

PREFACE

Collective
Hope

By

VALERIE BRAITHWAITE

For social scientists, power and governance are big themes. Our ambition is to persuade that hope is too. Some may expect these issues to be addressed in this volume in a top-down fashion. We have not chosen this path. In a world racked by war, hunger, dislocation, and social upheaval, the contributors in this volume have opted for a bottom-up approach. If we can recognize and understand hope in situ and communicate our insights in intellectually challenging ways, perhaps we may be able to entice others to do likewise; steadily pulling the pieces together from our learnings from culturally diverse settings to fully grasp, and respect, the process by which groups set out to mold different futures for themselves.

In this volume, hope is aligned with reason (see especially John Cartwright; Philip Pettit) and action (see especially Sasha Courville and Nicola Piper) and has social roots that empower individuals and collectivities (see especially John Braithwaite; Valerie Braithwaite; Victoria McGeer; Clifford Shearing and Michael Kempa). Through “parental and peer scaffolding” (McGeer, this volume), we are taught the process of hope and learn its social etiquette—how to empower others through the gift of hope and how to empower ourselves through receiving the hope that others offer. Like all social phenomena, hope can go very wrong (see especially Peter Drahos); although as our authors remind us, we do not need to look to the collective for blame on this count. Individual hope is no less certain in the “goodness” of its outcomes than is collective hope. But regardless of outcomes, hope we must. It remains the human beacon of engagement with the task of mapping our destinies.

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If hope is at the core of our being, the question becomes how do we hope productively, not only as individuals (Gillham 2000; Snyder 2000) but also as collectivities (Krygier 2001). We refer to a positive form of this process—hope that is genuinely and critically shared by a group—as collective hope (see Peter Drahos for a delineation of private, collective, and public hope). Less sustainable, we argue, is public hope, at its worst a contagious but superficial form of hope peddled by spin doctors and uncritically accepted by expectant beneficiaries. One of the goals of this volume is to identify the conditions under which collective hope thrives and public hope is exposed, although we do not for a moment turn a blind eye to the overlap between these ways of hoping and to the synergies for social change that are created when they coexist (see especially Valerie Braithwaite; John Cartwright; Clifford Shearing and Michael Kempa). Such is the complexity of understanding the process of hoping well at the collective level. Only when we have satisfactorily accomplished this goal will we be in a position to offer a positive theory of hope, power, and governance. The articles that follow mark the beginning of our journey.

Defining Institutions of Hope

Institutions are conceived as the cultural regulators of life's journey. They are defined broadly as the interconnected rules, norms, and practices that order social encounters and signpost the way toward valued goals. Institutions of hope refer to sets of rules, norms, and practices that ensure that we have some room not only to dream of the extraordinary but also to do the extraordinary. Institutions of hope move us collectively away from a social script that makes engagement in shaping our futures seem futile toward one in which we are expected to be active and responsible participants contributing to a vibrant civil society. Institutions of hope are part of the family of enabling institutions that offset, loosen, or challenge the constraints imposed by regulatory institutions.

Institutions of hope, while richly explored in literature, art, and cultural studies (see John Cartwright, this volume; see also Zournazi 2002), have received relatively little attention in the social sciences, particularly the more empirically driven social sciences (cf. Mack 1999). Over the past decade, however, interest has swelled within the discipline of psychology. Psychologists have advanced the case for a cognitive-affective process of successful adaptation defined by hope (Snyder 2000). Through learning the skills of setting goals and plucking up courage to actively and responsively try different pathways that might lead to the achievement of these goals, individuals can improve problem-solving capacity as well as mental outlook. This literature coheres around the theme of positive psychology—the study of how individuals can be the best they can possibly be—as opposed to a clinical preoccupation with why people fail to realize their potential. Positive psychology might be seen as the beginnings of an emerging institution of hope in itself, one that takes academic scholarship into the marketplace and the helping professions.

Institutions, however, rarely deliver what they promise standing alone (Braithwaite 1993, 1998b; Heimer 1998). Institutions are about social behavior,

and social behavior cannot be compartmentalized. Plans of action developed with a counselor must confront the harsh realities created by other powerful institutions, some close to home such as the family and the workplace, others more distant such as legal and political systems. If individual hope is to be promoted within our enabling institutions (as practiced by schools, medical services, social welfare agencies), it must be accommodated in the design of our constraining institutions, most notably political and legal institutions at the community, regional, and international levels. This volume is directed toward understanding how this goal might be institutionally accomplished.

Institutions of Hope

The volume is divided into two parts. Part I, comprising articles by Peter Drahos, Sasha Courville and Nicola Piper, Clifford Shearing and Michael Kempa, and John Braithwaite, presents a set of case studies demonstrating institutions of hope at work, sometimes for good, sometimes not, from wealthy to poorer countries. These contributors identify the strengths and pitfalls of the institutions they have studied, setting out criteria for what constitutes a socially constructive institution of hope. In all cases, the institutions of hope that are analyzed coexist—in some cases compete—with entrenched, resource-rich institutions that are able to undermine or hijack the hopes of the less powerful.

In the opening article to the volume, Peter Drahos provides insight into how hope is not only derailed within the competitive structure of some of our institutions but also rendered dysfunctional for those who have judged poorly, mistakenly assessing the pathways for turning their hopes into reality. Drahos addresses the impact of intellectual property agreements on the less developing world and hopes for free trade. The problem he identifies is the struggle to provide antiretroviral medicines to poor people suffering from AIDS in developing countries. Drahos steps up to the platform to expose the Achilles' heel of hope. Hope can be spooned out to mass publics by those who command our institutions—as a sedative to injustice and abuse and as a means of delaying, even circumventing, calls for social change.

While recognizing the abuses of hope by the politically powerful, Drahos does not argue for withdrawal from hope—quite the opposite. He proposes a four-point plan for strengthening institutions of hope through ensuring that hope becomes the object of critical scrutiny, comparative analysis, rigorous research, and earnest development that is owned as a possible future by protagonists and skeptics alike and that is shared openly with members of the society. For a society to hope well, it must do the hard yards of forging collective hope out of individual hope and not take the easy road of skating on public hope.

The second article, by Sasha Courville and Nicola Piper, examines the role that hope plays in nongovernmental organization (NGO) activism. Focusing their analysis on the fair trade movement and foreign migrant worker rights, Courville and Piper document the ways private hopes can be shared within collectivities and

become a force for social change. Starting from a general and commonly shared conception of hope, Courville and Piper are strong in articulating its limitations. But like Drahos, they then proceed to analyze the add-ons that make hope functional in delivering better outcomes for a community. Their argument centers on the notion that hope must have an object. Through introducing us to the operations of NGOs at the grassroots, Courville and Piper demonstrate how hope acquires its object—through shared feelings of injustice, through ideas for change, and through a sense of empowerment as the feelings and ideas are shared within a community. But most important is action. Once action is seen as being the companion of hope, social movements gain momentum. Courville and Piper have provided a richly textured account of the bootstrapping that takes place between hope, empowerment, ideas for change, and action. Hope is the most enduring of these, lying in wait through cycles of adversity and resistance to change. In concluding, Courville and Piper lend substance to their opening supposition: collective hopes are many, and power cannot be divorced from the question of whose hopes will dominate and be realized.

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The seeds of doubt that Courville and Piper sow in relation to whose hopes dominate at the collective level are explicitly tackled by Clifford Shearing and Michael Kempa in their article on the hopes embodied in the South African museum built on Robben Island. Shearing and Kempa's case study directly confronts the issue of whether we are observing, through the accounts of the authors, the power of hope or the hopes of those who now hold power. Shearing and Kempa push the envelope further by asking the hard and provocative question, Does the museum peddle public hope or is it part of a set of enabling institutions that are nurturing collective hope for a new South Africa? Drawing on the work of social theorists such as Foucault and Bourdieu, Shearing and Kempa begin their analysis from the position that all hope is socially constructed and that any analysis of authentic hope has to be made against this background. They proceed to argue, drawing on case material from Robben Island, that it still makes sense to talk about authentic hope because the issue is not how it is constructed but how it is contested. Just as individuals and institutions have to prove their trustworthiness

(Braithwaite 1998b), those who offer hope must prove the authenticity of that hope.

Shearing and Kempa offer three avenues for establishing authenticity. The first critically examines the hope that is on offer in its cultural context and asks, Does this hope have integrity for these people, does it espouse the ways of being, the sensibilities that have historically been valued in this population? Shearing and Kempa connect the design and operation of the Robben Island Museum to the South African sensibility of *ubuntu*. In this way, the museum constitutes a technology of governance that symbolizes and reinforces a deeply and widely held sensibility that speaks to the dignity of a new South Africa. The second avenue for establishing authentic hope proposed and illustrated by Shearing and Kempa picks up on two of Drahos's conditions for collective hope—providing opportunity for the bearers of truth to come forward and allowing those who inspire private hope to lead the new hope among South Africans. Shearing and Kempa use interview material to show the priority that the designers of the Robben Island Museum have placed on living history, through opening their doors the moment that Robben Island was declared a museum and employing those who lived and learned to hope with Mandela as museum guides. The openness of the museum experience, where guides tell their stories without the careful scripting of museum curators and archivists can no doubt be confronting. But this brings Shearing and Kempa to their third avenue for authenticating hope. The museum exposes visitors to sensibilities of a particular kind, but visitors do not have to take them on board. They can contest them and respond to alternatives. Authenticated hope is chosen not imposed.

Hope that we choose to embrace is empowering, an idea introduced into this volume by Courville and Piper as well as Shearing and Kempa, and one that was developed by John Braithwaite in his article on the recursive process of hope fueling emancipation and emancipation fueling hope. On this view, to engage with only half the cycle is to deny ourselves and others full potential. John Braithwaite draws on the work of psychologists such as Seligman (2000, 2002) and Snyder, Irving, and Anderson (1991) to assert that hope solves problems at the individual and collective levels, but then goes on to argue that it is the emancipation-hope strategy rather than the hope strategy that is critically important to cultivate. Hope without emancipation (e.g., without the means to support oneself) is likely to give rise to frustration and despair. But then structural reforms that bring emancipation, as important as they are, lead nowhere without a politics of hope.

In accord with Drahos, John Braithwaite develops the theme of “cold analysis” as an ally of hope, arguing for a multidimensional conception of human agency whereby we move between optimistic and pessimistic frames as we negotiate our futures. What is accomplished with ease at the individual level, however, is not facilitated at the institutional level. Missing in the modern world is the social infrastructure that nurtures optimism and gives the less privileged the confidence to act on their freedom and planfully pursue their hopes. Starting with an analysis of Emancipation Conferences for young people moving out of foster care in California, and drawing on a theoretical model of Youth Development Circles in the restorative justice tradition, John Braithwaite demonstrates how, in practice, we

can institutionalize the hope and emancipation loop. The key element is the cultivation and celebration of strengths—of individuals in this case but, by extension, of collectivities.

While institutional acknowledgment of strengths breaks the chains, it is the care-eliciting actions of young people themselves at these conferences that gives the emancipation-hope cycle momentum. The institutional setting empowers young people to invite those whom they would like to join them—those who have the life skills they need, the resources they can draw on, and the cold analysis they can trust, as well as those who offer the kind of support that shares disappointments as communal failures and pursues hopeful action through deliberation and commitment to turning things around. The experience of the emancipation-hope cycle is hypothesized as a key to revitalizing citizenship and democratic participation—a hypothesis that in the best hope tradition, requires cold analysis through democratic experimentalism (Dorf and Sabel 1998).

These four articles on building institutions of hope address not only their practicability and desirability but also demonstrate, most important, that they are currently in existence. As John Braithwaite points out in his article, we are social scientists observing the inventiveness and ingenuity of others, certainly not inventors ourselves. Through the process of observation and analysis, however, we can contribute in a number of ways.

First, we can pull together principles that appear to underlie institutional successes and failures. In all of these articles, we see hope being supported by other principles of institutional design. Hope is not imposed; it is shared, and individuals should be assured that they can walk away from it if they choose. Hope as emotional sharing needs to be tempered by ideas, deliberation, experimentation, and cold analysis. As a design principle, individuals should not be offered the emotional experience without the reasoned analysis. The process should be open and transparent, otherwise the risks of manipulation and deception are magnified. But probably the two most important allies of hope realization are empowerment and action. Individuals must not only be given the scope to hope and plan thoughtfully, but they must also be allowed to act and feel empowered to act.

From this summary of the empirically derived principles for designing institutions of hope emerges an important corollary. None of the authors suppose that hopes and actions, no matter how carefully conceived and implemented, always lead to positive outcomes for collectivities. A further design principle, therefore, must be to realign hopes and preserve empowerment and action when things go wrong (as in John Braithwaite's hope-emancipation loop). Embedded within this design principle are a number of propositions worthy of further analysis. One such proposal, which is most evident in Clifford Shearing and Michael Kempa's article on the New South Africa, is learning to design institutions that will facilitate our capacity to collectively redirect our hopes without becoming immobilized in a culture of blame and recrimination. As Victoria McGeer points out later in the volume, this is an essential step in being able to nurture the human spirit in times of disappointment and despair. Fear, like hope, is a contagious emotion that quickly robs collectivities of their productivity and momentum.

Through the articles in part I, we have been able to see institutions of hope in operation and extract principles for how such institutions can function productively. The primary case that has been made for their importance is that they are carriers of social change for a better world. But institutions of hope may function in other ways as well, for instance, as spaces for the expression of human need. It is this issue of institutionalizing hope to address the psychological needs of individuals that occupies the authors in the remaining half of this volume.

Victoria McGeer opens part II with a developmental analysis of why and how we learn to hope. McGeer asks, What does it mean for an individual to hope well? Her analysis provides a theoretical account of hoping that underpins the institutional arguments in part I. McGeer starts from the position that from birth, we all face our agential limitations: we desire things that are beyond our reach. But she goes on to point out that human development is about engaging with these limitations, testing the boundaries, achieving previously unattainable goals, and finding ways of compensating when we fail. McGeer explains the process whereby we get to know our capacities, both current and potential, through the concept of scaffolding. It is at this point that McGeer breaks with an individualistic account of hope and argues that hoping well is essentially a social phenomenon. Initially, scaffolding is provided by parents as they reinforce and regulate an infant's first attempts at skill acquisition and provide emotional comfort when the infant encounters frustration and disappointment. While maturity brings a capacity to self-scaffold, individuals retain the capacity to draw on the strengths and hopes of others to rekindle their own sense of agency and to realign their hopes when things become difficult. In this way, peer scaffolding replaces parental scaffolding as a mechanism that assists us to hope well throughout our lives.

McGeer's account of peer scaffolding sits comfortably alongside John Braithwaite's account of Youth Development Circles and Emancipation Conferences. McGeer, however, rejects the idea that we are entirely dependent on institutions to hope well. Using George Eliot's (1996) novel *Middlemarch* as an observational field of human hoping, she provides examples of two ways in which we can hope badly. First, she describes wishful hoping whereby we retreat from accepting responsibility for planning our future and indulge in the fantasy or expectation that others will provide for us. The second way in which we hope badly is described as willful hoping. Here, our relationships with others subsume secondary importance as achievement becomes all important to our sense of self and meaning in life.

The alternative that McGeer proposes for hoping well is responsive hope. While the individual must assume responsibility for articulating his or her own hopes, the process of hoping well involves interacting with the hopes of others. McGeer argues that through investing in the hopes of others, in helping make these hopes meaningful and realistic, a sense of agency and trust in one's own capacities grows. At this point, McGeer floats the prospect of building "communities of mutually responsive hope." As she points out, if hopes are shared and we can jointly reflect on their meaning and value, surely it is but a small step toward developing collective hopes and shared ways of being.

From McGeer's perspective, to hope in a world that is not responsive is a tall order. Valerie Braithwaite explores this theme through examining the way in which individuals engage with a tax authority as a key institution for delivering desired outcomes for the democracy. In this article, a model of the collective hope process is developed, based on Snyder's (2000) work on individual hope. The central hypothesis is that individuals will engage in collective action when hopes remain high that the object of that action (in this article, a tax authority) can serve the public good. Hope is defined as being high when three conditions are satisfied: (1) individuals feel part of the democratic process, (2) individuals believe it is important to make reforms to improve the tax system, and (3) individuals trust the tax authority to act in the collective's best interest. Under these circumstances, individuals will be prepared to cooperate with tax authorities. When hope is low, however, individuals are likely to turn their backs on the collective.

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Using survey data from 2,040 Australians, the article shows that cooperation is related to aspirations for better tax administration and perceptions of tax-authority trustworthiness. Those who turned their backs on the system and dissociated from the collective signed on to a tax-reform package that limited government options for using the tax system to redistribute income. In addition, they expressed lack of trust in the tax authority not only as it currently stood but also as it might be. In other words, they were of the view that the authority could never do anything to prove itself trustworthy in their eyes. At one level, these data convey a positive message about the ways in which a democracy carries a variety of different voices and different hopes for the future of the society. At another level, the data hold a warning for the conditions under which different goals cannot be reconciled or tolerated. The absence of trust and the loss of hope for future trust is a divisive social force that threatens a society's capacity to move toward a more productive future together.

The final two articles of the volume provide contrasting perspectives on how and why hope is such a fundamental component of being human. In both cases, hope is conceptualized as an expression of our rationality.

From the perspective of analytical philosophy, Philip Pettit argues that hope—in a substantial not a superficial sense—should be understood as “cognitive

resolve.” Substantial hope represents a disciplined mental game in which one constructs a scenario of “what if?” that can be set in competition against evidenced-based beliefs absorbed through interaction with the environment. Pettit sets the scene for his analysis of hope through drawing on the precautionary assumption that we hold beliefs about what in all likelihood will occur, and simultaneously, we entertain a worse-case scenario and plan accordingly. This approach, a common feature of modern risk management, protects us from danger. Pettit argues that hope assumes a parallel form to precaution, except the outcome is something that we desire, not something that we fear.

The case for running with a hope-based action plan rather than strictly going on the evidence available at a particular time is considered rational from the perspective of individual well-being and social well-being. Given that humans are attuned to being emotionally responsive to their environments, having to reassess an action plan with every bit of evidence that comes to one’s attention can be exhausting and emotionally destabilizing. Both conditions can induce a state of inaction, a sense of having little control, and ultimately, a loss of personal agency. Pettit argues that through adopting a hope-based action plan, individuals can protect themselves from this emotional roller coaster and preserve their sense of agency for when it may be needed. An important aspect of his analysis is that at no stage does he visualize substantial hope as self-deception. To do so would deny hope the rational mental rigor that it entails.

Extending the argument for the rationality of hope at the individual level to the collective level, Pettit puts forward the observation that interpersonally we presume of each other that we are conversable subjects, capable of reason. This presumption is not dented in any serious way by evidence—we could not function effectively in social contexts if we made our interactions contingent on evidence to this effect. Furthermore, when we act collectively to achieve certain outcomes, we enter the arena with cognitive resolve that we will all collaborate and that we will be successful in our undertaking. Again, we do so not on the basis of hard evidence but because we know that this is the only base from which we can launch collective action. Pettit notes that it is when the hope game is abandoned that collective groups unravel. Hope of the substantive kind is, in Pettit’s words, “ubiquitous in human life.”

The analytical perspective is supplemented in the final article of this volume by a literary perspective. John Cartwright takes us on a journey through space and time from the Middle Ages to present-day South Africa, and in so doing, he sums up the way in which we have come to conceptualize the hope of individuals and collectivities. Through diverse stories, we understand that individuals always have had, and always will have, images of how their futures might be different and better (hope), and they practice their futures almost always imperfectly but are nevertheless capable of constructing a better world for themselves and for others when they are enmeshed in social institutions of hope. Such institutions, to be effective, encapsulate the kind of hope analyzed in this volume—hope that is empowering, that is action oriented, that is subject to cold analysis, that is authentic—but all these qualities acquire their strength and integrity through hope’s being linked

with its traditional sisters, love, faith, and respect for others, and its companions, reason, imagination, and perseverance.

The juxtaposition of these two sets of articles—those concerned with institutions of hope in part I and those with individuals undertaking a journey of hope in part II—is purposeful in setting up a future research agenda on the institutionalization of collective hope. A myriad of collective hopes, be they consonant or discordant, is held to be a desirable feature of a pluralist democratic society. But designing institutions that allow collective hopes to be aired and practiced is fraught with large challenges. Finding the institutional structures that respect competing collective voices and allow for the realization of the most promising hopes involves a research agenda in which theory and practice can dynamically accommodate each other. Detailed observation of practice and experimentation with different models are necessary adjuncts to the construction of institutions of hope; wherever they are built, they will need to bridge the gap between the psychological needs of individuals and the regulatory constraints imposed by dominant social institutions.

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