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# A Darker Side of Hope: Harmony-Focused Hope Decreases Collective Action Intentions Among the Disadvantaged

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## Abstract

Hope is viewed as a positive emotion associated with the motivation to change existing conditions. As such, it is highly relevant for social change, particularly when considering disadvantaged groups. We propose that, in the context of unequal intergroup relations, hope may actually undermine motivation for change among disadvantaged group members. Specifically, we distinguish between hope targeted at *harmony with the outgroup* and hope targeted at *social equality* between groups. Drawing on insights regarding the consequences of positive intergroup interactions, we predict that hope for harmony with the outgroup can *undermine* the constructive tension that motivates the disadvantaged toward equality. Across four studies, involving different intergroup contexts, hope for harmony was negatively associated with disadvantaged group members' motivation for collective action. We further found that high identifiers from the disadvantaged group were immune to this effect. We discuss theoretical and practical implications for the role of hope in social change.

## Keywords

hope, harmony, equality, identification, collective action

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*“Hope in reality is the worst of all evils, because it prolongs the torments of man”*

—Friedrich Nietzsche (1878/2006)

Hope can be thought of as the emotional experience associated with the desire for improving existing conditions (Lazarus, 1999; Smith & Lazarus, 1990). As such, the psychological literature has long emphasized the positive role of hope in human functioning, particularly in the context of grave circumstances such as when coping with a terminal disease or loss (Lazarus, 1999). Because hope reflects a belief in at least the possibility of positive change (independent of whether it is attainable through action), it may motivate people to actively challenge situations by trying to alter them (Lazarus, 1999). In this sense, hope is highly applicable to social change processes, particularly when considering the disadvantaged position of some groups. For example, if members of such groups hope for the possibility of change in their disadvantaged position, they are more likely to work toward that goal (Włodarczyk, Basabe, Pérez, & Zumeta, 2017). If this reasoning is valid, then the experience of hope can be absolutely pivotal for instigating actions to advance equality (see Stroebe, Wang, & Wright, 2015).

We propose, however, that the association between hope and motivation to advance change toward equality is more complex. In fact, we specify conditions under which hope can *undermine* individuals' motivation to change their disadvantaged group's position in society. We propose that a key factor determining whether hope affects motivation for social change is the *target* of hope (i.e., what is being hoped for). In the context of asymmetrical power relations, the disadvantaged side might hope for having better relations with the advantaged outgroup, or for advancing the ingroup's position. Whereas in both cases the nature of hope is identical, the content of the hopeful aspiration and (potentially) its implications differ considerably.

This is important because hope for better relations with the outgroup (hereafter termed *harmony-focused hope*) can ironically undermine disadvantaged group members'

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motivation to engage in social change toward equality. We derive this possibility from work on intergroup contact, demonstrating that contact that seeks relational harmony lowers individuals' motivation for social change (see Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007; Saguy, Schori-Eyal, Hasan-Aslih, Sobol, & Dovidio, 2016). As such, harmony-focused hope fits well with Nietzsche's statement, quoted in the epigraph, that hope can "prolong the torments of man" (Nietzsche, 1878): in this case by providing a promise of better future relations that may go unfulfilled (see Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009).

## Hope and Social Change

The question of when disadvantaged group members try to promote equality has been extensively discussed in the collective action literature. In the context of collective disadvantage, group members may feel that their rights, interests, or values are violated. Such appraisals of injustice provoke emotions such as anger, paving an emotional pathway to collective action (Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). In their meta-analysis, Van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2008) further identified the importance of group identification and group efficacy beliefs in predicting collective action. Specifically, the more individuals identify with their group, and the more they perceive that their group is able to achieve social change, the more motivated they are to take collective action (for a review, see Van Zomeren, 2013).

Positive emotions have received less attention in the collective action literature, although several studies have highlighted the role of hope in mobilizing people to act for change (see Aminzade & McAdam, 2001; Pearlman, 2013). For example, Wright, Taylor, and Moghaddam (1990) found that hope for improving one's position was associated with collective action intentions, whereas hopelessness was related to inaction. More recently, Włodarczyk et al. (2017) provided evidence that hope for improving social conditions amid economic crisis predicted participation in collective action. This suggests that hope can function as a motivator for social change when it springs from the desire to change a reality of deprivation.

Nonetheless, hope can sometimes also act as a barrier to collective action. For example, Hornsey and Fielding (2016) found that hopeful messages regarding positive progress in the context of climate change were less effective than pessimistic messages in motivating collective action. The authors proposed that this effect might stem from reduced perceptions of risk and negativity in the current reality. In this research, we go beyond this finding and put forward the argument that the *target* of hope must be considered when attempting to understand the effects of hope on motivation to act for change. That is, we do not assume that hope per se undermines action motivation, but that the specific target of hope shapes its consequences and may render hope discouraging rather than

encouraging. Specifically, we propose that when disadvantaged group members' hope is focused on better relations with the outgroup (rather than on equality and justice), it may reduce motivation for advancing change toward equality.

## Harmony-Focused Hope and Collective Action

Our reasoning is based on findings that when disadvantaged group members come to trust and like members of the advantaged group—potentially a result of positive intergroup contact—they become less committed to advancing change toward equality (Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012; Saguy et al., 2016). For example, positive contact with Whites in South Africa was found to be negatively correlated with support for egalitarian policies among Black South-Africans (Dixon et al., 2007), and positive contact with Jews in Israel was associated with less attention to inequality among Arabs and less support for social change (Saguy et al., 2009). Consistent findings were obtained among the Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, demonstrating that having more friends from the dominant group (New Zealand Europeans) was associated with the legitimization of inequality and consequently reduced support for reparative social policies (Sengupta & Sibley, 2013).

Together, these findings suggest that a positive orientation toward the advantaged group can undermine disadvantaged group members' motivation for social change. The processes that were offered as underlying this effect have to do with the outcomes of positive personal interactions (see Dixon et al., 2005). Specifically, people who developed positive relationships with members of the outgroup tended to focus less on group distinctions, including those pertaining to power inequality, and became more positive not only toward those individuals, but also toward the advantaged outgroup as a whole (Saguy et al., 2016; Wright & Lubensky, 2009).

In the current research, we posit that orientations toward harmony may undermine motivation for social change even in the absence of any intergroup contact. We suggest that merely experiencing harmony-focused *emotions* can lead to the same effect as experiencing actual harmony, such that hoping for better relations with the outgroup can result in a reduced motivation for social change toward equality. This would mean that contact and close relationships with the advantaged outgroup need not necessarily take place—but rather merely be imagined and desired—for their known effects to shape motivation for change.

Furthermore, we propose that some disadvantaged group members might be immune to this effect. Specifically, we suggest that enhanced identification with one's disadvantaged group can buffer against the impeding effect of hope for harmony. This is in line with a plethora of research showing that high identifiers are more likely to respond, collectively, to their group's disadvantage (e.g., Doosje, Ellemers,

& Spears, 1995) and maintain their commitment to group goals even in face of limited scope for change (Klandermans, 1984; Stürmer & Simon, 2004). Indeed, Van Zomeren, Spears, and Leach (2008) suggest that higher identifiers are more likely to engage in collective action despite low group efficacy beliefs or little hope for social change, reflecting more durable collective action motivations. This suggests that higher identifiers may maintain their commitment to the group's interests and position regardless of how hopeful they are for better relations with the outgroup. Accordingly, the highest identifiers should be less susceptible to the undermining effect of hope for harmony—perhaps even immune to it. We therefore treat group identification as a moderator of the relationship between harmony-focused hope and the motivation to engage in collective action.

## Overview of the Current Research

Our key prediction is that harmony-focused hope will be negatively related to the motivation to engage in collective action, but that high identifiers with the ingroup will be less susceptible to this effect. To test these hypotheses we conducted three correlational field studies (Studies 1a-1c), and one experimental study (Study 2). The correlational field studies were conducted in two contexts marked by intergroup tension, which vary in the degree of intensity. We intentionally chose contexts in which citizens of two groups reside in a single political region marked by clear inequality, both historically and presently, as well as an ongoing struggle for social change. Such circumstances allow for the emergence of hope for improving intergroup relations or the ingroup's status.

Specifically, Studies 1a and 1b were conducted among Palestinian citizens of Israel during different periods of mass protest against discriminatory policies by the Israeli government, and Study 1c was conducted among Black Americans during a period of protests against racial discrimination. In Study 2, we experimentally manipulated harmony-focused hope among Palestinians. Across all studies, we measured self-reported harmony-focused hope (hope regarding better future relations with the advantaged outgroup), group identification, and motivation to engage in collective action. We also measured what we term equality-focused hope, capturing hope for improving the ingroup's status. This additional measure was included to ensure that the anticipated negative relationship between hope and collective action is specific to harmony-focused hope. Finally, we also measured anger and efficacy beliefs to examine whether the hypothesized demotivating effect of harmony-focused hope exists above and beyond other predictors of collective action.

## Studies 1a and 1b

Study 1a took place during protests by Palestinian citizens of Israel following the shooting of a Palestinian youth by

the Israeli police in 2014. Protests and demonstrations, which rippled across several Palestinian villages and cities, called for an end to state aggression against Palestinian citizens and demanded justice and accountability. This shooting was at the time the latest in a series of killings by the Israeli police that had taken the lives of 48 Palestinian citizens since the second Palestinian uprising (termed "Intifada") in 2000. Study 1b was conducted prior to the 2015 parliamentary elections in Israel. These elections were characterized by racist incitement against Palestinian citizens, reflected in a series of threats and attempts by mainstream politicians and extremists to delegitimize this group in the eyes of the Jewish population. Both contexts allowed us to examine the relationship between harmony-focused hope and Palestinians' readiness to act against racism and oppression.

## Method

**Participants.** Of 177 Palestinian citizens of Israel who participated in Study 1a, 22 participants were removed from the analysis for not completing the questionnaire<sup>1</sup> and three others were removed because they were underage, yielding a final sample of 152 participants (86 females; ages 17-69 years,  $M = 31.6$  years,  $SD = 13.3$  years). The majority (63.8%) were lower-middle class with high levels of education (51.3% with a bachelor's degree or higher).

In Study 1b, the initial sample comprised 183 Palestinian citizens of Israel. In total, 27 participants who did not complete the questionnaire and three who failed to follow instructions were excluded from analyses, yielding a final sample of 153 participants (74 females, one unspecified; ages 17-63 years,  $M = 27.1$  years,  $SD = 8.65$  years). The vast majority of participants were educated (76% with a bachelor degree or higher) and of lower-middle class (61%).

**Procedure.** Two recruiters approached participants at Israeli university campuses and through social media. Participants completed a questionnaire either online or in paper form, first giving their informed consent. Each questionnaire then included a text describing the events occurring during each period and their implications for Palestinians in Israel, followed by items measuring our research variables.

**Measures.** Unless otherwise indicated, all responses across the different studies reported below were given on 6-point scales anchored 1 (*Not at all*) and 6 (*Extremely*).

*Hope* was measured using two items, the first assessing harmony-focused hope ("Hope for a better future in relations between Arabs/Palestinians<sup>2</sup> and Jews in the country") and the second assessing equality-focused hope ("Hope for promoting the status of Arab/Palestinian citizens in the country").

*Collective action intentions* were measured using four items assessing willingness to partake in various forms of

**Table 1.** Means, SDs, and Pearson Correlations Among Variables in Study 1a.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Hope for a better future in the relations between Arabs/Palestinians and Jews in the country	3.00	1.77	—				
2. Hope for strengthening the status of Arab/Palestinian citizens	4.12	1.93	.60**	—			
3. Identification (with Palestinians)	5.19	.86	-.15	.02	—		
4. Collective action	4.96	1.18	-.19*	-.02	.54**	—	
5. Anger toward the [Israeli] government	5.51	.82	-.18*	.03	.48**	.52**	—
6. Efficacy	4.88	1.07	-.05	.14	.50**	.51**	.46**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Table 2.** Means, SDs, and Pearson Correlations Among Variables in Study 1b.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Hope for a better future in the relations between Arabs/Palestinians and Jews in the country	3.04	1.51	—				
2. Hope for strengthening the status of Arab/Palestinian citizens	3.74	1.58	.42**	—			
3. Identification (with Palestinians)	5.08	.84	-.22**	.1	—		
4. Collective action	4.71	.95	-.18*	.01	.44**	—	
5. Anger toward the [Israeli] government	5.18	1.19	-.05	.15	.37**	.27**	—
6. Efficacy	4.85	1.12	.01	.08	.48**	.39**	.18*

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

protest (e.g., participating in a peaceful demonstration) against police and state violence in Study 1a and against racism in Study 1b (Study 1a:  $\alpha = .76$ ; Study 1b:  $\alpha = .85$ ; adapted from Van Zomeren et al., 2004, and Tausch et al., 2011).

*Anger* was measured by asking participants to indicate the extent to which they experienced “Anger towards the Israeli government.”

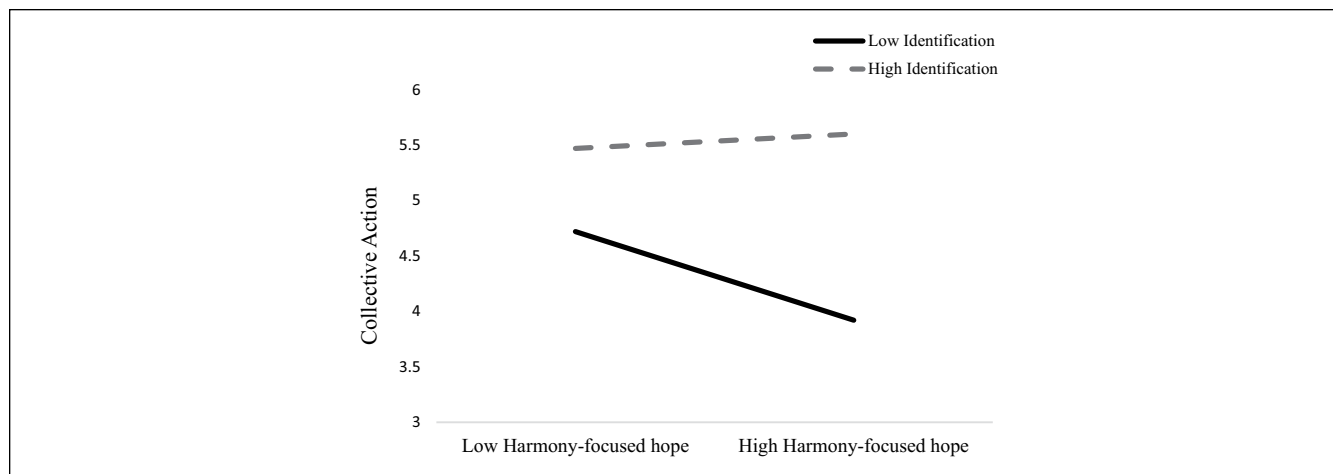
*Efficacy beliefs* in study 1a were assessed by gauging the perceived efficacy of collective action in advancing two specific forms of change. Participants indicated the extent to which they thought different actions can help Palestinians: “. . . direct media and international attention to discrimination and racism against Palestinians in Israel,” and “. . . challenge the status-quo and the power balance in the country” ( $\alpha = .89$ ). In Study 1b, we assessed efficacy beliefs about the group, regardless of the action employed to achieve the group’s goals (i.e., “I believe that we [Arabs/Palestinians] are capable of advancing change in our situation”; adapted from Van Zomeren, Saguy, & Schellhaas, 2013).

Finally, *Group identification* was measured using a shortened six-item version of the Multidimensional Group-Identification Scale (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, Halevy, & Eidelson, 2008), covering three identity dimensions: Importance (e.g., “Being Palestinian is a central component of my identity”), Superiority (e.g., “People of other nations can learn a lot from us”), and Commitment (e.g., “I feel strong commitment towards Palestinians”; Study 1a:  $\alpha = .84$ ; Study 1b:  $\alpha = .87$ ).<sup>3</sup>

## Results

We first inspected the means, standard deviations, and correlations among our variables in both studies (see Tables 1 and 2). Harmony-focused hope was positively and moderately correlated with equality-focused hope in both Studies 1a ( $r = .60, p < .001$ ) and 1b ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ), supporting the notion that they are similar yet different constructs. Harmony-focused hope was negatively associated with motivation for collective action in both studies (Study 1a:  $r = -.20, p = .016$ ; Study 1b:  $r = -.18, p = .028$ ), meaning that people who experienced more of this hope had decreased willingness to engage in collective action. Equality-focused hope was not related to collective action (Study 1a:  $r = -.02, p = .770$ ; Study 1b:  $r = .005, p = .955$ ).

To test our hypothesis that group identification would moderate the relationship between harmony-focused hope and collective action intentions, we employed Hayes’ (2013) PROCESS command (Model 1). In line with our hypothesis, the relationship was significantly moderated by group identification,  $B = .16, SE = .06, t = 2.58, p = .011$ , confidence interval (CI) = [.03, .28]. Decomposition of the interaction revealed that increased harmony-focused hope was associated with decreased willingness to engage in action among people with relatively lower levels of identification (i.e., individuals one standard deviation below the mean;  $B = -.22, SE = .07, t = -3.06, p = .003, CI = [-.37, -.08]$ ), but not among those with higher levels of identification (i.e.,



**Figure 1.** The relationship between harmony-focused hope and collective action intentions in Study 1a, as moderated by identification.

individuals one standard deviation above the mean;  $B = .03$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = .56$ ,  $p = .552$ ,  $CI = [-.08, .16]$ ; see Figure 1). To ensure this relationship existed above and beyond other factors that predict collective action, we repeated the analysis while adjusting for levels of anger and efficacy. Equality-focused hope was also included as a covariate to isolate the effect of this hope from harmony-focused hope. The findings of this analysis were also significant (interaction:  $B = .13$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $t = 2.27$ ,  $p = .025$ ,  $CI = [.01, .24]$ ; conditional effect at lower levels of identification:  $B = -.17$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $t = -2.66$ ,  $p = .025$ ,  $CI = [-.33, -.02]$ ). We conducted a similar analysis using equality-focused hope as an independent variable and found that the relationship between equality-focused hope and collective action was not significantly moderated by identification ( $B = .01$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $t = .25$ ,  $p = .799$ ,  $CI = [-.09, .11]$ ; low identifiers:  $B = -.03$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = -.53$ ,  $p = .599$ ,  $CI = [-.16, .09]$ ; high identifiers:  $B = -.01$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $t = -.24$ ,  $p = .810$ ,  $CI = [-.12, .09]$ ; see Figure 2).

We ran the same set of analyses for Study 1b. The interactive effect of identification and harmony-focused hope on collective action intentions did not reach significance ( $B = .08$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $t = 1.54$ ,  $p = .126$ ,  $CI = [-.02, .2]$ ), but the conditional effects were nonetheless in line with our hypothesis. While there was no significant relationship between harmony-focused hope and collective action among high identifiers ( $B = .01$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = .24$ ,  $p = .811$ ,  $CI = [-.11, .14]$ ), the relationship was marginally significant among relatively low identifiers ( $B = -.13$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $t = -1.89$ ,  $p = .060$ ,  $CI = [-.27, .00]$ ). Included, the covariates in the model had only a weak effect on the pattern of results (interaction:  $B = .08$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $t = 1.39$ ,  $p = .168$ ,  $CI = [-.03, .19]$ ; conditional effect among low identifiers:  $B = -.14$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $t = -1.97$ ,  $p = .051$ ,  $CI = [-.28, .00]$ ). As for equality-focused hope, the moderation by identification was not significant ( $B = -.05$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = -.86$ ,  $p = .392$ ,  $CI = [-.16, .06]$ ; low identifiers:  $B = .02$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $t = .33$ ,  $p = .738$ ,  $CI = [-.11, .16]$ ; high identifiers:  $B = -.06$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = -.96$ ,  $p = .338$ ,  $CI = [-.17, .06]$ ). These findings, although weaker than ideally would be the case, are largely in

line with the findings of Study 1a. Taken together, the two studies support our hypotheses.<sup>4</sup>

## Study 1c

Study 1c was designed to establish the external validity of the above findings by testing our predictions in a different national context. Accordingly, we conducted a correlational study among Black Americans during a period of racial tensions and protests against racial inequality. We expected to replicate the results of the previous studies.

## Method

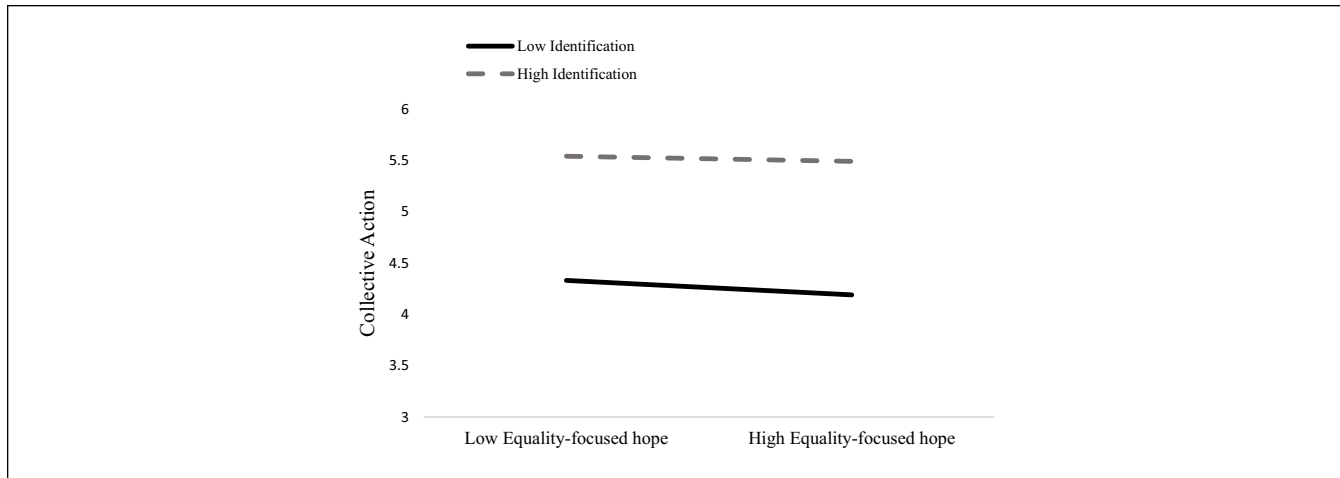
**Participants.** We recruited 242 Black American participants using Amazon Mechanical Turk. In total, 17 participants were excluded from our analyses for failing at least three of four attention-check questions embedded in the questionnaire (e.g., “For this particular question, please select ‘(6) Extremely’”), yielding a final sample of 225 participants (122 females, ages 18-69 years,  $M = 31.6$  years,  $SD = 9.4$  years).

**Procedure.** Participants read a text about the ongoing racial tensions in the United States at the time of the study, followed by measures of all of our research variables.

**Measures.** *Harmony-focused hope*, *equality-focused hope*, and *identification* ( $\alpha = .93$ ) were assessed using the same measures used in Studies 1a and 1b, but they were adjusted in a context-relevant form.

*Collective action intentions* were assessed using a six-item scale comprising three items from Studies 1a and 1b and three new items, added to capture nonviolent activities that occurred in the United States during this period (e.g., Participating in sit-ins,  $\alpha = .89$ ).

Anger was measured using one item: “Anger towards White Americans for denying the existence of discrimination.” *Efficacy* was operationalized as in Study 1b but in an



**Figure 2.** The relationship between equality-focused hope and collective action intentions in Study 1a, as moderated by identification.

**Table 3.** Means, SDs, and Pearson Correlations Among Variables in Study 1c.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Hope for a better future in the relations between Black and White Americans	5.08	1.2	—				
2. Hope for strengthening the status of Black Americans	4.91	1.2	.65**	—			
3. Identification (with Black Americans)	4.84	1.15	.20**	.38**	—		
4. Collective action	3.63	.13	.00	.14*	.41**	—	
5. Anger toward White Americans	3.62	1.6	-.13*	.06	.27**	.45**	—
6. Efficacy	4.62	1.11	.38**	.33**	.36**	.18**	-.003

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

elaborated four-item form ( $\alpha = .9$ ; adapted from Van Zomeren et al., 2013).

## Results

An examination of the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among our variables (see Table 3) revealed that, as in Studies 1a and 1b, harmony-focused hope was positively correlated with equality-focused hope ( $r = .65$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Collective action was positively related to equality-focused hope ( $r = .14$ ,  $p = .035$ ), but not to harmony-focused hope ( $r = .00$ ,  $p = .995$ ).

We next tested our hypothesis that identification would moderate the relationship between harmony-focused hope and collective action intentions. In line with our hypothesis and with the patterns revealed in our previous studies, we found a significant harmony-focused hope  $\times$  identification interaction on collective action intentions ( $B = .12$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = 2$ ,  $p = .046$ ,  $CI = [.002, .24]$ ). Decomposition of the interaction revealed that harmony-focused hope was negatively associated with willingness to engage in collective action among people with relatively lower levels of identification ( $B = -.22$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $t = -2.40$ ,  $p = .017$ ,  $CI = [-.40, -.04]$ ), but not among more highly identified individuals ( $B = .05$ ,

$SE = .10$ ,  $t = .52$ ,  $p = .605$ ,  $CI = [-.15, .26]$ ). When the covariates anger, efficacy, and equality-focused hope were included in the analysis, the interaction turned marginally significant ( $B = .10$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = 1.77$ ,  $p = .078$ ,  $CI = [-.01, .21]$ ), but the direction of the conditional effects was maintained (low identifiers:  $B = -.15$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $t = -1.50$ ,  $p = .137$ ,  $CI = [-.36, .05]$ ; high identifiers:  $B = .07$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $t = .63$ ,  $p = .531$ ,  $CI = [-.15, .30]$ ). The same analysis for equality-focused hope yielded a nonsignificant interaction ( $B = .02$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = .45$ ,  $p = .650$ ,  $CI = [-.09, .14]$ ).

## Discussion

Studies 1a to 1c, conducted in two different national contexts, all yielded findings consistent with our hypothesis that harmony-focused hope is associated with decreased motivation to advance change toward equality, but only among relatively low identifiers. In keeping with prior work, high identifiers were consistently high in their action tendencies regardless of their hope levels. Importantly, this relationship was observed only for harmony-focused hope and did not emerge for equality-focused hope, indicating a process unique to hope for harmonious future relations. Together, these findings suggest that harmony-focused hope diminishes collective action

intentions, an effect that is buffered for the highest identifiers.

We note that the pattern of results was weaker in Study 1b than in the other studies. One possible reason is that the context of elections was not equally important to all Palestinian citizens of Israel, a significant portion of who perceive the parliamentary presence of Palestinians as less pivotal in determining the fate of their group, or even ideologically object to this presence, viewing it as complicit in their oppression. Accordingly, people who were not concerned with the elections might have been less stimulated toward action regardless of their levels of hope and identification. The context employed for Study 1a, on the other hand, was more relevant to all Palestinian citizens of Israel and their existence, due to its importance in shaping their reality in the state and their relations with the authorities. Perhaps for this reason, Study 1a yielded stronger findings. Likewise, the fact that adjusting for potential covariates in Study 1c weakened the central effect may indicate that the phenomenon at hand occurs at varying intensities among different disadvantaged populations, or that our single item measure of harmony-focused hope was overly sensitive to noise. To address these concerns as well as our inability to draw causal inferences regarding the effect of harmony-focused hope on collective action intentions, we ran a fourth study in which we manipulated harmony-focused hope.

## Study 2

The aim of Study 2 was to replicate and extend the correlational findings of Studies 1a to 1c, while establishing causality by employing a controlled experimental design. We also sought to improve our findings' validity by introducing more detailed and reliable measures of hope, scaling up the measurement from the single item measures employed in Studies 1a to 1c. Single item measures are vulnerable to validity and reliability concerns, as they may simplify a presumed construct and/or exhibit inconsistency. We address this limitation by introducing multi-item measures of harmony-focused hope and of equality-focused hope in Study 2. To this end, prior to conducting Study 2, we ran a pilot study in which we asked 24 Palestinian citizens of Israel to describe in their own words their feelings of hope in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Participants' responses were then categorized into three themes: hope for positive relations between Arabs/Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, hope for achieving equality and justice, and a lack of hope for any improvement. Based on these responses, we created multi-item measures of harmony-focused and equality-focused hope.<sup>5</sup>

A wave of Palestinian protests against systematic house demolitions by the Israeli authorities spread in different Arab villages and cities within the green line in early 2017 and afforded us the opportunity to test our predictions experimentally. We developed a manipulation designed to induce hope for harmony (harmony-focused hope condition). For

comparison, we included two control conditions: (a) an equality-focused hope condition, aimed at increasing the sense of hope for achieving social equality and justice and (b) a general future-outlook condition, aimed at gauging participants' default collective action intentions. We expected the former to generate stronger collective action intentions than the harmony-focused hope condition. As for the latter, we hoped it would be useful in illuminating how collective action intentions in the other two conditions (harmony- and equality-focused hope) compare with baseline collective action intentions. In line with the findings of Studies 1a to 1c, we expected group identification to qualify the effects of the manipulation, such that the effect would be weaker or absent among those highest in group identification.

## Method

**Participants.** We recruited 294 Palestinian citizens of Israel at university campuses. In total, 18 participants were excluded for either failing at least three of four attention checks (10 participants) or failing to complete the questionnaire (eight participants), yielding a final sample of 276 (of which 171 were women and three did not specify their gender).<sup>6</sup> The majority of participants were from low to average socioeconomic status (37% identified as working class and 36.2% identified as middle class), who had or were pursuing high levels of education (59.8% had a bachelor's degree and 14.1% had a master's degree or higher).

**Procedure and Materials.** Participants were approached on several Israeli campuses and were asked to complete a questionnaire in exchange for coffee vouchers. All participants completed the questionnaire online, using their mobile phones or laptops. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: harmony-focused hope, equality-focused hope, or a general future-outlook condition. The manipulation described below was followed by scales measuring all research variables.

To induce hope, we employed a procedure of self-reflective writing (see Lerner & Keltner, 2001), instructing participants to describe a hopeful future, focused on either equality or harmony in the context of Arab/Palestinian–Jewish relations. In the first part of the instructions, they read that members of disadvantaged groups in conflicts can experience hope despite the difficult circumstances they face, and that this can vary between people and situations. Participants were then asked to imagine a hopeful future, either for harmony or for equality. The harmony-focused hope induction presented the following text:<sup>7</sup>

. . . Please try now to *imagine a hopeful future with respect to Arab/Palestinian–Jewish/Israeli relations*, and by this, we mean your feelings of *hope about improving relations between the groups*. Specifically, we ask you to *think and imagine a future (near or far) in which Arabs/Palestinians and Jews/Israelis exist*



*and live together, and relations between the groups are more mutual, close, respectful, and friendly.*

In the equality-focused hope condition, the italicized text above was replaced with the following:

*... Please try now to imagine a hopeful future with respect to the status of Arabs/Palestinians, and by this, we mean your feelings of hope about the achievement of the Palestinian cause. Specifically, we ask you to think and imagine a future (near or far) in which Palestinians with their struggle and resilience achieve significant change and progress toward liberation from oppression, justice, and a dignified life.*

In the general future-outlook condition, participants were simply instructed to imagine the future and write about what they think will happen with regard to the Palestinian cause or Israeli–Palestinian relations, without any instructions to feel hope.

### Measures

**Manipulation check.** We first aimed to ensure that participants adhered to the instructions and provided relevant responses to the condition at hand. Thus, three coders who were blind to conditions coded the content of the written responses as containing harmony-related content (scored as 1), equality-related content (scored as 2), or neither (scored as 3). Because coders initially identified many responses containing expressions of hopelessness and pessimism, we then instructed them to code for this separately, identifying such responses as “0” and differentiating them from wholly irrelevant responses that relate neither to hope/hopelessness or the future, coded as “3.” Final scores were determined based on agreement between at least two of the three coders.<sup>8</sup>

We also included closed-ended measures of hope. Specifically, four items assessed *harmony-focused hope* (e.g., “hope for coexistence between Arabs/Palestinians and Jews”;  $\alpha = .94$ ).

*Equality-focused hope* was also measured using four items ( $\alpha = .87$ ; e.g., “hope that Arabs/Palestinians will be liberated from all forms of discrimination”). All eight items were interspersed and presented in the same battery. We performed a principal-components factor analysis with promax rotation to ensure the two types of hope are differentiated. The analysis yielded two factors, with the harmony-focused hope items loading clearly on the first factor and explaining 60.25% of the variance (all loadings  $> .87$  and all cross-loadings  $< .1$ ), and the equality-focused hope items loading clearly on the second factor and accounting for 20.6% of the variance (all loadings  $> .78$  and all cross-loadings  $< .17$ ; Table 4).

*Collective action intentions* were measured as in Study 1a, but the scale was expanded to include another item to reflect the range of actions taking place at the time of the study (i.e., “participating in sit-ins in front the [Israeli]

Ministry of Housing or the parliament”;  $\alpha = .86$ ). *Anger and Group identification* ( $\alpha = .90$ ) were measured using the same items used in Study 1a. For efficacy, we employed the same four-item measure used in Study 1c ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

### Results

**Manipulation checks.** In assessing participants’ free responses, we first determined whether they properly adhered to the instructions. Examination of the coders’ assessments of participants’ responses to the manipulation led us to exclude 13 participants from the analyses for irrelevant responses (scored as 3): six due to meaningless, noncompliant responses (i.e., gibberish), and seven others because their responses did not clearly pertain to hope or any future outlook regarding Israeli–Palestinian relations (e.g., “I go to spend the weekend with my friends in Al-Hamra in Beirut and come back to my village in the Galilee in the beginning of the week.”). The remaining sample of 262 participants included 86 participants in the general future-outlook condition, 93 participants in the harmony-focused hope condition, and 83 participants in the equality-focused hope condition. Further evaluation of the responses revealed that not all participants complied with the directions of the hope conditions (around 30%), with some participants writing about a different hope than what their condition called for.<sup>9</sup> These participants were also excluded from the analyses below, yielding a final sample of 206: 86 in the general future-outlook condition, 65 in the harmony-focused hope condition, and 55 in the equality-focused hope condition. We suppose that this drop-out bias was a result of the difficulty Palestinians had imagining a hopeful future in general or in a specific manner that was not compatible with their vision.

Importantly, most participants in the general future-outlook condition (about 70%) tended to focus on negative and pessimistic future developments related to the continuation or escalation of the conflict (e.g., “Israel will become stronger and with the support of the western countries, this will lead to the continuation of occupation and injustices, until the displacement of the majority of Palestinians . . .”). This confirmed our suspicion that the hopeless responses coders identified were largely from this condition. In other words, instead of allowing us to assess default levels of hope, this condition actually prompted participants to connect to their pessimism by focusing “objectively” on the future in the context of a scientific study, which is likely to be associated with lower levels of hope and potentially also activism. The content of responses in the harmony-focused hope condition reflected hopefulness for better and positive relations between Arabs/Palestinians and Jews (e.g., “I see a much better future in which peace will prevail, a shared and cooperative life based on love, without fear from the other . . .”). Finally, in the equality-focused hope condition, participants wrote about their hope for equality and justice (e.g., “I hope for the end of racism and discrimination, equality on all

**Table 4.** Factor Loadings Based on a Principle Components Analysis With Promax Rotation for eight Items of Hope in Study 2 ( $N = 276$ ).

Component	Harmony-focused hope	Equality-focused hope
Hope that Arabs/Palestinians will promote their status	-.10	.90
Hope for a shared future between Arabs/Palestinians and Jews	.94	-.07
Hope that Arabs/Palestinians will achieve equality and justice	.17	.79
Hope for a better future in the relations between Arabs/ Palestinians and Jews	.93	.04
Hope that Arabs/Palestinians will be liberated from all forms of discrimination	.17	.80
Hope for building bridges of mutual respect and affection between Arabs/Palestinians and Jews	.88	.10
Hope for coexistence between Arabs/Palestinians and Jews	.97	-.09
Hope that Arabs/Palestinians will end occupation	-.15	.92
Eigenvalues	4.82	1.65
Percentage of total variance	60.25	20.60

levels, and the return of the Palestinian refugees and the rebuilding of the villages destroyed in 1948 . . .”).

We then turned to examine our closed-ended manipulation checks. To test whether the manipulation led to an increase in self-reported harmony-focused hope and equality-focused hope, we conducted two one-way ANOVAs—one for each of the hope scales as the dependent variable. The first analysis revealed that the manipulation significantly affected levels of harmony-focused hope,  $F(2, 203) = 9.71$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .09$ . A planned contrast comparing levels of harmony-focused hope between the harmony-focused hope condition and the other two conditions revealed significantly higher levels of harmony-focused hope in this condition ( $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ), compared with participants in the equality-focused hope ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and future-outlook ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ) conditions.

The analysis for levels of equality-focused hope revealed a marginally significant effect for the manipulation,  $F(2, 203) = 2.78$ ,  $p = .064$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ . Nonetheless, the planned contrasts supported our prediction only partially, with levels of equality-focused hope significantly higher in the equality-focused hope condition ( $M = 4.8$ ,  $SD = .97$ ) than in the future-outlook condition ( $M = 4.38$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ,  $p = .037$ ), but only marginally different from their levels in the harmony-focused hope condition ( $M = 4.73$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ,  $p = .067$ ). These results indicate that the harmony-focused hope condition increased hope for both harmony and equality. Furthermore, hope levels in the general future-outlook condition were the lowest compared with the other two conditions, regardless of the target of hope, further confirming our suspicion that this condition generated pessimism.

**Collective action.** To test our main hypotheses, we used the same procedure employed in Study 1, but this time utilizing the multi-categorical independent variable feature of the PROCESS command (Hayes & Preacher, 2014), as the manipulation included three conditions. This analysis created

two dummy variables for condition, using harmony-focused hope as the reference condition: D1, comparing the general future-outlook condition to the reference category (1 = *future outlook* and 0 = *harmony-focused hope and equality-focused hope*); and D2, comparing the equality-focused hope condition to the reference category (1 = *equality-focused hope* and 0 = *control and harmony-focused hope*). PROCESS includes these variables and their interactions with the moderator in the model, allowing a comparison of the harmony-focused hope condition with each of the other two conditions in the same model.

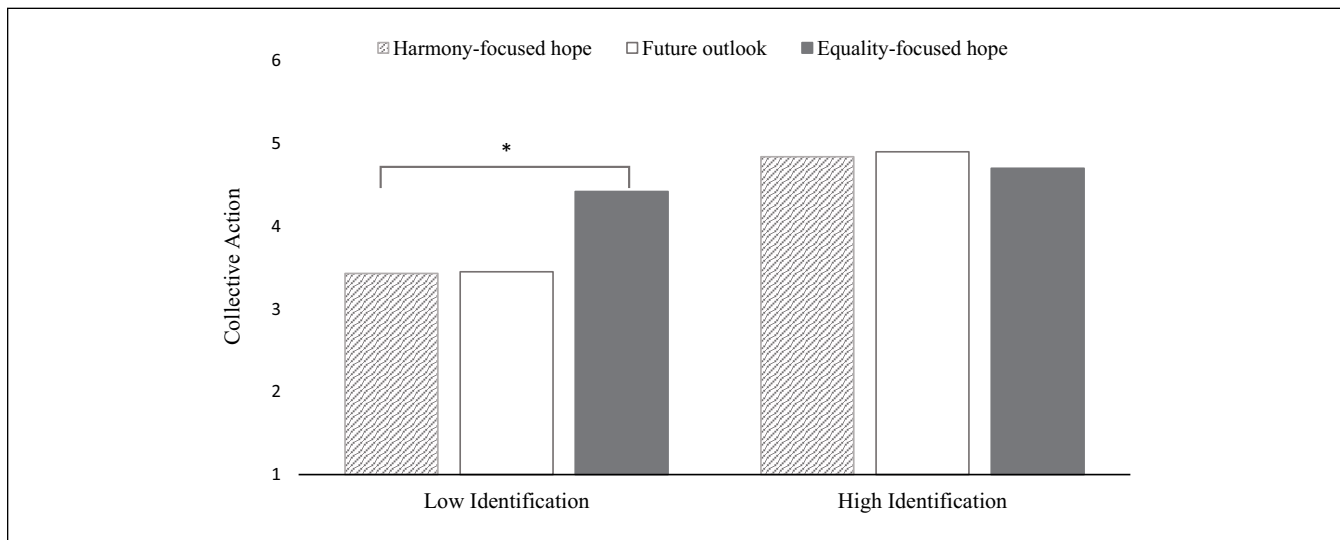
We report the statistics for the interactions as well as the main effects of both dummy variables and identification in Tables 5 and 6. The two-way interaction of D2 (harmony-focused hope vs. equality-focused hope) and identification on collective action intentions was significant ( $B_{int_2} = -.54$ ,  $SE = .2$ ,  $t = -2.73$ ,  $p = .007$ ,  $CI = [-.94, -.15]$ ). Analysis of the conditional effects (see Table 6) revealed that the harmony-focused hope condition ( $M = 3.43$ ), compared with equality-focused hope ( $M = 4.42$ ), decreased intentions for collective action mainly among those relatively lower on group identification ( $B_{D2} = .98$ ,  $SE = .29$ ,  $t = 3.37$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $CI = [.41, 1.55]$ ). On the other hand, collective action intentions in the harmony-focused hope condition and the future-outlook condition ( $M = 3.45$ ) were not differentiated from one another; ( $B_{D1} = .01$ ,  $SE = .22$ ,  $t = .04$ ,  $p = .965$ ,  $CI = [-.42, .44]$ ; see Figure 3). In other words, willingness to engage in action in the harmony-focused hope condition was similar to the condition that in effect induced pessimism regarding the future, suggesting that harmony-focused hope was as demotivating as pessimism in this respect. Importantly, this null effect was observed despite the significantly higher levels of hope reported by participants in the harmony-focused hope condition. We ran the same analysis controlling for anger and efficacy as covariates (as in Study 1), and the results remained similar ( $B_{int_2} = -.62$ ,  $SE = .18$ ,  $t = -3.35$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $CI = [-.98, -.26]$ ;  $B_{D2} = .85$ ,  $SE =$

**Table 5.** Significant Main Effects on the Dependent Variable in Study 2.

	Identification	D1	D2	D1 × identification	D2 × identification
Collective action	$B = .68, SE = .12, t = 5.68, p < .001$	$B = -.07, p = .92$	$B = 2.97, SE = .97, t = 3.06, p = .003$	$B = .02, p = .885$	$B = -.54, SE = .19, t = -2.73, p = .007$

**Table 6.** Simple Effects and Means for the Dependent Variable in Study 2.

	Low identification (−ISD)					High identification (+ISD)				
	Harmony-focused hope	Future outlook	Equality-focused hope	D1	D2	Harmony-focused hope	Future outlook	Equality-focused hope	D1	D2
Collective action	3.43	3.44	4.42	$B = .01, p = .965$	$B = .98, p = .001$	4.84	4.90	4.69	$B = .05, p = .812$	$B = -.15, p = .564$

**Figure 3.** The relationship between hope conditions and motivation for collective action in Study 2, as moderated by identification.

.27,  $t = 3.14, p = .002, CI = [.3, 1.38]$ ;  $B_{D1} = -.07, SE = .2, t = -.33, p = .739, CI = [-.47, .33]$ ).

These results support the notion that hope for harmony results in lower intentions for action, as compared to hope for inequality, inducing levels of activism intentions that resemble a pessimistic mind-set. Unfortunately, the nature of the future-outlook condition's impact on participants' open responses and the pessimism contained in them did not allow us to use it as a true control condition, but its undifferentiated effect from the harmony-focused hope condition is thus even more intriguing.

### Secondary Correlational Analysis

Despite these interesting findings, we acknowledge the potential problems posed by the exclusion of participants based on noncompliance with the condition to which they were assigned. Although most participants were retained, the fact that 56 participants were noncompliant implies that it

may be difficult in the context of such conflict to force group members to hope and envision a different future that is incongruent with the scope of their unobstructed imagination. We therefore conducted a secondary analysis on all participants, treating the data as correlational and using our manipulation checks as independent variables, to examine the interaction of levels of self-reported harmony-focused hope and identification on collective action intentions, while controlling for the condition people were assigned to and self-reported equality-focused hope.

The analysis revealed a main effect for self-reported harmony-focused hope on collective action ( $B = -.12, SE = .06, t = -1.98, p = .049, CI = [-.23, .00]$ ). Consistent with our hypothesis and with Study 1, the interactive effect of harmony-focused hope and group identification on collective action intentions was significant ( $B = .09, SE = .05, t = 2, p = .046, CI = [.002, .18]$ ), and the conditional effects indicated that self-reported harmony-focused hope was significantly associated with decreased collective action intentions

among relatively low identifiers ( $B = -.21$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $t = -2.51$ ,  $p = .013$ ,  $CI = [-.38, -.04]$ ), but not among high identifiers ( $B = -.02$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = -.94$ ,  $p = .770$ ,  $CI = [-.15, .11]$ ). This pattern remains similar when we include anger and efficacy as covariates, barring the main effect of harmony-focused hope, which turns nonsignificant ( $B = -.04$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $t = -.76$ ,  $p = .438$ ,  $CI = [-.15, .07]$ );  $B_{interaction} = .11$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $t = 2.58$ ,  $p = .011$ ,  $CI = [.02, .23]$ ; low identifiers:  $B = -.16$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $t = -2$ ,  $p = .046$ ,  $CI = [-.32, -.003]$ ; high identifiers:  $B = .07$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = 1.14$ ,  $p = .25$ ,  $CI = [-.05, .20]$ ).

We ran a parallel analysis testing the interactive effect of self-reported equality-focused hope and identification on collective action, controlling for experimental condition, self-reported harmony-focused hope, anger, and efficacy. This analysis revealed a nonsignificant interaction between equality-focused hope and identification on collective action ( $B = .02$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $t = .45$ ,  $p = .65$ ,  $CI = [-.06, .08]$ ). In other words, as in Study 1, we found that the negative effect of harmony-focused hope is unique to this specific target of hope.

## Discussion

Study 2 demonstrated that harmony-focused hope, compared with equality-focused hope, results in decreased collective action intentions among people with weaker group identification. However, relative to the future-outlook condition, which we had originally envisioned as a baseline condition, harmony-focused hope did not decrease or increase collective action intentions. We believe the reason for this is rooted in the actual impact of the future-outlook condition, generating pessimism and despair (as reflected in the free responses). Thus, our findings indicated that the effect of harmony-focused hope can be equivalent to the state of defeatism that emerged in the general future-outlook condition, in the sense that the motivation for action among relatively low identifiers when they feel hope for harmony is similar to their motivation when they are pessimistic about the conflict. Importantly, participants in the harmony-focused hope condition also reported experiencing equality-focused hope but were not as likely to participate in collective action, suggesting that harmony-focused hope *counteracts* the potential positive effect of hope for justice on action.

Moreover, the results of this study support the notion that identification functions as a buffer against the negative effects of harmony-focused hope, with high identifiers appearing to be uninfluenced by our manipulation and expressing the same motivation for action across conditions. The moderation analysis that we conducted using the self-report measures also provides support for our hypotheses, clearly replicating the findings obtained in Studies 1a to 1c while increasing their validity by incorporating multi-item measures of both harmony-focused and equality-focused hope.

## Internal Meta-Analysis

To examine the robustness of our findings, we conducted an internal meta-analysis on all findings (following Goh, Hall, & Rosenthal, 2016). We meta-analyzed all four studies using fixed effects in which each key effect size (i.e., the effect of harmony-focused hope on collective action tendencies) was weighted by sample size. We first converted these simple effect coefficients into Pearson's  $r$  values, then Fisher's  $z$ -transformed all correlations for the analysis stage, and finally converted them back to Pearson correlations for the presentation of general effect sizes. Overall, the interaction effect of harmony-focused hope and identification on collective action was significant ( $Mr = .15$ ,  $Z = .15$ ,  $p = .02$ , two-tailed). In line with our hypothesis, among relatively low identifiers, harmony-focused hope was associated with decreased motivation for collective action ( $Mr = -.24$ ,  $Z = -3.6$ ,  $p < .001$ , two-tailed), but this relationship did not emerge among the highest identifiers ( $Mr = .03$ ,  $Z = 1.11$ ,  $p = .20$ , two-tailed).

## General Discussion

The aim of the present research was to examine the role of hope for harmony in undermining collective action intentions among disadvantaged group members. As predicted, the results indicated that harmony-focused hope is associated with decreased motivation for social change among disadvantaged group members, although higher identifiers with the group seemed to be immune to this effect. Studies 1a to 1c—involving two different populations—provided correlational evidence for the relationship between harmony-focused hope and collective action. Study 2 revealed, experimentally, that hope for harmony indeed results in less motivation for change relative to hope for equality—but collective action intentions in the harmony-focused condition were similar to those in a condition that induced pessimism.

Our work yielded counterintuitive findings that challenge previous assumptions and findings regarding the favorable role of hope in intergroup conflict and in encouraging collective action. From a collective action perspective, we believe we have identified a darker side of hope, at least in the context of collective action and social change toward greater equality. When hope is aimed at harmony, rather than ending injustice, it can inhibit instead of stimulate motivation for social change among disadvantaged group members.

## Theoretical Implications

The present research holds implications for the literatures on collective action, intergroup relations, and group-based emotions. Many studies have addressed the role of emotions in motivating collective action, emphasizing anger as the main driving force. Emerging research investigating the outcomes of hope has shown that this emotion promotes willingness to engage in collective action (Cohen-Chen, Van Zomeren, &

Halperin, 2015; Greenaway, Cichocka, Van Veelen, Likki, & Branscombe, 2016; Wlodarczyk et al., 2017). The current research questions this singular function of hope by underlining the complexity of this seemingly positive emotion and demonstrating that hope can ironically undermine collective action intentions. These findings are congruent with the work of Hornsey and Fielding (2016), which suggests that hopeful messages can attenuate a sense of negative reality that may be integral to motivation. In line with this work, it is possible that experiencing hope for harmony attenuates perceptions of injustice and accentuates perceptions of positive relations with the outgroup, thereby decreasing motivation for collective action.

Notably, our work underscores the importance of considering the target of hope when assessing the emotion's impact. In this respect, our findings join previous research in highlighting that similar emotions can have different implications for people's behavior, as a function of various factors. The notion that hope can motivate action in certain situations while undermining it in others is consistent with similar patterns identified in research on other emotions. For example, anger has been found to increase support for militant actions in the context of terror attacks, but it can also increase support for compromises within the context of an upcoming opportunity for peace (Halperin, 2016; Halperin, Russel, Dweck, & Gross, 2011; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; see also Spanovic, Lickel, Denson, & Petrovic, 2010). This implies that both negative and positive emotions can have constructive or destructive influences on individuals' intergroup attitudes and behavior.

Within the realm of intergroup relations, our work is predicated on insights from research on the irony of harmony, addressing power differences in the context of intergroup contact (Saguy et al., 2016). This body of work suggests that positive contact contributes to optimistic expectations about the outgroup and can undermine the preconditions for collective action by low-status groups in this interaction (Saguy et al., 2009). Our findings extend these conclusions to apply them to harmony-focused *emotions* and to one's future outlook suggesting that mere hope for harmonious intergroup relations—even in the absence of any experience of actual harmony—could affect intergroup expectations similarly and therefore diminish willingness to act for social change. In other words, beyond identity representations or contact, some intergroup emotions could also promote harmony perceptions and thus relax concerns about inequality. Adding another significant piece to prior research on the irony of harmony, our results highlight the moderating role of identification, showing that imagined and perhaps actual harmony does not equally undermine the motivation of high identifiers to engage in social change, possibly because personal commitment to the group's interests overpowers these factors (Klandermans, 2002; Van Zomeren, Spears, & Leach, 2008). Our study thus affirms that group identification, aside

from being an important motivator of collective action, is also a source of resilience that immunizes group members from the ironic effects of harmony-focused hope. To our knowledge, none of the research in this domain has considered identification with the group as a moderating factor, thus neglecting an important feature of disadvantaged groups in asymmetric intergroup relations. Furthermore, while our findings are generally pessimistic about the role of harmony-focused hope (and harmony in general) among disadvantaged group members, the buffering effect of high identification may provide clues how the demotivating effect of harmony-focused hope could be overcome. Interventions that increase identification with one's disadvantaged group may therefore hold the key to promoting collective action even in the face of potential naturally-occurring demotivators.

### *Practical Implications*

As indicated above, our research also has important practical implications for practitioners who aim to mobilize disadvantaged groups for collective action by emphasizing the need to consider intergroup relations with respect to discrete conflict stages (see Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011). In the reconciliation stage, delivering positive messages of hope might lead to favorable outcomes and could generate intergroup trust, which is crucial for the peace-building process. Evidence of this comes from the applied initiative "Messages of Hope" to assist recovery in Rwanda (Lala et al., 2014). In the conflict escalation and maintenance stages, however, it is critical to recognize that promoting messages of hope about relations with the outgroup may not be effective, or even have a boomerang effect on disadvantaged group members. Thus, messages from political leaders and social agents focusing on improved future relations are likely to fail in the long run, once group members become disillusioned from their hope and optimism when these expectations are not met (Saguy, 2018). Following this line of thought, inducing hope for ending injustice together with anger toward the outgroup or the system should be a more effective strategy to motivate people to address collective disadvantage, especially if augmented with increased identification. It is thus important that social change agents become aware of factors that interfere with change and mobilization efforts or even undermine them, promoting the preservation of the status quo—particularly because the advantaged group may be able to use these as strategies to maintain its advantaged position. Indeed, it stands to reason that the dominant group can generate a sense of togetherness and hope for harmonious intergroup relations, instead of exercising force, as an attempt to relax concerns about inequality and to eliminate potential collective action with the aim of maintaining hierarchy and protecting its privileges (Jackman, 1994; see also Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, Pratto, & Singh, 2010).

### Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The present research has several limitations worth noting, which warrant a cautious interpretation of the results and further investigation. Our attempt to manipulate hope in the experimental design of Study 2 was only partially successful, as the manipulation of hope for harmony unintentionally also induced hope for equality. We also had to exclude participants for not complying with instructions, highlighting another potential shortcoming of the manipulation employed. Moreover, we suspect that the intended baseline condition in Study 2 might have refocused participants' attention on their inability to imagine future improvements rather than providing a true baseline, which can explain why the majority of participants in this condition had a pessimistic outlook about the future. Accordingly, future studies may want to include a baseline condition that is focused on an unrelated topic rather than the future of the group, and perhaps also include an empty control condition. Beyond these clear methodological difficulties, the above points to the challenge of inducing hope among a population that has experienced decades of oppression and/or defeat. Future work can attempt to manipulate this type of emotion in less pessimistic contexts to observe its broader effects.

In conclusion, our research takes important steps forward in understanding emotional and social processes related to collective action and social change. We shed light on the yet-to-be considered darker side of hope, associated with negative consequences for disadvantaged groups when hope is pinned on optimistic perceptions regarding future intergroup relations. We extend previous insights from research on the irony of harmony by demonstrating that actual harmony between groups is not necessary to attenuate motivation for social change, with mere hope for such harmony being sufficiently demotivating.

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### Supplemental Material

Supplementary material is available online with this article.

### Notes

1. All excluded participants under this criterion, in all studies reported in this manuscript, did not complete enough of the questionnaire to respond to the study's key constructs, and we therefore had no choice but to exclude them.
2. We used both terms—Arab and Palestinian—so as to cater to different sub-identities of Palestinian citizens of Israel.
3. The measures were embedded in a larger questionnaire that included items intended for use in another project.
4. We also tested moderation by each identification dimension separately (commitment, importance, superiority), and importance seemed to have the strongest effect out of the three dimensions. Nonetheless, although the moderation by importance was significant in Study 1b, in Study 1a its effect was still weaker compared with the multidimensional scale. Importantly, the three dimensions could not be differentiated in factor analyses.
5. An additional theme emerged that was related to change on the intragroup level (e.g., changing the ingroup's leadership), but it was not specified in the instructions of Study 2 as it does not directly address intergroup conflict. See supplementary material for a description of the pilot study.
6. Due to human error, details on participants' age were not collected, but as participants were students we assume an age range around 18-30 years.
7. Full instructions and manipulations are presented in the supplemental material.
8. A high degree of reliability was found among the three coders' ratings: ICC = .9.
9. Some participants in the harmony-focused hope condition wrote about equality or vice versa.

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