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## Dealing in hope: Does observing hope expressions increase conciliatory attitudes in intergroup conflict?



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### ABSTRACT

The emotion of hope has been found to play a pivotal role in intergroup conflict resolution processes. As a positive and motivating emotion, prominent group members, such as group leaders or representatives may wish to instill hope among ingroup members. One method that can be employed to instill hope is to express hope as confirmation for a specific path's merit. Three studies examined the effect of ingroup hope expressions on intergroup attitudes in conflict. Study 1 was conducted within the context of student-government relations in the UK. Results demonstrated that expressions of high hope (vs. low hope) increased support for an opportunity for conflict resolution by instilling hope among ingroup members. In Study 2 we used a fictitious conflict scenario regarding a conflict with an invading alien nation, and found that the leader's hope expressions increased support for a proposal compared to expressions of positive expectations in light of the proposal. Lastly, Study 3 was conducted within the extreme and intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Findings showed that ideology moderated the effect such that expressions of hope increased support for the proposal via experienced hope in ingroup members. However, this effect was only found among Leftists, while Rightists were not affected. Findings indicate the importance of hope expressions in shaping attitudes toward opportunities for intergroup conflict resolution, while emphasizing the importance of understanding how observers interpret such expressions and are affected by them.

### 1. Introduction

The complexity and dynamics involved in intergroup conflict make mobilizing the support of group members for agreements one of the most difficult, yet important, tasks in processes of conflict resolution. Such support may be mobilized by prominent group members, such as group leaders or representatives in various capacities, who seek to resolve or manage conflict. These members must think carefully about how to persuade, encourage, or motivate others in their group to support opportunities to end conflict. One strategy to engender support for processes that can create change in the future is to inspire group members to think and feel positively about a better future. In other words, it may be possible to mobilize ingroup members to support proposals for conflict resolution by instilling hope. Napoleon Bonaparte once said, "One can lead a nation only by helping it to see a bright outlook. A leader is a dealer in hope" (Bertaut, 1916; p. 52). In this paper we explore the effect of expressions of hope, made by an ingroup

member, on intergroup attitudes and emotions in conflict.

### 2. Hope As a Change-Inducing Emotion in Conflict

Scholars of hope (Downie, 1963; Lopez & Snyder, 2003; Sagy & Adwan, 2006) refer to three components of hope: a wish component, which is a desire for a specific goal to materialize, an expectation component, which is the belief this future is possible, and an affective component of positive feelings about the anticipated outcome (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1999; Staats & Stassen, 1985; Stotland, 1969). When applying this conceptualization to the current research, hope involves a wish or desire for conflict resolution, a belief that this future is possible, and positive affect prompted by the prospect of resolving the conflict (Leshem, 2017). Although hope is not associated with a physical action tendency (Lazarus, 1999), it has a cognitive manifestation of thinking and planning ways to achieve goals (Stotland, 1969). Hope is described as a vital coping resource (Lazarus, 1999) that guides goal-directed

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behavior. When combined with agency regarding paths to achieve a desired goal, hope can translate into actions geared toward goal-achievement (Snyder, 2000).

The potential of hope to motivate goal-directed attitudes and action has inspired research in a variety of domains, showing the correlation between hope and cognitive flexibility and creativity (Breznitz, 1986; Clore, Schwarz, & Conway, 1994; Isen, 1990; Lazarus, 1991), problem solving abilities (Chang, 1998), and physical and psychological health (Cheavens, Michael, & Snyder, 2005).

In intergroup conflict, and especially intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 2013; Coleman, 2011; Kelman, 2007; Kriesberg, 1993), hope has been found to be associated with positive intergroup attitudes (Halperin, Bar-Tal, Nets-Zehngut, & Drori, 2008; Lala et al., 2014), concession-making (Rosler, Cohen-Chen, & Halperin, 2017), willingness to provide humanitarian aid (Halperin & Gross, 2011), processing of conciliatory information (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Porat, & Bar-Tal, 2014), and forgiveness (Moeschberger, Dixon, Niens, & Cairns, 2005). Recently, experimentally induced hope has been shown to increase attitude-change (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, & Gross, 2014; Cohen-Chen, Crisp, & Halperin, 2015; Leshem, Klar, & Flores, 2016; Saguy & Halperin, 2014), establishing experiencing hope as an important factor driving attitude-change in conflict resolution processes.

Hope therefore seems to be pivotal in transforming attitudes in conflict. As a positive, inspiring, and change-motivating emotion, leaders, representatives, and advocates of conflict resolution may wish to instill hope among their fellow group members. And while a number of methods can be employed to increase hope in others, one possible way is expressing one's own hope as confirmation for a specific path's merit. As such, it stands to reason that group representatives' expressions of hope influence ingroup members, whether they do so spontaneously, or deliberately to elicit certain responses.

### 3. Emotional expressions as sources of information

In social environments emotions are a way to convey interests, attitudes, and perceptions regarding events, people, and relationships. Emotional expressions contain information about the expresser and their relation vis-à-vis the situation and the actors involved that can influence the attitudes, cognitions, emotions, and actions of those who observe the expressions (Van Kleef, 2016). Building on a social-functional approach to emotion (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Frijda & Mesquita, 1994), emotions as social information (EASI) theory (Van Kleef, 2009, 2016) describes how people use the emotional expressions of others to make sense of ambiguous situations and to inform their own thoughts, feelings, and actions. For instance, emotional expressions provide information to observers about expressers' feelings and social intentions (Ekman, 1993; Fridlund, 1994; Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008; Knutson, 1996), whether they are presented non-verbally or as a narrative expression (Van Kleef, 2017). For example, verbal expressions of anger (compared to happiness) were found to signal high (versus low) limits in negotiations, thereby inducing concession-making in observers (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004).

Much research has examined the influence of emotional expressions in interpersonal relations (see Van Kleef, 2016), as well as the effects of emotional expressions of leaders and group representatives on followers (for a review, see Van Knippenberg & Van Kleef, 2016). Several of these studies point to emotional contagion as a psychological mechanism by which expressers influence observers (e.g., Barsade, 2002; Bono & Ilies, 2006; Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005; Van Kleef, 2009; Visser, Van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & Wisse, 2013). This body of work supports the notion that emotional expressions influence observers' emotions, cognitions, and behaviors, but has been limited to basic emotions such as anger, happiness, and sadness. It remains unclear whether and how observers may be influenced by expressions of more complex, secondary emotions such as hope, and in particular whether such expressions may sway group members' emotions (in particular hope) and

attitudes regarding (solutions to) intergroup conflict.

### 4. Emotional expressions in intergroup conflict: the role of political ideology

It is increasingly clear that emotional expressions play an important role in the regulation of intergroup relations (De Vos, van Zomeren, Gordijn, & Postmes, 2013; Goldenberg, Saguy, & Halperin, 2014; Kamans, van Zomeren, Gordijn, & Postmes, 2014; Nadler & Liviatan, 2006; Solak, Reifen, Cohen-Chen, Saguy, & Halperin, 2017; Van Kleef, Steinel, & Homan, 2013; Wohl, Hornsey, & Bennett, 2012). With regard to hope in particular, recent work has investigated effects of hope expressions by outgroup members (Leshem et al., 2016) or the outgroup as a whole (Cohen-Chen, Crisp, & Halperin, 2017) on experienced hope and concession-making in conflict. However, research has yet to explore how expressions of hope made by ingroup members to their own group influence attitudes regarding intergroup conflict. The basic premise of the current research is that expressions of hope by leaders and other group representatives can increase hope and peace-supporting attitudes among ingroup members.

When addressing emotional expressions as a means to promote conflict resolution, it is important to consider the nature of the intergroup conflict in question. In relatively mild intergroup conflicts, expressions of hope may generally have more sway than in more severe conflicts. In conflicts characterized as "intractable" (Coleman, 2011; Kriesberg, 1993), hopes for peace have typically been repeatedly dashed, contributing to a collective narrative of irresolvability (Bar-Tal, 2013). Because hope is rare in these contexts, it may carry emotional meaning that makes it particularly charged. Thus, it is important to consider factors that may influence how hopeful expressions are interpreted. Particularly relevant in this respect is political ideology, which plays an important role in intergroup conflict by shaping the content of people's beliefs and attitudes as well as associated cognitive and affective processes (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009).

Past research has found that ideology influences intergroup processes in important ways (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Kossowska, Bukowski, & Van Hiel, 2008). Of particular relevance here is research that points to a link between hope and a liberal-Dovish ideology in the context of intergroup conflict. Research has shown that individuals who hold more Rightist, conservative political views are more inclined to have a higher perception of threat and experience higher levels of fear (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Golec & Federico, 2004; Jost et al., 2003; Kossowska et al., 2008). On the other hand, hope is associated with more Leftist ideologies (Bar-Tal, 2001; Cohen-Chen et al., 2014; Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006), and Leftist ideological inclinations are characterized by openness to change (Jost et al., 2009; Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008). For instance, Leshem (2017) found that Israeli Rightists were less likely to wish for peace with the Palestinians compared to Leftists. A recent paper (Pliskin, Nabet, Jost, Tamir, & Halperin, 2018) demonstrates that hope is perceived by Leftists themselves as congruent with a Dovish ideology, while Rightists perceive it as incongruent with their own ideology. Congruence has been found to be an important factor in political contexts as it focuses on commonalities between ingroup members and emphasizes differences with outgroups (Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004).

Motivated reasoning (Kunda, 1990; Nickerson, 1998) suggests that cognitive processes are influenced by the need for congruence with preexisting perceptions and beliefs. Caprara and Zimbardo (2004) found that congruence between personality traits (associated with certain political ideologies) and political affiliation predicted support for political candidates and voting. Relatedly, research has found that people change their attitudes in accordance with their ideologies, and that this change is motivated (Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, & Chamberlin, 2002).

We therefore predicted that, in contexts of intractable conflict,

participants' political ideology moderates how ingroup expressions of hope influence observers' intergroup attitudes and emotions (Jost et al., 2009; Pliskin, Bar-Tal, Sheppes, & Haperin, 2014). Specifically, we propose that in intractable conflicts, expressions of hope increase hope and peace-supporting attitudes among participants whose ideology is congruent with hope (i.e., Leftist ideology). It stands to reason that expressions of high hope for peace would be perceived as more congruent by those holding Leftist ideologies, and so would increase proposal acceptance. However, for those holding Rightist ideology, hope would not affect participants' perceptions of the proposal because it challenges their existing views.

## 5. The present research

We investigated how ingroup expressions of hope in light of an opportunity for conflict resolution affect intergroup attitudes in conflict. Specifically, we examined the effects of expressions of hope by ingroup members regarding a proposal for conflict resolution with an outgroup on attitudes toward the proposal and the outgroup. Study 1 was conducted within the context of student-government relations in the UK, examining the effect of hope expressions made by the representative of the student union on conciliatory attitudes among participants (students). In Study 2 we presented participants with a fictitious conflict scenario and compared leader expressions of hope to expressions of positive expectations in light of a proposal. Lastly, in Study 3 we examined leadership hope expressions within the more complex and extreme context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an intractable intergroup conflict in which ideology may constitute a boundary condition. Across these studies, we used expressions made by ingroup leaders or group representatives in order to increase our manipulations' credibility and impact, based on the assumption that such prominent group members are particularly likely to make wide-scope statements regarding opportunities for conflict resolution. Throughout these studies, we report all manipulations, measures, and exclusions.

## 6. Study 1

In Study 1 we aimed to examine the effect of expressions of hope (high vs. low) made by the ingroup's representatives within the context of a conflict. We explored the effects of hope expressions on ingroup hope for conflict resolution and support of the proposal.

### 6.1. Method

#### 6.1.1. Participants and procedure

Eighty-five participants were UK students (60% men, 38% women), recruited using an online survey platform (Prolific Academic). Participants' mean age was 24.34 ( $SD = 6.69$ ). The sample size ( $N > 72$ ) was determined a-priori using G\*Power (Cohen *d*'s effect size 0.6, power 0.8,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Participants were offered £1.5 for participation in a study about “political and social attitudes in British society”. Here, the context was the consistent rise in tuition fees in the UK, an issue that has resulted in a number of protests in recent years.

Participants first read about the issue itself, describing tuition fees and their increase over the years despite student protests. Next, participants learned about a proposal, put forth by the government in the form of endowment loans, which would include installment payments commencing upon beginning quality employment (for the full text see methodology file). Finally, participants were informed that the UK student union leadership had expressed different levels of hope: “The leadership of the NUS (National Union of Students) has stated that this proposal has led them to feel [hopeful/little hope] that a resolution... can be achieved.” Participants then answered reading comprehension questions, followed by whether they felt that the text was reliable and relevant to them. Following this text, participants completed the mediating and dependent variables.

### 6.1.2. Measures

Hope was measured using a six-item scale based on the work of Cohen-Chen, Crisp, and Halperin (2015). Participants were asked to indicate, on a scale from 1 (absolutely disagree) to 6 (absolutely agree) to what extent they agree with the items: “I am hopeful that this conflict will be peacefully resolved in the future”, “When I think about the future of the relations between us and the government, I feel hope”, “Under certain circumstances and if all core issues are addressed the students' situation can improve in the future”, “We should stop trying to resolve this conflict because it will never happen”, “I don't expect ever to resolve this conflict” and “To what extent do you feel hopeful in light of the leadership's reaction” ( $\alpha = 0.64$ ).

Support for the proposal was measured using a four-item scale. Participants were asked to indicate, on a scale from 1 (Strongly oppose) to 6 (Strongly support) to what extent they support the proposal presented to them: “To what extent would you support a proposal based on the outline described in the text”, “To what extent would you vote for an proposal based on these guidelines in a referendum”, “To what extent do you believe this proposal should be the basis for negotiations between the parties” and “To what extent do you see this proposal as positive” ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ).

Finally, we examined whether the expression of hope influenced support for the NUS using a four-item scale. Participants indicated on a scale from 1 (absolutely disagree) to 6 (absolutely agree) to what extent they agreed with the items: “To what extent would you support this leadership politically in the future”, “To what extent would you be willing to express support for the leadership by putting up a sign or sticker indicating your support”, “To what extent would you be willing to express support for the leadership using social media” and “To what extent would you be willing to express support for the leadership by writing a letter” ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ). We also measured anger, hatred, and fear toward the government in order to differentiate the effect of our manipulation of hope from other emotions relevant in conflict.

Lastly, we measured self-reported political orientation, socio-economic status (SES), age, and gender.<sup>1</sup>

### 6.2. Results and discussion

Twenty-three participants failed the attention questions,<sup>2</sup> indicating they were not adhering to instructions. These participants were omitted from the analysis. Sensitivity power analysis yielded a Cohen's *d* effect size of 0.64, indicating that the minimal detectable effect was a medium-sized effect (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007).

In terms of hope, results showed that participants in the high hope condition ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ) expressed significantly higher levels of hope for better relations with the government compared to those in the low hope condition ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ;  $t(60) = -2.00$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $d = 0.50$ ). In terms of support for the proposal, participants in the high hope condition were more supportive of accepting the proposal ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ) presented to them compared to those in the low hope condition ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ;  $t(60) = -2.12$ ,  $p = .03$ ,  $d = 0.56$ ).

No main effect of the manipulation was found in terms of support for the NUS  $t(60) = 0.24$ ,  $p = .81$ ,  $d = 0.06$ . Additionally, no main

<sup>1</sup> In addition, we included measures of perceptions and attitudes toward the leadership (NUS). This included identification with the leadership, confidence and liking, perceived leadership's characteristics, attitudes toward the leadership's reaction to the proposal, perceptions about the leadership's sincerity and decision making abilities, and emotions (positive and negative) increased by the leadership's reaction. We also measured trust toward the government. However, these measures were not part of our hypotheses and are therefore beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Since this was an online study, we incorporated 3 Instructional Manipulation Check (IMC) questions (Oppenheimer, Meyvis, & Davidenko, 2009) to make sure participants were taking the questionnaire seriously.

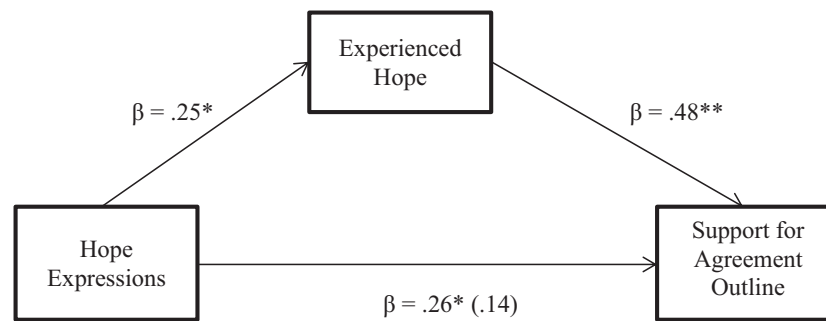


Fig. 1. (Study 1): Indirect effect of hope expressions on support for the proposal through experienced hope. Values are standardized beta coefficients.

effect of the manipulation was found on anger ( $t = 0.86$ ,  $p = .39$ ,  $d = 0.22$ ), hatred ( $t = 0.00$ ,  $p = 1.00$ ,  $d = 0.00$ ), and fear ( $t = 1.35$ ,  $p = .18$ ,  $d = 0.34$ ). Hope predicted agreement support above and beyond the other emotions ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p = .001$ ), pointing to hope specifically as the emotional mechanism.

A mediation analysis (Fig. 1) using Hayes (2013) bootstrapping Process procedure for SPSS (Model 4; 5000 iterations) revealed that the effect of the hope expression manipulation on support for the proposal  $b = 0.54$ ,  $t = 2.08$ ,  $p = .04$ , CI [0.02, 1.06] was reduced when ingroup hope was included in the model  $b = 0.29$ ,  $t = 1.22$ ,  $p = .23$  CI [-0.18, 0.76] and that the indirect effect was significant  $a*b = 0.25$ ,  $SE = 0.15$ , CI [0.03, 0.65]. Thus, when the leadership expressed hope regarding the proposal, participants experienced more hope regarding future relations with the outgroup, and were more willing to accept the outgroup's proposal.

Study 1 demonstrated that expressions of hope, made by an ingroup representative in light of a proposal for conflict resolution, increased support for the proposal by instilling higher levels of hope among members of the ingroup. What is unclear from these data is whether expressing hope has different effects than expressing positive expectations, which are implied by hope. We addressed this question in Study 2.

## 7. Study 2

Study 2 aimed to examine whether expressions of hope made by a leader to ingroup members increased experienced ingroup hope and proposal acceptance compared to an expression of positive expectations. According to appraisal theories of emotion (Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, Shorr, & Johnstone, 2001), hope arises when one sees opportunities for things to become better in the future. Based on this, expressions of hope signal that the expresser made this appraisal of positive opportunities. The question then becomes whether and how the signal that is conveyed by an emotional expression of hope is different from the signal conveyed by a non-emotional expression of positive expectations. We propose that the latter will elicit a quantitatively larger response, and that emotional expressions of hope send a stronger signal than non-emotional expressions of positive expectations. On a general level, emotions arise when an event is appraised as relevant to a person's concerns (Frijda, 1986). Therefore, emotional expressions reveal that the expresser *really cares* about the situation because it impinges on their personal goals (Van Kleef, 2016). This relates to our conceptualization of hope as involving a wish or desire component in addition to a positive expectation component. Thus, we posit that the emotional expression of hope indicates that the expresser not only has an expectation that a better future is possible, but also desires this outcome. As such, emotional expressions add a layer of credibility to the expresser's message by signaling that the expresser is emotionally invested in the situation.

## 7.1. Method

### 7.1.1. Participants and procedure

Sixty-eight participants were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk (64% men, 36% women). Participants' mean age was 34.03 ( $SD = 7.89$ ). The sample size was determined using G\*Power as in the previous study (Cohen d's effect size 0.6, power 0.8,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ).<sup>3</sup> Participants were offered \$1 for participation in a study about "Intergroup attitudes". Here, we created a hypothetical conflict context to control for pre-existing attitudes or information participants may have when addressing an existing context. The conflict scenario was based on a previously established scenario (Hodson, Choma, & Costello, 2009) featuring an 'Alien Nation', which we adjusted to an intergroup conflict context. The outgroup's name was randomly selected using an online alien species name generator, in order to avoid similarities to existing conflicts or groups. First, participants read a background text ('On the run from their mortal enemies... an alien race from the planet of Spesuria finds earth a suitable place to inhabit and hide. You, together with all the humans in your area, are taken from your home... and 'relocated' to a temporary camp on a small island... you are not allowed to leave the island under any circumstances... Over time, you realize that this situation is permanent'; For the full text see Appendix I).

Next, participants were asked to describe with one word how they would feel in this situation. This allowed us to eliminate participants who did not read the scenario or did not take it seriously (as reflected in random words or sentences). The scenario then developed into a conflict ('One day, you hear about a group of humans who managed to escape the island and kill 5 Spesurians... When human protests against this change turn violent, an army of Spesurians enter the island... Fighting in the streets continues for many months, leading to the killing and wounding of many from both sides. All attempts to resolve this conflict are useless... and hatred, fear and suffering have reached an all-time high').

At this point, participants were told of a proposal for conflict resolution presented to the leader ('Finally, the Spesurian government calls for a cease-fire and puts forth a proposal to the human leader, William Gerard', including issues of security ('Humans will cease their violent attacks on Spesurian troops... will not establish an army for 5 years... In return, Spesurian troops will not be allowed to carry weapons...'), territory ('Humans will... inhabit rural areas, while Spesurians will continue to inhabit urban areas...'), and government ('Humans will assume 49% of government... Decisions will be made together with Spesurians when issues are relevant to both groups'). Lastly, participants read that the human leader expressed either hope ('I feel hopeful about entering into negotiations with the Spesurians based on this proposal') or positive expectations ('I have positive expectations about entering into negotiations based on this proposal').

<sup>3</sup> Due to a technical error on the MTurk website, we collected 4 participants less than the sample size required.



### 7.1.2. Measures

Hope was measured using the same scale used in the previous study, although items were adjusted to the context ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ). Support for the proposal was measured using the same scale as in the previous study ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ). Lastly, support for the leader was also measured using the same scale as before ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ). Similar to the previous study, we measured anger, hatred, and fear to differentiate the effect of our manipulation of hope from other emotions relevant in conflict.

### 7.2. Results and discussion

Four participants were omitted from the analysis. One was an outlier ( $> 2.5$  SDs from the mean) on multiple variables, and 3 described their feeling with irrelevant words and answered reversed questions the same way as non-reversed questions, indicating that they were not paying attention. Once again, sensitivity power analysis yielded a Cohen's  $d$  effect size of 0.63, indicating that the minimal detectable effect was a medium-sized effect.

As expected, positive leadership expressions regarding the proposal in general resulted in relatively high means (positioned in the 'positive' side of the scale) in terms of both experienced hope ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ) and proposal acceptance ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ). We conducted a series of independent samples  $t$ -tests to examine the effect of the hope expressions compared to an expression of positive expectations on the dependent variables. In terms of experienced hope, results showed that participants in the hope condition ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) reported significantly higher levels of hope compared to those in the positive expectations condition ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ;  $t(62) = -2.07$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $d = 0.52$ ). In terms of support for the proposal, participants in the hope condition were more supportive of accepting the proposal ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ) compared to those in the positive expectations condition ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ;  $t(62) = -2.13$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $d = 0.53$ ).

No main effect of the manipulation was found on support for the leader ( $t(61) = -0.89$ ,  $p = .38$ ,  $d = 0.22$ ). No main effect of the manipulation was found on anger ( $t(61) = 0.08$ ,  $p = .93$ ,  $d = 0.02$ ), hatred ( $t(61) = -0.53$ ,  $p = .59$ ,  $d = 0.13$ ), and fear ( $t(61) = 0.85$ ,  $p = .39$ ,  $d = 0.21$ ). Hope remained a significant (and was the only significant) predictor ( $\beta = 0.52$ ,  $p < .001$ ) of agreement support when controlling for the other emotions, once again indicating hope as the emotional mechanism.

A mediation analysis (Fig. 2) using Hayes (2013) bootstrapping Process procedure for SPSS (Model 4; 5000 iterations) revealed that the effect of the manipulation on support for the proposal  $b = 0.59$ ,  $t = 2.13$ ,  $p = .04$ , CI [0.04, 1.15] was reduced when ingroup hope was included in the model  $b = 0.31$ ,  $t = 1.23$ ,  $p = .22$  CI [-0.19, 0.82] and that the indirect effect was significant  $a*b = 0.28$ ,  $SE = 0.15$ , CI [0.03, 0.64]. Thus, when the leader expressed hope regarding the proposal (vs. positive expectations), participants experienced more hope regarding future relations with the outgroup, and were more willing to accept the proposal for conflict resolution.

Study 2 examined the effect of leadership hope expressions

(compared to an expression of positive expectations) on ingroup hope for conflict resolution and support for proposal acceptance. Findings demonstrated that expressions of hope, made by an ingroup leader in light of a proposal for conflict resolution, increased support for accepting the proposal by instilling higher levels of ingroup hope. Importantly, the effect was found compared to an expression of positive expectations in light of the proposal, indicating that the expression of hope constitutes a stronger signal regarding the proposal than expressions of positive expectations, adding value beyond just expectations that peace is possible. In other words, expressing the emotion of hope, which includes a wish for a better future in addition to the expectation that this future will occur, increased motivation and willingness to accept the opportunity for conflict resolution. These results point to the positive role of hope expressions in mobilizing people toward conflict resolution.

Although we found these results encouraging, the results of Studies 1 and 2 were obtained in either low-intensity (Study 1) or hypothetical (Study 2) contexts. This begged the question of whether expressions of hope also promote attitudes for conflict resolution in more extreme, violent, and prolonged contexts of intergroup conflicts in which political ideology takes on greater importance. In Study 3 we aimed to examine the moderating effect of ideology when hope for peace is expressed in an intractable conflict.

## 8. Study 3

Study 3 was conducted within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a highly-politicized context of an intractable intergroup conflict. In this study we hypothesized that expressions of hope (high vs. low) made by an ingroup leader within the context of an intractable intergroup conflict would be moderated by participants' political orientation.

### 8.1. Method

#### 8.1.1. Participants and procedure

One hundred and seventy six participants (41.5% men, 52% women, 6.5% missing) were recruited using an online survey platform (iPanel) in Israel and were paid approximately \$2 in return for participation. Although Studies 1 and 2 yielded medium-sized effect sizes, and the minimal detectable effect was medium, our results were somewhat underpowered. We aimed to rectify this in Study 3 by collecting significantly higher numbers of participants. The mean age was 43.21 ( $SD = 14.28$ ). In terms of political orientation 44% indicated they were Rightists (extreme right, right, and moderate right), 32% stated they were Centrists, and 24% indicated they were Leftists (extreme left, left, and moderate left).

Participants read a short text stating that Palestinian representatives recently decided to present a proposal outline for conflict resolution, and that the proposal will be presented shortly, right after the elections in Israel (March 2015). Four issues were presented in the outline. (1) A

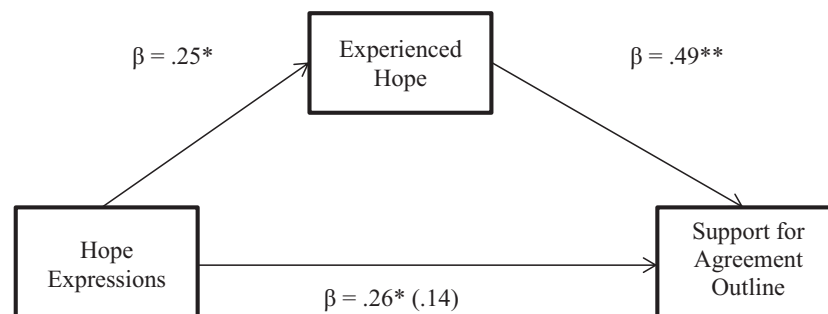


Fig. 2. (Study 2): Indirect effect of hope expressions on support for the proposal through experienced hope. Values are standardized beta coefficients.

two state solution which includes returning to the 1967 borders with various border changes; large settlements will be defined as Israeli territories and in return, other territories from the Israeli side of the green line will be annexed to the Palestinian state. (2) Areas with an Arab majority in Jerusalem will be under Palestinian sovereignty while areas with a Jewish majority will be under Israeli sovereignty. The holy sites will be under joint sovereignty. (3) Guarantees from the USA and European states for Israel's security, and a demilitarized Palestinian state. (4) Formal Palestinian yielding of refugees' "right of return" into Israeli territories in the future, in return for financial compensation to Palestinian refugees (For the full text see methodology file).

Next, participants were told that the Israeli President, Reuven Rivlin, had read the proposal outline. Due to the heightened tension over political ideology in Israel when discussing the conflict, we aimed to use a somewhat neutral leader. The reason we chose the president is his impartial and non-partisan position within the Israeli political arena. Furthermore, while president Rivlin is a member of an Israeli right wing party, his political attitudes were ambiguous at the time of conducting this study. This created an opportunity to present a prominent group member and leading figure who was, to some extent and at that time, clean of political affiliation. This would enable us to examine the moderating effect of participants' ideology in interpreting the emotional expression, rather than the expresser's. Participants in the *high hope condition* read that President Rivlin stated that the outline made him feel high levels of hope that peace is a real possibility in the future of the conflict. Participants in the *low hope condition* read that President Rivlin stated that the outline made him feel low levels of hope that peace is a real possibility in the future of the conflict.

Participants then answered reading comprehension questions, and those who did not know *who* had expressed the emotion toward the outline were not permitted to continue. Participants were also asked whether they felt that the text was reliable and relevant to them.

### 8.1.2. Measures

Hope was measured using the same scale used in the previous studies ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ). Support for the proposal was measured using the same scale as the previous studies ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ). We measured ideology as a continuous construct ranging from Left to Right, in accordance with common procedures (e.g., Brandt, Reyna, Chambers, Crawford, & Wetherell, 2014; Jost et al., 2003, 2009).<sup>4</sup> Lastly, support for the leader was measured using the same scale as in the previous studies ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ), as well as anger, hatred, and fear.

## 8.2. Results and discussion

Importantly, although the previous studies were slightly underpowered, sensitivity power analysis (multiple regression:  $R^2$  increase in  $G^*$ Power, used for interactions between dichotomous and continuous independent variables) yielded an effect size of  $F^2 = 0.04$ , indicating that the minimal detectable effect was a small-sized effect. In line with previous literature, political orientation was associated with hope ( $r = 0.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ), as well as agreement support ( $r = 0.66$ ,  $p < .001$ ) such that Leftists in general were found to be more hopeful and more supportive of the agreement. The hope expression manipulation had a marginally significant effect on experienced hope ( $t(174) = -1.86$ ,  $p = .06$ ,  $d = 0.27$ ). Participants who learned that the

president was hopeful in light of the proposal outline were more hopeful ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ) compared to those in the no hope condition ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ). However, a significant interaction effect (Fig. 3) of the manipulation X political orientation was found on hope  $b = 0.25$ ,  $t = 2.20$ ,  $p = .03$ ,  $F^2 = 0.04$ ,  $CI [0.02, 0.47]$ . A significant effect of the manipulation was found on ingroup hope, but only for Leftists (1 SD above the mean;  $b = 0.59$ ,  $t = 2.79$ ,  $p = .006$ ,  $CI [0.18, 1.02]$ ), while no effect was found for Rightists ( $b = -0.15$ ,  $t = -0.64$ ,  $p = .52$ ,  $CI [-0.62, 0.31]$ ).

In terms of support for the proposal outline, the manipulation did not have a main effect ( $t(174) = -0.68$ ,  $p = .49$ ,  $d = 0.09$ ). However, a significant interaction effect (Fig. 4) of the manipulation X political orientation was found on support for the proposal ( $b = 0.26$ ,  $t = 1.99$ ,  $p = .048$ ,  $CI [0.002, 0.51]$ ). While for Leftists (1 SD above the mean) there was a positive trend ( $b = 0.35$ ,  $t = 1.43$ ,  $p = .15$ ,  $CI [-0.13, 0.83]$ ), there was a negative trend for Rightists ( $b = -0.42$ ,  $t = -1.56$ ,  $p = .12$ ,  $CI [-0.95, 0.11]$ ).

Interestingly, while no main effect was found on support for the leader ( $t(174) = -1.01$ ,  $p = .32$ ,  $d = 0.19$ ), an interaction effect of the manipulation X political orientation was found ( $b = 0.57$ ,  $t = 3.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CI [0.28, 0.86]$ ). Here, while Leftists were more supportive of the president when he expressed hope  $b = 0.81$ ,  $t = 3.02$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $CI [0.28, 1.34]$ , Rightists were less supportive of the president when he expressed hope  $b = -0.66$ ,  $t = -2.46$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $CI [-1.19, -0.13]$ .

As in the previous studies, no main effect of the manipulation was found on anger ( $t(174) = -0.44$ ,  $p = .66$ ,  $d = 0.07$ ), hatred ( $t(174) = 0.25$ ,  $p = .80$ ,  $d = 0.04$ ), and fear ( $t(174) = 0.73$ ,  $p = .47$ ,  $d = 0.11$ ). There was also no interaction effect of the hope expression X political orientation on anger ( $b = 0.26$ ,  $SE = 0.15$ ,  $t = 1.80$ ,  $p = .07$ , 95%  $CI [-0.02, 0.55]$ ), hatred ( $b = 0.23$ ,  $SE = 0.16$ ,  $t = 1.47$ ,  $p = .14$ , 95%  $CI [-0.08, 0.55]$ ), and fear ( $b = 0.13$ ,  $SE = 0.19$ ,  $t = 0.65$ ,  $p = .51$ , 95%  $CI [-0.26, 0.52]$ ). When controlling for the other emotions, hope remained a significant predictor (and was once again the only significant predictor  $\beta = 0.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

A moderated mediation analysis (model 8) using Hayes (2013) bootstrapping Process procedure for SPSS (5000 iterations) was conducted to test whether the interaction between the manipulation and political orientation led to more support for the proposal through ingroup hope. The analysis revealed that the interaction term's effect on ingroup hope ( $b = 0.25$ ,  $t = 2.30$ ,  $p = .03$ ; 95%  $CI = [0.3, 0.48]$ ) weakened the effect on support for the proposal ( $b = 0.13$ ,  $t = 1.09$ ,  $p = .28$ ; 95%  $CI = [-0.10, 0.36]$ ) and that the interaction's indirect effect was significant ( $a^*b = 0.13$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ; 95%  $CI = [0.01, 0.26]$ ). Indeed, expressions of high hope made by the president increased support for the proposal through increased levels of hope, but this effect only existed for Leftists  $b = 0.31$ ,  $SE = 0.12$ ,  $CI [0.09, 0.56]$ . No effect was found for Rightists  $b = -0.08$ ,  $SE = 0.13$ ,  $CI [-0.34, 0.18]$ . Thus, the president's expression of hope led Leftists to feel more hopeful and more supportive of the proposal. On the other hand, Rightists were not affected by the leader's expression of hope (see Fig. 5).

When addressing the question of why the manipulation did not affect Rightists, one possibility is that attitudes toward the expresser were affected by the emotional expression of hope, which further affected the response to the emotional expression itself. In other words, the expression of hope, which is associated with a Dovish ideology (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Porat, & Bar-Tal, 2014; Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006; Leshem, 2017; Pliskin et al., 2018), may have influenced how the expresser was perceived and thereby the response to the expression. It is conceivable that Rightists disliked the president *because* he expressed hope for peace, and thus his message backfired. Therefore, an alternative moderated mediation model (model 8) examined whether attitudes toward the expresser (messenger) were shaped by the expression of hope. Results showed that when support for the leader was included in the model  $b = 0.28$ ,  $t = 5.05$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $CI [0.17, 0.40]$ , the interaction effect on experienced hope was no longer significant  $b = 0.09$ ,  $t = 0.79$ ,  $p = .43$ ,  $CI [-0.13, 0.30]$ . The indirect effect of the

<sup>4</sup>For exploratory purposes, we included measures of perceptions and attitudes toward the president. This included identification with the leader, confidence and liking, characteristics of the president, attitudes toward the president's reaction to the proposal, perceptions about the president's sincerity and decision making abilities, and emotions (positive and negative) increased by his reaction. We also measured trust toward the Palestinians. However, these measures were not part of our hypotheses and are therefore beyond the scope of this paper.

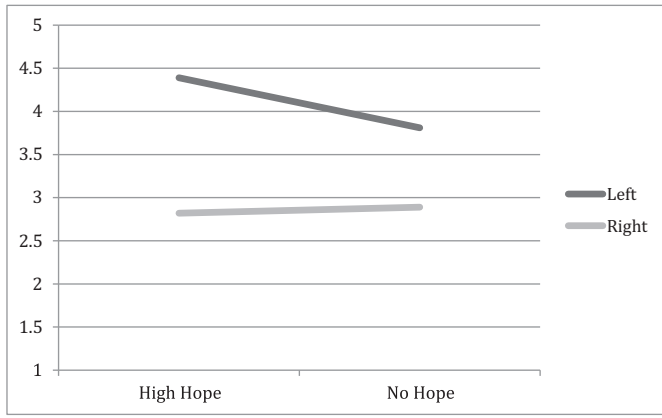


Fig. 3. (Study 3): The interactive influence of hope expressions X ideology on experienced hope.

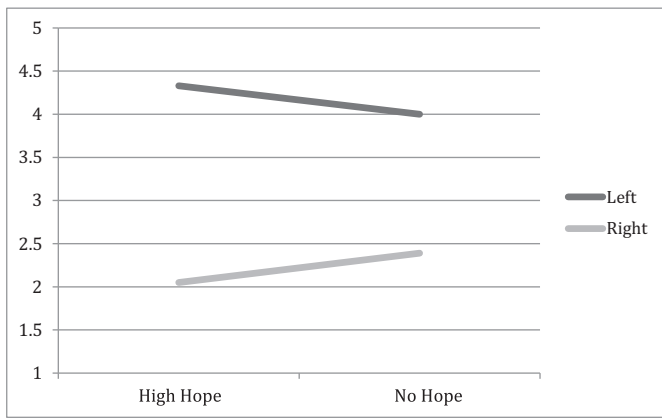


Fig. 4. (Study 3): The interactive influence of hope expressions X ideology on support for the proposal.

proposal acceptance, but only for participants whose political ideology was congruent with these expressions. Notably, in this context we found that expressions of hope influenced not only attitudes toward the out-group, but also toward the expresser, which affected the emotional response to the expression itself.

9. General discussion

In this paper we examined the effect of hope expressions on the experience of hope and support for a proposal in light of opportunities for conflict resolution. Three studies addressed this question in three different contexts. Study 1 was conducted among UK students who were presented with an opportunity for conflict resolution with the government over rising tuition fees. Results indicated that hope expressions made by student representatives increased experienced hope and proposal acceptance. In Study 2, we compared expressions of hope to expressions of positive expectations in light of a proposal in a hypothetical conflict scenario. Here, results showed that expressions of hope made by an ingroup leader led to stronger feelings of hope among members of the ingroup, thereby increasing support for the proposal for conflict resolution. Lastly, in Study 3 we examined hope expressions within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and found that expressions of hope increased greater support for the proposal by instilling hope in the ingroup, but only among Leftists, whose ideology is congruent with hope for peace. Moreover, findings showed that the expression of hope itself led Leftists to perceive the president more favorably, which increased their levels of hope. On the other hand, the expression of hope led to negative attitudes toward the president, reducing levels of hope for peace.

9.1. Theoretical and applied significance

Our findings hold theoretical implications for the field of emotional expressions. Past work on emotional expressions has mostly focused on the effect of emotional expressions in interpersonal domains (for a review, see Van Kleef, 2016). Some more recent research has begun to

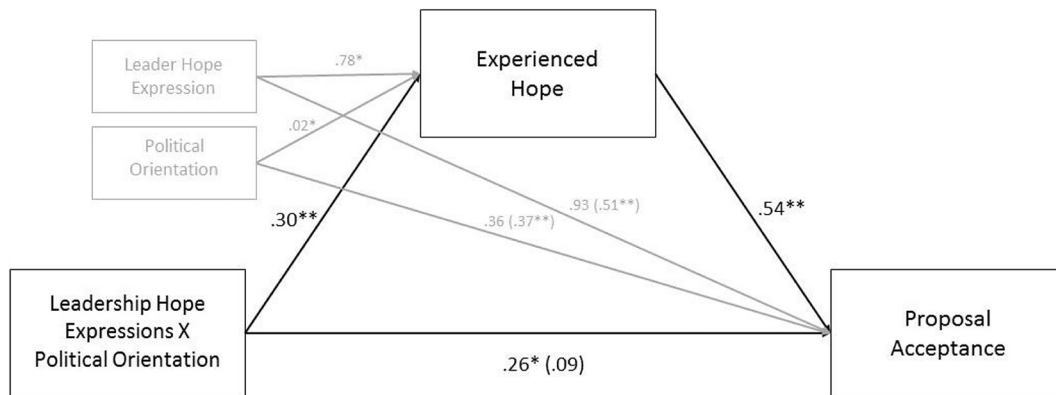


Fig. 5. (Study 3): The interactive effect hope expressions X ideology on proposal acceptance through experienced hope.

manipulation X political orientation through leader support was positive for Leftists  $a*b = 0.25, SE = 0.09, CI [0.07, 0.47]$  and negative for Rightists  $a*b = -0.24, SE = 0.10, CI [-0.46, -0.06]$ . Thus, while expressing hope led Leftist participants to be more supportive of the president, which led to higher levels of hope, the expression of hope itself led Rightists to be less supportive of the expresser, which led to lower levels of hope.

Study 3 demonstrated that expressions of high hope in intractable conflict led to higher ingroup hope and subsequently to greater proposal acceptance, but only among Leftists. This further substantiated the notion that the expresser's hope increased ingroup hope and

investigate the role of emotional expressions within intergroup contexts (Cohen-Chen et al., 2017; de Vos et al., 2013; Goldenberg et al., 2014; Kamans et al., 2014; Nadler & Liviatan, 2006; Van Kleef et al., 2013; Wohl et al., 2012) and examined expressions of positive affect as influencing intergroup attitudes. The current work brings together these two domains and contributes to this emerging literature by combining the effect of ingroup representatives' emotional expressions (targeted at the ingroup) on intergroup relations, attitudes, and emotions. We demonstrate that when faced with an opportunity for conflict resolution, expressions of hope made by prominent ingroup members can mobilize support for a proposal for conflict resolution by instilling feelings of



hope among fellow group members.

The current findings underline the importance of researching hope and hope expressions in conflict. In intractable conflicts (Azar, 1990; Coleman, 2011), there is an inherent tension between emotions that “feel good” on the one hand, and emotions that serve to promote conflict resolution on the other. “Positive” emotions do not necessarily promote harmonious intergroup relations (e.g., pride; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002). On the other hand, “negative” emotions can contribute to conflict resolution (e.g., guilt, Wohl & Branscombe, 2010; empathy, Batson, Chang, Orr, & Rowland, 2002; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003). Hope is a unique emotion because it simultaneously involves experiencing positive affect while potentially promoting conciliatory attitudes. It is often experienced within negative situations and contexts, and is increased when there is high uncertainty and low control, unlike joy or happiness, which are triggered by a positive event and include high levels of certainty (Nesse, 1999; Roseman, Spindel, & Jose, 1990). Therefore, hope is the positive emotion most relevant in contexts of conflict and conflict resolution (for a review see Cohen-Chen, Crisp, & Halperin, 2017).

In addition to theoretical implications, our findings have applied relevance. As stated, advocates of conflict resolution may search for ways to increase hope among group members. Our results serve as an initial indication of the way in which hope expressions can be used in promoting conflict resolution, while pointing to political ideology as an important boundary condition. Our findings thus come with a cautionary note, which is to be cognizant of how hope expressions are interpreted by people holding different political ideologies in extreme conflict contexts.

## 9.2. Limitations and future research

Our research has a number of limitations that should be addressed in future work. First, although the expressions of hope were made by leaders or representatives of the ingroup, we did not explicitly examine leadership as either dependent or independent variable; rather, we used leaders as spokespersons in our manipulations of hope expression, based on the assumption that hope expressions of prominent group members such as leaders are particularly likely to have sway over group members' emotions and attitudes. However, it is important that future work examine questions regarding leadership specifically, such as comparing between hope expressions made by a leader and those made by a regular ingroup member.

Second, Study 3 established the effectiveness of hope expressions among Leftists (but not Rightists). Future work should focus on messages that would increase hope and peace-supporting attitudes among Rightists specifically. It is possible that messages targeting Rightists should focus on different emotions (Inbar, Pizarro, & Bloom, 2009; Jost & Amodio, 2012; Pliskin et al., 2014). Conversely, it is also possible that hope should be conveyed or expressed differently when addressing Rightists. Past work (Cohen-Chen et al., 2015; Cohen-Chen et al., 2014; Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Porat, et al., 2014) has successfully increased hope regardless of political orientation using indirect messages of dynamism and change. Moreover, recent work has shown that hope expressions made by the outgroup are effective in increasing experienced ingroup hope (Cohen-Chen et al., 2017). However, the findings presented in this paper indicate a more complex picture when messages from ingroup representatives are involved. These insights should be taken into consideration in future research.

Relatedly, this research focused specifically on hope for peace and conflict resolution, but did not consider different types or targets of hope which may manifest themselves among people with different ideological orientations. Future work should widen the target of hope from conflict resolution to other hopes (such as for the prolongation of conflict, outgroup destruction etc.), to see whether the moderating role of ideology may shift for different types of hope.

Another line of work should examine whether expressions of hope

affected the emotion of hope specifically, or positive affect in general. This would help to elucidate the specific role of hope compared to other positive emotions. This is particularly pertinent in contexts of conflict, in which positive affect in general is uncommon and may be interpreted differently than in other contexts. Additionally, recent work has demonstrated that experiencing hope may have negative consequences under certain circumstances. In the realm of climate change (Hornsey & Fielding, 2016), worry had a stronger relationship to change variables than hope. Although these findings focus on the experience of hope rather than expressions of hope, it is important to adopt a critical perspective on hopeful expressions and further examine the comparison of negative framing to positive framing (Ito, Larsen, Smith, & Cacioppo, 1998; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) in emotional expressions. Group membership has been found to play an important role in terms of emotional expressions (Totterdell, 2000; van der Schalk et al., 2011; Weisbuch & Ambady, 2008), and understanding the specific role of the leader beyond shared group membership is important. Future endeavors should also delve deeper into the effects found in this paper, examining a variety of mediating variables and mechanisms. Lastly, it is important to examine sustained effects of hope expressions over time to improve external validity.

## 9.3. Conclusion

In summary, this research irradiates how leaders and other group representatives can utilize expressions of hope to promote the resolution of intergroup conflict. The current findings draw attention to the importance of hope expressions in shaping attitudes toward opportunities for conflict resolution. At the same time, the findings emphasize the importance of considering political ideology in order to develop a rich understanding of how expressions of hope shape intergroup relations.

## Acknowledgements

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## Appendix I. Manipulation text

### 1.1. Study 1

Tuition fees were first introduced across the entire United Kingdom in September 1998 as a means of funding tuition to undergraduate and postgraduate certificate students at universities. Developments in the funding of higher education were announced in January 2004 when universities were allowed to charge up to £3000 a year, increasing to £3290 by 2010/11.

Despite wide-scale student protests, universities were eventually able to charge students up to £9000 a year for the annual tuition costs of students, an outcome which led to considerable objection among the student unions. Recently, the government has been considering a number of solutions for this issue. One of these proposed solutions is the implementation of Endowment Loans. This includes:

- Students will be required to pay tuition fees in convenient installments
- Payment will commence only after graduation
- Payment will commence only upon beginning quality employment.

The government, in collaboration with research and educational organisations in the UK, has begun examining the opinions of students throughout the UK regarding this solution in order to develop its future policy, conducting surveys and interviewing student representatives.

For example, **the leadership of the NUS (National Union of Students) has stated that this proposal has led them to feel hopeful**

(little hope) that a resolution to the poor relations between students and the government can be achieved.

### 1.2. Study 2

Imagine the following scenario: On the run from their mortal enemies who wish to destroy them, an alien race from the planet of Spesuria finds earth a suitable place to inhabit and hide. You, together with all the humans in your area, are taken from your home in the middle of the night with no notice, and 'relocated' to a temporary camp on a remote island. You have no idea what has happened to other people from all over the world, or where they are. You are provided with a comfortable home and you have access to food, but you are not allowed to leave the island under any circumstances. Humans are not represented in government and cannot be part of decision-making processes. You are all forbidden from criticizing the Spesurians and this recent 'relocation', or trying to discuss this injustice with other people. Over time, you realize that this situation is permanent.

Try to imagine how you would feel in this situation. Please describe how you feel in one word:

One day, you hear about a group of humans who managed to escape the island and kill 5 Spesurians as a protest against their treatment of humans. The Spesurians are shocked at this act of aggression, and address this by adding armed troops on the island to enforce their rules. When human protests against this change turn violent, an army of Spesurians enter the island, detaining and hurting humans in order to stop the uprising. Fighting in the streets continues for many months, leading to the killing and wounding of many from both sides. All attempts to resolve this conflict are useless, everybody knows someone who was killed or is currently missing, and hatred, fear and suffering have reached an all-time high. Finally, the Spesurian government calls for a cease-fire and puts forth a proposal to the human leader William Gerard.

#### 1.2.1. Proposal outline

**Security:** humans will cease their violent attacks on Spesurian troops and civilians and will not establish an army for 5 years as a show of good faith. In return, Spesurian troops will not be allowed to carry weapons (unless provoked) and will minimize their day to day activity in human areas.

**Territorial issues:** Humans will be given gradual access to inhabit rural areas, while Spesurians will continue to inhabit urban areas. The human leadership will have the responsibility of resource allocation among humans, while working with Spesurians and receiving resources for infrastructure.

**Government and autonomy:** Humans will assume 49% of the government. Their representatives can be elected/chosen in whatever way humans choose. Decisions regarding the human population will be made by humans (when they are irrelevant to Spesurians). Decisions will be made together with Spesurians when issues are relevant to both groups.

As stated, this proposal was given to William Gerard as the human leader and representative. Gerard considered the full proposal carefully and stated 'I feel hopeful about entering into negotiations with the Spesurians based on this proposal'/'I have positive expectations about entering into negotiations based on this proposal'.

### 1.3. Study 3

Recently, Palestinian representatives decided to present an agreement outline for conflict resolution. This proposal will be presented in Israel right after the elections.

This outline includes:

(1) A two state solution which includes returning to the 1967 borders

with various border changes; large settlements will be defined as Israeli territories and in return, other territories from the Israeli side of the green line will be annexed to the Palestinian state.

- (2) Areas with an Arab majority in Jerusalem will be under Palestinian sovereignty while areas with a Jewish majority will be under Israeli sovereignty. The holy sites will be under joint sovereignty.
- (3) Guarantees from the USA and European states for Israel's security, and a demilitarized Palestinian state.
- (4) Formal Palestinian yielding of refugees' "right of return" into Israeli territories in the future, in return for financial compensation to Palestinian refugees.

**After reading this outline, President Reuven Rivlin stated that this outline led him to experience high levels (low levels) of hope that peace constitutes a real possibility in the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.**

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