



Organizational respect dampens the impact of group-based relative deprivation on willingness to protest pay cuts

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Although group-based relative deprivation predicts people's willingness to protest unfair outcomes, perceiving that one's subgroup is respected increases employees' support for organizations. An integration of these perspectives suggests that subgroup respect will dampen the impact of group-based relative deprivation on workers' responses to unfair organizational outcomes. We examined this hypothesis among university faculty ($N = 804$) who underwent a system-wide pay cut. As expected, group-based relative deprivation predicted protest intentions. This relationship was, however, muted among those who believed university administrators treated their area of expertise (i.e., their subgroup) with a high (vs. low) level of respect. Moderated mediation analyses confirmed that group-based relative deprivation had a conditional indirect effect on protest intentions via participants' (dis)identification with their university at low to moderate, but not high, levels of subgroup respect. Our finding that satisfying relational needs can attenuate responses to group-based relative deprivation demonstrates the benefits of integrating insights from distinct research traditions.

Research on relative deprivation and relational models of intragroup (and intergroup) relations provide conflicting accounts of how workers will respond to unpopular workplace policies. On the one hand, relative deprivation theory suggests that employees subjected to policies that deprive their group of an outcome will attempt to undermine their organization (e.g., Kelly & Kelly, 1994; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Conversely, relational models posit that people care about their subgroup's standing within an organization and will respond positively to respectful treatment by ingroup authorities (Huo, Binning, & Molina, 2010; Tyler & Lind, 1992). Although never pursued, an integration of these literatures implies that employees who feel that they have been treated respectfully will support their workplace *despite* receiving a disadvantageous outcome.

The current study examines this possibility by assessing university faculty members' responses to a contentious pay dispute. We begin with an overview of relative deprivation theory to highlight the role that people's *interpretation* of their group's outcome *relative to* other groups has on their reactions to unfavourable outcomes. We then review research on subgroup respect to argue that, though people often focus on group-based outcomes,

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they also care about the relationships between groups within their organization. As we explain below, the way people – and by extension, their subgroups – are treated affects their support for their workplace (see also Smith, Tyler, & Huo, 2003; Spears, Ellemers, Doosje, & Branscombe, 2006). We conclude this section by describing the context of this study and explicating our hypotheses.

Relative deprivation and collective action

One of the main insights of relative deprivation theory is that people's *perception* of their outcomes *relative to* salient referents affects how they respond to inequality (Crosby, 1976; Walker & Pettigrew, 1984). Because social comparisons lie at the heart of feeling relatively deprived (see Pettigrew, 1967), people's reference point shapes their experience of relative deprivation. Indeed, Runciman (1966) argued that an unfavourable comparison between the self and another person creates the experience of individual-based relative deprivation. In contrast, an unfavourable comparison between one's ingroup and another group elicits group-based relative deprivation.

The distinction between individual-based and group-based relative deprivation is more than a theoretical nuance. Although individual-based relative deprivation predicts self-focused outcomes (e.g., mental health) better than group-based relative deprivation (Abrams & Grant, 2012; Osborne & Sibley, 2013), group-based relative deprivation predicts group-focused outcomes (e.g., collective action) better than individual-based relative deprivation (Grant & Brown, 1995; Osborne & Sibley, 2013). Indeed, a recent meta-analysis by Smith, Pettigrew, Pippin, and Bialosiewicz (2012) shows that studies examining the relationship between relative deprivation and responses to inequality at the *same* level of analysis (e.g., group-based relative deprivation with group-focused responses) produce larger effects than studies that examine these relationships *across* levels of analysis (e.g., individual-based relative deprivation with group-focused responses). Thus, employees' feelings of group-based relative deprivation are particularly relevant for explaining collective responses to workplace disputes.

Respect and institutional support

Although relative deprivation theory shows that people are concerned with what they receive, people care about more than outcomes. Indeed, both the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992) and group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003) posit that people care deeply about fair treatment. Specifically, both models argue that how people are treated by organizational authorities communicates desired information about their place within the group (i.e., it conveys respect or the absence thereof). In turn, perceptions of fair treatment and the ensuing feelings of respect predict people's acceptance of institutional policies (see Tyler, 2006).

Research on the relational models has traditionally focused on an organization's treatment of the *individual*. Huo, Binning, *et al.* (2010), however, argue that people will care about the treatment of their *subgroups* when their social identity is salient. Indeed, perceptions of subgroup respect positively correlate with multiple group-focused responses including students' warmth towards teachers and ethnic outgroups, as well as the strength of their identification with their superordinate group (Huo, Molina, Binning, & Funge, 2010). Thus, just as respectful treatment by group representatives influence *self-focused* attitudes and behaviours, respectful treatment of one's subgroup by organizational authorities can affect *group-focused* attitudes and behaviours.

Additional support for the proposal that subgroup respect shapes people's attitudes towards groups comes from Tyler and Lind's (2002) distinction between *treatment-based* group-based relative deprivation (e.g., 'My group is treated worse than other groups') and *treatment-based* individual-based relative deprivation (e.g., 'I am treated worse than I deserve'). In making this distinction, they show that treatment-based group-based relative deprivation is the strongest predictor of citizens' support for government intervention in the marketplace. Moreover, research directly assessing perceptions of subgroup respect shows that these judgements predict people's engagement with – and trust in – institutions (Huo & Molina, 2006; Huo, Molina, *et al.*, 2010). Other studies demonstrate that subgroup respect is positively associated with organizational identification (e.g., Huo, Binning, & Begeny, in press; Luijters, van der Zee, & Otten, 2008).

Placed side by side, research on responses to group-based relative deprivation and subgroup respect present an interesting paradox. Namely, workers whose social identity and relational needs are met by their workplace may stay committed to their organization *despite* experiencing a group-based monetary injustice. This is because subgroup respect provides workers with an identity-based form of compensation that should lessen their focus on the fairness of outcomes. In other words, the provision of subgroup respect should weaken the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and intentions to protest by satisfying workers' relational needs. We assess this previously unexamined possibility in a study of university faculty members' responses to a controversial pay dispute.

Study overview

This study integrates the two previously discussed literatures by examining university faculty members' reactions to a contentious pay dispute. Facing a budget shortfall of over \$584 million in 2009, university officials in California enforced a mandatory furlough that reduced the annual pay of faculty members at both of the state's multi-campus public university systems (i.e., California State University and University of California) by up to 10%. After the furlough announcement, many faculty members across California publicly protested the university officials' decision (Gordon, 2009, September 24). Others, however, expressed relief that a solution to the fiscal crisis had been achieved (Benefield, 2009, July 24). Such varied responses provide an ideal context for assessing the factors that affect workers' collective responses to controversial workplace policies.

An overview of our hypotheses is presented in Figure 1. Because group-based relative deprivation is associated with group-based responses to inequities (Abrams & Grant, 2012; Walker & Mann, 1987), we predicted that participants' belief that faculty who share their area of expertise (i.e., their subgroup) were unfairly deprived would be positively correlated with their intentions to protest the furlough. Given that university officials were responsible for implementing the furlough, we expected that this relationship would occur through a *decrease* in participants' identification with their university (i.e., their superordinate identity). Indeed, blaming group-based relative deprivation on the actions of the ingroup lead people to disidentify with their ingroup (Zagefka, Binder, Brown, & Hancock, 2013). Strength of ingroup identification, in turn, is associated with support for one's institution (see Ellemers, 2002; Ellemers, Wilke, & van Knippenberg, 1993). Thus, participants' strength of identification with their university should mediate the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and protest intentions.

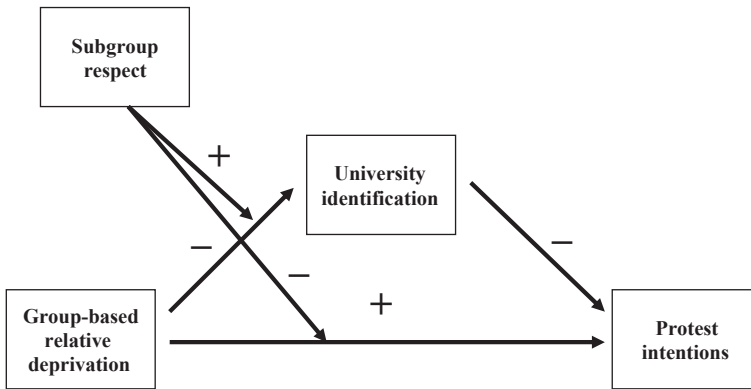


Figure 1. Schematic overview of the hypothesized moderated indirect effect of group-based relative deprivation on protest intentions through drops in university identification at varying levels of subgroup respect.

Although relative deprivation theory helps explain the relationship between group-based outcomes and people's ensuing reactions, research on subgroup respect shows that people also care about the treatment their group receives from authorities. Indeed, the way that people – and by extension, their subgroups – are treated conveys sought-after information about one's identity (Huo, Binning, *et al.*, 2010; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler & Lind, 1992). Thus, the indirect relationship between group-based relative deprivation and protest intentions through university identification was expected to be weaker among those who believed that their subgroup had received a high (vs. low) amount of respect. That is, subgroup respect should dampen the impact of group-based relative deprivation on faculty members' responses to the furlough by meeting their identity-based needs.

Method

Participants

Participants were 953 faculty members employed at one of four public university campuses in California during 2009. Our analyses focused on the 804 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 52.31$ years, $SD = 11.10$) who provided complete data for our variables of interest (84% of the sample).¹ Of these participants, 393 were men and 411 were women. Participants identified as Caucasian ($n = 637$), Asian ($n = 57$), Latino ($n = 35$), or Black ($n = 29$). The rest of the sample identified with another ethnic group ($n = 37$) or declined to state their ethnicity ($n = 9$). In terms of employment, most participants worked at a campus within the California State University (vs. University of California) system ($n_s = 550$ vs. 254, respectively), were tenured ($n = 499$), and had been employed at their current university for 14.14 years ($SD = 10.89$).

¹ Although the data analysed in the current study come from a larger study on faculty members' responses to the furlough (see Osborne *et al.*, 2012), none of the analyses reported here overlap with our prior study.

Measures

A survey was developed that included the following measures relevant to this study: (1) group-based relative deprivation, (2) subgroup respect, (3) university identification, (4) protest intentions, and (5) covariates (e.g., demographic variables). All measures were scored so that higher values represent more of the given variable. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations are shown in Table 1.

Group-based relative deprivation

Two items adapted from Smith, Cronin, and Kessler (2008) were used to assess group-based relative deprivation. The first item had participants indicate whether the average pay for faculty at their university was better or worse than the pay of 'faculty at comparable universities' on a 5-point scale (1 = *significantly worse*; 5 = *significantly better*; reverse-scored). The second item had participants indicate whether they felt 'the pay for the average faculty member' at their university was more or less than they deserved on a 5-point scale (1 = *much more*; 5 = *much less*). These items were averaged to form a measure of group-based relative deprivation ($r = .308, p < .001$).

Subgroup respect

Four items adapted from Huo, Molina, *et al.* (2010) were used to assess subgroup respect. These items had participants indicate their agreement with the following statements: 'Most of the time, I feel that people at my university' (1) 'value the ideas and opinions of faculty in my area of expertise', (2) 'think highly of the abilities and talents of faculty in my area of expertise', (3) 'admire the achievements of faculty in my area of expertise', and (4) 'make faculty in my area of expertise feel like we belong'. Items were rated on a 4-point

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between variables included in our analyses

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-----------------------------------|----------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|---------|----------|-------|
| 1. Sex ^a | – | | | | | | | |
| 2. Ethnicity ^b | –.027 | – | | | | | | |
| 3. University system ^c | –.133*** | –.084* | – | | | | | |
| 4. Conservatism | .143*** | –.093** | .121*** | – | | | | |
| 5. Group-based deprivation | –.050 | –.014 | .118*** | –.058 ⁺ | – | | | |
| 6. Subgroup respect | .009 | .050 | .007 | .014 | –.094** | – | | |
| 7. University identification | .022 | .037 | –.085* | –.022 | –.110** | .318*** | – | |
| 8. Protest intentions | –.121*** | –.065 ⁺ | .139*** | –.295*** | .249*** | –.103** | –.139*** | – |
| Mean | –0.022 | 0.585 | 0.368 | 1.970 | 4.047 | 2.757 | 3.088 | 3.280 |
| SD | 1.000 | 0.812 | 0.930 | 0.986 | 0.678 | 0.639 | 0.723 | 1.067 |

Note. ^aSex was contrast-coded (–1 = woman; 1 = man). ^bEthnicity was contrast-coded (–1 = ethnic minority; 1 = ethnic majority). ^cUniversity System was contrast-coded (–1 = work at a University of California campus; 1 = work at a California State University campus).

⁺ $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 4 = *strongly agree*) and averaged to form a measure of subgroup respect ($\alpha = .930$).

University identification

Two items adapted from Huo, Smith, Tyler, and Lind (1996) were used to assess university identification. These items had participants indicate their agreement with the following statements: (1) 'I am proud to think of myself as a member of my university' and (2) 'I feel committed to my university'. Items were rated on a 4-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 4 = *strongly agree*) and averaged to form a measure of university identification ($r = .665$, $p < .001$).

Protest intentions

Four items were used to assess participants' intentions to protest the furlough. These items had participants state their willingness to (1) 'engage the media', (2) 'sign a petition', (3) 'attend meetings to discuss alternatives' to the furlough, and (4) 'support a faculty strike' on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all willing*; 5 = *completely willing*). Items were averaged to form a measure of protest intentions ($\alpha = .804$).

Covariates

Four variables were used as covariates: participants' (1) sex, (2) ethnicity (minority vs. majority), (3) university system (California State University vs. University of California), and (4) political ideology. Political ideology was assessed by having participants indicate their political views on a 5-point scale (1 = *very liberal*; 5 = *very conservative*).

We included these covariates for multiple reasons. First, women's prior experiences with inequality in academia (see Ginther & Hayes, 1999) may influence their responses to additional workplace injustices. Second, Hohman, Packard, Finnegan, and Jones (2013) showed that minorities were more disadvantaged by the universities' furlough than Whites. Third, the union has a strong presence within the California State University system. As such, faculty employed at California State University campuses were more likely to be exposed to mobilization tactics than their University of California counterparts (see Klandermans, 1997). Finally, endorsement of conservative beliefs buffers people from the negative consequences of group-based relative deprivation (see Osborne & Sibley, 2013). Thus, it was necessary to show that the variables examined in this study predicted protest intentions above and beyond these covariates.

Results

We conducted a multiple regression analysis to test our hypothesis that subgroup respect would moderate the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and protest intentions. The first block of our regression model served as our baseline and included our (contrast-coded and mean-centred) covariates, whereas the second block added our (mean-centred) group-based relative deprivation and (mean-centred) subgroup respect variables.² The third block of our regression model included a (mean-centred)

² In all of the analyses presented below, we obtained similar results when excluding the covariates from our regression models. We include the covariates here to demonstrate the robustness of our models.

Group-based relative deprivation \times (mean-centred) Subgroup respect interaction term. The full model was then used to predict participants' protest intentions.

As shown in Table 2, group-based relative deprivation and subgroup respect were *independently* associated with protest intentions – even after controlling for our covariates. Specifically, whereas believing that one's ingroup was collectively deprived was positively associated with intentions to protest the furlough ($B = 0.322$, $SE = .051$, $p < .001$), subgroup respect was negatively correlated with protest intentions ($B = -0.127$, $SE = .054$, $p = .019$). The results from Block 3, however, show that the former relationship was moderated by subgroup respect ($B = -0.169$, $SE = .074$, $p = .022$). Simple slope analyses for participants who were ± 1 *SD* from the mean of subgroup respect (see Figure 2) revealed a strong positive relationship between group-based relative deprivation and protest intentions among those who felt their subgroup had been treated disrespectfully ($B = 0.440$, $SE = .073$, $p < .001$). In contrast, this same relationship was nearly halved among those who believed their subgroup had been treated with a high level of respect ($B = 0.224$, $SE = .067$, $p = .001$).

In a second set of analyses, we examined our hypothesis that the moderated relationship between group-based relative deprivation and protest intentions would be mediated by participants tendency to (dis)identify with their university at conditional levels of subgroup respect. As a preliminary step in this process, we sought to demonstrate that the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and our hypothesized mediator (i.e., university identification) was also moderated by subgroup respect. As such, we reran our regression model using university identification as a criterion.

As predicted, Table 2 shows that group-based relative deprivation was negatively ($B = -0.077$, $SE = .036$, $p = .033$), whereas subgroup respect was positively ($B = 0.352$, $SE = .038$, $p < .001$), associated with university identification. Although the former relationship was small, Block 3 demonstrates that the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and university identification varied by participants' perceptions of subgroup respect ($B = 0.104$, $SE = .052$, $p = .045$). Specifically, Figure 3 shows that the negative relationship between group-based relative deprivation and university identification was reliable among those who perceived that their subgroup had been treated with a low (i.e., -1 *SD*) level of respect ($B = -0.150$, $SE = .051$, $p = .003$). Conversely, group-based relative deprivation and university identification were *unassociated* among participants who believed that their subgroup had been treated with a high (i.e., $+1$ *SD*) degree of respect ($B = -0.017$, $SE = .047$, $p = .723$).

In a final set of analyses, we used Hayes' (2012) PROCESS macro to formally test our hypothesis of moderated mediation (see Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). In doing so, we ran Model 8 using 5,000 bootstrapped resamples (with replacement). Reliable indirect effects are indicated by 95% bias-corrected (BC) confidence intervals (CI) around a conditional indirect effect that do *not* contain zero. Notably, bootstrapping indirect effects has more statistical power than the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach to mediation *without* increasing Type I error rates (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). As such, it is the preferred method for assessing the reliability of indirect effects (also see MacKinnon, 2008).

Consistent with our predictions, Table 3 shows that the indirect effect of group-based relative deprivation on protest intentions through university identification varied by levels of subgroup respect. Specifically, whereas the indirect effect of group-based relative deprivation on protest intentions through university identification was reliable for those who were either 1 *SD* below (indirect effect = .0197; BC 95% CI = .0033, .0491) or at the mean (indirect effect = .0109; BC 95% CI = .0015, .0285) of subgroup respect, the same

Table 2. Multiple regression analyses predicting protest intentions and strength of university identification as a function of control variables, group-based relative deprivation, subgroup respect, and the interaction between group-based relative deprivation and subgroup respect

| | Protest intentions | | | | | | University identification | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|------|-----------|------|---------------------|------|---------------------------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| | Baseline model | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | | Baseline model | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
| | B | SE | B | SE | B | SE | B | SE | B | SE | B | SE |
| Intercept | 3.273*** | .046 | 3.279*** | .045 | 3.267*** | .045 | 3.096*** | .034 | 3.103*** | .032 | 3.110*** | .032 |
| Sex ^a | -0.061 ⁺ | .036 | -0.055 | .035 | -0.061 ⁺ | .035 | 0.010 | .026 | 0.006 | .025 | 0.010 | .025 |
| Ethnicity ^b | -0.108* | .044 | -0.100* | .043 | -0.093* | .043 | 0.026 | .032 | 0.011 | .030 | 0.007 | .030 |
| University system ^c | 0.186*** | .039 | 0.158*** | .038 | 0.160*** | .038 | -0.062* | .028 | -0.058* | .027 | -0.059* | .027 |
| Conservatism | -0.340*** | .037 | -0.323*** | .036 | -0.324*** | .036 | -0.008 | .026 | -0.016 | .025 | -0.014 | .025 |
| Group deprivation | | | 0.322*** | .051 | 0.332*** | .051 | | | -0.077* | .036 | -0.083* | .036 |
| Subgroup respect | | | -0.127* | .054 | -0.117* | .054 | | | 0.352*** | .038 | 0.345*** | .038 |
| Group deprivation × Subgroup respect | | | | | -0.169* | .074 | | | | | 0.104* | .052 |
| Model summary | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| R ² _{adj} | .123 | | .171 | | .182 | | .003 | | .108 | | .111 | |
| F | 29.157*** | | 28.577*** | | 25.376*** | | 1.703 | | 17.136*** | | 15.320*** | |
| ΔR ² | - | | .050 | | .005 | | - | | .106 | | .004 | |
| ΔF | - | | 24.051*** | | 5.255* | | - | | 47.604*** | | 4.033* | |

Note. ^aSex was contrast-coded (-1 = woman; 1 = man). ^bEthnicity was contrast-coded (-1 = ethnic minority; 1 = ethnic majority). ^cUniversity system was contrast-coded (-1 = work at a University of California campus; 1 = work at a California State University campus).

⁺ $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

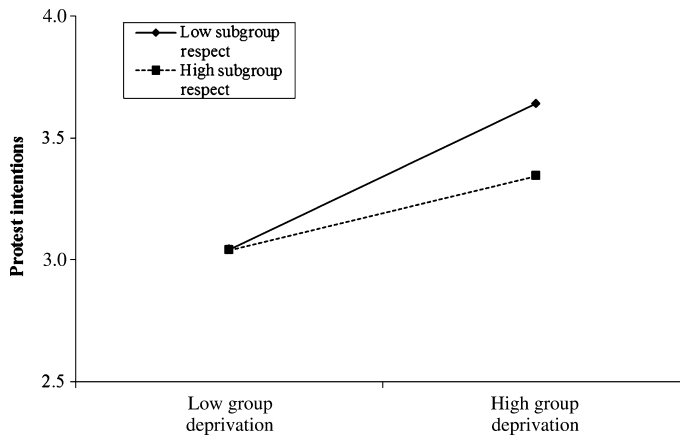


Figure 2. Relationship between faculty members' level of group-based relative deprivation and protest intentions at low (-1 SD) and high ($+1$ SD) levels of subgroup respect.

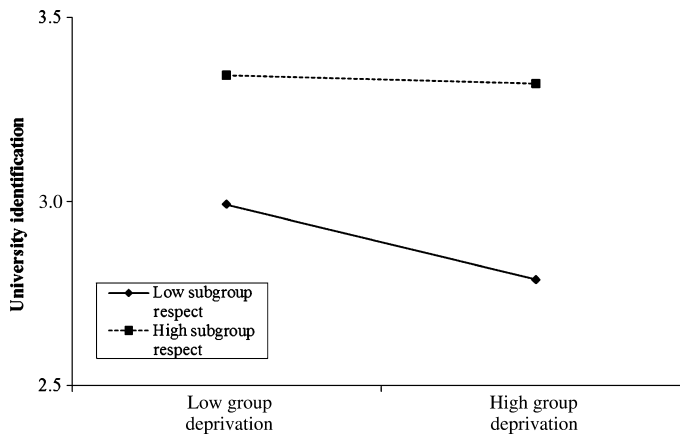


Figure 3. Relationship between faculty members' level of group-based relative deprivation and university identification at low (-1 SD) and high ($+1$ SD) levels of subgroup respect.

Table 3. Conditional indirect effect of group-based relative deprivation on protest intentions through university identification at low (-1 SD), moderate (Mean), and high ($+1$ SD) levels of subgroup respect

| Conditional level of subgroup respect | Indirect effect | Bootstrapped standard error | Bias-corrected lower limit | Bias-corrected upper limit |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| -1 SD | 0.0197* | 0.0111 | 0.0033 | 0.0491 |
| Mean | 0.0109* | 0.0066 | 0.0015 | 0.0285 |
| $+1$ SD | 0.0022 | 0.0077 | -0.0126 | 0.0191 |

Note. Bias-corrected and accelerated 95% confidence intervals were calculated using 5,000 bootstrap samples (with replacement). The estimate of the given conditional indirect effect partials out the effects of our control variables on the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and both (1) university identification and (2) protest intentions. Significant conditional indirect effects are highlighted in bold.

*Conditional indirect effect is reliable at $p < .05$.

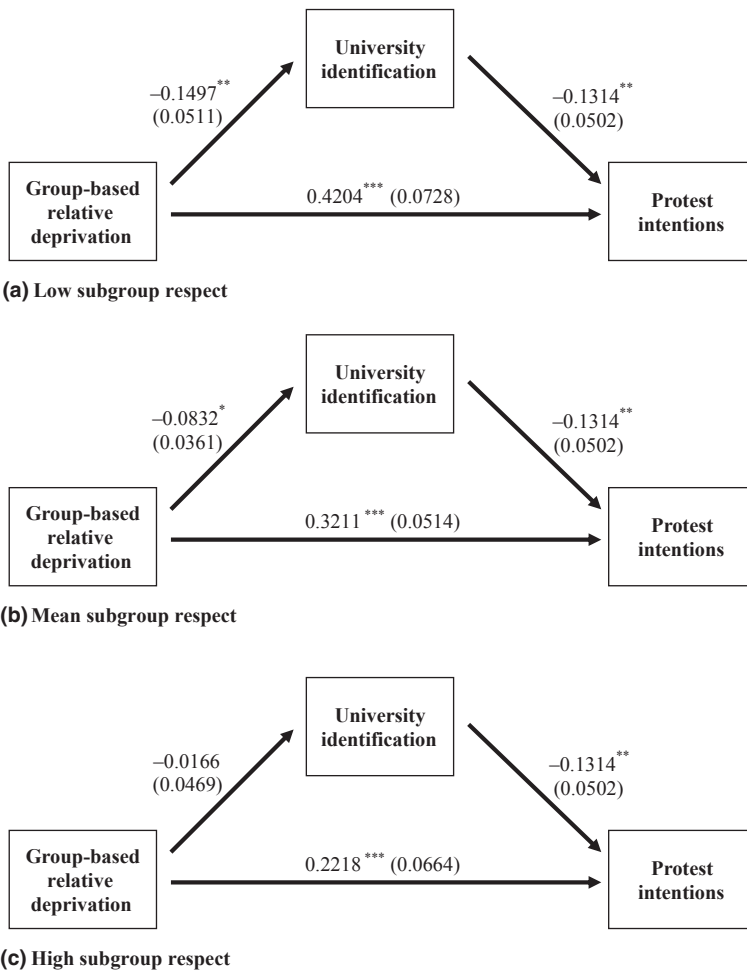


Figure 4. Indirect effect of group-based relative deprivation on protest intentions through university identification at (a) low (-1 SD), (b) medium (Mean), and (c) high ($+1$ SD) levels of subgroup respect. Estimates partial out the effects of our control variables on (a) university identification and (b) protest intentions. Note. Values represent unstandardized regression coefficients. Standard errors appear in parentheses. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

indirect effect was unreliable among participants who were 1 SD above the mean of subgroup respect (indirect effect = .0022, BC 95% CI = $-.0126, .0191$). Thus, the stronger relationship between group-based relative deprivation and protest intentions among participants at low (vs. high) levels of subgroup respect occurs (partly) through the former group's tendency to disidentify with their superordinate group (see Figure 4).

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and responses to a controversial workplace policy. Because believing that one's ingroup has

been unfairly deprived involves group-based comparisons (Runciman, 1966), we predicted that group-based relative deprivation would positively correlate with protest intentions. Research on relational processes, however, shows that people respond positively when their subgroup is treated with respect (Huo, Binning, *et al.*, 2010; Huo, Molina, *et al.*, 2010). As such, high levels of subgroup respect should dampen the impact that group-based relative deprivation has on workers' intentions to protest. Finally, given the role that group identification plays in transferring group-based grievances into collective action (Ellemers, 2002; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008, 2012), we expected that the Group-based relative deprivation \times Subgroup respect interaction on protest intentions would occur via participants' tendency to disidentify with their university.

As predicted, group-based relative deprivation positively correlated with participants' intentions to protest the furlough. This relationship was, however, muted among participants who felt their subgroup had been treated with a high (vs. low) level of respect. Finally, the predicted conditional indirect effect of group-based relative deprivation on protest intentions through drops in university identification occurred for participants who felt that their subgroup had been treated with a low to moderate, but not high, amount of respect. In other words, subgroup respect moderated the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and protest intentions through participants' (dis)identification with their superordinate identity.

That group-based relative deprivation would predict drops in university identification is a unique and theoretically intriguing insight. Indeed, most studies on the relationship between perceived injustices and various aspects of group identification focus on how the experience of injustice *increases* people's identification with the targeted group (Cronin, Levin, Branscombe, van Laar, & Tropp, 2012; Grant & Brown, 1995; Kelly & Kelly, 1994). The extent to which group-based relative deprivation leads people to *disengage* from their *superordinate* identity, however, has rarely been assessed. This oversight is surprising, given that relative deprivation theory posits that people care about how ingroup authorities allocate resources (Smith & Ortiz, 2002).

Our results show that believing that one's subgroup has been deprived by members of a superordinate group corresponds with a decline in their superordinate identification. Also, the extent to which participants disidentified with their superordinate identity explained *why* group-based relative deprivation predicted protest intentions – at least among faculty who believed that their subgroup had received a low-to-moderate amount of respect. Specifically, the more participants felt that their group had been deprived, the less they identified with their university. Low levels of university identification, in turn, predicted faculty members' intentions to protest. Thus, people's identification with their superordinate group plays an important role in maintaining stability within the workplace.

These results have important implications for organizations that implement unpopular workplace policies. Specifically, they suggest that pay cuts will have critical downstream effects on workers' commitment to their place of employment. If they do not strongly identify with their workplace, employees may view their salary as an important factor in deciding whether they should seek employment elsewhere. This may be problematic for organizations hoping to retain (or recruit) employees, as people focus more on fair outcomes than on fair procedures when their superordinate group identification is low (Huo *et al.*, 1996). As such, the furlough may have initiated a long-term exodus among faculty who are now seeking jobs outside – or have already left – California's financially strapped university systems.

It is also important to call attention to the *opposing* effects that subgroup respect has on attempts to establish an equitable distribution of resources in an organization. On the one hand, subgroup respect predicts people's level of social engagement and physical well-being (Huo, Molina, *et al.*, 2010) – two indicators of a healthy organization. On the other hand, our results show that subgroup respect can *undermine* people's motivation to overcome group-based inequalities. Taken together, these findings suggest that workers may (temporarily) overlook unfair outcomes if they believe their subgroup has been treated with respect. This finding is consistent with research showing that having one's complaints heard – even if it has no effect on the outcome (i.e., expressing non-instrumental voice) – increases people's acceptance of decisions made by authorities (Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990). Thus, we have identified a troubling side effect of subgroup respect that contributes to the maintenance of inequality (also see Jackman, 1994).

Contributions

This study makes a number of contributions to the literatures on relative deprivation and subgroup respect. For one, we are the first to integrate relative deprivation theory with research on subgroup respect. Although these two traditions appear to be strange bedfellows (i.e., the former focuses on outcomes, whereas the latter concentrates on social identity processes), people care about *both* their subgroup's standing *and* whether their subgroup received equitable outcomes. Indeed, as we have shown here, group-based relative deprivation and subgroup respect *independently* predict collective responses to unpopular workplace policies. Moreover, the interactive effects of group-based relative deprivation and subgroup respect show that these two variables depend on each other when explaining group-focused responses to perceived injustices. Recognizing the value of both instrumental (outcome) and non-instrumental (identity-based) motives generates theoretical insights that would be overlooked had we assessed them independently.

Another contribution made by this study is our assessment of participants' responses to a real-world event. Specifically, participants were involved in an actual pay dispute that left many in a state of unrest. Shortly after the university's announcement of the furlough, faculty and students (who were affected by a tuition increase) staged state-wide protests that included class walkouts and protest marches (Gordon, 2009, September 24). The amount of personal investment in, as well as the intensity of responses to, the furlough would be difficult to capture in an artificial lab setting.

Finally, whereas past work has focused on identifying *either* the boundary conditions of an effect (Kelly & Kelly, 1994; Osborne & Sibley, 2013) *or* the processes through which an effect occurs (Grant & Brown, 1995; Osborne, Smith, & Huo, 2012), we simultaneously assessed *both* a moderator and a mediator of the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and intentions to protest. Such an approach allows us to see if an indirect effect holds across the sample population (Morgan-Lopez & MacKinnon, 2006; Preacher *et al.*, 2007). Thus, our ability to show that the indirect effect of group-based relative deprivation on protest intentions only occurred through participants' tendency to disidentify with their university at specific values of subgroup respect demonstrates both *when* and *why* feeling relatively deprived leads to collective action.

Caveats and future directions

Although this study makes important contributions to the literature, we must note some caveats. For one, we assessed participants' *intentions* to protest. Relatedly, our data focused on self-reports. Thus, the extent to which participants acted upon their intentions remains unknown. Given the contentious nature of the furlough, however, many of our respondents likely followed through with their intentions. Indeed, classroom walkouts and rallies occurred throughout the state (Gordon, 2009, September 24). Moreover, van Zomeren *et al.* (2012) have shown that intentions to participate in collective action are positively associated with *actual* engagement in protest activities. Still, future research should assess people's behaviours within the context of controversial pay disputes.

Another caveat of this study focuses on our measure of group-based relative deprivation. Specifically, we had participants compare the pay of faculty at their university with the pay of 'faculty at comparable universities'. As such, the specific reference group participants had in mind remains unknown. It is likely, however, that participants were referencing colleagues within their own sub-discipline at universities *outside* California. Indeed, the tendency to attend conferences within one's area of expertise would expose participants to many colleagues unaffected by California's budget crisis. In addition, the high visibility of the furlough ensured that participants knew the 'grass was greener' outside California, thus making colleagues at universities in other states a likely referent. Indeed, many affected by the furlough sought work outside California's universities (see Hohman *et al.*, 2013). Nevertheless, future research should specify participants' referent groups to avoid interpretational ambiguities.

One should also be cautious about inferring the causal direction of our results. Faculty who highly identified with their university may have been less likely to feel the furlough was unjust than their less identified counterparts (e.g., Abrams & Grant, 2012). Alternatively, involvement in the protests may have raised participants' awareness about the impact the furlough had on faculty, thereby increasing their group-based relative deprivation. There are, however, reasons to believe that group-based relative deprivation *preceded* participants' disidentification with their university and later protest intentions. Specifically, experimental (Grant & Brown, 1995) and longitudinal (Macleod, Davey Smith, Metcalfe, & Hart, 2005; Schmitt, Maes, & Widaman, 2010) studies show that relative deprivation precedes responses to perceived inequality. Moreover, van Zomeren *et al.*'s (2008) meta-analysis of the relationship between perceived injustices and collective action showed that the average effect size for correlational and experimental studies are indistinguishable. Still, experimental work is needed to validate the causal direction implied by our results.

Finally, we should note that, though we have shed light on *one* moderator of the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and group-focused responses to a perceived injustice, other variables are also likely to affect the strength of these relationships. Indeed, different aspects of the socio-structural environment (i.e., the stability and legitimacy of status differences, as well as the permeability of group boundaries) elicit distinct responses to unfair outcomes (Ellemers, 2002; Ellemers *et al.*, 1993; Lalonde & Silverman, 1994; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999). Relatedly, Osborne and Sibley (2013) show that the endorsement of system-justifying beliefs moderates the relationship between group-based relative deprivation and both (1) perceptions of group-based discrimination and (2) support for the political mobilization of one's ingroup. Nonetheless, this study advances the literatures on relative deprivation theory and subgroup respect by showing that the relationship between group-based

relative deprivation and protest intentions *depends on* people's assessment of how authorities treat their groups.

Conclusion

Research shows that the perceived status of one's ingroup *relative to* other groups is a key predictor of collective action (Smith *et al.*, 2012). Still, people care about the amount of respect accorded to their subgroup (Huo, Binning, *et al.*, 2010). Indeed, as we have shown, perceptions of *both* group-based relative deprivation *and* subgroup respect *independently* predict people's identification with their superordinate group and later protest intentions. Moreover, people's focus on outcomes and processes interacted to predict both types of group-focused responses to inequality: Although group-based relative deprivation predicted university identification and protest intentions for faculty who felt the university treated their subgroup with a low-to-moderate level of respect, group-based relative deprivation only weakly predicted these *same* outcomes among those who perceived high levels of subgroup respect. Together, these findings uncover a previously unknown barrier to collective action (i.e., subgroup respect), while also illustrating a pathway through which group-based relative deprivation leads to protest intentions (namely, people's tendency to disidentify with their superordinate group).

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