

The dynamics of hope and motivation when groups work with complex societal issues

- The purpose of the study
- How the study was conducted
- The Integral Process for Complex Issues (TIP)
- Different aspects of hope and motivation in earlier research.
- The results of the study

Focus of the study

- The purpose of the study was to elucidate the complex relationships between hope, motivation and complexity awareness when groups worked on complex societal issues, using a structured discourse for issue analysis and discussion.
- The study focused on the interrelation of hope, motivation and changes in understanding of societal issues of complexity.

Background of the empirical study

- Participants: four groups with 5-9 participants in each group. (All participants volunteered).
- A total of 27 participants partook in the study.
- 2 groups of tenants, 1 group of people active in a "Transition Town" group, 1 group made up of staff from the Ambulance service, the SOS alarm, and Police.

The kinds of issues the groups were motivated to change

- Tenant group 1: Deterioration of the neighbourhood/increased segregation between ethnic groups
- Tenant group 2. Lack of voluntary engagement in the community
- Transition Town group: Local economy/urban agriculture
- Ambulance/SOS/Police: Communication between actors when staff is at risk.

How the study was conducted

- Each group partook in a TIP process during 5 meetings.
- Personal interviews with each participant was conducted before and after participation.
- In these pre and post interviews each participant was asked to rate their personal sense of hopefulness as to whether the issue that was of concern to them would be solved or improved on, on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 indicated “not hopeful at all” and 7 expressed “very hopeful”. After they had given their rate, they were asked to use the same scale to rate their sense of motivation for engaging to address the issue of concern.

They were then asked:

- *Why do you rate it that way?*

The Integral Process for Complex Issues TIP

- A concept that is central to this research study is cognitive scaffolding (or cognitive support structure).
- TIP is a cognitive scaffolding, designed for group processes and based on analyses of complex issues and theories of adult development.
- TIP functions as a modular process with a step-by-step approach, where each step goes deeper into the complex issue that has been selected.

TIP- modules used in the study

Create a Map of the Territory: Identify all topics of concern and how they interconnect and impact each other. Use that work to inform the choice of one topic to start with.

Develop a Portrait of the Issue

Identify the impacts and causes; decide initial issue(s) to work on; get a clear picture of the array of conditions that comprise the selected issue.

Invent an Action System

Identify the array of changes to reactively and proactively impact the issue, which can be done by an array of appropriate actors (e.g., individuals, groups, organizations, governments, etc.)

Use the Action-System & Select a Focus

Review the list of potential actions and discuss what impacts the chosen scope of actions could have on the issue. Make decisions about appropriate directions forward individually as well as for the group.

Dimensions of hope found in literature review

Consequences of hope

- Passivity and inaction *or* motivation and engaged action

Object of hope:

- naïve, wishful, false – realistic, wise authentic

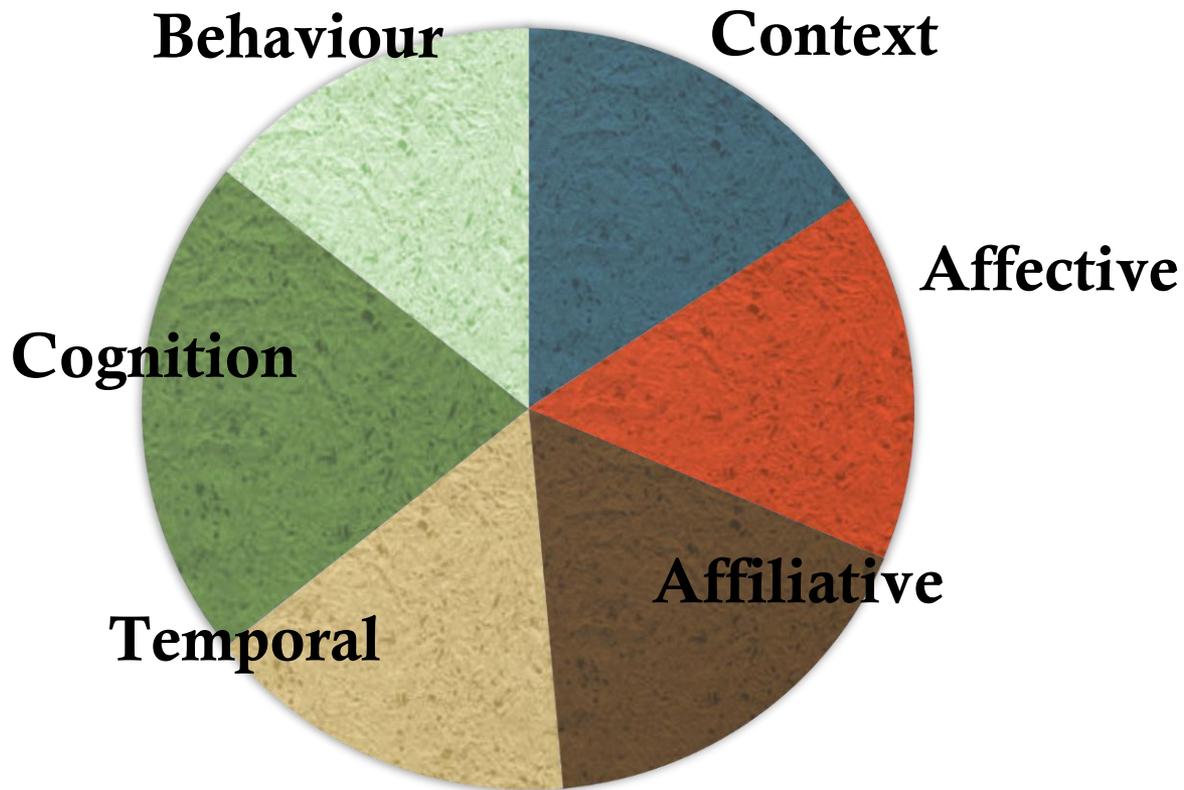
Hope-orientation:

- Individual – centered, willful – collectivistic

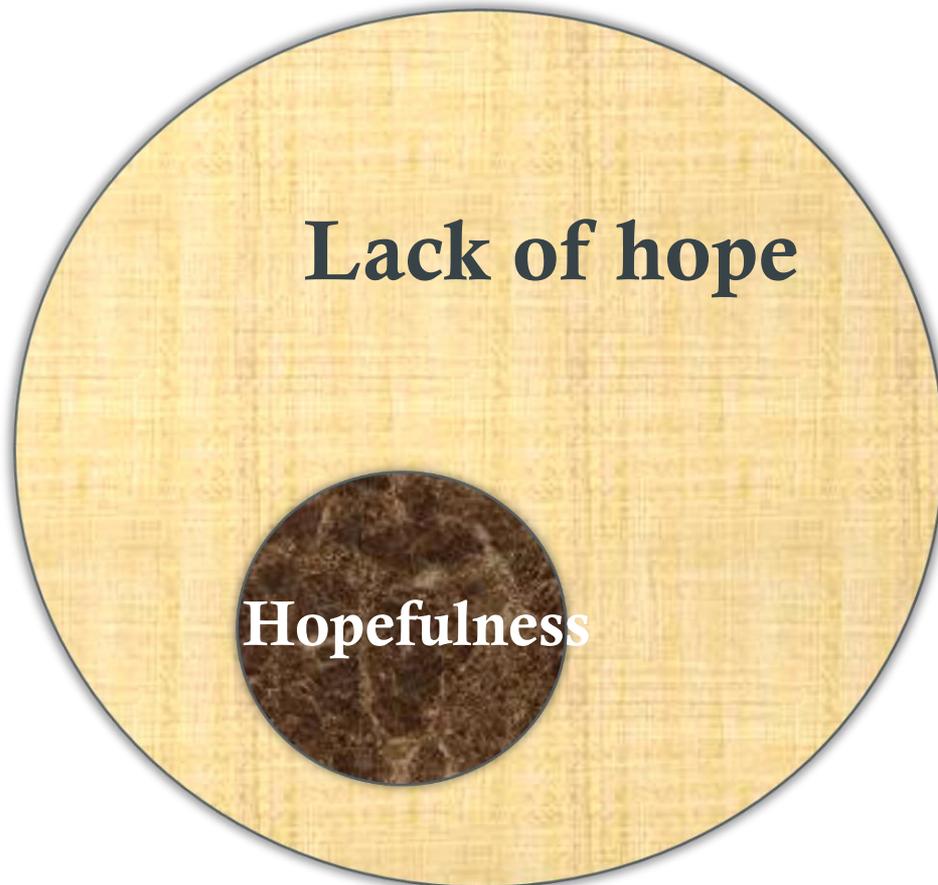
Spheres of hope:

- Particularized – generalized

“The Gestalt of Hope” (Dufault and Martocchio)



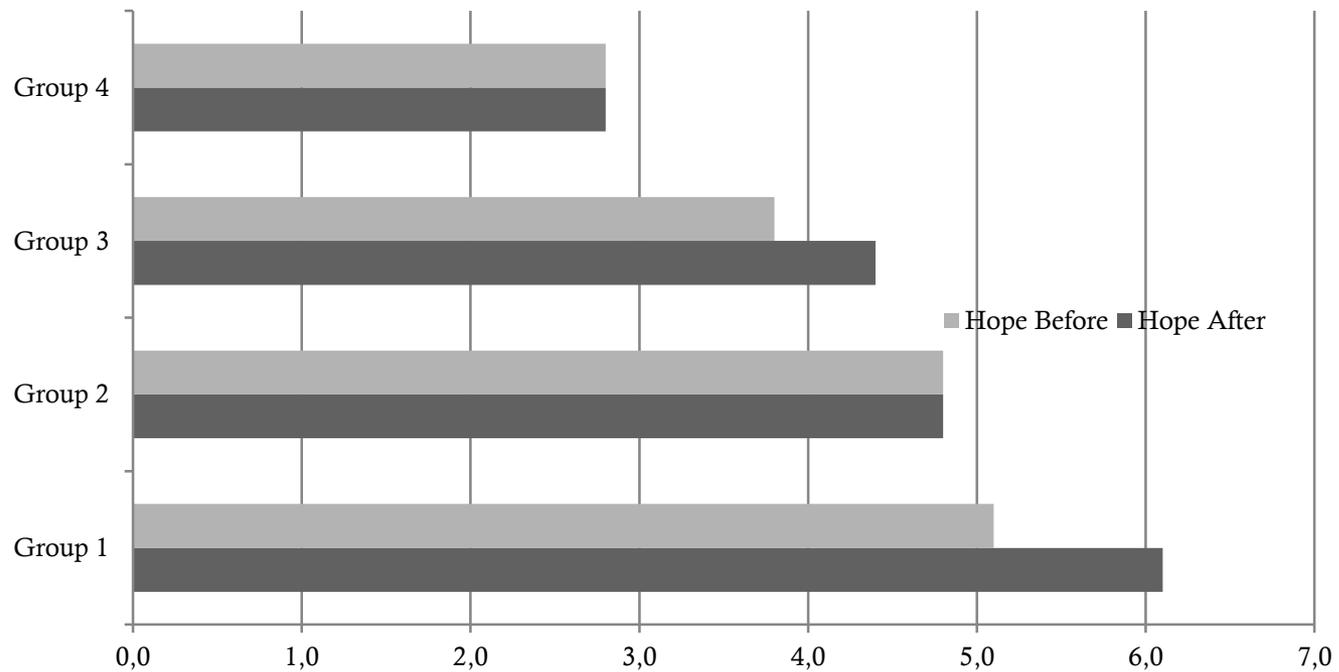
Particularized hope



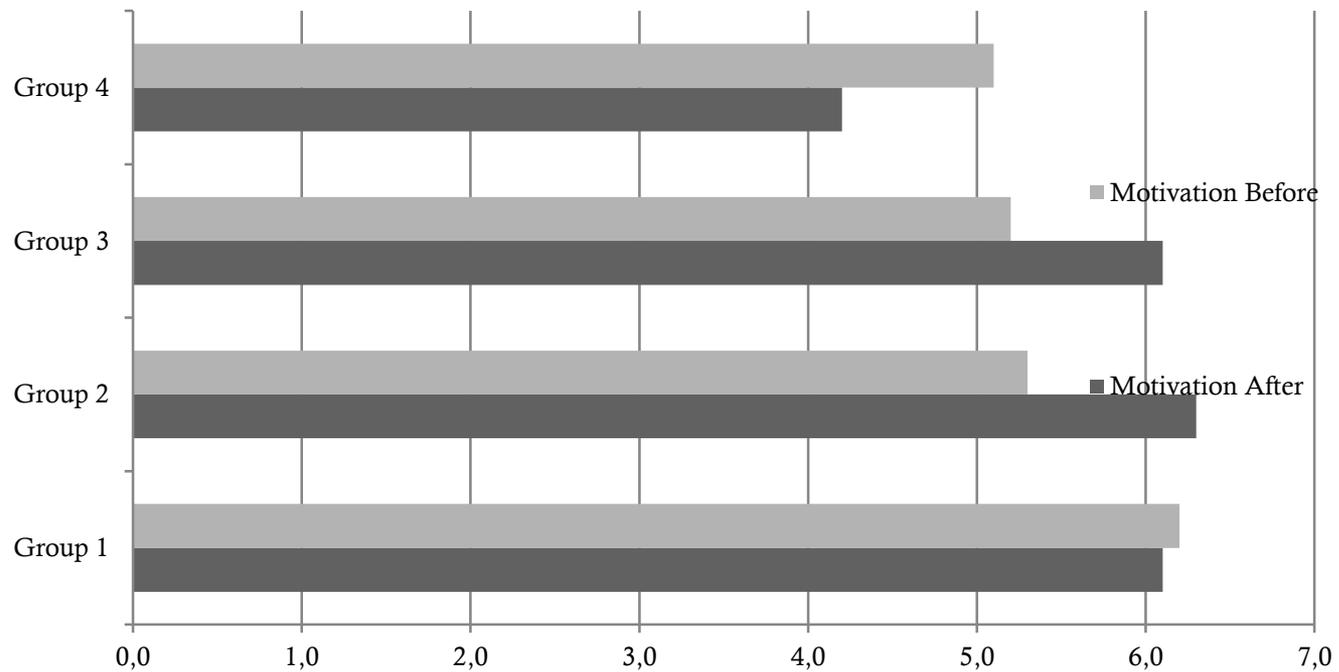
The literature review yielded a conceptual toolbox for analysing the complex relationships between hope, motivation, willingness to engage, and complexity awareness.

- It is hard to estimate how hope will influence motivation and action: the role of hope may lead to motivation to individual or collective action, as well as inhibit action and result in more passive approaches.
- Assumptions, knowledge and new information may give rise to fluctuations in the levels of perceived hope.
- In hope theory, gaining access to multiple routes to approaching a goal will positively affect the sense of hopefulness.
- The concepts of hope and motivation are broad, complex and interconnected; an attempt to outline some of these relationships supports considerations about how a cognitive scaffolding process may have impact on hope and motivation.

Rates for hope before and after



Rates for motivation before and after



Explanatory categories for levels and changes in hope and motivation

- **Issue importance** –the issue itself was considered important or urgent, thus it needed to be addressed.
- **Pathway perception** – the respondent perceived ways to address the issue and felt hopeful due to this and/or motivated to use perceived pathways to work on the issue.
- **Personal resources** – respondents referred to an innate sense of optimism, confidence, strong willpower, talent, the ability to find solutions, faith, time to get involved, keen interest, or valuable knowledge.
- **Collective Efficacy** –sense of possibility for working together towards a shared goal.
- **Other Stakeholders** –sense of the engagement or support from actors outside the group, including those with perceived mandates connected with the issue.
- **Process approach** –participants felt motivated by the approach to working on the issue.
- **Goals/Future** –participants shared that their vision of the future after changes would have occurred was a *source* of motivation.

Barriers to hope and motivation

- **Structures/systems** – respondents talked about inherent limits in significant organizations or societal structures that would make the issue difficult to solve.
- **Issue complexity** – insight that a resolution of the issue might involve more resources than first anticipated.
- Lack of pathway perception
- Lack of personal resources.
- Lack of collective efficacy
- Lack of stakeholder engagement

How increased complexity awareness affected hope and motivation

- The study indicates that increased complexity awareness may have the effect on reducing hope and motivation, which can be explained by initial unrealistic/false hope.
- Increased complexity awareness may also lead to discovery of new pathways, which increases hope and motivation.
- The group sessions helped group members to navigate within the complexity of the issue, and to find some central strategies, rather than becoming overwhelmed by the immensity of the task.
- Reports from participants showed that when the participants formulated concrete actions that made sense to them, then “particularized hope” emerged, as well as continued engagement.

- Hope is sensitive to a variety of conditions, such as time, information, personal resources, social context and perceived support.
- People's hope and motivation can be significantly strengthened when making direct, personal experiences of ways of working productively in a group of participants that share interest in solving common concerns.
- This study confirmed that the discovery of new potential pathways to manage the issue, through a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity involved, is a key factor for levels of hope and motivation, and hence propensity to engage actively in efforts to address the issue.

- As hope and motivation are continuously subject to dynamic change, the object of hope may shift over time; subjected to new conditions, such as access to new information and changes in social contexts. Moving away from “false (or naïve) hope” may at one point appear as lack of hope from a static viewpoint, but viewed dynamically, it may be the start of a renewed, different way of hoping.