

Hope Comes in Many Forms: Out-Group Expressions of Hope Override Low Support and Promote Reconciliation in Conflicts

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Abstract

In conflicts, political attitudes are based to some extent on the perception of the out-group as sharing the goal of peace and supporting steps to achieve it. However, intractable conflicts are characterized by inconsistent and negative interactions, which prevent clear messages of out-group support. This problem calls for alternative ways to convey support between groups in conflict. One such method is emotional expressions. The current research tested whether, in the absence of out-group support for peace, observing expressions of out-group hope induces conciliatory attitudes. Results from two experimental studies, conducted within the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, revealed support for this hypothesis. Expressions of Palestinian hope induced acceptance of a peace agreement through Israeli hope and positive perceptions of the proposal when out-group support expressions were low. Findings demonstrate the importance of hope as a means of conveying information within processes of conflict resolution, overriding messages of low out-group support for peace.

Keywords

hope, emotional expressions, emotions in conflict, intergroup conflict

Compromise in Intergroup Conflict

Intractable conflicts (Bar-Tal, 2013; Coleman, 2003; Kriesberg, 1993) are a severe type of intergroup conflict, seemingly resistant to peaceful resolution over time (Azar, 1990). Parties seem unable to make steps needed to promote peace. One reason may stem from societal beliefs shared by those involved in such conflicts. A predominant belief involves the perception that the out-group is unwilling to support peace (Bar-Tal, 2013; Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Zafran, & Halperin, 2012). This belief supports a group-based narrative that in-group efforts to promote peace are futile, since the out-group will never take the necessary steps to promote peace. One example is the “no partner” claim made by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak after Yasser Arafat rejected the peace proposal put forth by Israel, leading to the failure of the “Camp David Summit” in 2000. This claim pointed to the Palestinians’ rejection of the agreement as the reason for Israel’s refusal to support subsequent attempts for peace. More importantly, it is still widely used by Israelis when explaining the ongoing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians (Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, & Dgani-Hirsh, 2009). This assertion indicates an important rationalization—that supporting peace is based, at least partly, on the *out-group’s* attitude to peace. Relatedly, a public opinion poll conducted among Israelis and Palestinians in November 2013 (Telhami & Kull, 2013) showed that on both sides, half of those who rejected a peace agreement explained that this was due to

their conviction that the out-group would oppose it. Thus, when forming conflict-related attitudes, it is important to know that the out-group is willing to support peace and take steps to achieve it.

If people consider out-group support for peace when forming their attitudes, it is important to further understand the ways in which support for peace is communicated between groups involved in conflict. Moreover, since clear messages of support are rare, due to a history of segregation and antagonism, it becomes crucial to understand alternative ways to convey support. One possible way of conveying such information is emotional expressions indicating support for peace.

Conveying Information With Hope Expressions

Emotional expressions influence observers by signaling interests and attitudes when information is scarce or inconsistent. These expressions can be made using both nonverbal and facial

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expressions (Van Kleef, Homan, Beersma, & van Knippenberg, 2010) as well as narrative expressions using speech or a written indication of the expressing party's emotion (Cheshin, Rafaeli, & Bos, 2011; de Vos, van Zomeren, Gordijn, & Postmes, 2013; Kamans, van Zomeren, Gordijn, & Postmes, 2014; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010). Research on emotions as social information (Van Kleef, 2009; Van Kleef et al., 2010), stemming from the social-functional approach to emotion (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Frijda & Mesquita, 1994), shows that emotional expressions provide information to observers about expressers' feelings and social intentions (Ekman, 1993; Fridlund, 1994; Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008; Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Knutson, 1996; Steinel, Van Kleef, & Harinck, 2008), which has consequences for observers' behavior.

Specifically for this research, we aimed to examine the influence of an out-group expressing hope. Hope is a positive emotion that arises due to a cognitive process involving imagining a desired future (Averill, 1994; Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974; Lazarus, 1999; Snyder, 2000; Stotland, 1969). Although hope does not necessarily have a physical action tendency (Lazarus, 1999), it has a cognitive manifestation of planning ways to achieve the goal in question (Stotland, 1969). This energizes and directs behavior and, when combined with agency, becomes action to achieve those goals (Snyder, 2000; Staats & Stassen, 1985). Empirical research regarding hope's behavioral tendencies has found that hope is associated with cognitive flexibility and creativity, better performance on cognitive tasks, and problem-solving abilities (Breznitz, 1986; Chang, 1998; Clore, Schwarz, & Conway, 1994).

Within the context of conflict, conceptual (Bar-Tal, 2013; Lala et al., 2014) and empirical work indicates that experiencing hope is related to support for policies and actions promoting peace (Cohen-Chen, Crisp, & Halperin, 2015; Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, & Gross, 2014; Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Porat, & Bar-Tal, 2014; Halperin & Gross, 2011; Moeschberger, Dixon, Niens, & Cairns, 2005; Rosler, Cohen-Chen, & Halperin, in press). Importantly, past work has demonstrated that people observed as experiencing hope are seen by others as more likely to make concessions (Cohen-Chen et al., 2015). These findings evoked our interest in hope when expressed by the out-group, because it signals crucial information about the out-group's state of mind: that the out-group perceives peace as a meaningful and desired goal, that they believe peace is a viable future possibility, and that they may be willing to take steps to achieve peace. While negative emotions and attitudes are often expressed in conflicts, work on norms of reciprocity indicates that contentious communications induce further escalation (Brett, Shapiro, & Lytle, 1998). Thus, expressions of positive emotions are important in the context of conflict resolution. However, while expressions of happiness (Van Kleef et al., 2004) indicate satisfaction with the current situation, hope focuses on a better future (Lazarus, 1999; Stotland, 1969) and is thus appropriate when addressing opportunities for peace. Furthermore, expressions of empathy (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006) require trust to induce conciliatory attitudes, a condition rare in intractable conflicts.

Since in-group willingness to promote peace is related to the perception of the out-group to support peace (Telhami & Kull, 2013), and since people who are observed as hopeful are observed as more likely to make concessions (Cohen-Chen et al., 2015), we sought to examine the effect of an expression of out-group hope on peacemaking attitudes through in-group hope. We hypothesized that to experience hope for peace and agree to compromise, people search for indications that the out-group supports peace. When support is conveyed directly, out-group hope expressions are somewhat unnecessary to communicate information, since hope does not hold added value in terms of the out-group's intentions toward peace. However, when either the in-group's narrative or direct out-group messages indicate low out-group support, out-group hope can override this message by conveying support. Thus, out-group hope can bypass messages of low support for peace, inducing experienced hope for peace and conciliatory attitudes.

The Present Research

We examined the influence of out-group hope expressions (in light of a peace proposal) on agreement acceptance, and the conditions under which out-group hope expressions affect intergroup attitudes. Since we were conveying an emotion expressed by an entire group (rather than a representing individual), we chose to convey the emotion in narrative form (de Vos et al., 2013; Kamans et al., 2014; Van Kleef et al., 2010) to increase reliability and applicability. Presenting a facial expression of an individual would enable participants to dismiss the emotion as an anomaly or outlier. Additionally, in contexts of extreme segregation, attitudes and emotions are often conveyed in narrative form (e.g., through the media). We conducted two studies within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, described as a prototypical example of an intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 2001). We hypothesized that if out-group support for the proposal was clearly high, participants would not need to ascertain indicative information about out-group support from hope expressions. However, when out-group support is low, expressions of out-group hope would play an important role, overriding this negative information and inducing compromise through the indirect effect of experienced in-group hope for peace on positive perceptions of the proposal. In Study 1, we manipulated expressed Palestinian hope in light of a peace agreement and measured experienced hope for peace and agreement acceptance. In Study 2, we manipulated both expressed Palestinian support and Palestinian hope and added a variable indicating positive perceptions of the proposal.

Study 1

In Study 1, we aimed to examine the effect of expressing high (vs. low) Palestinian hope on Jewish-Israelis' emotions and attitudes toward peace. We conducted an experimental study in which an opportunity for peace was presented as an agreement outline. We then manipulated the level of hope for peace expressed by Palestinians in light of the agreement and

examined the effect on experienced hope for peace and agreement acceptance.

Pilot Study

To establish low baseline of perceived Palestinian support for peace (and avoid demand issues in the experimental study), we conducted a short survey. One hundred and six participants (57 male; mean age = 51.32, $SD = 13.29$) answered an online survey. This survey was part of a larger project, and we were offered an opportunity to add three questions (“To what extent do you believe Palestinians support signing a peace agreement, including concessions on issues of borders, Jerusalem, and refugees”; “What percentage (out of 100%) of people in Palestinian society do not support signing an agreement with Israel”; and “To what extent do you feel hopeful regarding peace in the future”). Participants’ perception of Palestinian support was low ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.24$), lying within the nonsupport range of answers, and on average participants believed that 58% of Palestinians do not support signing an agreement. Both items were correlated ($r = -.76$, $p < .001$) and were associated with hope ($r = .39$, $p < .001$; $r = -.42$, $p < .001$, respectively). This result strengthened the assertion that the baseline belief held by Israelis is that out-group support for peace is low and that this is associated with in-group hope for peace.

Participants and Procedure

Eighty-seven Jewish-Israelis (41 male; mean age = 30.45, $SD = 12.42$) were asked to answer a questionnaire regarding political issues in return for participation in a raffle. Forty-four participants were government students in the Yezreel Valley College, and 43 were recruited on the train, constituting a diverse sample from Israeli population. Participants were recruited during a time of calm (April 2013). In terms of ideology, 43% were rightists, 30% were centrists, and 24% were leftists (3% missing).

Participants were randomly assigned to either a high Palestinian hope (coded 1, $n = 45$) or a low Palestinian hope (coded 0, $n = 42$) condition. All participants read that “a collaborative effort of Israeli and Palestinian scholars is examining attitudes of people from both sides regarding a potential outline for a future agreement.” The agreement (Appendix) was presented, including four major issues:¹ borders, Jerusalem and holy sites, Israeli security, and Palestinian refugees. Next, participants in the *high Palestinian hope condition* read that this proposal led 80% of Palestinians to experience hope for peace, while for the *low Palestinian hope condition*, the percentage was 20%. Participants then answered questions regarding the agreement. The sample size was determined a priori using G*Power (moderate effect size = .6, power = .8; $\alpha = .05$).

Measures

To assess experienced hope, we utilized a 4-item scale, referring to the cognitive appraisals and affect involved in

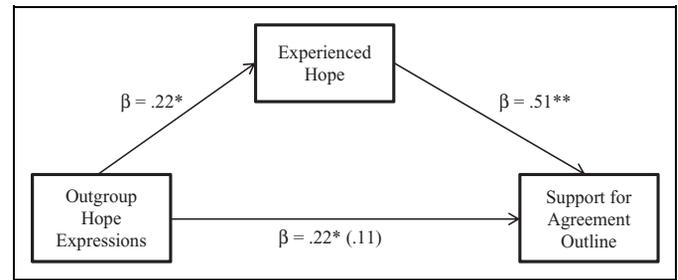


Figure 1. Indirect effect of Palestinian hope expressions on agreement acceptance through experienced hope. Values are standardized β coefficients.

in-group hope for peace specifically. The scale was based on a scale of hope for peace developed by Cohen-Chen et al. (2014, 2015): “Under certain circumstances and if all core issues are addressed, The Israeli-Palestinian conflict’s nature can be changed”; “Israel should give up because it cannot resolve the conflict” (reverse-coded [R]); and “I don’t expect ever to achieve peace with the Palestinians” (R). An additional item referred to hope induced by the Palestinian response (“in light of the Palestinian response, to what extent did this outline lead you to experience hope?”; $\alpha = .69$). An exploratory factor analysis with oblique rotation showed items load onto a single factor (eigenvalue = 2.08, loadings > .67).

To assess agreement acceptance, we used a 3-item scale (“To what extent do you support Israel signing a final agreement based on this outline,” “To what extent do you believe this outline should be the basis for negotiation between Israel and the Palestinians,” and “To what extent would you vote for Israel signing an agreement based on this outline in a referendum”; $\alpha = .92$). Answers for both measures ranged from 1 (*absolutely not*) to 6 (*absolutely*). Lastly, we measured participants’ age, gender, and self-reported political orientation.²

Results and Discussion

Two participants were omitted from the analysis. One failed to fill in the main variables, while another was underage. Participants in the high Palestinian hope condition experienced more hope ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.12$) than the low Palestinian hope condition, $M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.07$; $t(85) = -2.08$, $p = .04$, $d = .45$. In addition, participants in the high Palestinian hope condition were more willing to accept the agreement ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.56$) compared to the low Palestinian hope condition, $M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.35$; $t(86) = -2.15$, $p = .04$, $d = .49$.³

Indirect Effect

Next, we used Hayes (2013) Process (Model 4) to determine whether expressions of high Palestinian hope increased agreement acceptance through experienced hope. Results (Figure 1) revealed that the effect of the manipulation on agreement acceptance ($B = .66$, $SE = .31$, $t = 2.12$, $p = .04$, 95% confidence interval [CI] = [0.04, 1.29]) was reduced after experienced hope was added ($B = .33$, $SE = .28$, $t = 1.19$, $p = .24$,

95% CI [-0.22, 0.88]) and the indirect effect through experienced hope was significant ($a \times b = .334$; 95% CI [0.028, 0.714]). Results suggest that expressions of high Palestinian hope induced experienced hope for peace among Israelis, which was subsequently associated with agreement acceptance.

Study 1 had two limitations we aimed to address. First, low levels of Palestinian support were assumed as a baseline using a preliminary survey. If our assumptions were correct, the effect of Palestinian hope expressions should be moderated by expressions of Palestinian support. As well, Study 1 lacked perceptions of the proposal itself. Was the proposal seen as good for the in-group? Study 2 aimed to address these limitations.

Study 2

In Study 2, we posited that expressions of Palestinian hope would transcend the functionality of information about support for the proposal, conveying that Palestinians believe peace is a real and meaningful possibility. This may lead to willingness to take steps toward peace. In addition, we aimed to further understand the mechanism by which out-group expressions of hope increased agreement acceptance through experienced hope. According to Bar-Tal (2001), hope within the context of conflict resolution enables conceiving of new paths (Snyder, 2000; Staats & Stassen, 1985) toward the positively viewed goal of ending the conflict, motivating people to hold attitudes for peace. We theorized that increasing experienced hope for peace (using out-group hope expressions) would lead participants to perceive the proposal itself as a viable pathway to achieving this desired future, which would increase willingness to accept the proposal. By inducing hope regarding the peaceful future, the opportunity for conflict resolution would be perceived as better for the in-group, leading to action to achieve that very goal. To this end, we added a variable regarding positive perceptions of the proposal.

We hypothesized that Palestinian hope expressions would override a message of low support, increasing experienced hope and positive perceptions of the proposal and inducing agreement acceptance. We utilized a 2 (high vs. low Palestinian hope) \times 2 (high vs. low Palestinian support) design, examining the interaction of Palestinian Hope Expressions \times Palestinian Support Expressions on agreement acceptance through a serial mediation of experienced hope and positive perceptions of the proposal.

Participants and Procedure

One hundred and thirty participants (59 male; mean age = 30.11, $SD = 11.06$), of whom three were excluded for reasons described below, were recruited on the train during a time of calm (November 2013). In terms of political orientation, 43% were rightists, 19% were centrists, and 28% were leftists (10% missing).

Participants were presented with the same agreement used in the previous study and were informed that either a high (62%, $n = 67$, coded 1) or low (22%, $n = 60$, coded 0)

percentage of Palestinians expressed support for the agreement, followed by a high (73%, $n = 62$, coded 1) or low (23%, $n = 65$, coded 0)⁴ percentage of Palestinians expressing hope. Two conditions sent inconsistent messages (high hope/low support; high support/low hope). To interpret these incongruent scenarios, we ran a pilot using snowballing methods via e-mail form. Qualitative interpretations indicated that the low hope/high support condition is interpreted to mean that Palestinians support the agreement but do not experience hope that it would lead to peace (often the case for Doves). On the other hand, the high hope/low support condition was seen to imply that Palestinians do not support the agreement, but hope for peace was induced by the existence of a proposal. Next, participants proceeded to answer questions. Sample size of above 128 was determined through an a priori test using G*Power (moderate effect size $F = .25$, power = .8; $\alpha = .05$).

Measures

To ensure participants understood the difference between expressed Palestinian hope and support (and eliminate those who did not), participants were asked to write levels of hope and support expressed by Palestinians. To assess levels of *experienced hope*, we used a 3-item scale similar to the one used in Study 1. To reduce demand concerns, we omitted the item asking about hope in light of the Palestinians' response. This improved reliability ($\alpha = .75$). In order to examine participants' positive perceptions of the proposal, we formed a 3-item scale ("I feel this agreement constitutes a loss for Israel" (R), "I feel this agreement is fair to both sides," and "I feel that Israel benefits from this agreement"; $\alpha = .79$). Agreement acceptance was assessed using the same scale from Study 1 ($\alpha = .96$). Lastly, we measured participants' age, gender, and political orientation.⁵

Results and Discussion

Three participants were omitted from the analysis. One was underage, one had out-of-range values (over 2.5 SD s from the mean), and one answered reversed questions the same, implying that questions were not read properly. Answers to the reading comprehension questions indicated that participants understood the difference between expressed agreement support and expressed hope in light of the agreement.

Interaction Effects

First, we conducted an analysis of variance to examine the effect of Palestinian support (high vs. low) and Palestinian hope (high vs. low) on experienced hope (Figure 2). The effect of Palestinian support was nonsignificant, $F(1, 117) = 2.64$, $p = .11$, as was the effect of Palestinian hope, $F(1, 117) = 0.60$, $p = .44$. However, the interaction effect was significant, $F(1, 117) = 5.16$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. When Palestinians expressed high support for the agreement, no significant difference was found between high Palestinian hope ($M = 3.95$,

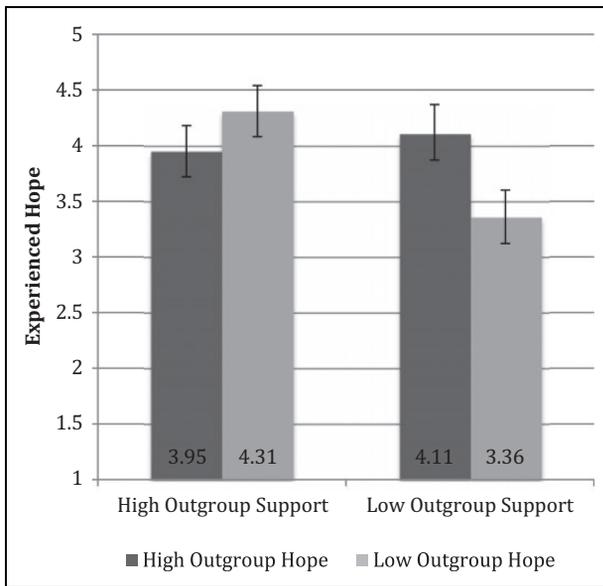


Figure 2. Experienced Israeli hope as a function of Palestinian expressions of Hope \times Support. Error bars represent standard errors.

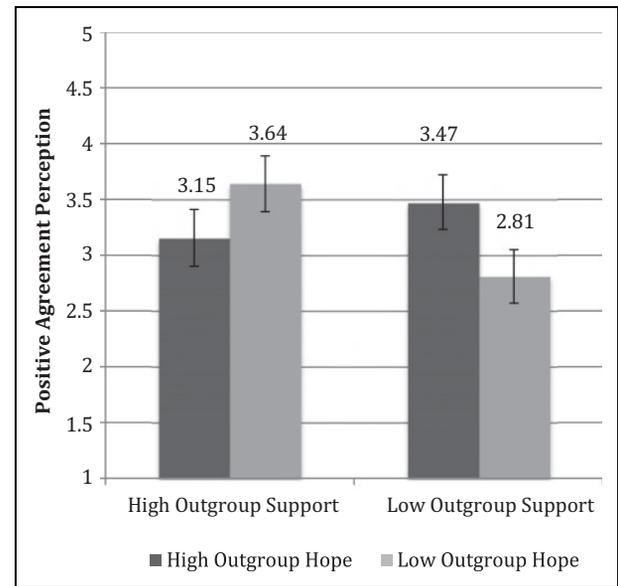


Figure 3. Agreement perceptions as a function of Palestinian expressions of Hope \times Support. Error bars represent standard errors.

$SD = 1.50$) and low Palestinian hope, $M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.15$; $F(1, 64) = 1.22$, $p = .27$. However, when Palestinian support was low, high Palestinian hope ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.26$) led to significantly higher experienced hope compared to the low Palestinian hope condition, $M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.35$; $F(1, 53) = 4.33$, $p = .04$.

Regarding positive perceptions of the proposal (Figure 3), the effect of both Palestinian support, $F(1, 123) = 0.99$, $p = .32$, and Palestinian hope, $F(1, 123) = 0.11$, $p = .74$, was nonsignificant. However, the interaction effect was significant, $F(1, 123) = 5.12$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Results showed that when Palestinian support was high, no significant difference was found between high Palestinian hope ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.59$) and low Palestinian hope, $M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.33$; $F(1, 65) = 1.84$, $p = .18$. However, when Palestinian support was low, participants in the high Palestinian hope condition ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.42$) rated the agreement as marginally significantly more positive compared to the low Palestinian hope condition, $M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.29$; $F(1, 58) = 3.48$, $p = .07$.

Lastly, we examined the interaction's effect on agreement acceptance. Both Palestinian support, $F(1, 123) = 0.64$, $p = .42$, and Palestinian hope, $F(1, 123) = 0.27$, $p = .60$, were nonsignificant. Additionally, the interaction effect was nonsignificant, $F(1, 123) = 1.74$, $p = .19$.

Next, we examined whether the interaction Palestinian Support \times Palestinian Hope increased positive perceptions of the agreement through experienced hope, further associated with agreement acceptance. We used structural equation modeling to examine whether the hypothesized serial moderated mediation model was consistent with the data. We first ran the saturated model, finding that the effect of the interaction term Out-Group Support \times Hope on positive perceptions was nonsignificant ($p = .29$), which led us to

omit this path from the analysis. Next, we eliminated out-group hope ($p = .87$) and out-group support ($p = .83$). Upon running the analysis again, the model fits the data well ($\chi^2 = 1.19$, $p = .76$), but the path from the interaction to agreement acceptance was nonsignificant ($p = .07$), as were the main effects of out-group hope and out-group support ($p > .61$). Lastly, we removed the path leading from experienced hope to agreement acceptance ($p = .10$). All paths ($df = 7$) were found to be significant, and the model fit the data well, $\chi^2(7) = 7.48$, $p = .38$, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .99 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .02 (Figure 4).

The model in which the interaction was associated with agreement acceptance indirectly through both experienced hope and positive perceptions as mediators also fit the data well, $\chi^2(3) = 3.59$, $p = .31$, CFI = .99, and RMSEA = .04. However, experienced hope was no longer associated with agreement acceptance ($B = .11$), indicating a serial moderated mediation model. Lastly, we examined whether the interaction induced agreement acceptance through positive perceptions of the proposal followed by experienced hope. This model did not fit the data well, $\chi^2(7) = 145.13$, $p < .001$, CFI = .99, and RMSEA = .41.

To sum, in Study 2, we sought to create a comprehensive picture by manipulating expressions of Palestinian Support \times Palestinian Hope and examining how Israelis perceived the agreement. When Palestinian support for the agreement was low, the effect of Palestinian hope expressions counteracted this low support. Here, expressions of high Palestinian hope in light of the agreement led participants to experience more hope for peace, which was further associated with positive perceptions and agreement acceptance. However, when

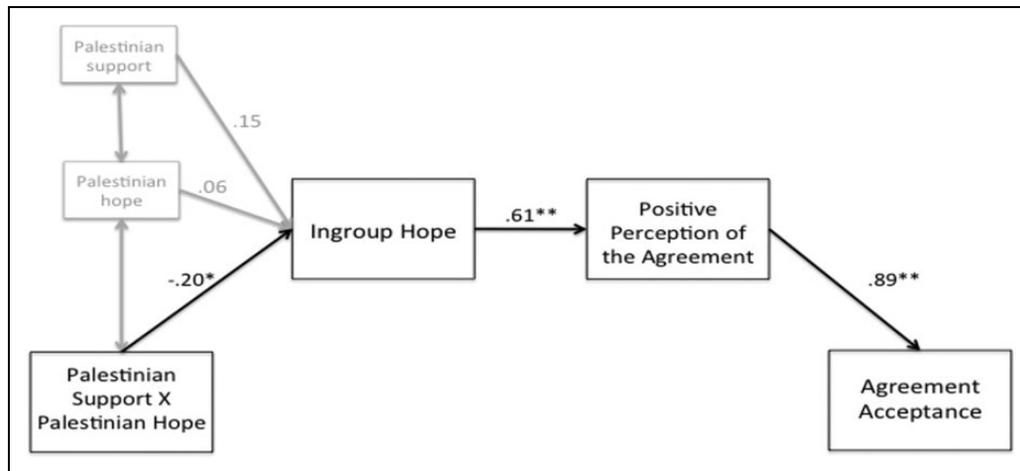


Figure 4. Serial mediated moderation model predicting support for the agreement outline.

Palestinian support for the agreement was high, Palestinian hope expressions had no effect.

General Discussion

In conflicts, accepting opportunities for conflict resolution rests, at least partly, on the perception of the out-group as sharing the goal of peace and supporting steps to achieve it. However, in intractable conflicts, coherent and positive messages of intergroup support for peace are rare (Bar-Tal, 2013). Thus, it is crucial to understand ways to convey intergroup support. One way in which groups can indicate such attitudes is emotional expressions. In this article, we focused upon out-group expressions of hope, an established catalyzer for peace-supporting attitudes (Cohen-Chen et al., 2014; Cohen-Chen et al., 2015; Saguy & Halperin, 2014). Here, hope was found to be a constructive tool for communicating reconciliation and compromise within complex intergroup dynamics, when such messages are scarce or inconsistent.

Two studies addressed these questions in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Results from Study 1 indicated that Jewish-Israelis who learned that an agreement induced Palestinian hope experienced more in-group hope and were more willing to accept the agreement compared to the low Palestinian hope condition. In Study 2, we examined the effect of Palestinian hope expressions at different levels of Palestinian support. As well, we added participants’ perceptions of the proposed agreement. Results revealed that expressions of Palestinian hope (high vs. low) had no effect when Palestinian support was high. However, expressions of out-group hope played an important role when Palestinian support was low. This condition accurately mirrors the context of an intractable conflict, in which the national narrative embodies the idea that the out-group does not support peace (Bar-Tal, 2007). For these participants, high (vs. low) Palestinian hope induced positive perceptions of the proposal through higher experienced hope, further associated with agreement acceptance.

Theoretical and Applied Significance

Our findings hold theoretical implications both within the realm of emotions in conflict and in the field of emotional expressions. Within the field of emotions in conflict, many studies have established the significance of felt emotions in conflict and its resolution (Kelman, 1998; Reifen-Tagar, Federico, & Halperin, 2011; Staub, 2005; Vollhardt, Coutin, Staub, Weiss, & Deflander, 2007). Previous work has focused on hope specifically (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, et al., 2014; Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Porat, et al., 2014; Cohen-Chen et al., 2015; Saguy & Halperin, 2014) but has yet to examine the ways in which *expressing* hope can be used in conflict resolution. This research sheds new light on emotional interactions between groups, and the importance of hope as promoting peacemaking attitudes, not only for those experiencing it but for those who observe it in their rival in extreme and negative contexts.

This research also serves to expand the domain of emotional expressions. A large proportion of research focused on interpersonal domains (Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Steinel et al., 2008; Van Doorn, Heerdink, & Van Kleef, 2012; Van Kleef, 2009; Van Kleef et al., 2010). Some work has examined emotional expressions within intergroup contexts (de Vos et al., 2013; Goldenberg, Saguy, & Halperin, 2014; Kamans et al., 2014; Nadler & Liviatan, 2006; Wohl, Hornsey, & Bennett, 2012), and an additional line of work examines expressions of positive affect (happiness: Van Kleef et al., 2004; empathy: Nadler & Liviatan, 2006) as influencing intergroup attitudes. However, the examination of out-group hope expressions as substituting supportive messages in an intractable conflict is novel. Hope has been found to be especially prominent when opportunities for conflict resolution present themselves, a condition we attempted to create in our research.

In addition to theoretical implications, our findings have applied relevance. Intractable conflicts are characterized by one-sided narratives emphasizing the other side’s responsibility for the conflict’s perpetuation (Bar-Tal, 2007). Here, hope is shown to be a constructive tool that communicates messages

of reconciliation and compromise to the out-group within complex intergroup dynamics, when these messages are scarce or inconsistent.

Although interesting, this line of research holds a number of limitations that should be addressed in future work. The first stems from the group-based approach referred to. Here, it is the group expressing hope and not a representative (who may be discounted as an outlier by in-group members). However, there are other ways in which group-based emotions can be expressed (leaders). Second, this line of research examined a very specific and unique type of intergroup conflict. It is important to examine this effect within a variety of different intergroup contexts such as prejudice and inequality, as well as to strengthen its longevity. Future endeavors should also consider issues of power and power asymmetry (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004; Rouhana, 2011), as out-group hope expressions could induce different outcomes when observed by a low-power player. Lastly, it is important to delve deeper into the effects, examining a variety of mediating variables. One possibility is that out-group expressions of hope induce open-mindedness toward the out-group, which is associated with attitudes for peace (Kruglanski, 2004). As well, possible boundary conditions are important to study. One example is trust, particularly given Nadler and Liviatan's (2006) findings that in the absence of trust, conciliatory messages backfired.

In summary, this research illuminates a new way in which hope can be used to overcome messages of low out-group support, sending conciliatory messages and creating an intergroup atmosphere promoting peace. The current findings demonstrate that out-group hope expressions serve to increase experienced hope and improve perceptions of an agreement, further inducing acceptance of opportunities for peace. As such, this research furthers understanding of avenues to conflict resolution.

Appendix

Stimulus of Peace Agreement

A collaborative effort of Israeli and Palestinian scholars is examining the attitudes of people from both sides of the conflict regarding a potential outline for a future agreement.

The Agreement:

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 U.S. 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.

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Notes

1. The agreement was designed to address Israeli concerns. This was because we did not want participants to reject the agreement based on its content but to focus on out-group expressions. Therefore, while the agreement includes Israeli concessions, we emphasized issues of concern to Israelis.
2. Some additional measures were included in the reported studies but were not the focus of this article. In the interest of parsimony, we will not discuss further (Study 1: responsibility, concessions, and zero-sum perceptions; Study 2: variability, concessions, zero-sum perceptions). However, further information about outcome variables may be obtained from the authors.
3. No interaction effects of the Manipulation \times Political Orientation were found on experienced hope ($\beta = -.18, p = .57$) and agreement acceptance ($\beta = -.05, p = .89$), indicating the effect was the same regardless of political orientation.
4. Although still manifesting high hope, we wanted to make the numbers less pronounced to avoid suspicion deriving from a clear dissonance in the low support—high hope condition.
5. Although still manifesting high hope, we wanted to make the numbers less pronounced to avoid suspicion deriving from a clear dissonance in the low support—high hope condition.

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