Do people want to feel general hope or fear if they believe it justifies their ideologies?

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Abstract

Previous research has shown that the belief that an emotion justifies one's ideology increases one's motivation to experience this emotion. However, a question that remains is whether such findings can be obtained using politically-relevant as well as irrelevant targets of emotion. The purpose of the present study is to answer this question for leftists and rightists, with hope and fear as the focal emotions. To this end, two experimental conditions are employed, with one containing politically-relevant article headlines and the other containing politically-irrelevant headlines. In each condition, headlines hinting at either hope- or fear-inducing articles are shown, and participants' rankings of these headlines are used as indications of their desire to experience hope or fear. Political ideology is found to influence the motivation to experience hope versus fear, although this effect is not mediated by the belief that these emotions justify one's ideology. Furthermore, neither the political relevance of headlines nor the interaction of political relevance and ideology affect the desire to experience hope versus fear. However, controlling for the influence of gender on the motivation to experience hope versus fear causes the effect of ideology on this motivation to become nonsignificant. Results are discussed and compared to previous findings, potential limitations and future directions are suggested, and a conclusion is formulated.

Keywords: motivated emotion regulation, ideology, beliefs, hope, fear

At times, people may have specific motives for regulating their emotions (e.g., Tamir, 2016; Tamir & Ford, 2012). One such motive, recently examined by Pliskin, Nabet, Jost, Tamir, and Halperin (in preparation), is the justification of one's political ideology. Pliskin and her colleagues found that leftists believed more strongly than rightists that hope justified their ideology and were thus more motivated to experience hope (and actually did), despite the presence of intractable intergroup conflict that might discourage experiencing this emotion. In contrast, rightists believed more strongly than leftists that fear justified their ideology and were thus more motivated to experience fear (and actually did) during the intergroup conflict.

A potential limitation of the study by Pliskin et al. (in preparation) is that its results were obtained using only politically-relevant targets of emotion. People may thus have been more likely to believe that emotions justified their ideologies simply because the emotions' targets were politically-relevant (and therefore congruent with their ideologies). To what extent, then, does the congruence between an emotion's target and one's ideology affect the belief that the emotion justifies one's ideology (and the resulting motivation to experience the emotion)? The present study is meant to answer this question regarding leftists and rightists, with hope and fear as the focal emotions. To provide a useful context in which to discuss the present study, relevant literature will be reviewed on ideology and motivated reasoning, on hope and fear as emotions, on motivated emotion regulation and ideology, and on incidental emotions.

Ideology and Motivated Reasoning

Ideology may be defined as a set of beliefs or mental models, held by individuals or shared among group members, that helps to interpret the environment as it is while also specifying how the environment should be (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009). Within the

context of ideology, acceptance of inequality and openness to social change can serve as dimensions that distinguish between the political left and right, with the former characterised by low acceptance of inequality and high openness to social change and the latter characterised by high acceptance of inequality and low openness to social change (Jost et al., 2009).

Furthermore, individuals may be more likely to adopt an ideology when it fulfils their dominant epistemic, existential or relational needs (Jost et al., 2009), and the fulfilment of these needs motivates them to maintain their ideologies (Jost & Amodio, 2012). The desire to maintain one's ideology was also observed by Skitka and her colleagues, who found that while liberals initially attributed individuals' problems to dispositional factors, they subsequently made a motivated correction in accordance with their (liberal) ideology by taking situational factors into account (Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, & Chamberlin, 2002). The concept of motivated correction is related to research suggesting that people generally engage in a cognitively-biased search for information supporting their desired conclusions (rather than the most accurate ones; Kunda, 1990). Such motivated reasoning may also be an implicit means of emotion regulation, biasing information processing in favour of experiencing certain emotions (Westen, 1994; Westen, Blagov, Harenski, Kilts, & Hamann, 2006). In addition, Pliskin et al. (in preparation) have found that beliefs about the extent to which hope and fear justify one's ideology can drive the regulation of these emotions. Because hope and fear also play an important role in the present study, these emotions will be discussed in more detail below. However, to facilitate an understanding of hope and fear as emotions, a brief description of emotions in general will be provided first.

Hope and Fear as Emotions

Emotions are collections of conscious or unconscious processes related to cognitive

appraisal, motivation, and action readiness (Frijda, 2004). More specifically, emotions can be

viewed as appraisals of one's environment combined with associated changes in action

readiness (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989). They have also been found to influence

attitudes, as well as the motivation to take action, regarding a public event (i.e., a peace

summit; Halperin, 2011). Before moving on to a discussion of motivated emotion regulation

and its link to ideology, it may be useful to consider different aspects of the two emotions

central to the present study: hope and fear.

Hope and fear are emotions that respectively involve positive and negative views of

possible change (Pliskin et al., in preparation), similar to how the political left and right

respectively involve high and low openness to social change (Jost et al., 2009). Hope is an

emotion that is highly cognitive in nature and involves positive feelings about a positive goal

one expects to achieve (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Porat, & Bar-Tal, 2014). It also promotes

creativity and cognitive flexibility and thus facilitates finding or being open to solutions to an

intergroup conflict (Cohen-Chen et al., 2014). Accordingly, Cohen-Chen et al. (2014) found

that, during an intergroup conflict, hope made leftists more receptive to information

supporting peace.

In contrast to hope, fear is an emotion that may be experienced in response to

perceptions of threat or danger to oneself or one's ingroup (Cohen-Chen et al., 2014). Fear

consists of both psychological and physiological reactions aimed at survival, and it tends to

involve appraisals of low strength and little control over a situation. Furthermore, this

emotion can be triggered automatically and may sometimes dominate one's thoughts (Cohen-

Chen et al., 2014). As fear causes people to selectively recall fear-related information, it also

reduces their receptivity to new ideas. For example, people with more conservative, rightist

ideologies have been found to perceive more threat and experience greater fear, biasing them

toward information that disfavours opportunities for peace during intergroup conflict (Cohen-Chen et al., 2014).

Motivated Emotion Regulation and Ideology

While leftists appear to have a greater tendency to experience hope and rightists a greater tendency to experience fear (in the context of intergroup conflict) their emotional reactions are not necessarily automatic; these may be intentionally regulated (Pliskin et al., in preparation). Emotion regulation refers to motivated processes distinct from the automatic generation of emotions (Sheppes & Gross, 2011). These processes affect the specific type of emotion one experiences, as well as the timing and expression of the emotion and *how* one experiences it (Gross, 2014).

Previous studies have distinguished between hedonic and instrumental motives for emotion regulation (Tamir, 2016; Tamir, Mitchell, & Gross, 2008). Hedonic motives refer to the motivation to experience pleasant emotions and to avoid unpleasant ones, whereas instrumental motives refer to the desire to experience (pleasant or unpleasant) emotions that facilitate goal achievement. In addition, ideology has been found to drive emotion regulation during intractable intergroup conflict, with leftist ideology leading to increased intergroup empathy and rightist ideology leading to increased intergroup anger (Porat, Halperin, & Tamir, 2016).

As discussed earlier, Pliskin et al. (in preparation) have shown that the belief that an emotion justifies one's ideology motivates one to experience this emotion. However, they exclusively studied emotions with politically-relevant (as opposed to irrelevant) targets. Thus, people may have believed that emotions justified their ideologies simply because the emotions' targets were congruent with their ideologies (i.e., politically-relevant). Investigating this possibility is important as it may clarify whether the results obtained by

Pliskin and her colleagues also apply to emotions with politically-irrelevant targets. The present study therefore examines people's beliefs about emotions with politically-relevant versus irrelevant targets. The use of emotions with politically-irrelevant targets is based on the concept of incidental emotions (e.g., Lerner, Li, Valdesolo, & Kassam, 2015).

Incidental Emotions

Previous studies have made a distinction between integral and incidental emotions (e.g., Hillebrandt & Barclay, 2017). Whereas integral emotions stem from the decision at hand, incidental emotions carry over from prior situations to affect decisions to which they were initially unrelated (Lerner et al., 2015). For example, anger aroused in one situation can subsequently elicit a desire to blame people who are unrelated to the source of the anger (Quigley & Tedeschi, 1996). In addition, Kausel and Connolly (2014) have shown that beliefs about incidental emotions can influence behaviour. They found that in a Trust Game, players A sent less money to angry (compared to guilty or neutral) players B because they believed that incidental anger made players B less trustworthy.

Just as incidental emotions can influence decisions to which they were initially unrelated (Lerner et al., 2015), hope and fear with politically-irrelevant targets may be considered in relation to ideology (thereby transcending their original context) and thus be perceived as ideologically-relevant. This may be especially likely when a desire to experience ideology-justifying emotions (which is induced experimentally in the present study) encourages people to consider various emotions in relation to their ideologies. When hope and fear with politically-irrelevant targets are perceived as ideologically-relevant, they may be viewed as justifying ideology to the same extent as hope and fear with politically-relevant targets. The motivation to experience hope and fear should then be the same regardless of whether the emotions' targets are politically-relevant or irrelevant. Therefore, findings similar

to those of Pliskin et al. (in preparation) are expected to be obtained in the present study for hope and fear with either politically-relevant or irrelevant targets.

The Present Study

The present study examines whether people believe that hope or fear justifies their ideologies and are thus motivated to experience this emotion, even when the emotion's target is politically-irrelevant. Based on earlier reasoning, the first hypothesis is that leftists (compared to rightists) have a stronger belief that hope justifies their ideology and are thus more motivated to experience hope, regardless of whether the emotion's target is politically-relevant or irrelevant. The second hypothesis is that rightists (compared to leftists) have a stronger belief that fear justifies their ideology and are thus more motivated to experience fear, regardless of whether the emotion's target is politically-relevant or irrelevant. These hypotheses will be tested by measuring participants' beliefs about (and desire to experience) hope and fear regarding politically-relevant versus irrelevant events. Furthermore, the present study takes place in the Netherlands and is conducted in Dutch, with data collection occurring on two separate occasions per participant.

Method

Participants

Dutch-speaking residents of the Netherlands were recruited for the present study through SONA (*Leiden University Research Participation*), through social networks, and through face-to-face contact in and around the Leiden University Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. Participants could receive one study credit or €3,50 (consistent with the standard hourly rate) for completing the experiment. At times, recruitment was intentionally biased in favour of rightist participants in order to obtain an ideologically-balanced sample. In this case, leftist participants who had filled out the first (but not the

second) questionnaire were not allowed to complete the experiment. In total, 237 participants

(133 women and 104 men) aged eighteen to seventy-eight ($M = 29.07$, $SD = 13.42$) were

recruited, with age information missing for four participants. Of the 237 participants, forty-

four completed only the first questionnaire and were therefore excluded from analyses.

Another nine participants were excluded after being suspected of inattentively filling out the

second questionnaire. More specifically, these participants filled out the second questionnaire

in less than five minutes, whereas the obtained data as well as personal experience suggest it

takes approximately fifteen minutes to do so attentively. Finally, 184 participants (107

women and seventy-seven men), aged eighteen to seventy-eight ($M = 28.92$, $SD = 13.20$),

were included in analyses. In terms of political ideology, seventy-one participants were

slightly to extremely leftist, fifty-eight were centrist, and fifty-five were slightly to extremely

rightist.

   Of the 184 participants, forty-five completed the second questionnaire less than three

hours after completing the first one. Due to this relatively short interval, these participants'

responses to the first questionnaire may have influenced their responses to the second one

(e.g., by alerting them to the true purpose of the second questionnaire's measures). To

investigate this possibility, all analyses were repeated once without these forty-five

participants.

Procedure

   The present study was conducted after being approved by the ethics committee, using

research materials which had been translated into Dutch. Data were collected through

Qualtrics, a computer program for data collection and analysis. Once individuals had

scheduled their participation in SONA or through personal contact with the researchers, they

were emailed a first, short questionnaire. This questionnaire contained study information and

informed consent forms, in addition to questions regarding demographics. On the scheduled date and time, participants arrived in the lab or completed a second, longer questionnaire online. The second questionnaire affirmed participants' informed consent before explaining that they would be asked shortly to write a brief text about their values. The thought of having to write this text was meant to elicit a desire to experience ideology-justifying emotions (i.e., hope or fear). Participants were additionally told that before writing the text (and after answering some additional questions), they would be given the opportunity to read a number of unrelated articles, as research had shown that reading about unrelated subjects improved one's writing skills.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions, with one condition containing six politically-relevant article headlines and the other containing six politically-irrelevant headlines (between-subjects). Furthermore, each participant viewed three headlines hinting at hope and three hinting at fear. These headlines had been pre-tested to ensure that people expected the corresponding articles to induce either hope or fear. Participants were allowed to rank the headlines in the order of their desire to read the corresponding articles, as there would ostensibly be insufficient time to read all of them. After ranking headlines, participants answered some questions related to measures that were included for exploratory purposes (i.e., promotion versus prevention focus, trait anxiety, intolerance of uncertainty, optimism versus pessimism, adult trait hope, evaluations of hope and fear, and ideology justification beliefs regarding hope and fear). Finally, participants were fully debriefed and told that they were not actually required to read articles or write a short text, as these tasks were not the true aim of the present study.

Measures

Demographics. A separate questionnaire was created for the measurement of

demographic variables. This questionnaire measured participants' age, education level (options ranged from *high school* to *University Master's degree or higher*), the extent to which their political opinions were leftist versus rightist (options ranged from 1 = *Extremely leftist*, to 4 = *Centrist*, to 7 = *Extremely rightist*) and social versus liberal (options ranged from 1 = *Very social*, to 4 = *Neither social nor liberal*, to 7 = *Very liberal*), and their political progressiveness versus conservativeness (options ranged from 1 = *Very progressive*, to 4 = *Neither progressive nor conservative*, to 7 = *Very conservative*). It additionally measured participants' level of religiosity (options ranged from 1 = *Atheist*, to 2 = *Not religious*, to 5 = *Very religious*) and their monthly household income compared to the Dutch average of €4,100 (options ranged from 1 = *Much lower than average* to 5 = *Much higher than average*). Participants' gender was accidentally omitted from this questionnaire and was instead measured separately after the experiment.

Motivation to experience hope versus fear. The present study employed experimental stimuli in the form of fabricated article headlines referring to (fictional) current events in the Netherlands. Participants' rankings of these headlines (rank 1 being the highest and rank 6 the lowest) were used as indications of their motivation to experience the emotions (i.e., hope or fear) hinted at by the headlines. In other words, a higher ranking indicated a stronger preference for an article and thus for the emotion hinted at by the article's headline. For analysis purposes, headline rankings were first reverse-scored (so that higher numbers indicated higher rankings), and separate mean scores for hope and fear preferences were then calculated using the corresponding headlines' rankings.

Trait anxiety. To measure trait anxiety, the Anxiety subscale of the Trait version of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI; Roberts, 2013) was employed. This subscale consisted of six items with a Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 4

(*almost always*), with higher scores indicating more trait anxiety. For analysis purposes, a mean score of trait anxiety was calculated using all six items ($\alpha = .87$).

Promotion versus prevention focus. To measure promotion (versus prevention) focus, the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ; Higgins et al., 2001) was used. The RFQ consisted of eleven items, with the promotion focus subscale containing six items ($\alpha = .67$) and the prevention focus subscale containing five items ($\alpha = .67$). Eight items had a response scale ranging from 1 (*never or seldom*), to 3 (*sometimes*), to 5 (*very often*). One item had a response scale ranging from 1 (*never true*), to 3 (*sometimes true*), to 5 (*very often true*). Lastly, two items had a response scale ranging from 1 (*certainly false*) to 5 (*certainly true*). Mean scores of promotion and prevention focus were calculated using the corresponding items (some of which had to be reverse-scored).

Intolerance of uncertainty. To measure intolerance of uncertainty, a brief version of the Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale (IUS; Fialko, Bolton, & Perrin, 2012) was employed. This scale contained 5 items with a response scale ranging from 1 (*not at all characteristic of me*) to 5 (*entirely characteristic of me*), with higher scores indicating less tolerance of uncertainty (Fialko et al., 2012). A mean score of intolerance of uncertainty was calculated using all five items ($\alpha = .85$).

Optimism versus pessimism. To measure optimism (versus pessimism), the revised Life Orientation Test (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994) was used. This test consisted of ten items, with the optimism ($\alpha = .63$) and pessimism ($\alpha = .65$) subscales containing three items each and the remaining items being fillers. All items had response scales ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Mean scores of optimism and pessimism were calculated using the corresponding items.

Adult trait hope. To measure adult trait hope, a questionnaire by Snyder (2000) was

employed. This questionnaire consisted of twelve items with response scales ranging from 1 (*definitely false*) to 8 (*definitely true*). A mean score of adult trait hope was calculated using all twelve items ($\alpha = .82$), some of which had to be reverse-scored.

Evaluations of hope and fear. To measure participants' evaluations of politically-relevant or irrelevant hope and fear, the Evaluations of Emotions scales (EVE; Netzer, Kim, & Tamir, in preparation) were used. These scales required participants to evaluate hope and fear (in general and in relation to potential political developments) by selecting one of seven points on a continuum located between two labels. The pairs of labels were *bad* versus *good*, *harmful* versus *useful*, *foolish* versus *wise*, *worthless* versus *valuable*, and *unnecessary* versus *necessary* (Netzer et al., in preparation). For each of the four EVE scales, a mean score was calculated using the corresponding items (with reliabilities ranging from $\alpha = .85$ to $\alpha = .92$). However, these mean scores were not included as control variables as they were considered too conceptually similar to mean preference for hope- (or fear-)inducing articles and ideology justification beliefs regarding hope and fear.

Ideology justification beliefs. To measure the degree to which participants believed that hope and fear justified their ideologies, a questionnaire adapted from Pliskin et al. (in preparation) was employed (see full questionnaire in Appendix A). This questionnaire contained eight items, four measuring beliefs about hope ($\alpha = .86$) and four measuring beliefs about fear ($\alpha = .86$), with response scales ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 6 (*completely agree*). Mean scores of ideology justification beliefs about hope and fear were calculated using the corresponding items.

Results

Effects of Ideology and Condition on Preference for Hope versus Fear

The mean ranking assigned to each type of article headline across participants is
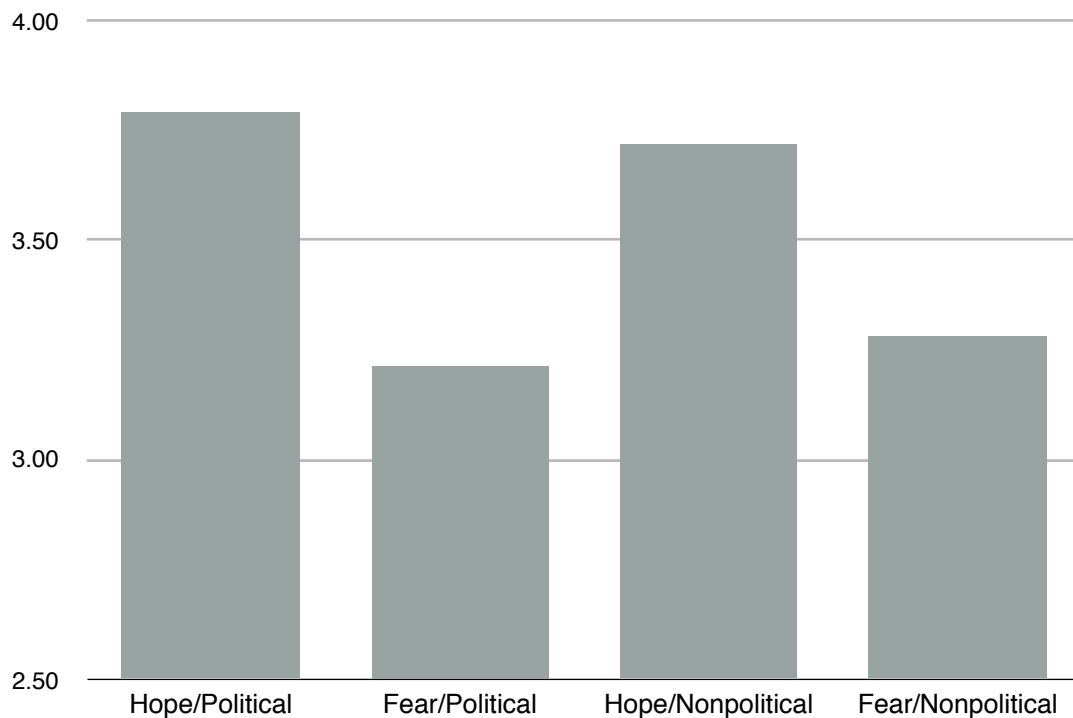
Figure 1. Mean rankings of headline types across participants. Higher rankings indicate stronger preference, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 6.

displayed in Figure 1 (based on eighty-three participants viewing politically-relevant headlines and 101 viewing politically-irrelevant headlines). For the purpose of analysis, political ideology was transformed into a nominal variable containing three levels (leftist, centrist, and rightist). The results discussed below were obtained using the main sample ($N = 184$) and were not substantially affected by the exclusion of the forty-five participants who completed the second questionnaire less than three hours after completing the first one.

The hypothesis that leftists (compared to rightists) more strongly believe that general hope justifies their ideology and are thus more motivated to experience this emotion, as well as the hypothesis that rightists (compared to leftists) more strongly believe that general fear justifies their ideology and are thus more motivated to experience this emotion, was tested by performing a number of univariate Analyses of Variance (ANOVA). For the first ANOVA, participants' ideology (leftist, centrist, or rightist) and experimental condition (politically-relevant versus irrelevant article headlines) were used as independent variables and mean

preference for hope-inducing articles per participant was used as the dependent variable. The main effect of ideology was significant, $F(2, 178) = 5.099, p = .007$. Pairwise comparisons (with Bonferroni correction) indicated that leftists ($M = 3.96$) had a significantly stronger preference for hope-inducing articles than did rightists ($M = 3.53$), whereas neither group differed significantly from centrists ($M = 3.72$). The main effect of condition was nonsignificant, $F(1, 178) = .453, p = .502$, as was the interaction effect of ideology and condition, $F(2, 178) = .022, p = .978$.

When the aforementioned ANOVA was performed with mean preference for fear-inducing articles per participant as the dependent variable instead, similar results were obtained. This is because participants' preferences for hope- and fear-inducing articles are located on the same spectrum and thus complement one another. Pairwise comparisons (with Bonferroni correction) for fear preference thus displayed a pattern complementing that of the pairwise comparisons for hope preference; rightists ($M = 3.47$) had a significantly stronger preference for fear-inducing articles than did leftists ($M = 3.04$), whereas neither group differed significantly from centrists ($M = 3.28$).

Influence of Control Variables

Although all potential control variables except gender correlated weakly with mean preference for hope- (or fear-)inducing articles (see Table B1), five were included in order to investigate their combined influence on the first ANOVA's results. Gender, education level and religiosity were controlled for because these were the three demographic measures correlating most strongly with mean preference for hope- (or fear-)inducing articles (see Table B1). In addition, promotion and prevention focus were controlled for due to their conceptual relations to hope and fear preferences, respectively. After inclusion of the five control variables, the main effect of ideology became nonsignificant, $F(2, 173) = 1.760, p = .$

175. The main effect of condition remained nonsignificant, $F(1, 173) = .861$, $p = .355$, as did the interaction effect of ideology and condition, $F(2, 173) = .081$, $p = .922$. A closer examination revealed that the main effect of ideology became nonsignificant due to the inclusion of gender ($p = .003$) as a control variable. After this control variable was excluded (while the other four were included), the main effect of ideology became significant, $F(2, 174) = 4.907$, $p = .008$, with pairwise comparisons displaying the same pattern as before the inclusion of control variables.

Pairwise comparisons for gender (when including all five control variables) indicated that female participants ($M = 3.90$) had a significantly stronger preference for hope-inducing articles than did male participants ($M = 3.52$). When mean preference for fear-inducing articles was used as the dependent variable instead, pairwise comparisons for gender showed a complementary pattern; male participants ($M = 3.48$) had a significantly stronger preference for fear-inducing articles than did female participants ($M = 3.10$).

Mediation Through Ideology Justification Beliefs

As the correlations between ideology justification beliefs (about hope and fear) and mean preference for hope- (or fear-)inducing articles were nonsignificant and weak (see Table B1), there was no potential for mediation through justification beliefs. Thus, no mediation analyses were performed.

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Discussion

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Hypotheses and Findings

The present study investigates whether findings similar to those of Pliskin et al. (in preparation) can be obtained using politically-relevant as well as irrelevant targets of hope and fear. To this end, two related hypotheses are tested; that leftists (compared to rightists) more strongly believe that general hope justifies their ideology and are thus more motivated

to experience hope, and that rightists (compared to leftists) more strongly believe that general fear justifies their ideology and are thus more motivated to experience fear.

Consistent with the hypotheses, leftists were more motivated than rightists to experience hope, whereas rightists were more motivated than leftists to experience fear. As additionally hypothesised, the motivation to experience hope or fear was unaffected by the political relevance of the emotions' targets, nor did political relevance interact with political ideology to influence this motivation. Contrary to expectations, the influence of ideology on the motivation to experience hope or fear was not mediated by the belief that hope or fear justified one's ideology.

The absence of mediation through beliefs about hope and fear may stem from the use of a questionnaire adapted from Pliskin et al. (in preparation), which may have been less successful than the original in measuring such beliefs. Alternatively, participants may have lacked a convincing reason to attach any significance to their own beliefs about hope and fear (in relation to ideology) due to the artificiality of the experimental context, which may explain why these beliefs failed to act as mediators. This would also explain why Pliskin et al. (in preparation), who conducted their study in relation to actual, politically-relevant events (e.g., the Israeli-Palestinian conflict), did find beliefs about hope and fear to mediate the influence of ideology on the desire to experience hope or fear.

The Role of Gender

After the influence of participants' gender on their motivation to experience hope or fear was controlled for, the effect of ideology on this motivation became nonsignificant. Women were found to be more motivated than men to experience hope, whereas men were more motivated than women to experience fear. This pattern is similar to that observed for leftists versus rightists, which may be because most leftists (i.e., 73.2 percent) were female

and most rightists (i.e., 72.7 percent) were male. Norrander and Wilcox (2008) have found that in recent times, American men and women have generally become more conservative, while some women have instead remained liberal. As liberalism and conservatism strongly relate to leftism and rightism, respectively, these findings may at least partially explain the observed overlap between the effects of ideology and gender in the present study. However, whereas Norrander and Wilcox (2008) employed an American sample, the present sample contained Dutch participants. As Dutch society is known to be more politically moderate as well as more leftist compared to American society, the present overlap between ideology and gender may also stem partially from the use of an entirely Dutch sample.

Although no previous studies appear to explain the aforementioned influence of gender on preferences for hope versus fear, the present results (when including gender) do suggest that women (instead of leftists) are more motivated to experience hope, whereas men (instead of rightists) are more motivated to experience fear.

Previous Findings

Although the present findings indicated that preferences for hope and fear were unaffected by the political relevance of the emotions' targets, the opposite might have been expected based on the study by Hillebrandt and Barclay (2017). These researchers found that the degree to which observers attributed the emotions of negotiation counterparts to their own behaviour depended on whether the emotions were integral (i.e., related to their targets) or incidental (i.e., unrelated to their targets). Based on these findings, one might expect the political relevance of emotion targets in the present study to somehow affect emotion preferences. However, Hillebrandt and Barclay (2017) studied attributions for others' emotions, whereas the present study focused on participants' beliefs about their emotional experiences in relation to ideology. These differences limit the comparability of Hillebrandt

and Barclay's (2017) findings to those obtained in the present study.

Potential Limitations and Future Directions

A potential limitation of the present study is that the employed sample contained relatively large numbers of leftist (versus rightist) and female (versus male) participants, which explains the overall higher mean rankings for article headlines hinting at hope compared to headlines hinting at fear (see Figure 1). Another potential limitation of the present study is that no measures were included to test the effectiveness of the cover story presented to participants regarding the task of writing about personal values. This allows for the possibility that participants were motivated to experience hope or fear by something other than the need to justify their ideologies. In addition, the degree to which the modified questionnaire on ideology justification beliefs accurately measured the intended construct was not investigated.

Future studies employing manipulations or questionnaires similar to those used presently should evaluate the effectiveness of these measures. Furthermore, future research involving ideology and motivated emotion regulation should be designed to elucidate the separate effects of ideology and gender on the motivation to experience (ideology-justifying) hope or fear. Finally, future studies should investigate whether the findings of Pliskin et al. (in preparation) also apply to hope and fear with politically-irrelevant targets.

Conclusion

In general, the obtained findings fail to support the present hypotheses. This is primarily due to the unexpected influence of gender on hope and fear preferences, as well as an absence of mediation through beliefs about these emotions. It thus remains unclear whether people believe hope and fear justify their ideologies and therefore want to experience these emotions, even when the emotions' targets are politically-irrelevant.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire on Ideology Justification Beliefs Regarding Hope and Fear

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements by selecting a number (1 to 6) on the response scale.

1. In general, experiencing hope justifies my political beliefs

2. In general, experiencing fear justifies my political beliefs

3. Experiencing hope in general reinforces my political beliefs

4. Experiencing fear in general reinforces my political beliefs

5. Reading hopeful articles reinforces my political beliefs

6. Reading fearful articles reinforces my political beliefs

7. Feeling hopeful about potential political developments reinforces my political beliefs

8. Reading fearful articles about potential political developments reinforces my political beliefs

Appendix B

Correlation Table

Table B1

Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Measure	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 Mean hope preference	3.75	0.77	-														
2 Gender	1.58	0.50	.29**	-													
3 Age	28.92	13.20	-.06	-.17*	-												
4 Education level	3.24	1.13	.09	-.04	-.27**	-											
5 Religiosity	2.16	1.00	-.08	.13	.07	-.11	-										
6 Household income	2.52	1.26	-.05	.00	.19*	-.17*	.07	-									
7 Promotion focus	3.73	0.58	-.06	-.15*	.02	.15*	-.01	.13	-								
8 Prevention focus	3.63	0.75	.09	.17*	.03	-.06	.07	.09	-.02	-							
9 Trait anxiety	1.92	0.68	.03	.26**	-.23**	.09	.04	-.14	-.46**	.00	-						
10 Intolerance of uncertainty	2.08	0.81	.02	.20**	-.07	.00	.18*	.04	-.33**	.09	.57**	-					
11 Optimism	3.49	0.69	-.08	-.35**	.12	.06	-.07	.10	.45**	-.13	-.54**	-.36**	-				
12 Pessimism	2.48	0.71	-.09	.26**	-.17*	-.04	-.03	-.12	-.40**	-.02	.47**	.38**	-.47**	-			
13 Adult trait hope	5.63	0.91	-.05	-.35**	.09	.15*	-.08	.10	.67**	-.15*	-.64**	-.48**	.61**	-.51**	-		
14 Ideology justification beliefs for fear	2.92	1.00	.00	.19**	-.10	-.07	.00	-.07	.08	-.01	.11	.16*	.00	.20**	-.12	-	
15 Ideology justification beliefs for hope	3.59	0.95	.02	.08	-.01	.00	.10	.07	.15*	.22**	.05	.17*	.09	-.10	.01	.26**	-

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level