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Hasan-Aslih, Siwar; Shuman, Eric; Goldenberg, Amit; Pliskin, Ruthie; van Zomeren, Martijn; Halperin, Eran

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# The Quest for Hope: Disadvantaged Group Members Can Fulfill Their Desire to Feel Hope, but Only When They Believe in Their Power

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Siwar Hasan-Aslih<sup>1,2</sup> , Eric Shuman<sup>1,2</sup>, Amit Goldenberg<sup>3</sup>,  
Ruthie Pliskin<sup>4</sup>, Martijn van Zomeren<sup>2</sup>, and Eran Halperin<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Within contexts of oppression and struggle for social change, in which hope is constantly challenged, do disadvantaged group members still *want* to feel hope? If so, does this desire translate into actual hope? And does motivation for hope relate to disadvantaged individuals' collective action tendencies? We suggest that, especially when faced with setbacks in the struggle for social change, disadvantaged group members want to feel hope, but actualizing this motivation depends on their group efficacy beliefs. We address these questions in a two-wave sample of 429 Palestinians living under militarized occupation in the West Bank. Our results indicate that when faced with setbacks, Palestinians want to feel hope for social change, but only those who perceive high group efficacy are able to fulfill their desire. We discuss these findings' implications for understanding motivated emotional processes and hope in contexts of oppression.

## Keywords

Hope, emotions, motivation, oppression, efficacy, collective action

It is hard to speak of hope at this time. That would look as if we were ignoring history and the present, as though we were looking at the future in severance from what is happening at this moment. But in order to live we must *invent* hope by force.

—Mahmoud Darwish, Palestinian national poet

For marginalized populations struggling for justice, the ability to feel hope may hold unique significance. Hope, defined as the emotional state of believing that change is possible (Lazarus, 1991), not only strengthens the resilience of individuals under oppression but may be imperative for maintaining their commitment to the struggle for social change (see Greenaway et al., 2016). The current work investigates hope in a context that offers little scope for it, specifically the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, which has seen no tangible progress toward resolution since the Oslo peace accords. While most research has focused on the perspective of Israelis, the advantaged group in this conflict (e.g., Canetti et al., 2017; Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Porat, & Bar-Tal, 2014; Halperin et al., 2010), here we shed light on the perspective of Palestinians (see also Halabi et al., 2016; Hasan-Aslih, Pliskin, et al., 2019; Punamaki & Suleiman, 1990; Rouhana, 2004), the disadvantaged group experiencing a daily reality of oppression, militarized occupation, and political unrest—in which hopelessness seems almost inevitable (Dabbagh, 2004; Hobfoll et al., 2012).

Considering the importance of hope within contexts of prolonged oppression and struggle for social change, how do disadvantaged group members try to maintain their hope, especially when encountering setbacks in their struggle? Do they *want* to feel hope? If so, are they able to invent it by force, as in the above quote? And does this relate to their willingness to act upon their motivation for social change? To our knowledge, no research has examined these questions despite their scientific and societal relevance. The current research investigates the relationship between the motivation for hope, the actual experience of hope, and collective action tendencies, testing three main ideas. First, we propose that when facing setbacks in their struggle, disadvantaged group members are motivated to feel hope for social change. This is because believing that change is possible can help cope with hardships and

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

<sup>2</sup> University of Groningen, the Netherlands

<sup>3</sup> Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

<sup>4</sup> Leiden University, the Netherlands

## Corresponding Author:

Siwar Hasan-Aslih, University of Groningen, Grote Kruisstraat 2/1, Groningen 9700 AB, the Netherlands.  
Email: siwar.aslih@gmail.com

uncertainty about the future (Folkman, 2010). Second, as emotional preferences are often direct antecedents of emotional experiences (see Pliskin et al., 2018; Porat et al., 2016), one can assume that wanting to feel hope for social change will translate into experiencing hope. However, we argue that because oppression challenges disadvantaged group members' ability to feel positively about the future (e.g., Khamis, 1998; Mani et al., 2013), an important condition for translating the motivation for hope into the experience of hope is the belief that the group can achieve change (i.e., group efficacy; Bandura, 1995). Third, as emotional preferences have behavioral implications for individuals (Hasan-Aslih, Netzer, et al., 2019; Porat et al., 2016), we suggest that the motivation for hope can, when combined with efficacy, predict willingness to act, collectively, for social change. We test these ideas in a two-wave study among Palestinians living under military occupation in the West Bank.

### Hope and Coping With Oppression

Hope is an emotion that arises from "a strong desire to be in a different situation than at present" (Lazarus, 1999; see also Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, & Gross, 2014). Unlike optimism, people can feel hopeful even when they perceive low likelihood of the desired change or little control over the situation (Averill et al., 1990; Bruininks & Malle, 2005). Thus, hope involves the appraisal that a desired change is *possible* in the future (Bury et al., 2016; Lazarus, 1991; Leshem, 2017; Van Zomeren et al., 2019). Hope is known to keep people engaged with the desired change, motivate goal setting and planning, and facilitate cognitive flexibility, openness to new information, and mental exploration of novel situations (Breznitz, 1986; Bruininks & Malle, 2005; Snyder, 1994). Further, because it reduces stress and generates more creative thinking about the situation, hope can be adaptive for dealing with challenges (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Snyder et al., 1996).

In contexts of oppression, hope can be instrumental for disadvantaged group members because it facilitates coping with daily hardships (e.g., poverty, violence, and trauma). First, hope can help these individuals make sense of their environment by reappraising stressors, thereby mitigating distress and negative emotions (Lazarus, 1993). For example, hopefulness plays a significant role in coping with mass trauma by stimulating positive thinking about the future, disputing catastrophic thinking, and facilitating meaning-making (Antonovsky, 1979; Bar-Tal, 2001). Hobfoll and colleagues (2007) and Pearlman (2013) identified hope as a central theme in mass-trauma recovery programs, and others have demonstrated that it can facilitate recovery from trauma, postwar growth, and empowerment among refugees (Ai et al., 2007) and genocide survivors (Lala et al., 2014).

Second, hope can be an action-oriented emotion that increases feasibility assessments and drives goal-directed behavior (Snyder, 2002; Staats & Stassen, 1985; Stotland, 1969). For instance, when combined with efficacy beliefs, hope can

motivate collective action (Cohen-Chen & Van Zomeren, 2018; Greenaway et al., 2016; Wlodarczyk et al., 2017). Together, these findings indicate that hope is adaptive for disadvantaged group members as it offers them personal and collective instrumental benefits in coping with challenges. However, we know little about the function of hope when faced with setbacks in contexts of prolonged oppression.

### Do Disadvantaged Group Members Want to Feel Hope in the Face of Setbacks?

Despite its potential benefits for the disadvantaged, hope for social change may be harder to generate or sustain when one's group suffers ongoing injustice. Oppression structures the lives of disadvantaged individuals, exerts pressure on them, constrains freedoms and capabilities, and, accordingly, affects capacities for hope (Stockdale, 2019). For example, previous research has shown that the Israeli occupation shapes the lives of Palestinians who report high levels of distress, worry, fears about their future, helplessness, and hopelessness (Dabbagh, 2004; Giacaman et al., 2011; Hammack, 2003; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003). Feeling hope may be especially challenging when collective conditions further deteriorate, such as when facing setbacks in the struggle for social justice, making it harder to envision change (see Bar-Tal, 2013).

Nonetheless, we suggest that it is in these situations that disadvantaged group members most *need* hope, so as to avoid helplessness and defeat and instead find ways to believe that change is possible despite hardships (Folkman, 2010). This premise echoes Lazarus's notion that people *try* to cling to hope through adversity, even when the chances of success are low, as hope provides grounds for continuing engagement in life (Lazarus, 1999). Indeed, work by Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2003) on the effect of trauma on Palestinian women who participated in empowerment groups during the second Intifada revealed that despite their pain and suffering, women continuously sought hope. The assumption that people need and pursue hope during difficult times is consistent with the emotional preferences literature suggesting that people want to experience emotions that may individually or collectively benefit them (Porat et al., 2016; Tamir, 2009, 2016). As hope is a coping resource that facilitates positive thinking about the future and a galvanizing force for social change efforts, it should be especially beneficial for disadvantaged group members coping with discouraging circumstances. While people may not be aware of these potential benefits, they may intuitively understand that hope can facilitate coping with challenges. Support for this notion comes from work on worry showing that implicitly ascribing utility to this emotion predicts motivation to feel it when anticipating threat (Tamir et al., 2007). We therefore propose that when facing setbacks in the struggle for social change, disadvantaged group members should be motivated to feel hope. To our knowledge, the notion that people seek out hope has not been empirically tested among disadvantaged groups in contexts of oppression.

### *Does Wanting to Feel Hope for Social Change Translate Into Hope Experience?*

Typically, the motivation to feel an emotion translates into the experience of that emotion. For example, people motivated to feel anger can usually intensify their anger (Porat et al., 2016; Tamir et al., 2019). Nonetheless, because the reality of oppression strongly counteracts the emotional experience of hope, fulfilling the motivation for hope may require additional capacities to manage contextual constraints. We propose that to realize hope when facing setbacks, disadvantaged individuals must believe they can change the situation through group efforts (i.e., group efficacy).

In contexts in which experiencing oppression contributes to a sense of helplessness among the disadvantaged, believing in the ability to exert control over one's life holds great significance (Tiessen, Taylor, & Kirmayer, 2009). Efficacy beliefs are generally linked to disadvantaged group members' resilience to challenging events and their ability to regulate their ensuing emotions. The literature on human functioning shows that people's actions and self-regulation are partly shaped by their beliefs about their efficacy as individuals (personal efficacy) or as a group (group efficacy) to affect events in their life (Bandura, 2000). Efficacy perceptions influence how people cope with obstacles and aversive experiences, their ability to set and commit to goals, the actions they undertake to pursue goals, their vulnerability to stress and depression, and their ability to regulate positive and negative emotions (Bandura, 1997, 2001; Bandura et al., 2003; Tamir & Mauss, 2011).

Building on this research, we suggest that in contexts of oppression, group efficacy is particularly important for the disadvantaged. Specifically, we hypothesize that disadvantaged group members who believe in their group's efficacy to cope with the situational demands are able to guide their hopes and thinking about the possibility of social change. Conversely, those who perceive their group as inefficacious will likely dwell on the negative situation and the obstacles they face (Bandura, 1982) even when they desire hope, thus hindering their ability to imagine alternatives and experience hope for social change.

### *Does Motivation for Hope Predict Collective Action When Paired With Efficacy?*

Individuals with a strong sense of efficacy may possibly act on their motivation for hope through engaging in efforts to promote social change, a notion supported by two lines of research. A robust literature on collective action demonstrates that group members exercise their group efficacy through participation in collective action (Cohen-Chen & Van Zomeren, 2018; Klandermans, 1997; Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Similarly, research on the consequences of collective action indicates that action can empower people who participate in it, help overcome the effects of trauma, and reinforce a positive emotional climate of hope and solidarity, rendering it a form

of coping (Paez et al., 2007; see also Drury et al., 2005). Therefore, it stands to reason that disadvantaged group members who seek hope in the face of setbacks, particularly those who have group efficacy beliefs, will be motivated to engage in collective action because it is congruent with their desire for hope. Consistent with this, the emotional preferences literature suggests that the implications of motivations to feel certain emotions go beyond experiencing these emotions, with several works indicating that emotional motivations affect behavioral tendencies such as collective action intentions (Hasan-Aslih, Netzer, et al., 2019; Porat et al., 2016). We thus aim to investigate whether the motivation to feel hope for social change, when combined with group efficacy beliefs, predicts willingness to partake in collective action.

### *Overview and Hypotheses*

The current study examines three hypotheses: (1) When faced with setbacks, disadvantaged group members will be motivated to feel hope for social change; (2) Only disadvantaged individuals with high group efficacy beliefs will be able to translate their motivation for hope into the actual experience of hope, whereas among those low in efficacy, motivation for hope will not be related to their hope experience; and (3) For group members high in group efficacy (but not for those low in group efficacy), the desire to feel hopeful about their situation and the hope it engenders will predict their willingness to engage in collective action. Overall, we suggest that perceiving setbacks in the context of oppression may actually be positively related to collective action via motivation for hope and the experience of hope, as long as people have a sense of group efficacy.

To investigate these questions, we conducted a two-wave study among Palestinian residents of the West Bank. During the 1967 war, Israel occupied the Palestinian territories of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, displacing 430,000 Palestinians, half of whom had previously been displaced from other parts of Mandatory Palestine since the 1948 war that led to the establishment of Israel (Badil, 2004). The 1967 war prompted Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation that continues to this day. The collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace processes at the turn of the millennium, the decline of the Palestinian struggle, and life challenges under militarized occupation have placed Palestinians in a state of insecurity, ambiguity, and uncertainty regarding their future. This context afforded us an opportunity to study hope among disadvantaged group members whose hope is constantly challenged. It is important to note, however, that the politically sensitive nature of the current context is also evident in the research itself. Carrying out research in environments of militarized conflict and occupation requires negotiating various challenges, ranging from logistic barriers and mobility limitations to difficulties in enlisting the cooperation of the target population due to issues of fear and mistrust (Cohen & Arieli, 2011).

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

Participants were Palestinians living in the city of Ramallah and the surrounding areas who were recruited by a local survey company (Near East Consulting) for face-to-face interviews. The survey company employed convenience sampling in which survey personnel recruited people in their social network, while trying to ensure as much population representation as possible. Due to the sensitive sociopolitical content of the study, it was difficult to approach people randomly across a long period of time. Our past experiences with research in the West Bank revealed that Palestinians who are approached randomly show reluctance to cooperate due to concerns and fear of being subject to political persecution by the Israeli army or the Palestinian Authority. The first wave (T1) was conducted in April–May 2018, during a period of relative calmness, allowing us to assess all variables at baseline levels. Four hundred and fifty participants (51% women,  $M_{\text{age}} = 33.9$ ) completed T1. Sample size was determined by a generic power analysis. We aimed to be able to detect small changes across time points ( $d = .2$ ) with high sensitivity (95% power at the  $p = .01$  level), a power analysis conducted in G\*Power (Version 3.1) indicated that a sample of 449 was required. We collected data for a second wave (T2) 7 months later, during a period of escalation following two drive-by shootings carried out by Palestinians that targeted Israeli soldiers and settlers near illegal Israeli settlements. The Israeli army imposed a military closure on Ramallah, raiding residential neighborhoods and shutting down major checkpoints between it and surrounding cities. Almost all participants completed T2<sup>1</sup> ( $n = 429$ , 50% women,  $M_{\text{age}} = 33.7$ ), and only these were included in the final analyses. In both waves, after obtaining their informed consent, the interviewer read to participants the questions and recorded their answers. Each interview lasted around 40–60 minutes, and each participant received an anonymized identification code, allowing us to match T1 and T2 responses.

### Measures

Most variables (motivation for hope, hope experience, efficacy, and collective action intentions) were measured at both time points. Demographic variables were measured only at T1. There was a small amount of missing data in the sample. Missing values on items that were a part of scale were replaced with the participant's mean of other items on that scale, and missing values on single-item measures were replaced with the sample mean. Given the small amount of missing data (no variable had more than 3% of its data missing), these more simple procedures were acceptable and would not yield different results from more complex imputation procedures (Downey & King, 1998). Perceived setbacks were measured only at T2, as the measure assessed setbacks that occurred in the period between the two waves. This study was part of a large-scale survey that examined a number of research questions and thus it included additional measures that were not analyzed in the current

investigation, but they will be used in future publications.<sup>2</sup> We report the full list of measures in the Supplementary Materials. All items reported below were measured on a 6-point Likert-type scale anchored 1 (*not at all*) and 6 (*to a very large extent*), unless otherwise indicated.

**Motivation for hope.** Participants were asked, “Imagine you could have perfect control over your emotions. To what extent would you want to feel the following emotions?” They then rated the extent to which they would *want* to feel several emotions, including “Hope for ending the occupation.”

**Hope experience.** In T1, participants were asked, “In the context of the Israeli occupation and the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, to what extent do you feel each of the following emotions?” In T2, they were asked, “In light of the recent escalation in the West Bank, to what extent do you feel each of the following emotions?” Following these instructions, they rated the extent to which they felt several emotions, including “Hope for ending the occupation.”

**Group efficacy.** Two items measured group efficacy, “I believe that we Palestinians, as a group, can achieve our goals” and “I believe that we Palestinians, together, can end the occupation” (T1:  $\alpha = .97$ , T2:  $\alpha = .96$ ).

**Collective action intentions.** Participants rated the degree to which they are personally willing to engage in each of the following actions: “Participating in peaceful demonstrations against the occupation,” “Participating in peaceful sit-ins against the occupation,” and “Acting within peaceful social political movements against the occupation” (T1:  $\alpha = .97$ , T2:  $\alpha = .99$ ).

**Demographics.** Participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire in T1. Items included gender, age, education, income, religion, religiosity, and profession.

**Perceived setback.** In T2, participants rated the extent to which there had been setbacks in the preceding 6–7 months (i.e., from T1 to T2) in achieving the several goals that most Palestinians strive for in their struggle to end the occupation (Arab World for Research & Development, 2010): “Improving the movement ability (decreasing checkpoints, issuing permits),” “Achieving Israeli recognition of and compensation for the historical and ongoing atrocities against Palestinians,” and “Fulfilling the right of return of Palestinian refugees” ( $\alpha = .91$ ). Participants answered on a scale ranging from  $-3 = setbacks to achieving these goals$  to  $+3 = progress toward achieving these goals$ , with 0 reflecting no change. Since most of the sample (75%) perceived either setbacks or no progress toward achieving the goals, we reverse scored this variable and discuss it in terms of perceived setbacks. In addition, this distribution was bimodal rather than normal, with one mode around 0, indicating no progress, and another around 3, indicating high levels of setbacks (see Supplementary Materials).

**Table 1.** Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations With Confidence Intervals.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Perceived setbacks (T2)	1.38	1.24								
2. Motivation for hope (T1)	4.68	1.52	.02							
3. Hope (T1)	4.08	1.71	-.03	.39**						
4. Efficacy (T1)	4.21	1.35	-.02	.46**	.42**					
5. Collective action intentions (T1)	2.84	1.54	.06	.30**	.33**	.33**				
6. Motivation for hope (T2)	4.91	1.37	.23**	.28**	.13**	.09	.15**			
7. Hope (T2)	3.96	1.54	.02	.09	.27**	.15**	.12**	.12*		
8. Efficacy (T2)	4.42	1.36	.09	-.02	.12*	.27**	.11*	.26**	.19**	
9. Collective action intentions (T2)	3.05	1.80	.23**	.13**	.24**	.23**	.43**	.21**	.22**	.37**

Note. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.  
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Results**

(The code used to analyze the data can be found at <https://osf.io/7bkty/>).<sup>3</sup> We began by examining the correlations between the main variables within each wave (see Table 1) and then moved on to investigate our main research questions. Because we were planning to use efficacy as an individual difference moderator, we also checked whether it changed over time. We found that efficacy increased from T1 to T2,  $\beta = .07$ , 95% confidence interval (CI) = [.02, .13],  $SE = .03$ ,  $t(428) = 2.67$ ,  $p = .008$ , and therefore decided not to use T1 efficacy as our moderator as originally planned. Instead, we averaged the scores across the two time points to create an overall score reflecting participants’ general sense of efficacy, thereby controlling for the change over time.

**Do Disadvantaged Group Members Want to Feel Hope in the Face of Setbacks?**

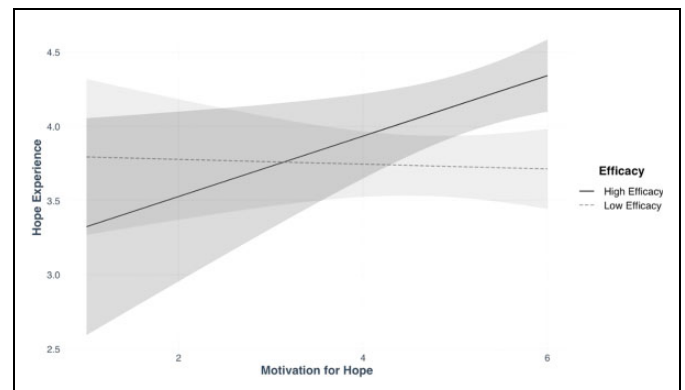
We investigated this by testing whether perceived setbacks predicted motivation for hope at T2, while controlling for motivation for hope at T1. This analysis yielded an effect of perceived setbacks,  $\beta = .22$ , 95% CI [.13, .39],  $SE = .20$ ,  $t(424) = 2.34$ ,  $p = .02$ , and an effect of motivation for hope at T1,  $\beta = .28$ , 95% CI [.19, .37],  $SE = .04$ ,  $t(424) = 4.96$ ,  $p < .001$ , on T2 motivation for hope. This indicates that perceived setbacks predicted motivation for hope above and beyond baseline levels of motivation for hope.

**Does Wanting to Feel Hope for Social Change Translate Into Hope Experience?**

We tested this by examining whether there was an interaction between motivation for hope at T2 and group efficacy beliefs, on hope experience at T2, controlling for T1 hope experience and perceived setbacks (see Table 2). This analysis yielded a marginally significant main effect of motivation for hope and a significant main effect of group efficacy on hope experience, as well as a significant main effect of T1 hope. In addition, the two-way interaction between efficacy and motivation for hope was significant. Simple slopes analysis (see Figure 1) revealed

**Table 2.** Model Statistics for Model Predicting Hope Experience.

Variables	$\beta$	95% CI	SE	t	p
Motivation for hope (T2)	.09	[-.01, .18]	.05	1.75	.08
Efficacy	.13	[.02, .22]	.05	2.55	.01
Hope (T1)	.20	[.11, .30]	.05	4.23	<.001
Perceived setbacks (T2)	.007	[-.08, .10]	.05	0.15	.88
Motivation for Hope (T2) $\times$ Efficacy	.09	[.006, .19]	.05	2.10	.03



**Figure 1.** Effects of motivation for hope on hope experience. Shaded areas reflect 95% confidence intervals, high and low efficacy reflect +1 SD and -1 SD from the mean.

that when efficacy was high (+1 SD), motivation for hope significantly predicted hope experience,  $\beta = .18$ , 95% CI [.04, .33],  $SE = .08$ ,  $t(424) = 2.39$ ,  $p = .02$ , and when efficacy was low there was no relationship between motivation for hope and hope experience ( $\beta = -.01$ ,  $p = .83$ ). This supports our hypothesis that only those high in efficacy can successfully bring their hope experience in line with their preference.

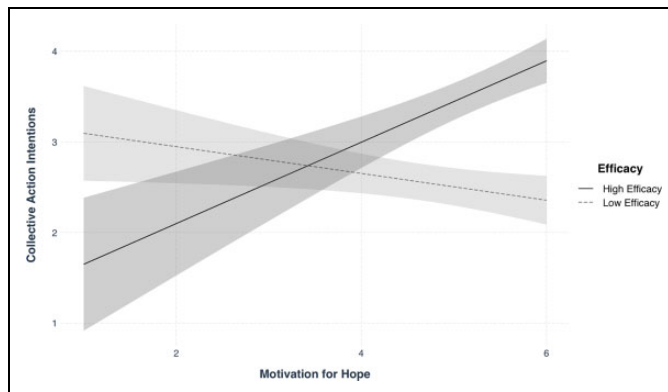
**Does Motivation for Hope Predict Collective Action When Paired With Efficacy?**

We then tested whether the same pattern of findings would be found for collective action intentions. We thus conducted the



**Table 3.** Model Statistics for Model Predicting Collective Action.

Variables	$\beta$	95% CI	SE	t	p
Motivation for hope (T2)	.11	[.03, .20]	.04	2.68	.008
Efficacy	.25	[.16, .33]	.04	5.90	<.001
Collective action (T1)	.31	[.23, .39]	.04	7.46	<.001
Perceived setbacks (T2)	.19	[.11, .27]	.04	4.76	<.001
Motivation for Hope (T2) $\times$ Efficacy	.23	[.15, .30]	.03	5.67	<.001

**Figure 2.** Effects of motivation for hope on collective action intentions. Shaded areas reflect 95% confidence intervals, high and low efficacy reflect  $+1$  SD and  $-1$  SD from the mean.

same analysis but with collective action intentions as the dependent variable. All variables had significant main effects (see Table 3), in addition, the two-way interaction between efficacy and motivation for hope was significant. Simple slopes analysis (see Figure 2) revealed that when efficacy was high ( $+1$  SD), motivation for hope significantly predicted collective action intentions,  $\beta = .34$ , 95% CI [.21, .47],  $SE = .07$ ,  $t(424) = 5.24$ ,  $p < .001$ , when efficacy was low, motivation for hope even slightly negatively predicted collective action intentions,  $\beta = -.11$ , 95% CI [-.01, -.21],  $SE = .05$ ,  $t(424) = -2.19$ ,  $p = .03$ . This supports our hypothesis that only for individuals high in efficacy the desire to feel hope about one's current negative situation can predict collective action.

### Overall Model: Are Perceived Setbacks Linked to Collective Action Intentions?

Finally, we tested our overall model to determine if perceived setbacks at T2 could explain collective action intentions via motivation for hope and hope experience among those high in efficacy above and beyond T1 variables, using the *lavaan* package in R (Version 0.6-5). Efficacy was treated as moderator for the paths from motivation for hope to hope and collective action. The model (Figure 3) fit the data well,  $\chi^2 = 25.36$  ( $df = 14$ ),  $p = .03$ , comparative fit index = .98, normed fit index = .96, Tucker–Lewis index = .95, root mean square error of approximation = .04, standardized root mean square residual = .04.<sup>4</sup> It showed that above and beyond the effects of T1 variables, perceived setbacks predicted motivation for hope,

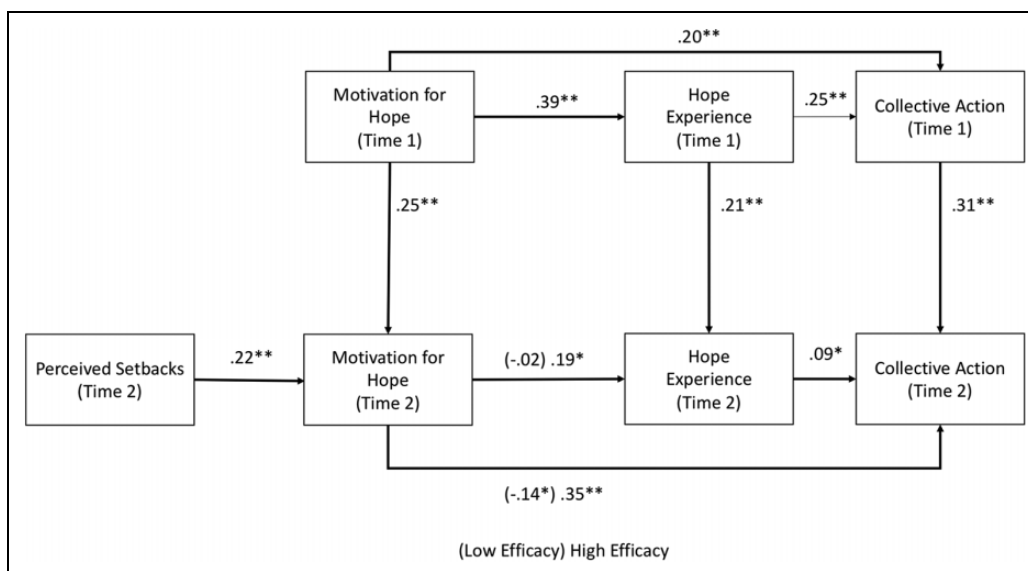
which in turn predicted both hope experience and collective action intentions but only when efficacy was high. Further, there was a significant indirect effect of perceived setbacks for those high in efficacy both on hope experience ( $\beta = .04$ , 95% CI [.008, .08],  $SE = .02$ ,  $p = .03$ ) and on collective action ( $\beta = .07$ , 95% CI [.01, .13],  $SE = .03$ ,  $p = .001$ ). However, the indirect effect of perceived setbacks for those low in efficacy was not significant both for hope experience ( $\beta = -.005$ ,  $p = .83$ ) and on collective action, ( $\beta = -.03$ ,  $p = .05$ ).

## General Discussion

In contexts of ongoing oppression, in which efforts for social change frequently face setbacks, disadvantaged group members' ability to experience hope is challenged. This investigation sheds new light on the questions of whether disadvantaged group members are motivated to feel hope for social change and are able to fulfill this desire despite dispiriting conditions, and whether this motivation is linked to collective action toward social change. Our findings provide evidence that disadvantaged group members are motivated to feel hope in the face of setbacks, but not every disadvantaged individual is able to realize this motivation. Whether or not motivation for hope is associated with hope experience depends on disadvantaged group members' beliefs about the efficacy of their group to exert influence on the circumstances. The current work also indicates that people high in efficacy who want to feel hope show willingness to engage in collective action.

### Theoretical Implications

Taken together, our findings have important implications for the study of emotional preferences, hope, and collective action (Gross, 2002; Tamir, 2016; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007; Van Zomeren et al., 2019). The current examination links these lines of research, indicating that disadvantaged group members seek hope during frustrating circumstances, perhaps in an attempt to avoid hopelessness and defeat. Even though previous research suggests that people get what they want in the sense that their motivation drives a concordant emotional state, even in conflict (Porat et al., 2016), we show that this is not necessarily the case for disadvantaged group members. Specifically, our work illuminates the role of contextual and psychosocial factors in shaping emotional processes by demonstrating that disadvantaged group members who lack coping resources such as efficacy beliefs are less likely to realize their desire to feel hope for social change. In other words, their repeated experience of setbacks may create a boundary condition for experiencing hope, unless people believe that they have the collective power to shape their lives. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that depleted resources impede individuals' capacity to cope with trauma, especially where proper psychosocial resources for rebuilding hope for the future are lacking (Hobfoll, 1998; Hobfoll et al., 2007). At the same time, our investigation indicates that disadvantaged individuals with



**Figure 3.** Full model. Standardized coefficients are presented. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

a sense of efficacy exercise their agency through engaging in efforts to fight oppression, thus confirming previous findings that efficacy is pivotal for collective action (Cohen-Chen & Van Zomeren, 2018; Van Zomeren et al., 2019).

**Limitations and Future Directions**

Despite these interesting findings, the present research has several limitations. First, due to the unique sample residing under military occupation within an atmosphere of suspicion and fear of being subject to political repression, we used a convenience rather than random sampling method, thereby limiting the findings’ generalizability. Another limitation is that our measurement of hope referred to recent events occurring during the study period without defining a specified time frame (e.g., current moment, past week), potentially adding noise to our findings. Future research should be careful to examine motivation for hope and hope experience within a specific time frame. Relatedly, even though our work investigated hope for ending oppression, our measures did not explicitly differentiate between hope for change as a result of internal (e.g., own efforts) versus external forces (outside intervention), which could be an interesting direction for future research. Furthermore, while our results indicate that there is sometimes incompatibility between disadvantaged individuals’ motivation for and experience of hope when they face setbacks, we cannot conclusively determine whether or how they bridge this gap. Future research could benefit from examining what strategies, if any, people low in efficacy use to bridge such gaps as well as the implications these have for their well-being. Finally, previous research on hope among disadvantaged group members differentiated between hope that is equality oriented and hope that is oriented toward harmony between groups (Hasan-Aslih, Pliskin, et al., 2019). In future research, it would be interesting to explore and compare motivated hope for equality and

motivated hope for harmony as well as their relationship with collective action.

**Conclusion**

In sum, this work sheds light on the experience of Palestinians living within a daily reality of oppression and militarized occupation. Despite this reality, and especially when they perceive setbacks in the struggle for social change, disadvantaged group members try to cling to hope. While the contextual constrains might hinder their ability to transform this desire into an actual experience of hope, a sense of efficacy enables individuals to manage such constrains and enhance their emotional experience. This research highlights the importance of hope and efficacy for marginalized groups as coping resources that maintain commitment to the struggle against oppression.

**Authors’ Note**

Siwar Hasan-Aslih and Eric Shuman contributed equally, and order was determined alphabetically.


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**ORCID iD**

Siwar Hasan-Aslih  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8563-2394>



## Supplemental Material

The supplemental material is available in the online version of the article.

## Notes

1. The low dropout rate can be explained by the sampling method employed, which allowed for the establishment of trust between participants and survey personnel.
2. The two waves reported here were part of a larger study comprising three waves. As data for T3 were collected only after this article was submitted to the journal, it is not included in our analysis.
3. We hope to make all data accessible, pending approval of the funding agency, which is examining whether making this data publicly accessible is in keeping with their data protection policies.
4. The overall model  $\chi^2$  is usually nonsignificant in the case of good fit. With large samples, this is often not the case and this fit statistic is not considered determinative if the others are supportive of fit (see Kline, 2005).

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### Author Biographies

**Siwar Hasan-Aslih** is a doctoral researcher at the University of Groningen and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI). Her research focuses on emotions, collective action, and the role of power relations in social change processes.

**Eric Shuman** is a doctoral researcher at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI) and the University of Groningen. His research focuses on emotions, collective action, and social change processes.

**Amit Goldenberg** is an assistance professor at Harvard Business School. His research is focused on understanding the unfolding and regulation of the emotional processes that shape group behavior.

**Ruthie Pliskin** is an assistant professor at Leiden University. Her research focused on intergroup relations, emotions and their regulation, and political psychology, with a focus on ideology and moralization.

**Martijn van Zomeren** is a full professor at the University of Groningen. His research focuses on social relationships, culture, social change, collective action, protest, emotion, morality, efficacy, identity, and political psychology.

**Eran Halperin** is a full professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI) and the director of aChord Center. His research focuses on intergroup conflicts, emotions, emotion regulation, peace, and social change processes.

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