorse each of 20 adjectives in response to the question: "How do you feel currently about this conflict?" These were then separately collapsed into the positive ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.22$, $\alpha = .88$) and negative ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.31$, $\alpha = .86$) affectivity subscales used in our analyses.

Results

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for variables central to this study are presented in Table 4. Results of multiple regressions including both locomotion and assessment strength predictors on outcome measures central to this study are also available (Table S4).

Ripeness. As in previous studies, we regressed the ripeness measure on the main effect of regulatory mode predominance, controlling for sex. As predicted, there was a significant positive relation between the two variables, such that increases in locomotion predominance strength were associated with increases in ripeness ($\beta = 0.29$, $p = .047$). In other words, as people became more locomotion predominant, they became more likely to report that there was a way out of their persistent conflict situation.

Affect. Next, we examined the relation between locomotion predominance and the affective experiences participants reported with respect to the conflict. Consistent with our predictions, increases in locomotion predominance were associated with more positive affect in relation to the conflict experience ($\beta = 0.27$, $p = .041$). Further, increases in locomotion predominance were associated with less negative affect in relation to the conflict experience ($\beta = -0.36$, $p = .015$). Together, these results suggest that as people become more locomotion predominant, they attribute more positive emotions and less negative emotions to difficult and ongoing conflict issues in their lives. We conducted follow-up analyses that revealed the robustness of these patterns when controlling for qualities of the relationship and conflict about which participants spoke.[7] Regarding whether affect moderated the association between locomotion predominance and conflict ripeness—interactions were found neither for negative affect ($\beta = 0.06$, $p = .662$) nor positive affect ($\beta = 0.03$, $p = .858$).

Mediation analyses. A question raised by the above results, and warranted by this research more generally, is whether the relation between regulatory mode predominance and affect can be explained by ripeness. Accordingly, we ran a mediation analysis, which included sex and negative affect as covariates (notably, unlike positive affect, negative affect was not significantly associated with ripeness). As shown in Figure 4, the association between regulatory mode predominance and positive affect was fully

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[6] It is worth noting that in his original conceptualization, Zartman (2000) discussed two components of ripeness: a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) and a mutually enticing opportunity (MEO). Given our primary interest in a perceived solution for (or way out of) conflict, when we refer to ripeness, we are referring mainly to the MEO component.

[7] As in Study 3, we also obtained an objective measure of conflict severity by having external raters code the verbal transcripts of the event. Two coders showed substantial agreement, $r(90) = .67$, $p < .0001$ (ICC = .66, $M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.81$), so an averaged rating was used. This rating had no relation to participants' regulatory mode predominance ($\beta = 0.03$, $p = .591$).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Variables (Study 4)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Locomotion	4.47	.74	(.85)					
2. Assessment	4.19	.75	.24*	(.81)				
3. Predominance	.27	.92	.60***	−.63***	—			
4. Ripeness	4.41	1.37	.13	−.17	.20*	(.84)		
5. Positive affect	3.46	1.22	.21*	−.04	.21*	.55***	(.88)	
6. Negative affect	4.01	1.31	−.09	.21*	−.24**	−.14	−.15	(.86)

Note. $N = 92$. Cronbach's alpha appears in parentheses.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

mediated by ripeness—predominance, direct: $t(90) = 1.83$; predominance, mediated: $t(90) = 0.80$, Sobel's $Z = 2.05$, $p = .040$.

Mediation was confirmed by a bootstrapping procedure, an approach advocated by recent researchers that reports confidence intervals (CIs) for the indirect effect in lieu of simple significance tests (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). A boot-strapped (10,000 repetitions) mediation analysis showed that, controlling for sex and negative affect, ripeness significantly mediated the relation between locomotion predominance and positive affect (bias-corrected bootstrapped indirect effect 95% CI [.02, .23]). The alternative mediation model (positive affect mediating the relation between locomotion predominance and ripeness) was nonsignificant (bias-corrected bootstrapped indirect effect 95% CI [−.04, .19]).

Discussion

Study 4 adds a new dimension to our understanding of the relation between regulatory mode predominance and the resolution of interpersonal conflicts. It builds on Study 3's finding that predominant locomotors were more likely to experience their conflicts as resolved, but this time, constrained the task by having participants think of a conflict in which they were *presently* engaged. Under such conditions, locomotion predominant individuals were more likely to endorse that their conflicts were 'ripe' for resolution. Thus, the locomotion motivation for change and movement may facilitate the perception of a way out, no matter how persistent and difficult the conflict. Moreover, predominant locomotors reported experiencing more positive affect and less negative affect in relation to those conflicts, corroborating prior study results. Although we did not find that affect moderated the relation between regulatory mode predominance and ripeness, there was a notable mediation pattern.

Most importantly, peoples' sense of ripeness regarding the conflict fully explained the association between locomotion predominance and positive affect. In other words, a broader individual motivation for change relates to a perception of a way out in conflict, which can account for the experience of more positive emotions (this makes particular sense when considering specific items from the PANAS such as 'active' and 'determined'). Although causal interpretations are not warranted here, it is possible that locomotion gives people the sense that change is possible, indeed even *necessary*, which then yields a more positive affective experience. This pattern further resonates with Study 3 findings regarding individual differences in the particular strategies that are employed following conflicts, inviting us to speculate that this

sense that the conflict *can* be resolved also predicts predominant locomotors taking a more proactive role by engaging in voice strategies. Similarly, one can also imagine that this sense, which relates to a more positive experience, also predicts less engagement in neglect strategies. It further helps to elucidate why they would not necessarily be more motivated to seek change through terminating the relationship (exit strategies).

Overall, a ripe moment is one in which "the parties' motivation to settle the conflict is at its highest" (Zartman, 2000). Though ripeness has been studied across various contexts (see also Coleman, 2000; Pruitt, 1997, 2007; Zartman, 1989), limited knowledge has been acquired on stable *individual* motivations that might contribute to its presence (but see Coleman et al., n.d.). The present study illuminates not just the association between regulatory mode predominance and different experiences of conflict ripeness, but also how this experience can in turn relate to a more positive emotional experience of conflict in particular, which appears to be a benefit of locomotion predominance when it comes to its resolution. Importantly, one could imagine that a motivation for change could have some detrimental consequences in certain cases of conflict resolution, but this study points to one reason (i.e., greater experience of 'ripeness' increasing positive affect) why this may not be the case.

Study 5

The four previous studies, using different methods and measures, offer consistent evidence that regulatory mode predominance is predictive of interpersonal conflict resolution. However, a potential limitation to address is the emphasis on individuals' reports of their conflict experiences rather than behavioral evidence regarding what happens during conflict-related interactions between individuals. Because social conflict is inherently an interindividual phenomenon, self-report data can only go so far in revealing how such interactions actually unfold in the real world. In Study 5, we recruited roommate dyads to engage in conflict-relevant discussions and sought a behavioral measure to test the hypothesized relation between locomotion predominance and conflict resolution. Specifically, we were interested in the *duration* of the discussion between roommates as a measure of participants' motivation to move on, and move on quickly, from the issue. If predominant locomotors are primarily motivated to *get on with it*, we would expect them to be done with their conflict conversations more quickly. To the extent that predominant assessors are pri-
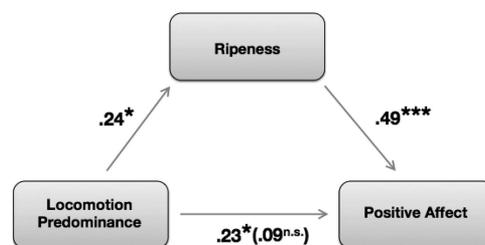

Figure 4. Mediation analysis—the relation between locomotion predominance and a more positive emotional experience regarding conflict is mediated by increased ripeness (Study 4). Standardized coefficients are shown. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

marily motivated to *get to the bottom of it*, we would expect them to engage in more drawn out discussions about recent conflicts with their roommates. We also predicted that the dynamic most influencing how the discussion unfolds would be dictated by the particular individual whose conflict experience was chosen as the basis of discussion (i.e., the 'victim,' detailed in Method below). Specifically, on the basis of the Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), we predicted that the victim's regulatory mode predominance would dictate conversation length. Shnabel and Nadler's (2008) research confirms that victims experience a loss of power and control in conflict situations, which they then seek to reassert in postconflict interactions. This model therefore led to our more specific prediction that conflict *victims* with stronger locomotion predominance would have briefer conflict conversations than their weaker locomotion predominant counterparts. Subsequent coding analyses of the discussions allowed us to test whether these shorter conflict resolution discussions were attributable to participants evading the issue, or, were evidently progressing in constructive ways. Further, consistent with results of the prior studies reported here, we anticipated that locomotion predominant individuals would indicate that their conflicts are more resolved, and report less negative feelings about them. Thus, Study 5 aimed to replicate and extend previous findings through a real-world situation in which two individuals talked about a recent conflict, affording a key behavioral measure relevant to understanding locomotion and assessment motivations in this context.

Method

This study was approved by Columbia University's IRB under protocol AAAM8554: "The Dynamics of Locomotion and Assessment in Interpersonal Conflict Resolution."

Participants. Ninety-nine roommate dyads ($N = 198$) from Columbia's BRL were recruited to take part in this study. Participants' ages ranged from 18–63 ($M = 23.89$, $SD = 5.46$). There were 110 female and 87 male participants, constituting 46 female-female dyads, 18 male-female dyads, and 34 male-male dyads (relevant sex differences are addressed separately below). Two separate samples were run and each roommate was compensated $5 to $8 for his or her participation. Neither sample nor compensation amount moderated any of the study findings.[8]

Materials and procedure. Upon entering the lab, dyad members were placed in adjacent rooms to complete the RMQ and conflict description. The conflict prompt was similar to that of Study 3, in that participants were asked to write about a time (in the last year) when they felt out-of-rapport with the roommate who accompanied them to the lab, when the roommate did or said something that upset the participant. To eliminate deception, participants were informed that their roommate would potentially be able to view this description at a later part of the experiment, but that all subsequent questions and questionnaires would remain completely confidential. Following the essay, they responded to several items about the conflict and their relationship to the roommate, rated on Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much so*). These included whether the conflict was resolved, how negatively they felt about the experience, how close they feel to their roommate, and how satisfied they are with their relationship. Participants were also asked to indicate how long ago (in days) the conflict began, and how long (in months) they had lived

with their roommate. The mean recency of the reported conflict was about 3 months ($M = 87.81$, $SD = 117.03$ days). On average, roommates had lived with one another for 9.5 months ($M = 9.44$, $SD = 10.37$). Upon completion of the essays, the experimenter then randomly selected one of the two roommates' descriptions to serve as the basis for the subsequent discussion. This meant that for half of the participants, the conflict that was subsequently discussed was an event in which *they* felt hurt by their roommate— what we will refer to as being in the role of 'victim' in the conflict. For the other half of the participants, the conflict that was subsequently discussed was an event in which they knew their roommate considered themselves to be a victim of something they did or said—placing them in the role of 'perpetrator' in the conflict.

Participants were then reunited in a third room and asked to sit at a common table. The experimenter told participants that one of their essays had been randomly selected for the purposes of the study, and that they would be having a discussion about the conflict experience together. The experimenter proceeded to read that description out loud, and then activated a handheld audio recording device on the table moments before leaving the room. Participants were instructed to stop the recording when they were finished with their conversation, and then notify the experimenter as such. These recordings provided the basis for our central behavioral measure of interest—conversation length.

Coding. To gain a more nuanced understanding of roommates' conflict discussions, we also performed content analyses of the audio recordings. A clearly defined training protocol was used to establish interrater reliability between two independent coders. Following a preliminary meeting where all concepts were operationalized, coders rated an initial subset of conflict discussions along the dimensions listed below. Upon separately completing ratings of each conflict interaction, coders met to resolve discrepancies and sync coding techniques.

One goal of the coding exercise was to ensure that our primary dependent variable of interest (conversation length) captured a motivation to swiftly move past conflict, as opposed to some other motivation (e.g., to avoid or disregard the conflict). In addition to determining the conversation initiator (the participant who began the actual conflict discussion, deducible by voice or contextual cues in 92 of the 99 dyads; intraclass correlation [ICC] = 1), we measured the extent to which the conflict issue was actually addressed, both before and during the study session conversation. Coders rated the following two items on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*): "had parties previously addressed the conflict?" and "did parties address the conflict during the study?"

Another goal of the coding was to measure the effectiveness of the conflict interactions between roommates, and specifically, the extent to which the conflicts under discussion were progressing toward resolutions. Thus, we again chose to focus on the notion of conflict ripeness (i.e., the extent to which the conflict was in a state

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[8] We first included both variables as predictors (controls) in analyses concerning each of our primary dependent measures, which did not influence the overall significance of our results (ps < .05). Additionally, effect sizes for these two potential moderators were not significantly different from zero (ps < .290), indicating that they did not moderate the magnitude of the relation between locomotion predominance and any relevant outcomes (including both participant and coder data) tested in this study.

of readiness for change or reconciliation). Coders rated for ripeness using a modified version of the ripeness scale described earlier (Study 4), which adapted items from first- to third-person as necessary (e.g., "*partners are* motivated to find a solution to this conflict," emphasis added). As expected from Study 4, these items exhibited high within-coder internal consistency (α = .84 and .86, respectively), so aggregate scores were generated.

A third goal of the content coding was to examine the possibility that conflicts are intensified by a locomotion- or an assessment-predominant approach. Although we have elucidated why predominant locomotors have reconciliatory motives, it is possible that in certain situations their proclivity toward action and change could be harmful to resolutions.[9] Likewise, although it appears as if predominant assessors employ passive rather than active conflict strategies (Study 3), it is possible that the negativity they experience, compounded by a desire to dig deeper, could exacerbate the conflict at hand. For the above reasons, the discussions were coded for a measure of conflict escalation (De Dreu, Nauta, & Van de Vliert, 1995) using the following items: "To what extent do parties obstruct each other?," "To what extent is frustration increasing?," "To what extent is the atmosphere worsening?," "To what extent are parties working out an ideal solution?," "To what extent are parties coming closer?," "To what extent are parties searching for a common way out?," and "To what extent are ideas explored?," all of which were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (the last four items are reversed-scored; thus, higher scores indicate higher conflict escalation). These items also exhibited strong internal consistency within coders (α = .81 and .88, respectively), so averaged indices were computed.

On all of the above dimensions, coders were asked to assume the perspective of an objective observer, rating interactions by absolute standards, not by participants' perceptions of the conflict. Intercoder reliability (Pearson's rs) ranged between .61 and .82, and averaged .70 (ICCs were consistently above .64, and averaged .71) for the entire coding of all 99 conflict discussions. Thus, each dimension was averaged between coders resulting in one score for analysis.

Analyses. In our analyses, we followed the approach recommended by Kenny and colleagues (e.g., Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006) and employed actor-partner interdependence models (APIMs). APIMs account for the mutual influence that dyad members have on one another by estimating the extent to which an individual's independent variable has an effect on his or her own dependent variable (i.e., an *actor* effect), as well as the extent to which an individual's independent variable has an effect on his or her partner's dependent variable (i.e., a *partner* effect). Thus, our models treat the roommate dyad as the major unit of analysis while partitioning the variance for locomotion predominance into effects due to the actor, the partner, and the Actor × Partner interaction. In this sample, locomotion scores and assessment scores were uncorrelated, $r(196)$ = −.08, p = .243, and as in previous studies, individual predominance scores (M = 0.26, SD = 1.11) were calculated by subtracting the latter (M = 4.37, SD = 0.72, α = .84) from the former (M = 4.11, SD = 0.79, α = .84).

Results

All descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for primary variables of interest are displayed in Table 5. Multiple regressions simultaneously accounting for the relative influence of locomotion and assessment strength on these variables are displayed in Table S5.

Closeness and satisfaction. Generalized linear mixed models (grouped by dyad) were performed for all APIM analyses (see Campbell & Kashy, 2002). We first ran an APIM using actors' and partners' locomotion predominance scores to predict differences in potential variables that might need to be controlled for in subsequent analyses. While actor/partner locomotion predominance did not predict differences in the recency of the conflict or length of cohabitation between roommates, we did find a marginally significant positive actor effect of locomotion predominance on relationship closeness (β = 0.16, p = .060) and a significant positive effect on satisfaction (β = 0.28, p < .0001). We found no partner effects or Actor × Partner interactions on these variables (closeness: β = 0.01, p = .879; satisfaction: β = −0.003, p = .954). However, because stronger locomotion predominance was associated with participants reporting that they felt closer and more satisfied in their relationships, we controlled for both factors in subsequent analyses.

Conflict resolution and negativity. We performed another APIM analysis using actors' and partners' locomotion predominance scores to predict actors' perceptions that their conflicts were resolved, and their negative feelings regarding the conflict. Because males (M = 5.51, SD = 1.45) reported that their conflicts were more resolved than females (M = 5.03, SD = 1.84), $t(196)$ = 2.25, p = .013, we also controlled for sex in the analyses that follow. Consistent with our hypotheses and the results of prior studies, locomotion predominant individuals were more likely to indicate that their conflict had already been resolved (β = 0.39, p = .001) and reported less negativity in response to the conflict (β = −0.31, p = .010) compared with those individuals characterized by weaker locomotion predominance. There were no partner effects (conflict resolution: β = −0.13, p = .287; negativity: β = 0.12, p = .352) or interactions between roommates' scores (conflict resolution: β = −0.10, p = .311; negativity: β = 0.13, p = .380) on either of these outcomes. Unlike Study 1 but consistent with Studies 2, 3, and 4, there were no interactions between locomotion predominance and negativity on the motivation to reconcile for either the actor (β = −0.02, p = .764) or the partner (β = −0.01, p = .942). Nonetheless, unlike prior studies, we were able to account statistically for the potential interdependence of conflict partners' scores.

Conversation length. Next, we tested the major question of the study: whether roommates' regulatory mode predominance differentially predicted the behavioral outcome measure of conversation length. Because roommates' conversation lengths were (by definition) equivalent, we collapsed by dyad and ran a multiple linear regression controlling for dyad sex-class and combined relationship closeness/satisfaction. Our outcome measure was the length of time (in seconds) of participants' conflict discussion recording, which was log-transformed for normality. Our predic-

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[9] Returning to an earlier point, in this research we focus on social conflicts occurring in the context of close interpersonal relationships that people want to continue. In such contexts, action that harms the relationship may serve only to create *further* disruption (e.g., barriers to moving on). In this study, we focus on roommate relationships, a situation in which limiting disturbances attributable to conflict may be of particular value.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Variables (Study 5)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. V Locomotion	4.32	.76	(.84)								
2. P Locomotion	4.42	.66	.28*	(.83)							
3. V Assessment	4.16	.82	−.16	−.07	(.84)						
4. P Assessment	4.04	.75	−.03	.03	.26*	(.85)					
5. V Predominance	.36	.83	.52**	.14	−.70***	−.27*	—				
6. P Predominance	.37	.98	.19	.64***	−.22	−.69***	.29**	—			
7. Resolved	5.19	1.66		.25**		−.27**		.31**	—		
8. Negativity	3.45	1.75		−.26**		.22*		−.27**	−.31**	—	
9. Conv. length	359.02	128.34	−.27*	−.05	.28*	.09	−.30**	−.12	−.17	.18	—

Note. N = 198. Cronbach's alpha appears in parentheses. V refers to conflict 'victim,' P refers to conflict 'perpetrator.' Italicized numbers indicate that values were calculated for all participants (i.e., victims and perpetrators).
* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

tors included locomotion predominance main effects for both the individual whose conflict was chosen, that is, the 'victim,' and his or her roommate, that is, the 'perpetrator,' as well as their interaction.

Results of this model revealed a significant main effect of victim locomotion predominance ($\beta = -0.20$, $p = .008$), indicating that as victims' locomotion predominance increased, the duration of their conflict discussions *decreased*. However, this association was qualified by a marginal Victim × Perpetrator Locomotion Predominance interaction ($\beta = 0.08$, $p = .072$). To facilitate interpretation of these findings, we created four dyad classes depending on the *victim-perpetrator predominance combination* (see Figure 5). These comprised locomotion–locomotion (LL) dyads, where both victim and perpetrator were locomotion predominant; assessment–assessment (AA) dyads, where both victim and perpetrator were assessment predominant; and two mixed-predominance dyad classes: one where the victim was locomotion predominant and the perpetrator was assessment predominant (LA), and the other where the victim was assessment predominant and the perpetrator was locomotion predominant (AL). Note that here we refer to locomotion versus assessment predominance, primarily for ease of interpretation. However, a median-split on the locomotion-assessment difference score (i.e., weak vs. strong locomotion predominance) yielded similar patterns.

As illustrated in Figure 5, the length of roommates' conflict discussions varied significantly among these different dyad classes, $F(3, 95) = 4.53$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .054$. Planned comparisons revealed a significant contrast between LL/LA dyads versus AA/AL dyads, $F(1, 97) = 7.84$, $p = .006$, reflecting the fact that discussions involving locomotion predominant victims' conflicts were overall shorter than discussions involving assessment predominant victims' conflicts. Discussions among AA dyads were significantly longer than those of LA dyads, $F(1, 97) = 3.99$, $p = .048$, and LL dyads, $F(1, 97) = 10.90$, $p = .001$, whereas AA dyads did not significantly differ from AL dyads, $F(1, 97) = 3.29$, $p = .071$, although it appears that there is some tendency for locomotion perpetrators to speed up the dyadic discourse (see Figure 5). In addition, LL dyads had significantly shorter discussions than both AL dyads, $F(1, 97) = 5.41$, $p = .021$, and AA dyads, $F(1, 97) = 10.90$, $p = .001$, whereas discussion length did not significantly differ between LL and LA dyads, $F(1, 97) = 1.79$, $p = .182$. Importantly, these results were maintained when accounting for dyad sex-class, relationship closeness/satisfaction, and the extent to which the conflict was already resolved.

Conversation content. Coding analyses illuminated several additional patterns worth noting. First, an APIM on the conversation initiator outcome variable revealed a significant actor effect of locomotion predominance ($\beta = 0.41$, $p = .013$), indicating that participants with stronger locomotion predominance were *more* likely to *initiate* the conflict discussions that ensued with their roommates. Interestingly, we also found a significant partner effect of locomotion predominance on conversation initiation ($\beta = -0.36$, $p = .037$), suggesting that participants became *less* likely to initiate such discussions as their roommate's locomotion predominance increased. Although we found no Actor × Partner Locomotion Predominance interaction ($\beta = -0.005$, $p = .965$), a closer analysis of these patterns revealed that they were moderated by role (Actor Locomotion Predominance × Role: $\beta = 0.99$, $p = .016$; Partner Locomotion Predominance × Role: $\beta = 1.08$, $p = .011$). Tests of simple slopes revealed that actor locomotion predominance was significantly positively associated with conversation initiation in the role of the victim ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < .0001$), but
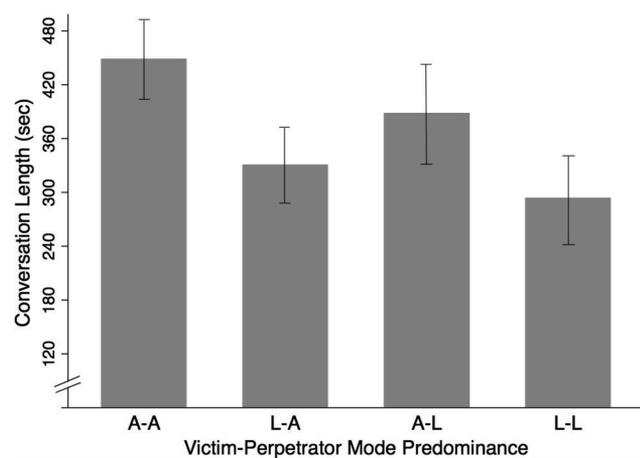

Figure 5. Roommates' regulatory mode predominance combination and conversation length (Study 5). Means and standard deviations for each dyad class, which denote victim-perpetrator predominance combinations; A = assessment predominant individual, L = locomotion predominant individual.

did not relate to conversation initiation in the role of the perpetrator ($\beta = -0.02$, $p = .754$); further, partner locomotion predominance was significantly negatively associated with conversation initiation in the role of the perpetrator ($\beta = -0.17$, $p < .0001$), but did not relate to conversation initiation in the role of the victim ($\beta = 0.05$, $p = .456$). In other words, increases in one's *own* locomotion predominance positively predicted initiating the conversation in the victim (as opposed to the perpetrator) role; further, increases in one's *partner's* locomotion predominance negatively predicted initiating the conversation in the perpetrator role (that is, when one's partner was the victim). This pattern is consistent with the Needs-Based notion that victims seek to reassert power and control during reconciliation. Perhaps unsurprising, then, is our more general finding that victims were more likely to initiate conflict conversations than were perpetrators: $\chi^2(1, N = 184) = 5.96$, $p = .015$.

Because values for all subsequent coding variables were equivalent within each roommate pair, we again collapsed across dyads and ran regular linear regressions. When it came to the extent to which roommates actually addressed the conflict issue during the study, we did not find any differences depending on victim ($\beta = -0.22$, $p = .450$) or perpetrator ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = .635$) locomotion predominance. However, when it came to the degree to which roommates appeared to have addressed the issue *prior* to the study, we did find a significant positive relation to victim locomotion predominance ($\beta = 0.50$, $p = .048$). That is, for the individual whose conflict was chosen, dyads were increasingly likely to have discussed or dealt with that conflict prior to the study as that individual's locomotion predominance increased.[10] This is precisely what would be expected given predominant locomotors' motivation to move on from the conflict as soon as possible. There was no significant relation between perpetrator locomotion predominance and addressing the issue previously ($\beta = 0.10$, $p = .684$), and no Victim × Perpetrator Locomotion Predominance interactions on either of the above variables (during: $\beta = 0.13$, $p = .767$; prior: $\beta = 0.06$, $p = .877$).

We then analyzed the coding data for conflict ripeness and escalation. Regarding conflict ripeness, we found a significant relation between victim locomotion predominance and the extent to which coders rated the discussions as ripe for resolution ($\beta = 0.33$, $p = .001$). In other words, as would also be expected, roommate discussions were rated as being more in a state of readiness for change and resolution when the individual whose conflict was chosen (i.e., the victim) was higher in locomotion predominance. The association between perpetrator locomotion predominance and ripeness was nonsignificant ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = .321$), as was the Victim × Perpetrator Predominance interaction ($\beta = -0.10$, $p = .180$).[11]

When it came to conflict escalation, no significant associations were found for victim ($\beta = -0.11$, $p = .349$) or perpetrator ($\beta = -0.08$ $p = .568$) locomotion predominance, nor for their interaction ($\beta = -0.04$, $p = .664$). That is, locomotion predominance did not predict any observed differences in the extent to which the conflict was intensified by roommates' conversations. A series of follow-up moderation and mediation analyses revealed that neither coded variable (ripeness/escalation, which, as may be expected, were slightly negatively correlated: $r(97) = -.23$, $p = .029$) significantly impacted any of the aforementioned patterns (e.g., conversation length).

Discussion

To summarize, upon recruiting roommate dyads to have discussions about recent areas of conflict, we found that participants with stronger locomotion predominance reported their conflicts were more resolved, and less generative of negativity, than did participants with weaker locomotion predominance. In this sense, Study 5 was a replication of Study 3 with extension to a real-world context, allowing us to examine conflict interactions and simultaneously account for the potential interdependence of dyad members' regulatory mode scores. It also afforded a key behavioral test of our hypothesis that predominant locomotors would be more motivated to move past conflict. Specifically, when conflict discussions between roommates were based on a locomotion predominant victims' conflict, they were over two minutes shorter than conflict discussions surrounding an assessment predominant victims' conflict. Consistent with the Needs-Based Model (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), victims' regulatory mode predominance was most predictive of the conversation length between participants. According to this model of reconciliation, the deprivation of power that victims experience in conflict situations leads to a corresponding motivational state in which they experience this deprivation as a need that must be fulfilled. In subsequent interactions, this manifests itself as an enhanced desire to restore their sense of control and an increased likelihood of engaging in power-seeking behaviors (see also Foster & Rusbult, 1999). Importantly, this research builds on Shnabel and Nadler's (2008) framework by suggesting that individual motivations reflecting different regulatory mode concerns can also influence the victim-perpetrator dynamic in ways that are consistent with a Needs-Based approach. It also highlights a unique measure relevant to this dynamic, that is, how long the conversation between partners over their conflict issue ensues—an important dimension of conflict interactions for research to consider more generally.

Another important dimension to consider in this regard is who initiates the conflict discussion. That victims were more likely to start these conversations when locomotion predominance was strong suggests how motivation and role may interact to produce a corresponding need to dictate the initiation and course of conflict-related discussions. This result also provides evidence that the shorter discussion times predicted by victim locomotion predominance were not merely due to an evasion of the conflict issue. In further support of this notion is our finding that predominant locomotors (both victims and perpetrators) were no less likely to confront the issue during the study itself. It is also of interest, and consistent with expectations, that predominant locomotion victims

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[10] This finding did not moderate the association between victim locomotion predominance and conversation length described earlier—predominance, direct: $t(196) = -1.32$; predominance, mediated: $t(196) = -0.96$, Sobel's $Z = -1.21$, $p = .226$; bias-corrected bootstrapped (10,000 repetitions) indirect effect 95% CI [$-.11$, $.03$].

[11] As in Studies 3 and 4, we wanted to ensure that predominant locomotors did not write about less severe conflicts, which could then explain raters' ripeness coding. Two coders rated a subset ($N = 50$) of the conflict essays for severity, showing acceptable agreement, $r(48) = .65$, $p < .0001$ (ICC = .65, $M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.65$), so an averaged rating was used. As in our previous studies, in Study 5, we also found no relation between locomotion predominance and the severity of the conflicts about which participants wrote ($\beta = 0.09$, $p = .342$).

were more likely to have already addressed the conflict with their partners before the study. In combination with the conversation initiator result, this suggests that in these relational and conflict contexts, predominant locomotors do not necessarily avoid the conflict but rather take active steps toward dealing with it—potentially indicative of voice strategies (recall items such as "I openly discussed the situation with my partner") as found in Study 3.

Perhaps most importantly, our finding that victim locomotion predominance predicted the occurrence of discussions that were rated as being higher in ripeness suggests that the conflict conversations between locomotion predominant victims and their roommates progress effectively toward change (as in Study 4). We did not find a relation between perpetrators' locomotion predominance and conflict ripeness, once again suggesting that victims may exert more influence on the resolution dynamic and discussion that ensues, an area meriting further study. Moreover, the lack of a relation between regulatory mode predominance and conflict escalation suggests that neither locomotion- nor assessment-predominant tactics exacerbate conflicts, as might be predicted in certain relational or conflict circumstances. Although one could argue that a motivation for change for its own sake could be detrimental to conflict resolution (e.g., through promoting exit strategies or revenge), escalation potentially creates even further conflict in close relationships (and is thus not ultimately in the service of change). Further, although assessment predominance presumably makes conflict resolution less likely in this context, it seems that problems arise from people remaining in (as opposed to proactively escalating) interpersonal conflict situations (recall from Study 3 that assessment predicts passive destructive strategies like neglect as opposed to active destructive strategies like exit).

Overall, when discussing one's own conflict issue with a roommate, increases in locomotion predominance predict discourses that progress not just more rapidly, but apparently more actively and effectively toward change. It bears repeating these patterns are not an artifact of the issue itself already having been resolved (according to participants themselves) or addressed (according to external raters) prior to coming to the study, as we were able to statistically account for both possibilities. Thus, the results of Study 5 suggest that locomotion predominant victims' faster conversation lengths likely reflect a motivation to *move on* from the issue. On the other hand, assessment predominant victims' longer conversation lengths likely reflect a motivation to *dig deeper* into the issue. Overall, given the locomotion motivation for speed and to move forward from conflict situations, and the assessment motivation for accuracy and to figure things out in conflict situations, this behavioral outcome measure yielded results that are consistent with our hypotheses.

Interestingly, we also found that roommates' locomotion predominance scores were significantly positively related ($\beta = 0.28$, $p = .005$). In other words, locomotion predominant individuals were more likely to have locomotion predominant roommates, which could reflect a regulatory fit-matching selection effect (Higgins, 2012). This is intriguing in light of our finding that locomotion predominance also predicted more relationship closeness and satisfaction. Whether the higher ability of locomotion predominant individuals to move on from conflict is in part a cause or consequence of having better relationships is a question that warrants

future study. This is particularly relevant in a living situation, which may very well provide an additional incentive for partners to put conflict issues in the past. Further, as a test of how discussions unfold when dyads are asked to revisit contentious issues that they have previously encountered, Study 5 was still able to tap into locomotors' motivation to go forward, and move on quickly, from interpersonal conflict situations—that is, their motivation to just *get it done*.

Study 6

To further examine the influence of locomotion predominance on reconciliatory motivations, we conducted a meta-analysis across all five of our studies.

Method

The Comprehensive Meta-Analysis (CMA) program was used, which follows Hedges and Olkin's (1985) approach by transforming effect sizes into z scores and then converting them back into Pearson's rs. We used the correlation coefficient as our basic measure of effect size, with the exception of the induction experiment (Study 2), in which the standard mean difference served as the appropriate metric.[12] All results were obtained from random-effect models in which the error term is composed of both within- and between-study variability (see Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2005, 2009 and Rosenthal & DiMatteo, 2001 for more information on CMA software and this statistical approach).

Locomotion predominance was first compared with reconciliation tendency. This tendency was reflected in participants' own responses to items indicating a motivation to reconcile (Studies 1 and 2), an experience of conflict as resolved (Studies 3 and 5; note that in Study 3, the 'unresolved' correlation was reversed), and conflict ripeness (Study 4; note that ripeness was also measured in Study 5, but this time by external coders rather than by the participants themselves). Second, locomotion predominance was compared with a tendency toward negativity in conflict situations, measured by the negative feelings (Studies 1, 2, 3 and 5) and negative affect scores (Study 4) that participants reported in response to interpersonal conflict situations.

Results and Discussion

Results of the meta-analysis show for reconciliation a significant random-effect model: $r = .27$, 95% CI [.18, .35], $p < .0001$. For negativity, the meta-analysis results also show a significant random-effect model, $r = -.23$, 95% CI [$-.31, -.15$], $p < .0001$. In both cases, heterogeneity tests were nonsignificant (reconciliation: $Q = 2.01$, $p = .734$; negativity: $Q = 3.78$, $p = .436$). This finding is further supported by low $I2$ values ($I2 < .0001$), indicating that a very low proportion of the observed variance stemmed from real differences between studies (which thus precluded the need to explore potential moderators). Overall, these results suggest that the relations between locomotion predominance and both reconciliation and negativity were homogeneous

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[12] Recall that locomotion predominance was measured via the RMQ in every study, but in Study 2, the regulatory mode (assessment vs. locomotion) predominance induction served as our primary measure.

and robust across all of our five studies. In the conflicts captured by the present research, in which mixed motives are at play in relationships that people want to maintain, predominant locomotors' tendency to reconcile quickly and overcome negative feelings proves fundamental. Study 1's finding that locomotion predominance interacted with negative affect to predict reconciliatory motives was not replicated across four subsequent studies, highlighting that these two relations tend to be independent in the conflict situations captured here.

General Discussion and Conclusions

The preceding set of studies represents the first to apply Regulatory Mode Theory (RMT) to conflict resolution research, uncovering the promise of this application when it comes to understanding what motivates different individuals in conflict. It underscores a novel approach to this question by emphasizing that peoples' responses to conflict need not be simply instrumentally motivated, but partially driven by more fundamental individual differences in motivation. Scholars and practitioners have long argued that motivational change and movement between states lie at the core of conflict resolution. Evidence for this association between a broader individual motivation for change and reconciliation has been found in one of our nearest nonhuman primate relatives (Webb, 2015; Webb, Franks, Romero, Higgins, & de Waal, 2014), suggesting its fundamental nature.

Importantly, change and movement between states is an *end in itself*, emphasizing that reconciliation can occur for locomotors regardless of what is instrumentally at stake. On the other hand, the assessment desire to make critical evaluations and comparisons, while also essential to motivation, can have various negative consequences in conflict situations. Specifically, it can cultivate a state of immobility over action and change, which theoretically, will never *in and of itself* resolve conflict. As we have shown here, it is therefore the *predominance* of an individual's locomotion over assessment that is the most relevant predictor of his or her motivation to take that critical step. We have demonstrated this under a range of empirical circumstances, including hypothetical conflict scenarios and experimental inductions (Studies 1 and 2), as well as personal conflict essays (Study 3), narratives (Study 4), and dynamic roommate interactions (Study 5). A meta-analysis on all five studies (Study 6) confirmed the consistent relation between locomotion predominance and reconciliatory motives across these different contexts.

This is not to say that assessment concerns are not relevant for conflict resolution. A combination of both locomotion and assessment is often necessary for successful goal-pursuit (see Higgins, 2012), and this could be no less true when it comes to resolving conflict, especially when the conflict is complicated (for the importance of complexity, see Lo Destro, Chernikova, Pierro, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2016; see also De Dreu et al., 2006). Indeed, previous studies on individual and group performance have shown that assessment and locomotion complement one another and that self-regulation is most effective when both modes are active (see Kruglanski, Orehek, Higgins, Pierro, & Shalev, 2010). One can imagine that assessment would be important to the extent that conflict resolution requires figuring out what went wrong, and evaluating the best or "right" way to proceed (e.g., so as to prevent future conflicts of a similar nature). It is the absence of a stronger motivation to move away from the current state and actually effect change, however, that proves problematic. Especially in cases like the low-intensity, mixed-motive relationship conflicts we have emphasized here, there may be no *right* solution to conflict but to move forward and tolerate negative feelings, again reinforcing the central importance of locomotion's predominance over assessment. As we have shown, the *less* locomotion presides over assessment, the *less* motivated people are to reconcile (Studies 1, 2, 3), perceive a way out of intractable conflicts (Study 4), and initiate 'ripe' conversations about their own conflicts (Study 5)—likely fueled by and fueling *more* negativity (Studies 1, 3, 4, 5), passive and destructive conflict strategies (Study 3), and time taken to deliberate on the issue (Study 5).

Study 6 revealed the robustness of these patterns across diverse conflict contexts, yet the question remains as to whether these results would generalize to more severe interpersonal conflicts. Indeed, in more stressful conflict events where negative emotions run high, predominant locomotors may still be better able to tolerate negativity and move forward. Nonetheless, it is also possible that such severe conflicts bring more complexity, and along with that, the assessment motivation for critical analysis. For instance, quickly "moving on" in response to a major partner transgression without "digging deeper" may require an unhealthy degree of emotional suppression (Richards, Butler, & Gross, 2003)—and may even facilitate future transgressions (McNulty, 2010). Despite this, assessors' stronger experience of negativity, in response to more stressful situations, could further entrench them in the conflict if not met by a greater motivation to effect change and move on. Future research stands to gain by disentangling how conflict severity moderates these diverse regulatory mode processes.

What other motivational mechanisms could buffer the potentially negative consequences of assessment in conflict resolution contexts? Previous work on self-regulation in close relationships has shown that motivational strategies and resources can play a key role in preventing the escalation of conflict. For example, Finkel and Campbell (2001) demonstrated that both dispositional and situational self-control facilitated the ability to accommodate one's partner's destructive behaviors (i.e., to inhibit reciprocal destructive responses in favor of constructive responding). Similarly, Ayduk and Kross (2010) found that participants who were higher in spontaneous self-distancing (i.e., adopting a third-person perspective) used more constructive problem solving strategies in interpersonal conflicts, and had less emotional reactivity when analyzing negative experiences more generally (explained by less recounting relative to reconstruing). Perhaps this ability to adopt a less self-immersed perspective could make the critical analysis that characterizes assessment less maladaptive (i.e., by attenuating destructive behaviors and ruminative thought processes). It is also important to acknowledge that in certain conflict resolution cases (e.g., those involving more severe conflicts or less intact relationships), the inhibition necessary for accommodation might not befit a predominant locomotor who prioritizes speed and change (i.e., a quick action) at the expense of a more consid-

ered, accurate response.[13] Thus, future research needs to explore the additional self-regulatory mechanisms and alternative conflict structures that might make assessment more, and perhaps locomotion less, adaptive. An important component of this work will be a closer examination of the particular *role* that individuals play in conflict to better understand how regulatory mode influences subsequent victim-perpetrator dynamics.

In highlighting the distinct motivational forces of locomotion and assessment, RMT might also help to illuminate how different ways of self-regulating following interpersonal conflict can exacerbate or even *become* the primary conflict at hand. We have all experienced conflicts where the original goal incompatibility becomes secondary to the conflict that results from the use of incongruent resolution tactics. The image of one person being motivated to move on from the conflict as quickly as possible, and his or her partner being motivated to dig deeper to understand what truly happened, maps well onto our lay theories and perceptions about individual variation in conflict resolution tactics. This common incompatibility can create an entirely new conflict (which intriguingly, has never been the focus of scientific study). Overall, this highlights something else that we might have yet to appreciate when it comes to conflict resolution: *independent of instrumental concerns, the resolution process itself can also involve a conflict between what two different motivational systems demand.* Building on the previous example, during the resolution process, a high assessment partner who is motivated to find out what *really* happened and respond in the *right* manner can come into conflict with a locomotion partner who is motivated to *move forward* and not look back.

To what extent could these divergent resolution tactics undermine relationship compatibility and success? Gottman and colleagues' seminal work on marital interactions (e.g., Gottman, Coan, Carrere, & Swanson, 1998; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989) revealed that even brief discussions surrounding a high-conflict issue are predictive of long-term relationship satisfaction and stability. Do dyadic discrepancies in locomotion and assessment result in strategies such as defensiveness and withdrawal (Gottman et al., 1976, 1998), known to yield harmful relationship consequences? Alternatively, in what situations might contrasting partner modes lead to more balanced, beneficial resolution and relationship outcomes through the process of regulatory 'complementarity' (see Higgins, 2012)? Although our work emphasized mostly low-intensity conflicts among close friends (as opposed to high-intensity conflicts among romantic partners), it will be of interest for future work to explore RMT in other relationship contexts, and to examine how self-regulatory incompatibilities (both within and between individuals) that exacerbate conflicts could be overcome through other motivational and behavioral mechanisms (see, e.g., Webb, Rossignac-Milon, & Higgins, in press).

In investigating this link, the present findings also contribute to a largely inconclusive and incomplete understanding of individual differences in conflict *resolution* approaches (see Lewicki, Litterer, Minton, & Saunders, 1994). Because conflict is an inherently interindividual phenomenon, studies have commonly focused on relational or situational characteristics of resolutions over stable individual predictors. A notable exception is recent work on the role of dispositional factors in forgiveness (reviewed in McCullough, 2001), much of which has emphasized personality dimensions such as the Big Five (McCrae & Costa, 1999; e.g., McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). Given the *motivational* nature of forgiveness (e.g., McCullough et al., 1997) and other conflict resolution phenomena, it is perhaps also surprising that self-regulatory frameworks have rarely been applied in this context (but see Mischel, DeSmet, & Kross, 2006). Recent studies applying Regulatory Focus Theory (RFT; Higgins, 1997) have begun to break this pattern (e.g., Molden & Finkel, 2010; Santelli, Struthers, & Eaton, 2009; Winterheld & Simpson, 2011), suggesting the further promise of employing related motivational frameworks such as RMT.

Molden and Finkel (2010) found that for individuals with a predominant promotion-focus (who emphasize nurturance and growth), trust in a relationship partner predicted forgiveness, whereas for individuals with a predominant prevention-focus (who emphasize safety and security), commitment more strongly predicted forgiveness. Building on this example, it is possible that distinct elements of partner rapport predict conflict resolution motives for predominant locomotors and assessors. In another line of research, Santelli and colleagues (2009) found forgiveness to be most likely when a victim's predominant regulatory focus was a fit with the regulatory focus style of the repentance given by the transgressor. The same could apply to regulatory mode, such that the style of repentance following interpersonal transgressions would be most effective when corresponding to locomotion concerns (e.g., 'let's move on') versus assessment concerns (e.g., 'let's figure out what happened'). Although our research intentionally highlighted reconciliatory motivations (partners resuming the relationship) as opposed to forgiveness (one partner absolving the other partner), it will be important for future studies to consider how locomotion and assessment relate to partner support perceptions during conflicts (see Winterheld & Simpson, 2011) and other potential outcomes impacting relationship satisfaction and well-being.

Compared with knowledge regarding the relational factors that influence conflict resolution, individual determinants are much less understood. This is concerning, given that individual dimensions influence how relational processes take shape. In particular, the ability to manage conflict has clear implications for the development and maintenance of close relationships (Arriaga & Rusbult, 1998; Gottman et al., 1998; Heavey, Layne, & Christensen, 1993). Conflict processes are critical to understanding relational functioning and adjustment. Disruptive conflict styles and unresolved conflict leave partners dissatisfied and augment the possibility of terminated relationships (Cramer, 2000). However, when managed effectively, conflict can even increase relationship satisfaction (Laursen & Hafen, 2010). Although most of us strive to maximize the benefits of social relationships, we must not underestimate the value of minimizing their inherent costs. Social relationships directly impact mortality, stress, and myriad other aspects of physical and mental health and well-being (e.g., Cohen, 2004; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010), underscoring the broader significance of investigating what

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[13] As Kruglanski and colleagues (2016) note, high locomotors may be motivated to 'move on' from a relationship when their partners are no longer relevant to their current goals—a different scenario from the conflicts-of-interest between close social partners emphasized here.

motivates different individuals to resolve interpersonal conflicts. As we have demonstrated here, RMT can provide a powerful tool to further this investigation.

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