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Angry opposition to government redress:

When the structurally advantaged perceive themselves as relatively deprived

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Keywords: relative deprivation, anger, symbolic racism, modern racism, group-based emotion

Abstract

We examined (structurally advantaged) non-Aborigines' willingness for political action against government redress to (structurally disadvantaged) Aborigines in Australia. Consistent with Pettigrew and Riley's (1971) suggestions, we found non-Aborigines opposed to government redress to be high in symbolic racism (Sears, 1988) and to perceive their in-group as deprived relative to Aborigines. However, only perceived relative deprivation was associated with feelings of group-based anger. And, consistent with relative deprivation and emotion theory, it was group-based anger that fully mediated a willingness for political action against government redress. Thus, the specific group-based emotion of anger explained why symbolic racism and relative deprivation promoted a willingness for political action against government redress to a structurally disadvantaged out-group. Theoretical and political implications are discussed.

Angry opposition to government redress:

When the structurally advantaged perceive themselves as relatively deprived

All around the world, members of ethnic and other minority groups suffer severe structural disadvantage. From Australia, to the United States, Britain, and Brazil, the structurally disadvantaged have less power, wealth, and health relative to other groups (for a review see Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Decades of research on “relative deprivation” has shown that group members who perceive such disadvantage and interpret it as unfair are most intent on actively opposing it (for a review see Walker & H. J. Smith, 2002). Since Runciman (1966) it has been suggested that anger about this kind of group-level relative deprivation provides the psychological fuel for political action among the structurally disadvantaged (for a review see H. J. Smith & Kessler, 2004). For example, East Germans who most felt “annoyed” and “explosive” about their group’s disadvantage relative to West Germans most wanted to publicly protest (Kessler & Mummendey, 2001).

As in the East German example, it is common for research to focus on perceptions of relative deprivation among structurally *disadvantaged* groups (for a review, see Walker & H. J. Smith, 2002). While such opposition from below is no doubt important, it leaves unexamined the role of the structurally *advantaged*. Given their greater power and resources, the structurally advantaged play an important part in determining the potential success of political action by the structurally disadvantaged (Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002). Where the advantaged are willing to engage in political action against government or other systematic redress (e.g., apology, economic redistribution, compensatory “positive action”), they pose a significant barrier to such efforts.

In this paper, we consider why members of a structurally advantaged group are willing to

engage in political action against government redress of an ethnic minority's structural disadvantage. A good deal of research has shown symbolic (or modern) racism to explain such willingness (for a review, see Sears, 1988). However, we think there is likely to be a more specific explanation than the general negativity toward the structurally disadvantaged captured in symbolic racism. In a departure from most research on relative deprivation, we examine Pettigrew and colleagues' notion that the structurally advantaged opposed to government redress *perceive themselves* as relatively deprived. Based in the notion that the specific emotion of anger gives greater psychological force to the perception of group relative deprivation (Runciman, 1966), we suggest such group-based anger as the best explanation of a willingness for political action against government redress to the structurally disadvantaged.

Action Intentions Against Government Redress

A great deal of research has examined prejudice, and other negative attitudes, as an explanation of why members of structurally advantaged groups oppose government and other systematic redress to the structurally disadvantaged (for reviews see Bobo, 1988; Leach et al., 2002; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). One of the most popular explanations is that of symbolic racism (for reviews see Sears, 1988; Taylor, 2002). In the United States, symbolic racism is conceptualized as a set of negative attitudes that white Americans hold about black Americans as a group. Sears and colleagues argue that a mixture of "anti-black affect" and individualistic "work ethic" values underlie whites' attitudes that blacks (1) enjoy undeserved benefits from government "handouts," (2) violate the work ethic by their lack of effort, (3) make excessive demands for public resources, and (4) face little discrimination (see Henry & Sears, 2002; Sears & Henry, 2003). Consistent with their conceptualization, when combined into a unitary scale of symbolic racism, these negative attitudes are a strong predictor of white American opposition to

compensatory “affirmative action,” school integration, and other forms of government redress to black Americans (for a review see Sears, 1988). The negative attitudes in symbolic racism have also been shown to predict white opposition to government redress to ethnic minorities in Britain, France, Germany, and Holland (e.g., Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995) as well as in Australia (e.g., Pedersen & Walker, 1997).

Although symbolic racism provides an empirical explanation of action intentions against government redress, it does little to clarify the actual social psychology at work among members of structurally advantaged groups. For example, conceptualizing symbolic racism as prejudice -- a general, negative orientation toward an out-group – does not specify how the structurally advantaged perceive their inter-group relation to the structurally disadvantaged (Leach et al., 2002; more generally see E.R. Smith, 1993). This is important because a failure to perceive the in-group as advantaged over a disadvantaged out-group is an obvious basis of opposition to government redress to the out-group (Leach et al., 2002). As a general, negative orientation toward an out-group, symbolic racism also fails to specify the more specific emotion that members of a structurally advantaged group may feel about their perceived inter-group relation with a structurally disadvantaged out-group (Leach et al., 2002; more generally see E.R. Smith, 1993; Tiedens & Leach, 2004).

Given the shortcomings of the prejudice concept, E.R. Smith (1993) called upon research in inter-group relations to focus on specific emotions rather than the more general negative affect and attitudes captured in prejudice. Based in appraisal theories of emotion (for a review, see Lazarus, 1991), E.R. Smith (1993) argued that it is specific, group-based, emotions that best explain group members’ action intentions in their inter-group relations (e.g., Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000). We believe that an early approach to group-based emotion – relative deprivation

theory – suggests a specific model of how members of a structurally advantaged group perceive and feel about their inter-group relation in a way that explains their willingness to engage in political action against government redress to the structurally disadvantaged.

Inverted Relative Deprivation and Anger

Some time ago, Pettigrew and colleagues (Pettigrew & Riley, 1971; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972) suggested group relative deprivation as an explanation of working class white Americans' political activity for anti-black candidates in the United States in the late 1960s. Although most previous and subsequent work on relative deprivation has examined it among the structurally disadvantaged, Pettigrew and colleagues believed it to be a potent form of prejudice among the structurally advantaged. Consistent with this, Pettigrew and Riley (1971) found those men who expressed the most prejudice to most perceive the “average man” as relatively deprived compared to the past. More recent studies in western Europe (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995) and the United States (Bobo, 1988; Taylor, 2002), have shown that the perception of relative deprivation predicts whites' opposition to ethnic out-groups as well as to policies that redress their structural disadvantage. Outside of psychology, variants of relative deprivation theory continue to be applied to examples of political action against government and other efforts to redress structural disadvantage (e.g., Omi & Winant, 1986; Wellmann, 1993).

Like most work in relative deprivation (for a review, see Walker & H.J. Smith, 2002), Pettigrew and colleagues suggested that a perception of group relative deprivation was likely to promote feelings of anger. Although they did not examine this group-based anger, based in relative deprivation theory they assumed that anger was the psychological fuel that translated the perception of group relative deprivation into political action. The well-established link between anger and action intentions shown in emotion research is consistent with this assumption (for

reviews, see Averill, 1983; Lazarus, 1991). A good deal of research on anger shows it to be associated with wanting to actively challenge perceived injustice (e.g., Roseman, Wiest, & Schwarz, 1994; for a review see Averill, 1983). Consistent with this, recent research has shown group-based anger about inter-group conflict (e.g., Mackie et al., 2000), unjust treatment from an authority (e.g., van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004), or unfair structural advantage (e.g., Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006) to promote a readiness to act.

We think that Pettigrew and colleagues' conceptualization of relative deprivation-based anger may be fruitfully combined with symbolic racism and the more recent perspective on group-based emotion. Together, these three lines of work suggest a model of why members of structurally advantaged groups may be willing to engage in political action against government redress. Thus, consistent with Pettigrew and colleagues, as well as Sears and colleagues, we expect members of a structurally advantaged group who are opposed to government redress to be prejudiced (i.e., high in symbolic racism). However, given that this negative orientation is very general in nature, we do not expect it to offer a specific explanation of a willingness for political action against government redress. Rather, based in Pettigrew and colleagues, we expect symbolic racism to promote the more specific perception that the structurally advantaged in-group is relatively deprived (symbolic racism \rightarrow group relative deprivation). As suggested by relative deprivation theory, this perception should promote the specific group-based emotion of anger (group relative deprivation \rightarrow group-based anger). And, it is this group-based anger that should best explain a willingness to engage in political action against government redress to the structurally disadvantaged (group-based anger \rightarrow action intentions). Thus, we expect group-based anger to fully mediate a willingness for political action (symbolic racism \rightarrow group relative deprivation \rightarrow *group-based anger* \rightarrow action intentions).

Our model of relative deprivation-based anger may be especially applicable to Western Australia, where the present studies were conducted. Previous research has shown that many of the structurally advantaged non-Aboriginal majority believe that the Aboriginal minority unfairly benefit from government handouts (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, 1998; Pedersen & Walker, 1997). Thus, despite great evidence to the contrary, many non-Aborigines may perceive their in-group as deprived *relative to Aborigines*, who they perceive as unfairly advantaged by government handouts. Anecdotal evidence of this can be found in the political rhetoric of Pauline Hanson and her now discredited One Nation party (see Broome, 2002; Fraser & Islam, 2000). In a speech to the Australian Parliament, Hanson (1996, p. 47) said, “I am fed up to the back teeth with the inequalities that are being promoted by the government and paid for by the taxpayer under the assumption that Aboriginals are the most disadvantaged people in Australia.” She went on to imply that it was the hard working (white?) “Australian” who was most disadvantaged in a society that had forsaken them (see Rapley, 1998). This is very similar to the political rhetoric Pettigrew and colleagues identified as tapping into perceived relative deprivation among white working class men in the United States in the late 1960s.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Using Australian Bureau of Statistics’ (1996) classifications, one low-income, one medium-income, and one high-income suburb in the metropolitan area of Perth, Western Australia was selected at random from all those listed for each socio-economic level. For each suburb, 150 residents were chosen at random from publicly available electoral rolls. Of the 450 sent questionnaires, 122 (27%) usable questionnaires were returned from self-identified non-Aborigines. This is an acceptable rate of return for this kind of mail survey (Dillman, 2000).

Participants were first asked their sex, age, and place of birth. We also asked them to describe their political orientation with a scale that ranged from 1 “strongly right” to 5 “strongly left.” Education level was assessed with a 5-point scale that ranged from 1 “primary school only” to 5 “attended or completed university.” In addition, an item asking for postal code was used to discern the average income of participants’ neighborhood from census data (i.e., Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996).

Participants’ average age was 49 years. Participants tended to be fairly well-educated, with the average person receiving more than secondary education. On average participants identified themselves at the “centre” of the political spectrum and came from postal codes of middle income. Importantly, however, these demographic characteristics showed little association with the measures of interest (see also Pilot Study 1 below). Thus, they are not discussed further.

Measures

Symbolic Racism

We used 7 items from a scale recently developed by Pedersen, Beven, Walker, and Griffiths (2004) to assess symbolic racism toward Aborigines in Australia ($\alpha = .85$). Although some items were grounded in particular aspects of the Australian context (e.g., land rights), the items reflect the general content of symbolic racism (see Henry & Sears, 2002). Thus, two items assessed the view that Aborigines have undeserved benefits: “Land rights for Aborigines are just a way of them getting more than they deserve,” “Aboriginal people get given more government money than they should.” Two items assessed the view that Aborigines are excessively demanding: “Aboriginal people are very vocal and loud about their rights,” “Urban Aborigines are pretty hostile.” Two other items assessed perceived discrimination: “The only racial

discrimination in Australia these days is in favour of Aboriginal people,” “The media is often biased against Aborigines” (reversed). One item assessed violation of the work-ethic (reversed): “Aboriginal people work as hard as anyone else.” On a Likert-type scale, responses could range from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*neither agree or disagree*), to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Relative Deprivation

To assess the specific perception of inter-group relative deprivation, we asked “Do you think non-Aborigines are advantaged, or disadvantaged, compared to Aborigines?” Responses were given on a 7-point bi-polar scale, anchored by 1 (*Aborigines advantaged*) and 7 (*non-Aborigines advantaged*), and thus were reverse scored for analysis. This scale was used to reinforce the fact that participants had to evaluate their in-group’s deprivation relative to the out-group’s advantage.¹ It is important to highlight the fact that our measure of group-level relative deprivation assessed the in-group’s perceived deprivation relative to a specific *out-group*. This makes it different to Pettigrew and colleagues’ measure of perceived group deprivation relative to the in-group’s past. Thus, our measure assesses the kind of *inter-group* relative deprivation that theory expects to best explain inter-group phenomena (for reviews, see H.J. Smith & Ortiz, 2002; Walker & H.J. Smith, 2002).

Although “non-Aborigine” is not a common self-categorization in Australia, it is the most general in-group that can be compared to structurally disadvantaged Aborigines. Thus, it was the only in-group categorization that was appropriate for our interests. In other research in this region of Australia, Leach et al. (2006, Study 2) showed non-Aboriginal people to report seeing themselves as “non-Aborigines” when thinking about Aboriginal issues.

Pilot Study. To validate our measure of inter-group relative deprivation, we embedded a pilot study into a survey designed to examine related issues (i.e., McGarty et al., 2005, Study 1).

We selected 500 names at random from the electoral roll of Perth, Western Australia. This publicly available list provides a name and address for every eligible voter. A questionnaire and accompanying letter was sent to the entire sample. A total of 164 questionnaires (33%) were returned from non-Aborigines.

Respondents were asked to state their age and gender as well as their education level (1 = primary school only, 5 = university), income (1 = under 10,000 dollars, 7 = over 50,000), and political affiliation (coded from left to right wing: 1 = Australian Democrats/Greens, 2 = Labor Party, 3 = Liberal/National, 4 = One Nation Party). They were also given the items used in the current study to assess relative deprivation and opposition to government redress (in the form of an apology to Aborigines).

Consistent with representative surveys in Western Australia (e.g., AC Nielsen, 2000), more respondents opposed (103) or were neutral to (12) government redress than supported it (43). The 115 participants who did not support government redress were extremely opposed to it ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 1.00$). Consistent with Pettigrew and colleagues' suggestion, the 115 participants who did not support government redress tended to perceive their in-group as *relatively deprived* ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.65$). Thus, they inverted the structural reality of Aboriginal disadvantage. And, the greater their perceived relative deprivation the greater their opposition to government redress, $r(112) = .37$, $p < .001$. However, perceived relative deprivation was uncorrelated to participants' demographic characteristics, all $r < |.06|$, all $p > .50$.

Group-based Emotions: Anger and Guilt

Immediately after the relative deprivation question, participants were asked, "How do you feel about this?" A list of emotion terms, most of which were taken from Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988) and Iyer, Leach, and Crosby (2003, Study 2), were provided in a format based

on Watson et al.'s (1988) Positive and Negative Affect Schedule. Thus, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt each emotion with a scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Anger was assessed with 4 emotion terms: angry, hostile, indignant, and outraged ($\alpha = .83$). While the first two terms emphasize intense arousal, the second two terms emphasize perceived injustice (see Lazarus, 1991). To provide a comparison to anger, we also assessed the similarly dysphoric emotion of guilt. Following Iyer et al. (2003), we used the six emotion terms: guilty, responsible, regretful, ashamed, remorseful, and blameworthy ($\alpha = .86$). Given that we expect participants to perceive their in-group as relatively deprived, they should feel little of the self-recrimination captured in guilt (see Leach et al., 2002).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. We assessed the latent structure of the emotions with a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Each of the 10 items was allowed to load only on its designated factor and no errors were allowed to correlate. As both emotions are dysphoric, the guilt and anger factors were allowed to correlate. The standardized loadings confirmed that each of the two factors was well defined by its items. For guilt, loadings ranged from .47 (regretful) to .87 (blameworthy). For anger, loadings ranged from .68 (indignant) to .96 (angry). All loadings differed from zero (all $p < .05$). Guilt and anger were reliably, but modestly, associated ($\phi = .26$, $p < .05$).

To assess model fit here and in subsequent analyses, we report the χ^2 statistic. When a proposed model reproduces the observed covariance matrix, χ^2 is not statistically reliable (i.e., $p > .05$). We also report a variety of fit indices based on χ^2 (i.e., CFI, IFI, GFI). With sample < 250 , values $> .90$ indicate satisfactory fit. We also report the two most widely used residual indices (SRMR, RMSEA), which should fall below .10 in samples < 250 (for a review see Hu &

Bentler, 1999).

Our hypothesized measurement model fit the data well. The sensitive χ^2 statistic was large, but not highly reliable, $\chi^2(34) = 48.531, p = .051$. Although the GFI (= .896) indicated marginal fit, two incremental indices (CFI = .969 and IFI = .969) showed excellent fit. In addition, the residual fit indices of the SRMR (= .081) and the RMSEA (= .072) showed good fit. Thus, the guilt and anger emotion terms appear to be satisfactory measures of two distinct constructs.

Opposition to Government Redress

A single item taken from AC Nielsen (2000) polls assessed opposition to redress in the form of a Federal government apology to Aborigines: “Do you think the government should say ‘sorry’ for past actions?” Responses could range from 1 (*I very strongly believe the government should say ‘sorry’*) to 7 (*I very strongly believe the government should NOT say ‘sorry’*). This form of government redress is the most salient and hotly debated in Australia (Broome, 2002; McGarty et al., 2005). We used this item to identify those opposed to government redress, as we expect only these participants’ relative deprivation-based anger to predict their willingness for political action against government redress.

Willingness for Political Action. Immediately after this question, participants were asked what they would be “willing to do to support their beliefs about government apology.” Taken from several widely used scales, these items assessed a willingness to engage in 10 specific political actions, such as “sending a letter of protest to government or media,” “help organize a demonstration,” and “vote for a political candidate who supports your view” (for a review see Brady, 1993). The willingness to engage in such specific action is a better predictor of actual action than are more general measures of broad support for goals such as government redress

(for a review see Ajzen, 1991). Items were presented with a scale ranging from 1 (*very unwilling*) to 7 (*very willing*) and formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = .91$).

Results

Descriptive

Consistent with representative surveys in Western Australia (e.g., AC Nielsen, 2000) and the Pilot Study, only a minority of this non-Aborigine sample supported government redress. That is, only 39 (32%) endorsed the values between 1 and 3 on the 7-point response scale. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed these 39 supporters to differ substantially from non-supporters in their mean opinion on government redress, $F(1, 115) = 575.49, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .84$. Whereas supporters of government redress were extremely supportive ($M = 1.87$, $SD = .80$), non-supporters were extremely opposed ($M = 6.39$, $SD = 1.03$). In addition, an ANOVA showed supporters to differ substantially from non-supporters in perceived relative deprivation, $F(1, 115) = 56.86, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .34$. Importantly, supporters of government redress showed no sign of inverted relative deprivation. Instead, they perceived Aborigines as deprived relative to their non-Aboriginal in-group ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.52$). Where members of structurally advantaged in-groups perceive a structurally disadvantaged out-group as relatively deprived they are likely to feel self-critical emotions such as guilt (e.g., Iyer et al., 2003; Leach et al., 2006). Unlike the anger we expect to explain action intentions against government redress, self-critical emotions should explain *support* for government redress and other forms of collective restitution (for a review see Leach et al., 2002). This was shown in a series of recent studies Leach et al. (2006) conducted in the same region of Australia examined here.

As our interest is in explaining opposition to government redress, we focused on the 77 participants (i.e., 68 opposed, 9 neutral) who did not support government apology (63% of the

total N). As mentioned above, these non-supporters were extremely opposed to government redress (see Table 1). Consistent with our conceptualization and the Pilot Study, these non-supporters perceived their in-group as relatively deprived (see Table 1). And, as expected, only non-supporters of government redress showed explicit endorsement of symbolic racism and showed a willingness for political action *against* government redress. As our conceptual model argues that inverted relative deprivation explains action intentions against government redress, only those participants who oppose government redress are relevant to our interests. Thus, the mediation analyses below focus on these 77 participants.

Explanatory Models

We used EQS 6.1 to estimate covariance structure models to account for the hypothesized relationships between measures. The full mediation model shown in Figure 1 represents our specific hypotheses. As symbolic racism is conceptualized as an indicator of participants' general orientation toward Aborigines, it is specified as an exogenous variable that only predicts the more specific inter-group perception of relative deprivation. Given our hypothesis that participants feel anger about their perceived relative deprivation, our model treats the two group-based emotions as mediators between relative deprivation and political action intentions. Our model specifies that symbolic racism and relative deprivation have no direct effect on a willingness for political action, and thus it provides a strict test of our hypothesis that the emotion of anger is a full mediator of such willingness (see Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998).

As expected, the full mediation model fit the data well. The χ^2 was not reliable: $\chi^2(2) = 7.60, p = .18$. The other indices also showed good fit for a sample of this size: CFI = .958, IFI = .961, GFI = .949, SRMR = .074, RMSEA = .098. The standardized path estimates shown in Figure 1a provide more specific support for our hypotheses. Although symbolic racism was a

strong predictor of relative deprivation, the model fit well without estimating either of the following two direct paths: symbolic racism \rightarrow anger, and symbolic racism \rightarrow willingness for political action. Thus, as expected, symbolic racism had no direct association with anger or the willingness for political action.

As expected, relative deprivation was a strong predictor of anger. And, anger fully accounted for the link between relative deprivation and a willingness for political action against government redress. Confirming that it is the specific emotion of anger that played this mediating role, the equally dysphoric emotion of guilt was unrelated to relative deprivation or the willingness for political action. In fact, the WALD test for model modification indicated that both paths involving guilt could be eliminated without worsening model fit (while adding 2 degrees of freedom and, thus, parsimony).

Alternative Models

To provide further support for the hypotheses represented in the full mediation model, we estimated two alternative models. The first examined the possibility that group-based emotion was only a partial mediator of relative deprivation and symbolic racism. The second examined a reversed mediation model where relative deprivation and symbolic racism were specified as mediators of the emotions.

Partial Mediation. Importantly, a model specifying partial mediation of both relative deprivation and symbolic racism provided no better fit than the more parsimonious full mediation model: $\Delta\chi^2(2) = .600, p = .741$. This is due to the fact that neither relative deprivation ($\gamma = -.12, p = .441$) nor symbolic racism ($\gamma = .08, p = .437$) directly predicted the willingness for political action. Thus, the full mediation model appears preferable to any of the possible partial mediation models.

Reverse Mediation. In order to obtain more support for the mediating role of emotion, we tested an alternative mediation model, where relative deprivation and symbolic racism were specified as full mediators of guilt and anger (see Figure 1b). The parameter estimates suggest against this model as a viable alternative to our hypothesized model. Most importantly, symbolic racism was a weak, non-reliable, predictor of the willingness for political action. This suggests against it as an alternative to anger as an explanation of such intentions. In addition, the fact that relative deprivation predicts political action intentions only half as well as anger does in the hypothesized model, suggests that relative deprivation is not a viable alternative to anger as an explanation of such willingness.

Although it is not possible to make a direct statistical comparison between the reverse mediation and hypothesized mediation model (because they are not nested), we can assess the degree to which the reverse mediation model fit the data. As expected, the reverse mediation model fit unsatisfactorily, with a highly reliable $\chi^2(3) = 24.73, p < .001$. Other fit indices were also highly unsatisfactory: CFI = .650, IFI = .685, GFI = .850, SRMR = .119, RMSEA = .366. We also looked to the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) to help distinguish between the two models, as it compares the parsimony of models based on the same covariance matrix. The AIC showed our hypothesized model to be superior, as it had a lower AIC (-2.40) than the reverse mediation model (AIC = 9.71). Thus, it appears better to presume that group-based emotion explains the effects of relative deprivation and symbolic racism, rather than vice versa.

Discussion

Although Australian Aborigines suffer severe structural disadvantage, this tended not to be perceived by the non-Aboriginal participants who opposed government redress to them. In fact, these participants perceived their structurally advantaged in-group as relatively deprived.

This relative deprivation, which inverted the reality of the in-group's structural advantage, promoted group-based feelings of anger. As such, this study offers the first direct support for the role of anger implied in Pettigrew and colleagues' notion of what we dubbed inverted relative deprivation. And, consistent with more general emotion research, anger provided a potent explanation of participants' willingness to engage in action. The greater participants' anger about their perceived relative deprivation, the greater their willingness to write letters, organize demonstrations, and vote for political candidates to oppose government redress to the out-group seen as the reason for the in-group's deprivation. Thus, individuals' subjective perception of relative deprivation fueled their political opposition through the specific emotion of anger.

Although previous research has shown the general negativity in symbolic racism to provide an empirical explanation of opposition to government redress to the structurally disadvantaged, the present results suggested a much more specific explanation. Perceived inter-group relative deprivation, and its attendant anger, fully explained the willingness to engage in political action against government redress. Thus, rather than being a general explanation of such willingness, symbolic racism promoted the specific inter-group perception of relative deprivation. As such, relative deprivation-based anger provides a more circumscribed phenomenological account of why prejudice predicts a willingness for political action against government redress. Of course, further evidence from other contexts is an important area of future research

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Although measures of (symbolic, modern, or other) prejudice may capture the general negativity in the affect and the attitudes that the structurally advantaged have toward the structurally disadvantaged, they do not capture the more specific psychological meaning that

individuals give their experience of structural inequality (Leach, 2006). In contrast, the notion of inverted relative deprivation specifies more precisely how such individuals perceive their in-group's relation to the structurally disadvantaged. It is this specific perception of their inter-group relation that can be expected to promote the specific group-based emotion of anger (Leach et al., 2002; more generally, see E.R. Smith, 1993).

Because anger is typically felt as a righteous response to perceived unfairness, it is especially likely to promote intentions of oppositional action (for reviews see Averill, 1983; Lazarus, 1991). In the case of inverted relative deprivation, this anger promotes a willingness to engage in political action against government redress to the structurally disadvantaged. That this willingness is based in an inversion of objective reality only serves to make more clear the need of a model that conceptualizes the subjective feelings the structurally advantaged have about their inter-group relations. The relative deprivation-based anger examined here provides a model of oppositional politics among members of structurally advantaged groups.

More generally, these results demonstrate the conceptual and practical advantages of studying specific emotions embedded in particular inter-group relations, rather than the more generic concepts of racism, prejudice, or group bias. Although the notion of group-based anger was offered in early work on group-level relative deprivation (e.g., Runciman, 1966), more recent work offers a broader view of the role emotion can play in inter-group relations (for reviews see E.R. Smith, 1993; Tiedens & Leach, 2004). Here, we showed that it is the specific emotion of anger that explains why inverted relative deprivation explains a willingness for political action against government redress to the structurally disadvantaged. More passive and inactive feelings of dysphoria, such as dejection, could not be expected to explain such action intentions (see H. J. Smith & Kessler, 2004).

More practically, the notion of inverted relative deprivation may help to explain the continued appeal of political movements that are fiercely anti-government and anti-outgroup. In the last 15 years, parties such as “One Nation” in Australia, the British National Party in England, the National Front in France, neo-Nazis in Germany and Austria, and “white power” movements in the United States, appear to have increased their numbers and influence by appealing to white people’s relative deprivation-based anger (see Fraser & Islam, 2000; Wrench & Solomos, 1993). All of these parties gained some support among disenfranchised members of the white majority by portraying their in-group as relatively deprived to immigrants, asylum seekers, or other structurally disadvantaged out-groups. Much of this rhetoric referred to feelings of anger about this perceived relative deprivation (e.g., Hanson, 1996). Thus, relative deprivation based-anger appears to be a basis of white political opposition to racial redress in a number of different societies over thirty years after Pettigrew and colleagues suggested it as an explanation in the United States.

That members of a group with such clear structural advantage as non-Aborigines in Australia can perceive themselves as relatively deprived may also help to explain the political divide that can occur between advantaged and disadvantaged. In a society where both the structurally advantaged and the disadvantaged see themselves as relatively deprived there is little shared reality between them. Indeed, each party’s belief in the righteousness of their political opposition may serve to widen the chasm between them. At best, such opposed views of inequality prevent coordinated effort. At worst, they fuel antagonistic political conflict. In either case, these opposed views of societal reality may help explain why racial, and other group, inequality appears difficult to alter by political consensus.

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Notes

1. Given that our measure of relative deprivation assesses (1) whether the in- or the out-group is perceived as deprived as well as (2) the amount of perceived deprivation, we analyzed all data with these two elements kept separate. This more complicated approach appeared to offer no advantages as it produced nearly identical results to those reported. It is important to note that the interaction term was too highly correlated with its constituent elements ($r > .90$) to be included in these analyses.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Inter-Scale Correlations, Non-Supporters of Government Redress

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Opposition to Redress ^a	6.39	1.03						
2. Symbolic Racism ^a	5.34	1.10	.35*					
3. Relative Deprivation ^a	5.19	1.85	.29*	.60*				
4. Guilt ^b	.45	.70	-.17	.05	.02			
5. Anger ^b	1.20	1.52	.25*	.50*	.49*	.27*		
6. Willingness for Political Action ^a	3.51	1.49	-.02	.23	.25*	.16	.50*	

^a1-7 response scale ^b0-5 response scale. N = 77.

* $p < .05$

Figure Captions

Figure 1a: Full Mediation Model Predicting Willingness for Political Action Against Government Redress (standardized solution).

Figure 1b: Alternative Full Mediation Model Predicting Willingness for Political Action Against Government Redress (standardized solution).