

Collective disadvantage in the context of socioeconomic crisis in Greece: The role of system-directed anger, politicians-directed anger and hope in normative and non-normative collective action participation

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Abstract

Group-based anger might take different forms depending on the target that is directed at. In this research, conducted in Greece ($N = 470$), we distinguished between two types of group-based anger in the context of socioeconomic crisis: Anger directed towards the international system and anger directed towards the local politicians. We showed that politicians-directed anger is better predicted by the mere perception of collective disadvantage, whereas system-directed anger by the perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage. We then examined the mediating role of politicians-directed and system-directed anger in the relationship between perceived (illegitimate) disadvantage and collective action and the moderating role of hope in these processes. Results revealed that perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage was positively associated to normative and non-normative collective action through system-directed anger. Collective disadvantage was negatively linked to normative collective action via politicians-directed anger but only among participants with low levels of hope. Moreover, collective disadvantage was directly and positively related to both types of collective action but only when hope was high. We discuss the differential implications of the two types of group-based anger and the role of hope in political

participation. Please refer to the Supplementary Material section to find this article's [Community and Social Impact Statement](#).

KEYWORDS

collective action, collective disadvantage, group-based anger, hope, illegitimacy

1 | INTRODUCTION

Although the economic crisis that started on 2008 hit the Eurozone as a whole, its economic and social consequences were greater for the countries with the weaker economies, mainly southern European countries (Muro & Vidal, 2017). In Greece, the economic crisis was accompanied by strong feelings of group relative deprivation—the perception of disadvantage that results from intergroup comparisons (Smith & Kessler, 2004)—as well as by massive protests especially during the years of 2011–2012 that, in some cases, also included radical forms of action (Chrysochoou, Papastamou, & Prodromitis, 2013). In the following years, Greek citizens were still perceiving that the country was in a disadvantaged position in comparison to other European countries (Petkanopoulou, Sánchez-Rodríguez, Willis, Chrysochoou, & Rodríguez-bailón, 2018). However, data exhibited that collective action participation decreased and political apathy increased also among young people (Dahl et al., 2017). This evidence raises the intriguing question of why over the last years some people have not been as willing to mobilize collectively as during the first years of the economic crisis especially since they continued to perceive a collective disadvantage?

With this research, we aim to achieve a deeper understanding of the emotional factors that shape people's willingness to get involved or not in collective action. To reach this goal, we focus on group-based anger, which is a well-known emotional determinant of protest (Van Zomeren, 2013). Similar to other authors, we distinguish between different subtypes of group-based anger based on the targets that this emotion is directed at (Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007). We also take in consideration another yet relatively understudied emotion in the literature of collective action: Hope. Specifically, we suggest that perceived collective disadvantage and the perceived illegitimacy of such disadvantage predict collective action through group-based anger, and these direct and indirect pathways are moderated by hope. We test this model for two different types of group-based anger, namely, system-directed anger and politicians-directed anger. Moreover, we assess willingness to participate in actions that either conform with the norms of the social system (i.e., normative collective action) or violate these norms (non-normative collective action; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990).

1.1 | Group-based anger as predictor of collective action

Group-based anger stems from the perception that one's group is deprived in comparison with other groups (e.g., Runciman, 1966; Smith, Cronin, & Kessler, 2008; Smith & Kessler, 2004; Walker & Smith, 2002). Group-based anger was consistently found to be the best predictor of individuals' willingness to take action to improve their group's status and conditions (Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). This emotional way to cope with the disadvantage was tested and confirmed in different contexts. Group-based anger was found to predict women's willingness to engage in collective action against gender inequality and discrimination (Ellemers & Barreto, 2009; Iyer & Ryan, 2009), East Germans willingness to fight against their disadvantage in comparison to West Germans (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999), students' protests against increased tuition fees and British Muslims' protests against British foreign policy (Tausch et al., 2011).

Group-based anger might not always be directed towards the advantaged outgroup; it might rather target powerful groups and agents such as the government, the authorities or the system that generates inequalities (Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009a). Indeed, previous research revealed that national governments as well as international influential groups and institutions are considered by southern Europeans as important causes of the economic crisis (Bukowski, de Lemus, Rodriguez-Bailón, & Willis, 2017; Papastamou, Valentim, Mari, & Marchand, 2018). In this research, we therefore focus on feelings of anger directed towards these agents. More specifically, we distinguish between anger that is directed towards international elites and institutions and anger that targets the local political system and actors.

Anger directed towards international elites and institutions could be considered as a type of moral outrage stemming from the perception that these powerful agents have violated a standard of justice (Thomas et al., 2009a). This type of anger that allocates the blame towards international third parties is more likely to politicize identity and foster collective action participation against inequality (Jasper, 2014; Thomas et al., 2009a; Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009b).

Anger directed towards local politicians shifts the blame for the disadvantage against powerful agents that are elected by and represent the ingroup. Thus, this type of anger might involve assuming certain responsibility for the disadvantage (Iyer et al., 2007). Evidence about the relation of this subtype of anger with collective action is less conclusive. On the one hand, anger directed towards a specific government was found to increase collective action intentions (Iyer et al., 2007; Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2007). On the other hand, anger directed towards the entire national political system seems to reduce political participation as an expression of political cynicism. For instance, Van Zomeren, Saguy, Mazzone, and Cicognani (2018) found that anger targeting the political system at large demotivated Dutch and Israeli participants to vote in the national elections. However, the same authors showed that in Italy during a period that a change of the political status quo was perceived as a real rather than a utopic issue, both anger directed towards a specific government and anger towards the political system as a whole predicted political participation (Van Zomeren et al., 2018).

We suggest that understanding the role of politicians-directed anger in collective action could be enriched by taking into consideration the interplay between this emotion and the future oriented emotion of hope. Notwithstanding, the aforementioned indirect evidence (see Van Zomeren et al., 2018), this possibility to the best of our knowledge has never been explored. In the following section, we discuss the role of hope in the context of collective action.

1.2 | The role of hope in the context of collective action

Hope is elicited by the belief that a desired outcome is possible to occur in the future, and it has been characterized as a creative emotional reaction that enables people to find new paths and solutions to societal problems (Bar-Tal, 2001; Cohen-Chen, Crisp, & Halperin, 2015; Lazarus, 1999). Thus, hope might motivate people to actively challenge the status quo and improve their personal or group position. However, only a few studies until now focused on the role of this emotion in the context of collective action.

Wright et al. (1990) showed that high levels of hope for improving social standing lead to participation in normative collective actions. Moreover, feeling hopeful was associated to increased willingness to participate in normative collective actions aiming at improving the living conditions of the middle class in Israel (Shuman, Cohen-Chen, Hirsch-Hoefler, & Halperin, 2016). Finally, hope that an unfavorable social situation will improve in the future predicted a stronger commitment with the 15 M movement in Spain (Włodarczyk, Basabe, Páez, & Zumeta, 2017).

However, there is also evidence contradicting the idea that hope motivates mobilization. Hornsey and Fielding (2016) found that messages of hope concerning environmental issues motivated actions that prevent climate change to a lesser extent than pessimistic messages through decreasing feelings of threat and risk. Furthermore, hope for maintaining harmonious relations with the advantaged outgroup diminished disadvantaged group members

willingness to engage in collective actions in order to improve their position (Hasan-Aslih, Pliskin, van Zomeren, Halperin, & Saguy, 2019).

Lastly, other authors showed that hope plays a moderating role qualifying the effects of other strong predictors of collective action. For instance, it was recently found that hope acts as a moderator on the efficacy-based pathway to collective action, such that perceived efficacy predicts collective action only among individuals who maintain high hopes for social change (Cohen-chen & Van Zomeren, 2018). However, the moderating role of hope on the emotion-based pathway to collective action still remains unexplored. In the present research, we examine the role of hope as a predictor of collective action and as potential moderator of the direct and indirect links between collective disadvantage and collective action.

1.3 | The present research

The aim of the current research is twofold: First, we wanted to explore how perceived collective disadvantage in the context of the socioeconomic crisis as well as perceived illegitimacy of such disadvantage shape the experience of different types of group-based anger. Most existing studies have assessed general feelings of anger without specifying the target that this emotion is directed at. The present research extends previous literature by distinguishing between different targets of group-based anger in the context of the socioeconomic crisis such as the international system (e.g., international institutions, elites) or the local political system and politicians of the country. Since system-directed anger has a strong moral component (Thomas et al., 2009a), we expect that perceived illegitimacy of the disadvantage would be a key appraisal for this subtype of anger (H1a). When it comes to politicians-directed anger, we expect that this type of anger will be stronger related to the mere perception of disadvantage rather than the perceived illegitimacy of it (H1b). This is because blaming the politicians who are elected by the ingroup might involve assuming certain responsibility (Iyer et al., 2007).

Second, we sought to explore the direct effects of collective disadvantage and the perceived illegitimacy of such disadvantage on collective action as well as the indirect effects of these variables through the two types of group-based anger, and we investigate whether hope acts as a moderator for these effects. This is a novel aspect of the current research, given that scholars only recently begun to investigate the role of positive emotions in the context of collective action and existing evidence is inconclusive. Moreover, although there is some evidence about the co-occurrence of anger with other negative emotions such as contempt (de Vos, van Zomeren, Gordijn, & Postmes, 2013), to the best of our knowledge, the interplay between group-based anger and positive emotions such as hope remains an unaddressed issue.

Building upon well-established models of collective action, we hypothesized that perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage will positively predict willingness to participate in collective action through increasing feelings of system directed anger (H2a). However, we expect that the direct and indirect effects of the mere perception of disadvantage would be moderated by hope (H2b). More specifically, we expect that among individuals who maintain high hope for the future, collective disadvantage will be positively associated to collective action both directly and indirectly through politicians-directed anger. Among individuals with low hope, we expect that politicians-directed anger will be negatively related to collective action; therefore, the indirect effect of collective disadvantage via politicians-directed anger would be reversed.

We test this moderated mediation process for both normative and non-normative collective action. This is important given that the vast majority of previous research is mainly focused on the emotional antecedents of non-normative collective action, whereas only few studies have examined the emotions that are associated to non-normative collective action (for exceptions, see Shuman et al., 2016; Tausch et al., 2011). We did not have any specific hypothesis about how these processes might differ when examining normative and non-normative collective action. On the one hand, it has been suggested that group-based anger is unrelated or less strongly related to non-normative collective action (Tausch et al., 2011). On the other hand, in the context of the socioeconomic crisis in Greece,

group-based anger was found to be related to both normative and non-normative reactions to austerity (Chrysochoou et al., 2013).

With regard to the role of hope as a predictor of collective action, previous literature provided contradicted evidence. Hope was found associated to both increased and decreased willingness to participate in collective action (Hornsey & Fielding, 2016; Shuman et al., 2016; Włodarczyk et al., 2017). We therefore tested the relation between hope and normative and non-normative collective action having these alternative possibilities in mind.

Given that this research aims to extend existing models of collective action, as per established practice (e.g., Sweetman, Maio, Spears, Manstead, & Livingstone, 2019), we control for perceived efficacy – a concept that is closely related to hope (Greenaway, Cichocka, Veelen, Likki, & Branscombe, 2016) – and group identification to show that the predicted effects hold above and beyond these two traditional predictors of collective action (Van Zomeren, 2013).

2 | METHOD

2.1 | Participants and procedure

In total, 510 participants accepted to participate in the study. We excluded 40 participants who withdrew early from the study (i.e., after the first question). The final sample consisted of 470 Greek citizens (129 men, 324 women and 17 undisclosed) aged between 18 and 75 years ($M = 36.11$, $SD = 14.27$) recruited through snowballing method who voluntarily answered the survey. After reading the instructions, participants provided informed consent and completed the survey individually. At the end of the study, participants were thanked and debriefed.¹

2.2 | Measures

The following measures were included in the questionnaire. All answers (unless otherwise indicated) were given in 7-point scales ranged from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*.

Perceived collective disadvantage. We adapted the measure of the socioeconomic status 10-points scale by Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, and Ickovics (2000) to measure participants' perception about the position that Greece occupies in the EU.

Perceived illegitimacy of collective disadvantage. We included an item to assess the extent to which participants perceived the position that Greece occupies in the EU as illegitimate: 'How unfair do you consider the position of Greece in the EU'.

Group-based anger. We asked participants to what extent they feel angry at the following targets: 'the politicians of the country', 'the current government', 'the political situation in Greece', 'the financial elites (banks, multinational corporations)', 'the European and international institutions (IMF, European Central Bank, European Commission)' and 'The EU'. An exploratory factor analysis with oblique rotation yielded two factors with eigenvalues greater than one that explained the 78.75% of variance. As expected, the first three items loaded onto the first component named as *politicians-directed anger* ($\alpha = .84$), whereas the last three items loaded onto the second factor named as *system-directed anger* ($\alpha = .86$).

Group-based hope. We asked participants to indicate the degree of their agreement with 11 statements that assess hope in the context of the socioeconomic crisis (e.g., 'I hope that in the future there will be economic growth and prosperity', 'I hope that new job positions will open in Greece', 'I hope that in the future there will be no economic crisis' and 'I hold hopes that the Greek citizens will be more interested in the common good than their personal interest'; $\alpha = .93$). The items were elaborated based on a pilot study in which we asked 64 university students to think of the socioeconomic situation in Greece after the economic crisis and describe what they hope for the future.

Collective actions. We asked participants about their willingness to participate to normative collective actions ($\alpha = .84$): 'participate in a demonstration', 'go on strike', 'join a trade union', as well as to non-normative collective actions: 'occupy public buildings', 'publish texts on the internet approving political violence', 'publish texts on the internet inciting to political disobedience' and 'take part in riots with the police or the political rivals' ($\alpha = .81$).²

Control variables. We measured political efficacy through the following two statements (Dahl et al., 2017): 'People like me do not have the opportunity to influence the decisions of the Greek parliament' and 'It does not matter who wins the Greek elections, the interest of the ordinary people do not matter' ($r = .587$; $p < .001$). The items were inverted in order to measure political efficacy instead of lack of efficacy. In addition, two items were included to measure national identification: 'I consider myself to be Greek' and 'The fact that I am Greek is an important part of my identity', $r = .754$, $p < .001$.

Demographic information. Finally, participants provided sociodemographic information (i.e., age, gender and place of residence).³

3 | RESULTS

3.1 | Analysis strategy

We first conducted preliminary analyses to inspect bivariate correlations between the study variables (see Table 1).

We then conducted hierarchical multiple regression analyses to predict system-directed anger and politicians-directed anger from perceived collective disadvantage and perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage (H1a and H1b). In these analyses, we also tested possible interaction between these two predictors. We then conducted a series of moderated mediation analyses (four in total) through Process macro for SPSS (Model 15) using bias-corrected bootstrapping for 10,000 resamples (Hayes, 2013), to test the direct and indirect effects of perceived collective disadvantage and the perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage on willingness to participate in collective actions (normative and non-normative) depending on the level of experienced hope (H2a and H2b). The two types of group-based anger were simultaneously introduced as mediators in all models. Lastly, for reasons of parsimony, we integrated these models using path analysis.⁴ We conducted these analyses controlling for perceived political efficacy and national identification (see Appendix S1 for analyses without controlling for these variables).

3.2 | Predicting politicians-directed anger and system-directed anger

In each hierarchical multiple regression analysis, control variables were introduced in the first step. Perceived collective disadvantage and perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage were simultaneously introduced in step 2. Step 3 included the interaction between perceived collective disadvantage and perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage. Results from the hierarchical regression analyses conducted are summarized in Tables 2 and 3 for system-directed anger and politicians-directed anger, respectively.

The first regression analysis revealed that the mere perception of disadvantage did not predict system-directed group-based anger ($\beta = .069$, $p = .116$). However, in line with H1a, perceived illegitimacy of the disadvantage positively and strongly predicted this type of anger ($\beta = .425$, $p < .001$). The interaction effect was not significant ($\beta = .001$, $p = .975$).

As expected (H1b), politicians-directed anger was positively predicted by the mere perception that Greece is in a disadvantaged position in comparison with other EU countries ($\beta = .174$, $p < .001$) but not by the perceived illegitimacy of such disadvantaged position ($\beta = .083$, $p = .060$). Again, the collective disadvantage \times illegitimacy was not significant ($\beta = -.006$, $p = .889$).⁵

TABLE 1 Means, standard deviations (SDs) and correlations matrices for key and control variables

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Collective disadvantage	7.91 (1.45)											
2. Illegitimacy of disadvantage	4.11 (1.78)	-.057										
3. Politicians-directed anger	5.88 (1.22)	.184***	.114*									
4. System-directed anger	5.30 (1.50)	.065	.413***	.352***								
5. Hope	3.64 (1.22)	-.259***	.129**	-.139**	-.119*							
6. Normative CA	3.85 (1.70)	.015	.064	-.032	.265***	.019						
7. Non-normative CA	2.27 (1.42)	.023	.047	-.041	.241***	-.008	.508***					
8. Prosocial CA	5.27 (1.38)	.017	.043	-.002	.090	.110*	.395***	.279***				
9. Political efficacy	3.87 (1.65)	-.123**	.063	-.267***	-.102*	.260***	.099*	.004	.091*			
10. National identification	5.44 (1.64)	-.012	.218***	.275***	.099*	.201***	-.190***	-.326***	-.057	.031		
11. Gender	-	.021	.106*	.065	.136**	.010	.065	.096*	.222***	-.047	-.088	
12. Age	36.11 (14.27)	.081	.088	.020	.238***	-.097*	.034	-.064	-.103*	.094*	.167***	-.218***

Note: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 2 Hierarchical regression analysis to predict system-directed anger the context of the socioeconomic crisis

Predictors	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	β	95% CI	B	β	95% CI	B	β	95% CI
Step 1									
Phase of data collection	-.147	-.048	[-.426, .133]	-.134	-.044	[-.392, .124]	-.134	-.044	[-.393, .125]
National identification	.159	.105	[.019, .298]	.019	.013	[-.111, .149]	.020	.013	[-.111, .150]
Political efficacy	-.160	-.106	[-.299, -.021]	-.179	-.118	[-.307, -.052]	-.179	-.118	[-.307, -.052]
Step 2									
Perceived disadvantage				.107	.069	[-.025, .239]	.107	.069	[-.026, .240]
Illegitimacy of disadvantage				.643	.425	[.514, .772]	.642	.425	[.512, .772]
Step 3									
Disadvantage \times illegitimacy							.002	.001	[-.120, .124]
R ²	.024			.198			.198		
F	.3.765*			22.170***			18.434***		
ΔR^2				.174			.000		
ΔF				48.583***			.001		

Note: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 3 Hierarchical regression analysis to predict politicians-directed anger the context of the socioeconomic crisis

Predictors	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	β	95% CI	B	β	95% CI	B	β	95% CI
Step 1									
Phase of data collection	-.030	-.012	[-.242, .181]	.035	.014	[-.175, .245]	.036	.015	[-.175, .248]
National identification	.361	.294	[.256, .466]	.345	.281	[.239, .451]	.345	.281	[.238, .451]
Political efficacy	-.333	-.271	[-.438, -.228]	-.312	-.253	[-.416, -.208]	-.312	-.253	[-.416, -.208]
Step 2									
Perceived disadvantage				.219	.173	[.111, .327]	.220	.174	[.111, .328]
Illegitimacy of disadvantage				.101	.082	[-.004, .206]	.102	.083	[-.004, .208]
Step 3									
Disadvantage \times illegitimacy							-.007	-.006	[-.107, .092]
R ²	.156			.190			.190		
F	27.656***			20.987***			17.454***		
ΔR^2				.034			.000		
ΔF				9.429***			.019		

Note: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

3.3 | Conditional direct and indirect effects of perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage on collective action

We first tested the direct and indirect effects of the perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage on normative and non-normative collective action intentions respectively moderated by hope (see Table 4).⁶ In line with H2a, this analysis revealed that system-directed anger mediated the relation between perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage and participation in normative collective actions independently from the level of the experienced hope ($IE = 0.147$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [0.0770, 0.2228] and $IE = 0.149$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI [0.0910, 0.2129] at low and high levels of hope, respectively, moderated mediation index = 0.0010, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [-0.0344, 0.0367]).

The indirect effect of perceived illegitimate disadvantage on non-normative collective action through system-directed anger was not conditioned by hope either ($IE = 0.119$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI [0.0629, 0.1771] and $IE = 0.106$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [0.0640, 0.1521] at low and high levels of hope, respectively, moderated mediation index = -0.0055, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI [-0.0320, 0.0218]).

3.4 | Conditional direct and indirect effects of perceived collective disadvantage on collective action

Two additional moderated mediation analyses tested whether hope moderates the direct and indirect effects of the perceived collective disadvantage on normative and non-normative collective action intentions (see Table 5).⁷ As expected, the indirect effect of collective disadvantage on normative collective action via politicians-directed anger was moderated by hope, moderated mediation index = 0.018, $SE = 0.01$; 95% CI [0.0024, 0.0386]. At low levels of hope (-1SD), politicians-directed anger negatively predicted willingness to participate in normative collective action. Whereas at high levels of hope (+1 SD), politicians-directed anger was not significantly related to normative

TABLE 4 Direct and indirect effects (via politicians-directed anger and system-directed anger) of perceived illegitimacy disadvantage on normative and non-normative collective action moderated by experienced hope

	M1: Anger politicians		M2: Anger system		DV: Normative		DV: Non-normative	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Perceived illegitimacy	.057	.03	.362***	.04	-.044	.05	-.014	.04
Anger politicians					-.115	.07	-.075	.06
Anger system					.408***	.06	.311***	.05
Hope					.100	.07	.113*	.06
Illegitimacy × hope					.002	.04	.029	.03
Anger politicians × hope					.130*	.05	.071	.04
Anger system × hope					.003	.05	-.015	.04
Perceived disadvantage	.151***	.04	.074	.05	.083	.06	.065	.05
Political efficacy	-.190***	.03	-.109**	.04	.136**	.05	.027	.04
National identification	.210***	.03	.012	.04	-.182***	.05	-.283***	.04
Phase of data collection	.035	.11	-.134	.13	.552***	.15	.383**	.12
R ²	.190		.198		.186		.217	
F (df)	20.986 (5, 448)		22.170 (5, 448)		9.185 (11, 442)		11.103 (11, 442)	
p	<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001	

Note: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 5 Direct and indirect effects (via politicians-directed anger and system-directed anger) of perceived collective disadvantage on normative and non-normative collective action moderated by experienced hope

	M1: Anger politicians		M2: Anger system		DV: Normative		DV: Non-normative	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Perceived disadvantage	.151***	.04	.074	.05	.073	.06	.054	.05
Anger politicians	-	-	-	-	-.110	.07	-.070	.06
Anger system	-	-	-	-	.411***	.06	.311***	.05
Hope					.092	.07	.112*	.06
Disadvantage × hope					.105*	.04	.088*	.04
Anger politicians × hope					.116*	.05	.056	.04
Anger system × hope					.003	.04	-.003	.03
Illegitimacy	.057	.03	.362***	.04	-.037	.05	-.009	.04
Political efficacy	-.190***	.03	-.109**	.04	.133**	.05	.022	.04
National identification	.210***	.03	-.012	.04	-.178***	.05	-.281***	.04
Phase of data collection	.035	.11	.134	.13	.563***	.15	.384**	.12
R ²	.190		.198		.196		.225	
F (df)	20.987 (5, 448)		22.170 (5, 448)		9.805 (11, 442)		11.666 (11, 442)	
p	<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001	

Note: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

collective action (Figure 1a). As a consequence, when hope was low, collective disadvantage had a negative indirect effect on willingness to participate in normative collective action via politicians-directed anger, $IE = -0.038$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI $[-0.0840, -0.0048]$. When hope was high, this indirect effect was not significant ($IE = 0.005$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI $[-0.0191, 0.0304]$). The direct effect of perceived disadvantage on normative collective action intentions was also qualified by hope. Collective disadvantage positively predicted normative collective action intentions at high levels of hope; $b = 0.199$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI $[0.0531, 0.3457]$, but this effect was null when levels of hope were low; $b = -0.054$, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI $[-0.2121, 0.1041]$ (see Figure 1b).⁸

When non-normative collective action was introduced as outcome variable, the analysis did not reveal presence of moderated mediation. However, hope moderated the direct effect of collective disadvantage on non-normative collective action, such as this effect was positive when hope was high, $b = 0.161$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI $[0.0411, 0.2803]$, but it was null when levels of hope were low, $b = -0.052$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI $[-0.1816, 0.0768]$ (Figure 2).

3.5 | Path analysis

For parsimony reasons, we aimed to integrate the aforementioned pathways into a model using AMOS 21. Missing values were imputed using the EM method (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). We specified a model (see Figure 3) where perceived disadvantage and perceived illegitimacy predict normative and non-normative collective action intentions both directly and indirectly through politicians-directed anger, system-directed anger and hope. In this model, we included all paths from the predictors to the mediators and from the predictors and the mediators to the outcome variables as well as the interaction terms between each one of the two types of group-based anger and hope. With the aim to test whether hope moderates the direct effects of perceived (illegitimate) disadvantage on collective action the interaction between perceived disadvantage and hope and the interaction between perceived illegitimacy and hope were also included in the model. This model had an excellent fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.759$, $p = .001$, CFI = .954,

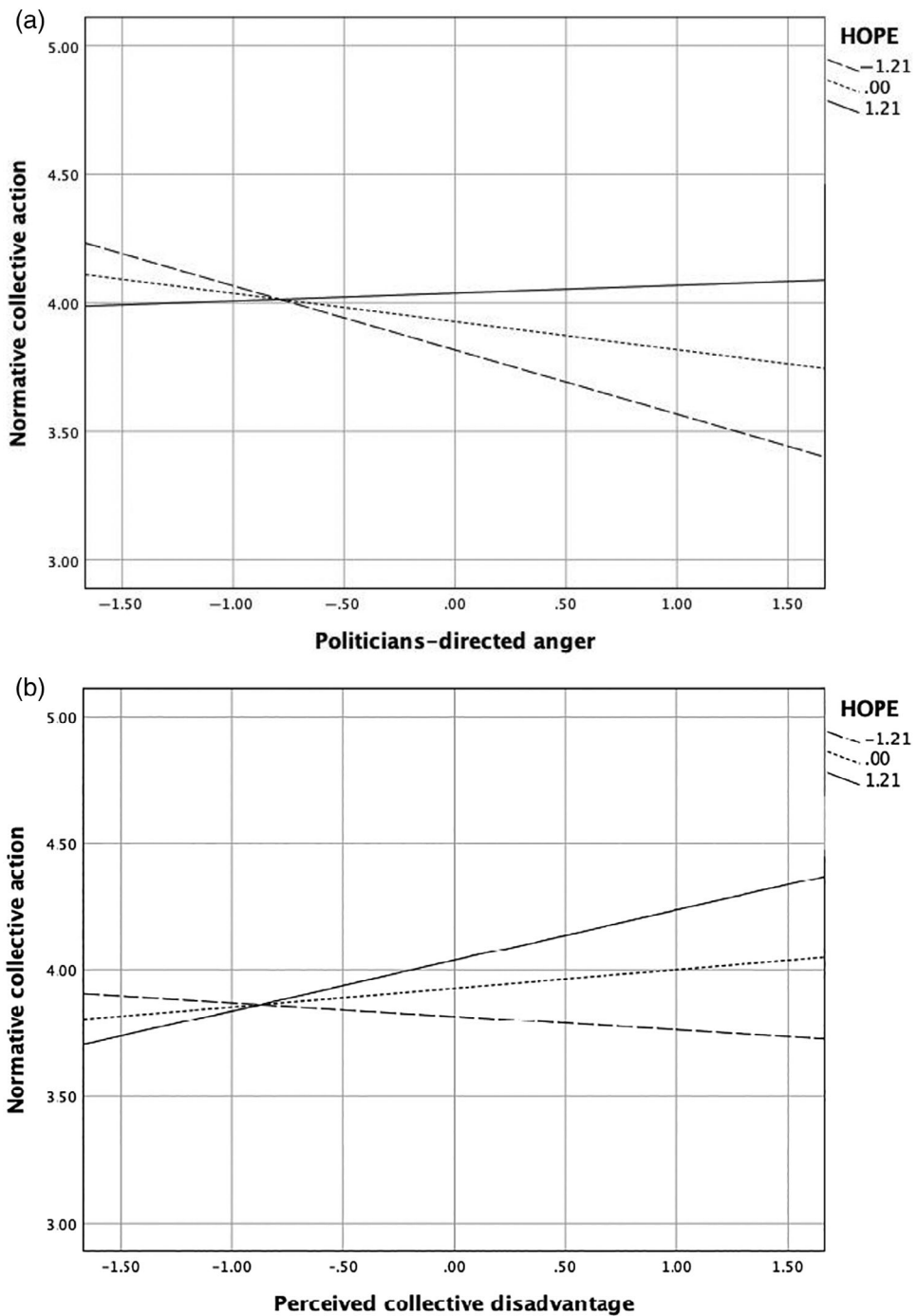


FIGURE 1 (a) Interaction effect between politicians-directed anger and hope on normative collective action intentions. (b) Interaction effect between perceived collective disadvantage and hope on normative collective action intentions [Corrections made on 18 November 2021, after first online publication: Figure 1b which was inadvertently left out has been included in this version.]

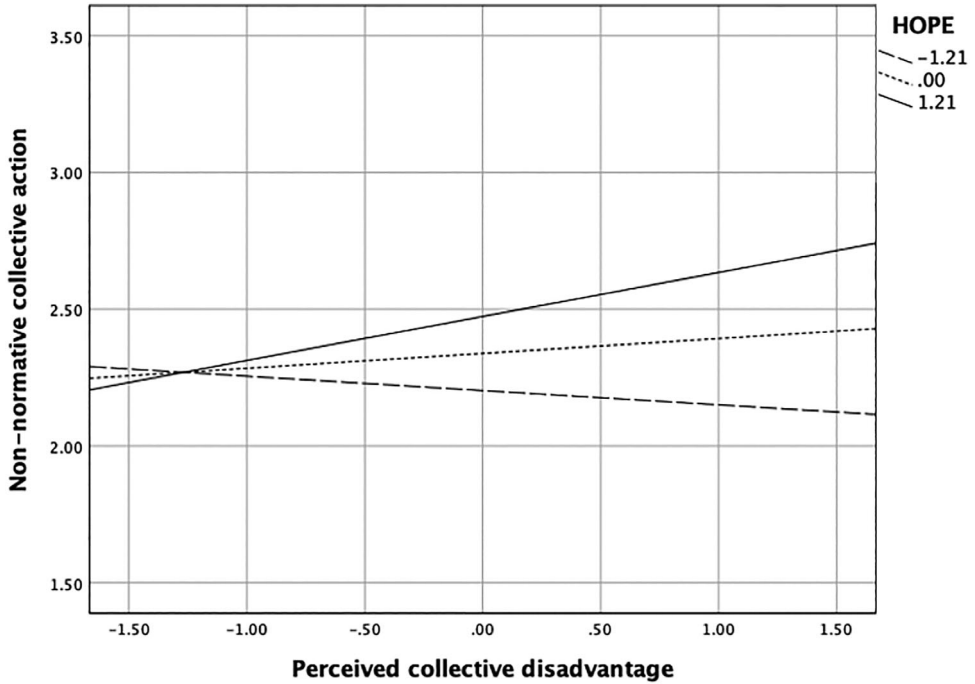


FIGURE 2 Interaction effect between perceived collective disadvantage and hope on non-normative collective action intentions

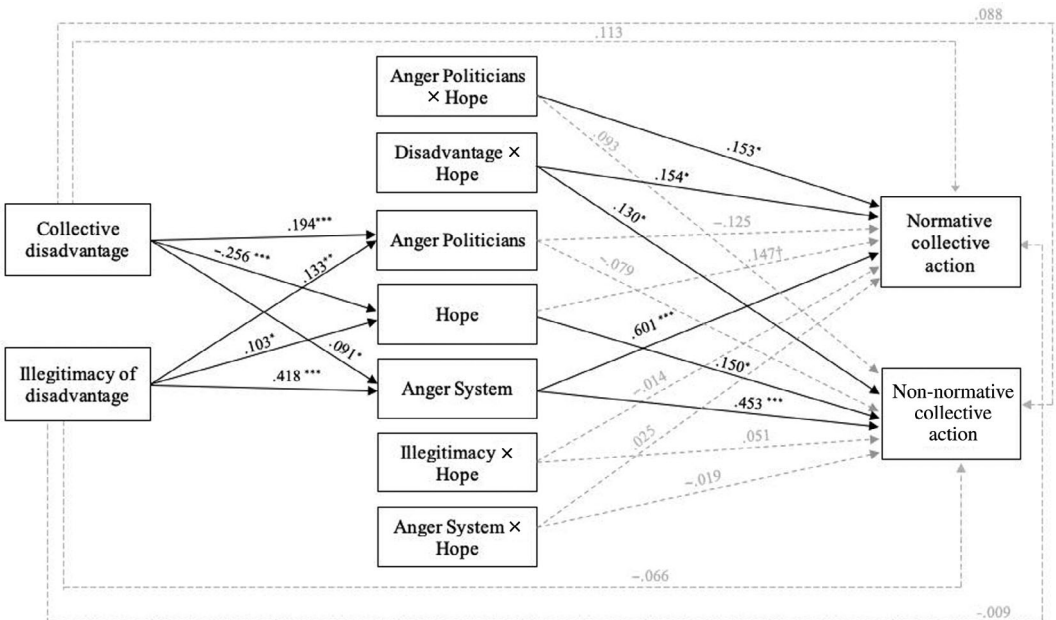


FIGURE 3 Results of path analysis. Black arrows refer to significant paths. Path coefficients are standardized estimates. Significance of coefficients is indicated, * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$, † $p < .06$. This analysis was conducted controlling for political efficacy, national identification and phase of data collection

sRMRR = .041, RMSEA = .040) and confirmed many of the expected relations. More specifically, perceived disadvantage was positively related to politicians-directed anger and less so to system-directed anger, whereas perceived illegitimacy of the disadvantage was more strongly related to system-directed anger than politicians-directed anger. More importantly and consistent with our predictions, both normative and non-normative collective action were predicted by system-directed anger but not by politicians-directed anger. However, normative collective action was predicted by the interaction between politicians-directed anger \times hope. As expected, the interaction between perceived collective disadvantage \times hope on both types of collective action was also significant. Overall, this analysis confirms the predicted indirect effect of perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage on collective action through system-directed anger. It also provides additional support for the moderating role of hope on the direct and indirect paths of collective disadvantage to collective action.

4 | DISCUSSION

Collective disadvantage has a complex emotional side that encompasses different types of feelings (Smith & Kessler, 2004). Most studies so far have focused on the experience of group-based anger and its mediating role in the link between collective disadvantage and collective action (e.g., Van Zomeren et al., 2004; van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012). Nevertheless, most researchers have assessed group-based anger using generic emotional labels (i.e., angry, outraged, annoyed) without specifying the target of such emotional responses (for an exception see Van Zomeren et al., 2018). In this research, we tested the well-established emotional pathway to collective action for two different subtypes of group-based anger – politicians-directed and system-directed group-based anger – and we investigated the role of the yet relatively understudied emotion of hope in these processes.

Specifically, our research revealed the following pathways to collective action: Perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage was positively related to system-directed anger which was then related to increased willingness to participate in both normative and non-normative collective action. However, the mere perception of collective disadvantage was positively related to politicians-directed anger which in turn predicted decreased willingness to participate in normative collective action, when hope for the future was low. Lastly, perceived collective disadvantage predicted both normative and non-normative collective action intentions but only among participants who maintained high hope for the future. Our findings highlight the importance of considering different subtypes of group-based anger and take in consideration the role of positive emotions in order to improve the predictive strength of the emotional pathways to collective action. Below, we discuss the theoretical implications of our findings for the literature of collective action as well as the political implications in general and more specifically for the Greek context, and we provide suggestions for future research.

Our findings support the idea that group-based anger might take different forms depending on the target is directed at. On the one hand, system-directed anger could be considered as proxy of moral outrage. It has been suggested that this type of anger stems from a perception that a standard of fairness has been transgressed (Thomas et al., 2009a). In line with this idea, we found that system-directed anger was strongly and positively predicted by perceived illegitimacy of the disadvantage (rather than the mere perception that Greece has a low status in the EU). On the other hand, politicians-directed anger was better predicted by the mere perception that Greece has a low status in the EU (perceived collective disadvantage) than the illegitimacy of such disadvantage. This finding supports the idea that blaming a powerful group that is elected by and represents the ingroup, might involve assuming certain responsibility for the disadvantage (Iyer et al., 2007).

Furthermore, our research provides evidence that the well-established emotion-based pathway to collective action (Van Zomeren et al., 2012) holds true only when anger is directed towards the international system and agents. The emotion-based pathway was not confirmed when anger targeted the local political agents. As

expected, among participants who maintained low hope, politicians-directed anger was associated to decreased willingness to participate in normative collective action. Contrary to our prediction, the experience of high levels of hope was not found to reverse the negative relationship between politicians-directed anger and collective action. However, those who maintained high hopes that the socioeconomic situation of the country would improve in the future were immune to the negative effect of politicians-directed anger on collective action. This is an important result given that it suggests that hope acts as a buffer against political apathy that is related to politicians-directed anger. Moreover, hope was also found to moderate the link between perceived collective disadvantage and collective action, such that when hope was high, collective disadvantage positively predicted participation to all types of collective action.

Taken together, these results are in line with previous findings that also revealed the role of hope as an important moderator of well-established predictors of collective action. For instance, Cohen-chen and Van Zomeren (2018) showed that hope moderates the efficacy-based pathway to collective action. Our results extend this line of research by showing that hope acts as a moderator also on the emotion-based pathway to collective action. It is noteworthy that these effects emerge after controlling for the – closely related to hope – factor of political efficacy as well as other ‘traditional predictors of collective action’. This means that hope makes a unique contribution to the well-established models of collective action (e.g., SIMCA; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008).

Besides the moderating role of hope, path analysis revealed a link between hope and collective action intentions that was even stronger in case of non-normative collective action. This finding joins those from other research in suggesting that hope predicts support for social change over and above group-based anger (Greenaway et al., 2016; Włodarczyk et al., 2017).

Contrary to the idea that hope is associated to peaceful forms of action (Shuman et al., 2016), in our study, hope was found to facilitate not only normative but also non-normative collective action. Recently, the term of radical hope was used to describe the feeling of hope that emerges due to perceptions of continuous injustice and sociopolitical oppression (Mosley et al., 2020). This feeling motivates a broad range of both normative and non-normative resistance tactics. Thus, a plausible explanation for our results could be that the prolonged socioeconomic crisis and its severe consequences might have elicited feelings of radical hope to our participants.

We also found that the indirect effect of illegitimate collective disadvantage to collective action via system-directed anger operates in a similar way with normative as with non-normative collective action. This finding contradicts the idea that different psychological factors and emotions are hidden behind participation in normative and non-normative collective action (Shuman et al., 2016; Tausch et al., 2011). However, it is in line with the results of previous research – including research conducted in the Greek context – in which it was found that affective injustice was a strong predictor of both types of action (Chrysochoou et al., 2013; Sabucedo, Dono, Alzate, & Seoane, 2018).

Apart from the theoretical contribution, our findings also suggest that the different subtypes of anger have distinct political implications. One could speculate that perceiving the illegitimacy of a collective disadvantage constitutes a more political understanding of the situation that involves a clearer attribution of the adversary. This politicization leads to collective action (both normative and non-normative) through system-directed group-based anger. It could be the case that system-directed anger enables Greek citizens to imagine alternatives to the current system that generates inequalities and motivates them to take action not only against their collective disadvantage but also against inequalities in the EU in general. Also, by allocating the blame on third international agents (e.g., elites and institutions), system-directed anger could potentially unite not only Greek citizens but also other European citizens under a common politicized identity (Thomas et al., 2009a). The mere perception of disadvantage shifts the blame towards the local politicians indiscriminately, which might reduce willingness to participate in collective action as an expression of political cynicism especially when there is no hope for change.

We have shown that hope cancels out the negative indirect effect of collective disadvantage on normative collective action through politicians-directed anger. Also, hope facilitates the positive direct effect of perceived collective disadvantage on collective action. These findings have applied relevance by providing guidelines on how to buffer political apathy and promote active citizenship. For instance, social and educational interventions could induce hope either through the use of hopeful messages or through emotion regulation strategies to buffer political apathy caused by distrust to the politics and promote participation in collective action to improve ingroup's disadvantage position. Yet, these possibilities remain speculations that need to be tested in future intervention studies. In addition, an important challenge for researchers is to identify those conditions under which hope could facilitate normative rather non-normative forms of action.

Finally, it still remains unclear whether the mere perception of collective disadvantage, when combined with high hope, motivates actions that aim to improve the status of the group within the system in a long run or actions that aim to change the system that generates inequalities itself. Identifying different nuances of hope (e.g., hope for harmony vs. hope for equality; Hasan-Aslih et al., 2019) could be helpful to address this question.

Notwithstanding the contribution of these findings, there are also some limitations to be acknowledged. The first one has to do with the correlational design of our research that does not permit us to make inferences of causality. However, the fact that the suggested pathways are grounded on classical models of collective action increases our confidence for the direction of the suggested pathways. Future studies could provide experimental evidence for the role of hope in collective action by manipulating the levels of this emotion through the exposure of people to malleability beliefs regarding the socioeconomic situation (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, & Gross, 2014).

A second limitation is the use of self-reported measures to assess participants' willingness to get involved in collective actions. Despite its widespread use, measures of action tendencies raise concerns about the extraction of conclusions related to the real action. Future studies could use alternative procedures and measurements to assess not only the intention but also certain commitment with the cause. Note that data for the present study were collected before the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) era. The current situation of pandemic poses severe restrictions in traditional forms of collective action, whereas gives rise to the online activism. A timely research avenue to follow could be to test how the different types of anger and hope are associated to social media collective action or other types of online protest (Greijdanus et al., 2020).

In conclusion, our research suggests that group-based anger due to collective disadvantage not always fuels political participation. Anger that stems from the mere perception of collective disadvantage and is directed towards the national political system (rather than the international system) and negatively predicts normative collective action, unless citizens maintain high hope that the socioeconomic situation will be improved. In a context of prolonged experience of deprivation and austerity, maintaining the ability to imagine a hopeful future might be an important challenge.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

ETHICS STATEMENT

All procedures performed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institution where the study was conducted and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Data were collected in two phases. All measures included in each phase are presented in Appendix S1. The variable *phase of data collection* (0 = phase 1; 1 = phase 2) was included as an additional covariate in all the analyses.
- ² We also measured prosocial collective action “join a neighbourhood association or a collective that conducts social work (e.g., provide health services, solidarity-based market),” “volunteer for a social or political purpose,” “donate money for a social purpose” ($\alpha = .78$). In difference with normative and non-normative collective actions, this type of action is more related to the idea of general civic engagement. This type of actions was unrelated to both types of anger (see Table 1) and it was dropped from further analysis.
- ³ Additional analyses using age and gender as controls yielded similar results.
- ⁴ The use of terms “predict” and “predictor” that are common in the language of regression is not intended to imply causation. In a similar vein, by using the term indirect effect, we are adopting the terminology of intervening variable models and we do not claim causal directions.
- ⁵ The regression analyses with age and gender as additional covariates yields a similar pattern of results. That is, system-directed anger is strongly predicted by perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage ($\beta = .428, p < .001$) and not by the mere perception of disadvantage ($\beta = .028, p = .507$). Politicians-directed anger is better predicted by the mere perception of disadvantage ($\beta = .170, p < .001$) and less so by perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage ($\beta = .091, p = .048$).
- ⁶ In these analyses the mere perception of disadvantage was introduced as covariate.
- ⁷ In these analyses perceived illegitimacy of disadvantage was introduced as covariate.
- ⁸ The negative indirect effect of collective disadvantage on normative collective action through politicians directed anger at low levels of hope $IE = -0.041, SE = 0.02, 95\% CI [-0.0886, -0.0075]$ and the direct effect of collective disadvantage on normative collective action ($b = 0.197, SE = 0.08, 95\% CI [0.0477, 0.3464]$) at high levels of hope held when age and gender were additionally included as covariates (moderated mediation index = 0.021, $SE = 0.01, 95\% CI = [0.0051, 0.0434]$).

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Datasets are available from the corresponding author upon request.

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