
GOING SOMEWHERE OR STAYING PUT?
THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF MOVEMENTS THAT CHALLENGE
MINORITY-MAJORITY RELATIONS

Lisa Kathryn Hartley

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DECLARATION

This thesis describes original research undertaken in the Department of Psychology, Murdoch University. This thesis has been prepared as a series of papers, with context statements to demonstrate the connections between the papers. Where the chapters involved substantial contributions from others this is appropriately acknowledged and my own original contribution is clearly demonstrated. Otherwise, the writing and work outlined in these chapters is solely my own.

Lisa Kathryn Hartley

ABSTRACT

In many societies around the world the position that members of a privileged majority should take regarding institutionalised inequalities experienced by some minority groups is the site of contentious debate. Despite, or perhaps even because of, such debate there is often a lack of progress of these views into well-defined and effective movements that produce social change. This thesis starts with the assumption that reducing intergroup inequality involves, at least in part, the effective mobilisation and engagement of majority members.

Using Australia as a case example, the central research question is what are the social psychological factors that help movements take a form that is consistent with action to produce change in minority-majority relations? From a social identity perspective, it is argued that such movements encounter challenges due to the conflicting (and potentially conflicted) emotions and beliefs that their members and other members of the society hold. The research is based on a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods and is conducted in the context of significant socio-political transformations in Australian society, starting with the defeat of a social conservative Australian Prime Minister and the succeeding Prime Minister's apology to the minority Indigenous population for past wrongs.

In a review of Australia's recent socio-political history, social psychological factors of potential relevance to the research question are proposed (Chapter 1). Evidence for some of these claims is then offered through the reporting of interviews of social activists (Chapter 2). In light of the Prime Minister's apology to Australia's

Indigenous population and the findings from the interviews, the remaining chapters focus specifically on Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. In Chapter 3, the social psychological theoretical concepts and research relevant to this issue are critically reviewed.

In three cross-sectional studies during the year after the apology, majority group members' positions regarding policies that aim to foster reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are tracked (Chapter 4). This research provides correlational evidence for the utility of the opinion-based groups construct in explaining collective action intentions in contexts of emerging debate. Findings show that other factors such as group-based guilt and efficacy beliefs play an important, but secondary role in predicting action. Results also show that groups formed around opinions can become disconnected from action and explanations for this are discussed.

The utility of opinion-based group memberships in capturing emerging debate and collective action is also explored on a social networking internet site (Chapter 5). In Study 1, a content analysis of group forming around conflicting positions about minority-majority relations is presented. In Study 2, posts on the discussion board of two groups with opposing positions about the apology is analysed over a six point period. Findings suggest that group discussion and the actions advocated by group members shifted with changes in the offline political environment. Specifically, pro-apology group members are more likely to encourage others to undertake actions to promote their groups' opinion compared to the anti-apology group.

Chapter 6 examines whether the same processes underpin action for activists compared to sympathisers regarding to two government policies designed to address Indigenous disadvantage: economic development and paternalistic intervention. Most noteworthy, social movement identification is found to be an important predictor of action for the economic development policy for activists, whereas opinion-based group identification is important for the general community. Social identity has no predictive value for the intervention policy for either sample. It is argued that these results suggest the lack of development of action-orientated identities. In a technical note (Chapter 7), the validity of the opinion-based group construct is examined and it is argued that opinion-based group membership can be an excellent predictor of action but opinion-processes might be more relevant in certain contexts (e.g., for contested issues).

This thesis provides converging evidence for the idea that the incipient and actual members of the movements can be seen to be involved in active processes of forming social identities that are suited to producing social change. At all times these movements also appear to face challenges from alternative views (government decisions, public opinion and the policies of organisations). In some cases these appear likely to compromise or undermine the likelihood of the social identity promoting the level of engagement necessary to promote social change. Indeed, if the most active and most committed are ambivalent about the need to act on behalf of the cause then the cause is in trouble.

The value of this thesis lies in helping to map out social psychological factors that may contribute to the social stability of disadvantage. That is, rather than explaining the lack of social change in terms of explicit or implicit ideological resistance or

economic and political conspiracies, we can explain the lack of change as resting that intricate social psychological processes that have the potential to go wrong. On the upside, this thesis offers important practical implications for advocates of social change.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Mike (Reza) McCoy, Altaf Ali, Ishaq Ali, Wali (Daniel) Baboli, Sudat Muradi and Joenishananth Gunarathnam. Thank you for teaching me that even in the midst of profound injustice and suffering beautiful friendships can grow. I hope that one day, very soon, you and your families will receive the peace and the freedom that so many of us take for granted.

I came across this poem during the early stages of my PhD candidature. I think it aptly captures the inherent tensions involved in the struggle for justice for Indigenous peoples in Australia, many of which are touched upon in this thesis. I include this poem as a dedication to all those engaged in this struggle and as an acknowledgement that the injustices that Indigenous peoples have endured and continue to endure should not, and cannot, be forgotten.

New Politics: Reverse Cycle. Climate Change.

Eleven years of leadership
to white out difference
and create just 'ONE great Tribe,
one Australia' (Sydney Morning
Herald headline 12/10/07).

'Strayan', you know,
mainstream services,
make all the same now,
Sameness is in,
Like 'One Nation', like
Hanson's fish and chips.

'Sorry'?

No guilt. No victim.
No black arm band.
No 'Sorry' way.

But will write a preamble of Symbol
in the Constitution
to say, 'once many a tribe left
their footprints on the land'!
For museum and gallery showcase only.

We sure want their Black traces caked in
like museum iron cast pieces
of connected head chains
and prisoners' iron ball rings.

For those still truly alive,
back to Mission space, my friend!
Assimilate or Perish!

A new INVASION or a new
POLITICAL INVENTION?
With a 21st Century stroke of a pen,
the gubba sends in an army of police,
medicos, welfare people,
without needing permits,
troops who can legally invade
remote black homelands
for at least five years
to hunt down child abusers.

What a lucky break
our *Little Children are Sacred* report gave
our national visionary leader
enabling him to legislate
to send in the troops and
hide behind a trendy law
of reverse cycle (racial discrimination)
and climate change (mainstream
everything to one 'Strayan' way)

The community's welfare cheques
can now be quarantined
by good-hearted administrators
for worthy expenditures,
definitely not for grog
to dull the pain
of a 'dying' race.

Back to Mission space, my friend!
Back to the Future!
Assimilate or Perish!

Legislation escapes
Land rights, Human rights,
any rights that don't suit
the neo colonialists who, however,
are willing to write a lovely preamble
admitting this country is not terra nullius
when they first arrived,
and sing hymns of praise
of 'She'll be right, mate.'

We're all egalitarian now-
One Dream, One Nation.

If Blacks want their own land,
they can buy their own!
Interested in a 99-year lease?
Negotiate (if they can),
that's our strategy, wedge politics,
Survival of the fittest clan,
our brand new rule.
If elected,
we promise to sign the death warrant:
Multiculturalism is dead.
Land rights is dead.

But watch out, fellow 'Strayan',
two faces of the same coin
brand each other:
the Economic Conservative!
Same Choice! One Nation!

Oh bipartisan saints who humanely
send in the troops
to protect our sacred little children;
they promote individual tax cuts
for worker's choice to choose a dream
that can be bought! (election bribe)

Voters, come help ink in
an imposed national amnesia,
vote for 'Reverse Cycle
and Climate Change'!

- *Deborah Ruiz Wall*

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CHAPTER 1:

MINORITY-MAJORITY RELATIONS IN AUSTRALIA:

AN OVERVIEW OF THESIS AIMS AND CONTEXT

Introduction to the Issue

Institutionalised status differences between majority and minority groups have created and maintained systemic disparities in wealth, health, and educational opportunities in many societies around the world, including Australia, the United States, New Zealand, and Canada (Durie, 2003). Where group membership affords such advantages, the position that those in the privileged majority should take in relation to minority disadvantage are often the point of contentious debate (for a discussion, see Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002). In Australian society, debates about this issue are particularly salient, in part, because it is one of the world's most culturally and ethnically diverse nations. It is also the case that Australia has a complex history relating to its Indigenous population¹, who currently face high levels of discrimination, marginalisation, and poverty (UN, 2009). In the Australian context, therefore, very important questions arise regarding the conditions under which inequality between minority and majority groups might be challenged².

¹ The United Nations define Indigenous people as those which have a historical continuity with pre-colonial/invasion societies that settled on their country and consider themselves distinct from other segments of the nation states now prevailing on those countries. In this thesis, the terms "Indigenous Australians" or "Indigenous population" will be used interchangeably to denote people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

² In this thesis, I use the terms "minority" and "majority" to denote groups based on ethnicity or culture as opposed to other categories such as gender or religion. Broadly speaking, I use the terms to distinguish between the Australian majority (the mainstream/white/non-Indigenous Australians) and other groups based on ethnicity and cultural belongingness (e.g., Indigenous Australian). I acknowledge the inherent tensions of opposing two categories by definition and I thus use them with caution. For example, the term "ethnic" is often equated with "foreign" or "other" and is frequently applied only to non-Anglo-Celtic immigrants. I acknowledge that these terms can be used in a pejorative way but certainly do not use them

Traditionally, social psychological perspectives such as relative deprivation theory (Runciman, 1966; see Walker & Smith, 2002, for a review) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) have focused on understanding when low status group members (often minorities) might band together to challenge intergroup inequality because it is assumed that such challenges are most likely to come from below.

However, given the power that members of privileged groups (often majorities) have in either being able to maintain or challenge intergroup inequality, I focus on the position that the privileged majority take with regards to minority disadvantage. In particular, I start with the crucial assumption that social change about intergroup inequality often rests on the development of concerted collective action (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Klandermans, 1997; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and that social movement participation is often the “ultimate” form of collective action (Stürmer & Simon, 2004b).

Despite, or perhaps even because, of the presence of intense debate about the position that those in the privileged majority should take in relation to intergroup inequality, there is often a lack of transformation of these views into well-defined and effective movements that produce social change (see Koopmans & Statham, 2000; Statham, 2001 for discussions on this issue in the European context). Therefore, questions of when and how people come to join social movements, or form them in the first place are critical. Indeed, a broad body of literature from a range of disciplines, including sociology, political science, history and social psychology has explored this issue (see, Klandermans, 1997; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1988; Reicher, 2004;

as such. Particular sensitivity should also be noted about the use of the category “Indigenous minority”. Using this label runs the risk of reducing people to a disempowered status of “disadvantaged” to be measured, monitored, and rectified. This can create an imbalance of power over the way in which Indigenous affairs are discussed and addressed. It also ignores the fluid and contextual nature of Indigeneity and Indigenous identification (see Paradies, 2006).

Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Snow, Soule, & Kriesi, 2004; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Wright, 2001). Broadly speaking, this literature can be seen to approach the issue of social movement formation and participation from either a macro or micro-level perspective. The former approach focuses on social structural, political, and organisational factors influencing the formation of social movements while the latter focuses on how these macro-level factors affect the motives and actions of people, and how these may affect the macro-level factors (Klandermans, 1997; McAdam et al., 1988).

In line with arguments made by Klandermans (1997), I propose that while it is important to investigate the way in which macro-level factors affect the development of social movements, it is equally essential to understand the reasons why individuals are drawn to particular issues and the factors that can foster their on-going participation in social movement groups so that collective behaviour can occur. Much social psychological research has sought to answer these questions in European and the United States contexts, very little has addressed the nuances in Australian society. Using Australian society as a case example, I explore the social psychological factors involved in transforming views into well-defined and effective social movements that produce social change about minority-majority relations.

The research presented in this thesis is broadly guided by insights from social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) theories, which describe the ways in which social identities can shape how people think, feel, and behave. For this perspective collective action is, first and foremost, an outcome or expression of a relevant social identity (Tajfel & Turner,

1979; Turner et al., 1987). Recent models that integrate research from social psychological theory might be effectively used to explore the factors that foster the development of collective action in the first place (Stürmer & Simon, 2004a; van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). Most recently, van Zomeren et al. (2008) propose an integrative social identity model of collective action (SIMCA), that points to three broad psychological underpinnings and motivators of collective action: efficacy, injustice (cognitive and affective), and social identity. Crucially, van Zomeren et al. propose a central role for social identity in their model, suggesting it is a key predictor of not just collective action but also of perceptions of injustice (cognitive and affective) and efficacy.

Given the powerful influence that social identities are widely believed to have on people's behaviour, I propose that at a social psychological level, social movements that seek to change minority-majority relations encounter challenges due to the conflicting (and potentially conflicted) emotions and beliefs that their members and other members of the society hold. I propose that those social movements whose members are able to form and adopt social identities that answer such challenges are more likely to foster and sustain action than those which cannot. A failure to achieve address these challenges results in what I term "compromised" social identities or movements.

In recent years a number of scholars have suggested that the role of social context on social psychological processes of collective action has to be considered more carefully (e.g., Reicher, 2004; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2007; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; Wright, 2009). I explicitly take up these concerns in this thesis through a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods used in the context of dynamic

socio-political transformations in Australian society, starting with the defeat of a socially conservative Australian Prime Minister in 2007 and his successor's apology to members of the minority Indigenous population for past wrongs in 2008.

In the next section, I present a brief overview of the recent Australian political context regarding debates about minority-majority relations. I do this with the aim of drawing on potential social psychological factors relevant in the Australian context. In Chapter 2, I provide background for some of these claims by reporting interviews of social activists about these issues.

The Australian Context: Minority-Majority Relations since Colonisation

When Europeans arrived in Australia in the 1770s the continent was declared "terra nullius" (meaning "empty land" in Latin). This declaration is despite the Indigenous population inhabiting the region for thousands of years and estimates of population at the time range anywhere from 300,000 to as high as 750,000 (Hage, 1998; Lopez, 2000). Indeed, it has been argued that Australia has been carefully controlled to maintain a European/British dominance since its colonial beginnings (Jupp, 2002). This control was institutionalised as the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (also known as the White Australia Policy) which allowed for the control of non-white immigration (Jupp, 2002). During the same time in which this Act was being enforced, as many as 100,000 Indigenous Australian children were taken from their homes in an attempt to "breed" them into the broader white population (known as the Stolen Generations).

It was as recent as 1972 when the Whitlam Labor Government officially abolished the White Australia Policy, implemented a policy of multiculturalism, and made a firm commitment to the self-determination of Indigenous Australians (Jupp,

2002; Lopez, 2000). In 1991, the Australian Parliament instituted a formal ten-year process of Reconciliation³ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The policies of multiculturalism and Reconciliation received bipartisan political support through to the 1990s. For much of Australia's recent history the policies of multiculturalism and Reconciliation have offered a normative framework as to how the Australian majority should relate to minority groups (Hage, 1998). A significant shift in the content of these policies, however, occurred during 1996 - 2007.

The Howard Years, 1996 - 2001: Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Relations

The election of John Howard's Liberal Coalition Government in 1996 is argued to have marked "the end of a long period of consensus by the major parties on aspects of immigration, settlement and Aboriginal issues" (Markus, 2001 p. 39) with a shift towards socially conservative policy positions on these issues. Howard's first two terms as Prime Minister were characterised by his refusal to offer a national apology to Indigenous Australians based on National Inquiry that all Australian governments should apologise for the systematic removal of Indigenous children from their families during 20th Century (Marr & Wilkinson, 2003).

Howard legitimised his anti-apology position by arguing that that Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians should focus on "practical" measures, such as improving the life expectancy and living standards of Indigenous Australians (referred to as "practical Reconciliation"). He also positioned "symbolic Reconciliation" (i.e., symbolic actions aimed to foster Reconciliation such as an apology

³ Throughout the thesis, I capitalise "Reconciliation" when referring to the concept in Australian context. This is in line with the norms of pro-reconciliation organisations such as "Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation" and is done as a sign of respect for the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

for the past mistreatment of Indigenous peoples) as an irrelevant by arguing that current Australian generations should not be held personally responsible for the actions of past governments. Indeed, political commentators at the time argued that Howard was able to effectively undermine the legitimacy of offering an apology by distancing non-Indigenous responsibility for Indigenous disadvantage and thus any feelings of group-based guilt, which is based on perceptions of responsibility for some harm (see Markus, 2001).

Howard's refusal to offer an apology in the late 1990s fostered the development of the Reconciliation movement⁴ (also known as the "people's movement for Reconciliation") that actively lobbied the government and the public to support an apology. A number of campaigns such as "Sorry Days", the "Sea of Hands" movement, and the marches of an estimated one million people for Reconciliation in the year 2000 — including 400,000 who walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge — all suggested a broadly based thirst for justice for Indigenous people by a large section of the Australian population. By the end of 2000, however, the Reconciliation movement lost its momentum (Celermajer, 2009; Giles, 2002). The official policy of Reconciliation, particularly its symbolic aspects, was also stifled and support for Reconciliation lost some resonance within the Australian community (Markus, 2001).

It is worth asking why the Reconciliation movement faltered at this particular juncture. Was it that there was a lack of alternative identities the movement

⁴ The aims of the Reconciliation movement has been strongly criticised by some Indigenous activists and political commentators. For example, some have argued that the movement's aims appeal only to members of the majority Australian population who want to feel good about themselves (i.e., to alleviate "white guilt") rather than foster structural social change in the status of Indigenous Australians). Others have argued that the Reconciliation movement is vitally important for developing positive intergroup relations. The substance of this debate parallels tensions highlighted by Wright and Lubensky (2008) regarding strategies to aimed to foster social cohesion compared to social justice outcomes.

compromised in the absence of strong national advocacy and policies commanded at a broader political level? Did supporters of reconciliation feel unable to act because the idea of collective responsibility had been so clearly delegitimised by the Howard government?

The Howard Years, 1997 - 2007: “Immigrant” and (White) Australian Relations

Marked by the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11 2001 and the subsequent “War on Terror”, war in Iraq, and the Bali Bombings in 2002 and 2005, there was a significant shift in debates about minority-majority relations from Indigenous affairs to terrorism, border security, immigration, and asylum seekers (Jupp, 2007). These debates were, of course, anticipated in the widely publicised views of Pauline Hanson who, in her maiden speech to parliament in 1996 expressed a fear that Australia was in “danger of being swamped by Asians” and that “abolishing multiculturalism...will allow those from ethnic backgrounds to join mainstream Australia” (Hanson, 1996). Political commentators and politicians from 2001 accused the Howard government of pursuing wedge politics over the issue of asylum seekers arriving to win the 2001 election with his party’s infamous campaign slogan, “We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come” (Prime Minister John Howard, 28 October 2001) (Markus, 2001; Marr & Wilkinson, 2003; Ward, 2002). Wedge politics here are described as “a calculated political tactic aimed at using divisive social issues to gain political support, weaken opponents, and strengthen control over the political agenda” (S. Wilson & Turnbull, 2001, p. 385).

Debates about the relationship between national identity and those perceived as “other” manifested at a political level with the implementation of exclusionary policies

such as the tightening of border security, the introduction of oppressive asylum seeker policies (e.g., the Pacific Solution and Temporary Protection Visas), and the introduction of a punitive anti-terrorism act (Marr, 2007). Howard and other political commentators also continued to construct the policy of multiculturalism as jeopardising and eroding national social cohesion and undermining a unitary national identity (HREOC, 2007; Markus, 2001; Poynting, 2002). In a symbolic statement of the Howard government's conservative position on minority-majority relations, the term "multicultural affairs" and "Reconciliation" were removed from official government language and the "Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs" was replaced by the "Department of Immigration and Citizenship" (Mackay, 2007).

Curiously, there was very little public protest at the removal of these iconic government policies which had been the normative policy framework for minority-majority relations for some 30 years (Mackay, 2007; Marr, 2007). Was this because there was no opposition? Or was it that the opponents feared the astute use of wedge politics by the Howard government, for example, that they feared being labelled as disloyal or un-Australian?

The Rudd Years, 2007 - 2010: A New Era for Minority-Majority Relations?

The election of Kevin Rudd as Australia's Prime Minister in November 2007 was argued to symbolise a significant transformation in the political rhetoric about minority-majority relations in Australia (e.g., Mackay, 2007). For example, Rudd's election promises included offering the long awaited apology to the Stolen Generations (at the same time as strongly precluding the possibility of financial compensation for past-wrongs), implementing (arguably) more humane asylum seeker policies, and

making a stronger commitment to the social inclusion of vulnerable groups (including diverse cultural and ethnic groups). Rudd's electoral campaign also marked the beginning in the transformation of the Australian media sphere which saw the first significant integration of Web 2.0 technologies into a national election campaign. Web 2.0 here describes the second generation of web development including social networking sites. In particular, the two major political parties (the conservative Liberal Party and the Labor Party) both embraced blogs, online video and popular social networking sites in an attempt to win votes (e.g., Kissane, 2009). This engagement of Web 2.0 in political campaigning opened up new avenues for the development of support base for politicians and also new avenues for fostering the formation of groups to engage in collective action.

Given that changes in government often open opportunities for the mobilisation of movements wanting reform and social change (e.g., Eisinger, 1973; Tarrow, 1983), it seems timely to ask questions around the future of movements designed to produce change in minority-majority relations in the Australian context. The research presented in this thesis is nested within these dynamic socio-political transformations.

Social Psychological Factors Relevant in the Australian Context

In view of Australia's recent socio-political history, I argue that there are a number of potential social psychological factors that might be able to help us understand why there is often a lack of progress of views about challenging minority-majority relations into well-defined and effective social movements that produce social change. In particular, as discussed in detail next, I argue that the social psychological factors of

social identity, group-based emotions, and efficacy beliefs appear to have particular validity in this context.

First, if collective action is first and foremost an outcome or expression of a relevant *social identity* (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987) then a lack of action to address minority disadvantage may reflect a lack of action-relevant identities. Challenges from alternative views (e.g., government decisions, public opinion, and the policies of organisations) may compromise or undermine social identities that promote the type of engagement necessary to promote social change. For example, disputes about the nature of the Australian identity may well have contributed to waning momentum of the Reconciliation movement in 2000. On the one hand, the Reconciliation process emphasised the importance of Australia having a single national identity. On the other hand, Howard advocated for a national identity that was inconsistent with the symbolic recognition of Indigenous Australians (e.g., Gale, 2001; A. Moran, 1998). Similarly, other potential social identities such as “non-Indigenous Australian” may have also been too diffuse or too deeply problematised to be plausible bases for fostering action. In this thesis I propose one way of capturing the collectives involved in contested and complex debates is through the concept of *opinion-based groups* (Bliuc, McGarty, Reynolds, & Muntele, 2007). This proposition is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Second, if *group-based emotions* help shape group memberships and help foster social action (see Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000), groups that are tied to emotions that are inconsistent with action may undermine efforts to foster action (see Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009b, for a review of the role of group-based emotions in motivating action for social change). For example, some political commentators have

argued that Howard's construction that the current generation of Australians should not be held "personally" responsible for the mistakes of past generations (i.e., should not feel "group-based guilt") undermined the legitimacy of those who supported an apology (Markus, 2001).

Important questions are also raised regarding the influence of (or the lack of) *efficacy beliefs*. Where the success of a movement is largely dependent on the implementation of particular policies (such as a formal apology for the Reconciliation movement) but where the government is staunchly opposed to such action, and the major opposition party fails to distinguish itself from the government, the formation of a clear movement committed to take action to achieve change may be forestalled. At the same time, however, such blockages in the formal political situation may highlight the need for structural change and may also encourage action (for a discussion on the paradoxical relationship between perceptions of efficacy and social structural stability, see Leach et al., 2002).

Extending upon the variables in van Zomeren et al.'s (2008) model of collective action, perceptions of aspects of the social context such as the perceived level of consensus for the goals of a social movement in the wider community (see Pearson, 2000) and acrimonious and confusing debates over the comparative importance of policies (e.g., the debate over "practical" and "symbolic" Reconciliation that occurred following the election of the Howard Government in 1996) may also compromise or undermine the likelihood of the social identity promoting the level of engagement necessary to promote social change. Indeed, the work of Simon and Klandermans (2001) and Reicher and colleagues has emphasised the way in which leaders can act as agents

of social change by actively constructing the subjective meaning of an identity to foster consensualisation within the wider social context about particular social issues (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005; Reicher, Hopkins, Levine, & Rath, 2005). To this end, perceptions of social consensus about minority-majority relations might also be important.

Overview of Thesis Structure

As highlighted in the previous section, since Australia's colonial beginnings there has been intense debate about the position that the members of a privileged majority should take in relation to the disadvantage experienced by some minority groups. Despite this debate, there has been a stark lack of transformation of these views into well-defined and effective social movements that produce social change. In this thesis, I ask what are the social psychological mechanisms that help social movements take a form that it is consistent with action to produce change in minority-majority relations?

To explore the broad research question, I triangulate qualitative and quantitative methods to track and explore the development of socio-political opinion and collective action intentions during a period of dynamic socio-political transformation. The thesis question is also examined within different groups in Australian society, including members of the general community, activists, university students, and users of online social networking sites. By employing both qualitative and quantitative methods with a range of different samples allows me to establish confidence in each piece of the thesis.

In this chapter, I have highlighted a number of potential social psychological factors that may help social movements take a form that it is consistent with action to

produce change in minority-majority relations. To explore the validity of these ideas, I interviewed activists who sought to take action to change minority-majority relations (Chapter 2). During the time period in which these interviews were conducted, a major political change occurred in Australian society: the newly elected Prime Minister Kevin Rudd gave the long awaited apology to Indigenous Australians. As a result of this socio-political change, I focus specifically on efforts to change relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in the remaining chapters of my thesis.

In Chapter 3, I present a critical review of the social psychological theory and research concerning the concepts of collective action and social movement mobilisation relevant to the issue of reconciliation between non-Indigenous majority and Indigenous minorities. I empirically examine this knowledge in three cross-sectional studies (Chapter 4) across the year period after the apology to Indigenous Australians, where majority group members' positions regarding policies that aim to foster reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are tracked. This research provides correlational evidence for the concept of opinion-based groups (i.e., groups formed around shared opinions) in capturing positions in the context of emerging debate. Results also suggest that opinion-based groups can become disconnected from action (e.g., those opposed to financial compensation to Indigenous Australians).

Given the engagement of Web 2.0 in the political campaigning on the 2007 Federal election which has opened up the potential formation of online movements, I explore online manifestations of groups that have conflicting positions about minority-majority relations in Australia across time (Chapter 5). In Study 1, a content analysis of group names formed around these issues was conducted and in Study 2 the discussion

board of two groups that had opposing positions about the Australian government's apology to the Indigenous minority for past injustices was explored.

Chapter 6 asks whether the same processes underpin action regarding two policies addressing Indigenous inequality (economic development versus paternalistic intervention) for Reconciliation activists versus members of the general community. Results suggest that social movement identification was important for activists, while opinion-based group identification was important for the general community for the economic development initiative. For the intervention initiative, I argue that the failure of social identification to predict action for either sample suggests that appropriate action-orientated characteristics were not able to be formed in this context. In a technical note (Chapter 7), I examine the validity of the opinion-based group construct where I argue that while the construct is predictive of, and important in explaining action in some contexts, in other contexts (e.g., for issues that are highly contested) opinion-processes might be more relevant.

A Note about the Format of the Thesis

This thesis has been prepared as a series of papers to be submitted for publication. Most of the papers are currently under review. Given the format of the thesis, the text within these chapters is identical to the submitted papers, though alterations have been made to numbering system of the studies, the sections, and tables and figures within these papers to allow for consistent reference across this thesis as a whole. A context statement has also been added to the beginning of each chapter to place the empirical work within the broader theoretical aims of the thesis. Chapters 2

and 3 present background information for the research in this thesis and have not been submitted for publication.

Chapter 4 tracks majority group members' opinions about policies to address Indigenous Australian injustice during the year period after the apology was offered to the Stolen Generations. It is referenced as: Hartley, L. K. McGarty, C., & Donaghue, N. (2009). *Understanding disagreement within the majority about action to atone for past wrongs*. Manuscript submitted for publication: Murdoch University. The paper has been revised in line with editorial comments and resubmitted to the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*.

Chapter 5 explores the processes by which intergroup conflict and political action about contentious issues develops on social networking site. It is referenced as Hartley, L. K., McGarty, C., & Donaghue, N. (2010a). *The intergroup dimension of social networking sites: Socio-political action and intergroup conflict on Facebook*. Manuscript submitted for publication: Murdoch University to *Computers in Human Behaviour*.

Chapter 6 explores whether the same processes underpin action for sympathisers of a cause compared to activists. It is referenced as Hartley, L. K., McGarty, C., & Donaghue, N. (2010b). *Challenges to intergroup inequality: Contrasting pathways to collective action for sympathisers and activists*. Murdoch University and is planned to be submitted to the *British Journal of Social Psychology*'s special section on "Innovation in Theory and Research on Collective Action and Social Change".

Chapter 7 is a technical digression on measuring opinion-based group membership. It is referenced as Hartley, L. K, McGarty, C., & Donaghue, N. (2010c). Manuscript submitted for publication: Murdoch University and is planned to be submitted to *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*.

CHAPTER 2

GOING SOMEWHERE OR STAYING PUT? PERCEPTIONS OF ACTIVISTS CHALLENGING MINORITY-MAJORITY RELATIONS

In Chapter 1, a number social psychological factors that may be used to understand what prevents movements from taking a form that is consistent with action to produce change in minority-majority relations are proposed. These included the possibility of there being compromised national identities and a lack of alternative identities, and problems with efficacy beliefs and intergroup emotions such as group-based guilt compromising the development of action-orientated identities. I also suggested that macro-level issues such as debates about intergroup inequality policies (e.g., “symbolic” and “practical” Reconciliation), the perceived support for the goals of a movement in the wider community and the fear of being wedged, may also undermine the formation of sustainable movements⁵. Before designing the studies to empirically test the usefulness of these ideas in the context of minority-majority relations in Australia, I interviewed activists working on these issues

As an important point of contextualisation, the activists in this study were interviewed in the months after the Labor Party government was elected and gave the long awaited apology to the Indigenous Stolen Generations. As I have outlined in Chapter 1, in the years preceding this socio-political transformation debates about minority-majority relations in Australia were largely focused on the relations between

⁵ An exploration of the potential role of wedge politics in social movement formation and the mobilisation of collective action was presented in a conference presentation entitled: Hartley, L. K., Bliuc, A.-M, & McGarty, C. (2008). *The role of wedge politics in legitimising and delegitimising political action*. The Society of Australasian Social Psychologists Conference, Wellington, New Zealand, on March 28, 2008.

“immigrants” and (white) Australians (e.g., issues of terrorism, border security, immigration, and asylum seekers). As such, the questions asked in these interviews focused on what factors might prevent or foster activists from taking action about this particular minority-majority issue. In the interviews I labelled such action “efforts to promote cultural diversity”.

Method

The twelve self-identified activists were recruited from my own and my supervisors’ professional contacts⁶. Over half of the activists (eight) had a background in the provision of services to culturally diverse clients, although all were not working in this field at the time of the interview. The activists were between the age range of 25 – 60 and three quarters were female. The interviews were semi-structured in nature; a framework of items was supplemented by prompts and follow-up questions, and activists were able to speak as much as they wished (see Appendix A for the interview protocol). Interviews lasted between 15 and 60 minutes and were structured around a series of questions relating to their activism regarding the issue of cultural diversity in Australia and the role of the political context on the intensity of their activism. All interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim. The maximum word length of the transcribed interviews was 4697, the minimum 821, and the mean was 6,620 words per activist. The qualitative analysis was based on principles common to thematic analysis

⁶ At this point I should clarify my position as an activist researcher. Although I am politically committed to reducing injustice in the area I am researching, it is not the primary area of my own activism. I leave it to others to judge whether this biographical feature is a relevant consideration in the assessment of the research in this thesis. However, I should strongly note that politically salient events rather than the focus of my own activism drove the selection of the content area of this thesis.

(see Braun & Clarke, 2006) where individual responses to each question were recorded separately, coded, and organised with like responses being grouped together.

Analysis and Discussion

The content of these interviews was very wide-ranging and all the issues raised are not taken up in this chapter. In line with the broad theme of this thesis, I discuss here the activists' views that bear on the social psychological and social contextual issues that were that were raised in Chapter 1. Below, I present a short analysis of these themes.

Available Social Identities

Cultural diversity and Reconciliation. Interviews strongly suggested that activists did not perceive there to be a cohesive or recognisable social movement based around the cultural diversity tag, even though it was seen as potentially a good idea by many interviewed. Interestingly, some activists suggested that the diffuseness of the “cultural diversity” label was exactly what prevented a coherent social movement from forming around this issue. Nevertheless, a number of activists did suggest that they part of a collective of like-minded people in Australian community with regards to the broad issue of diversity in Australia. For example:

Activist 4: There's a larger community of people who are positive towards diversity, but there are few people who actually are motivated enough for a particular specific cause such as Reconciliation to come together to actually take action.

In this extract, the activist acknowledges that although there is a broader

collective of people sharing a similar position about cultural diversity in Australian society, this similarity in conviction is not enough to foster action. This extract is also interesting in the way that the activist positions “Reconciliation” as a distinct cause. Indeed, a number of other activists also constructed Reconciliation as a well-defined and specific social movement, often noting the impact that apology to the Stolen Generations had provided for rejuvenating a shared sense of identity with other reconciliation supporters. For example:

Activist 8: Six months ago I would have said the social movement for Reconciliation is one that’s disappeared. It’s been rekindled, whether it bursts into a sustainable burn is another question but it’s been rekindled by the PM’s Apology...[it has] a lot much more feel of a social movement about that again...The surge of energy I noticed with the PM’s apology to the Stolen Generations was extraordinary... I was down at the Esplanade here with 3000 other people. And the sense in that crowd was wonderful and really gave us a great boost.

What is significant about this extract is that it highlights the dynamic nature of the relationship between the government’s position on the apology and supporters of Reconciliation. In particular, the activist suggests that having a Prime Minister that supports the apology and being surrounded by pro-apology supporters on the way in which the apology to the Stolen Generations was recreated a sense of collective identity (or as the activist describes a “surge of energy”). The phenomenon this activist is describing appears very similar to Drury and Reicher’s (2005) definition of empowerment which is said to emerge when people realise their social identity in view

of the power of dominant forces. Importantly, empowerment has been argued to have personal (Drury, Cocking, Beale, Hansons, & Rapley, 2005) and lasting (Drury & Reicher, 2005) consequences for fostering action.

National identity. At the same time as many activists acknowledged the role that the Rudd government was playing in rejuvenating the Reconciliation movement, the ways in which the former Howard government undermined the efforts of those who supported change in minority-majority relations, and the ways in which he afforded legitimacy to the positions of those in the general community who sought to maintain the dominance of majority (white) privilege were discussed in considerable detail. In particular, the Howard government was positioned as an active player in mobilising people for an agenda that was ideologically opposed to the activists' own views. For example:

Activist 7: The fact that our Prime Minister was saying certain (racist) things, sort of made it OK for the general public to say it too...I'm not sure that he actually silenced those of us that did promote cultural diversity- not silenced in terms of deliberately trying to shut people up and not giving them airspace. I don't think it was an explicit attempt but I do think that by kind of making it more acceptable for people to have negative views, that those people with positive views couldn't be heard as much.

Interestingly, despite political commentators arguing that Howard's use of wedge politics had silenced people speaking out about his politics (Mackay, 2007; Markus, 2001; Ward, 2002), the activists in this study did not spontaneously offer wedge politics as a reason why social movements around the issue of cultural diversity

had not formed. Nevertheless, the effect of the government stance on issues of minority-majority relations appears significant. The work of Reicher and colleagues emphasises the ways in which political leaders can act as agents of influence and can actively construct the subjective meaning of an identity to meet the various political and social ends (Reicher, Cassidy, Wolpert, Hopkins, & Levin, 2006; Reicher, Haslam et al., 2005). In this case, Howard was able to construct a national identity that was exclusively defined and was able to position those who opposed him as being in the minority.

Contrasting constructions of Rudd were offered and his definition of the Australian identity. In the extract below, for example, the activist highlights the importance of Rudd as representing a more inclusive definition of “Australia”. Here, Rudd is positioned as someone who speaks Mandarin and by implication represents an extension of the Australian national identity beyond the traditional white, Anglo-Saxon self-definition provided by Howard. Rudd is also positioned as someone who appears to believe that an apology to Indigenous Australians is essential not only to make amends for past injustices but as fundamental to the definition of the national identity. This inclusive construction of the national identity is positioned as making activists’ “job” easier. For example:

Activist 12: When the general political climate is ‘No, we’re part of Asia; no we speak Mandarin. No, we say sorry. No, we don’t feel guilty but we’ve got to acknowledge history and make amends, we’ve gotta actively do the head-heart around heeding the hurts of racism’ it’s easier. But if you’ve got a general political background saying ‘we are a white country we are Christian’ [i.e., Howard], that’s much harder because you get legitimacy there.

What is also interesting about this activist's construction of the national identity is that it is very much in line with Rudd's portrayal of the Australian identity in his motion to the Stolen Generations. In this speech, Rudd positioned Reconciliation as an expression of a "core value of our nation... That value is a fair go for all". He goes on to describe that "there is a pretty basic Aussie belief that it is time to put right this most outrageous of wrongs". Here, Rudd's inclusively defined construction of the national identity is perceived as fostering activists to take action in line with their values.

Group-based Guilt

The previous extract is also interesting because group-based guilt is constructed as being separate from the apology. This construction is the same way in which Rudd, in this motion of apology speech, explicitly distanced the apology from individual responsibility and from any feeling of guilt (Celermajer, 2009). The way in which group-based guilt and the apology are constructed as being inconsistent highlights again, the problematic relationship that pro-apology and Reconciliation positions have with the emotion of guilt (see also Augoustinos, Lecouteur, & Soyland, 2002; Augoustinos & Penny, 2001). Interestingly, the issue of guilt did not come up in any of the other interviews.

Efficacy Beliefs

Related to the ways in which the contrasting political leaders, Howard and Rudd, were perceived to shape legitimacy around their ideological position about minority-majority relations, was the impact that the political context had on activists' ability to maintain faith in the potential efficacy of their actions. Some activists argued that

Howard's ideological position impaired their ability to engage in sustained action. For example:

Activist 9: Over a period of 11 years certainly I found my energy flagging, there's a point beyond which you can't sustain the energy levels needed for that particular struggle. When you're involved in X number of other struggles, again it's the same forces. And ...it was, yeah, I think we're going to look back on Howard's time as fairly grim at that level.

At the same time, other activists discussed how Howard's ideology actually drew them into activism. In the extract below, the activist describes personal resources as being clearly important for determining here level of activism. This is anticipated by resource mobilisation models of collective action (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2004a). It should be mentioned that this latter construction of efficacy was not a common theme.

Activist 2: I don't think my level of activism has ever been that greatly influenced by how effective it's going to be or how receptive the government's going to be... it's more what moves me at the time and other personal issues, personal resources.... what else I am doing in life, you know what I mean? I don't think 'Oh, now it's looking good so I'll jack up my activism hat'. In fact I might be more inclined to do it when there is least chance

Differences between the General Public and Activists

Some activists spoke about the difference between sympathisers of “cultural diversity” — constructed as some members in the general community who express diffuse support for the ideals of diversity — versus activists who wanted to create “real” structural change with regards to minority-majority relations. For example:

Activist 12: [sympathisers of cultural diversity] were seeing diversity as a goody-goody thing, ‘aren’t we a lovely country, we’ve got so many different people’.

We (activists) were interested in saying, ‘yes, we have a lot of different people, but these different people are not actually being treated in a very equitable fashion’.

Other activists explicitly constructed the wider general community’s support of cultural diversity as doing nothing more than making “people feel good but that’s not going to create structural change” (Activist 10). Ultimately, the debate here is a tension between the end goal of social cohesion versus social justice and change. This is an interesting finding as it has implications for models of social change. If there is no consensus on the outcome of a particular cause (e.g., the majority feeling “good” about themselves versus structural change), it is not surprising that there is no cohesive group formed around the issue of cultural diversity in Australia.

Online Activism

One final observation from these interviews was that, despite the growing intrigue about the role of the Internet in activism, there were very few references to the perceived value of the internet in being able to band like-minded people together to achieve change. One activist noted, however:

Activist 07: Now it’s interesting that for all the damage that (John Howard) did and all the damage that he has done...there was a number of good thinking, right thinking people in Australia who started to become active as a result of politics at a national level which was so offensive to them personally. I joined Getup, it’s

an online organisation...and many others joined as well, gave money, armchair activism.

This extract is interesting in that the use of online (or armchair) activism is being mobilised as a strategy as a direct result of grievances in the political context.

Conclusion

These interviews strongly suggest that the activists were not able to articulate a single recognisable social movement based around promoting cultural diversity, even though this was seen as potentially a good idea by many. In addition, the activists did not report that their levels of action and activity were hampered by wedge politics in the way we might have expected from the writings of political commentators as described in Chapter 1 (Markus, 2001; Marr, 2007; Ward, 2002). However, it was clear that the notion of promoting cultural diversity seemed too diffuse to provide a strong basis for consensus by those who subscribed to this view.

These interviews also point to the importance of a number of the social psychological factors highlighted in Chapter 1 as being important factors in understanding why there is often a lack of progress of views about challenging minority-majority relations into well-defined social movements that produce social change. In particular, it appears that challenges to efficacy beliefs, contested views of national identity (and other available social categories that people might organise around to promote change), and issues around group-based guilt may play a role in hindering commitment to social change. These propositions are empirically explored in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. The findings also highlight that a few activists perceived the potential of online groups for being able to translate grievances into action. The role of online

groups in fostering action is explored in Chapter 5. Differences in the kinds of factors that motivate action among members of the general community who sympathise with a cause compared to activists are explicitly taken up in Chapter 6.

Another salient theme in these interviews was that the socio-political transformations relating to Rudd's election and his apology to the Stolen Generations had rejuvenated the once stymied Reconciliation movement. In particular, Rudd's position about the apology was perceived to afford activists the legitimacy to speak out about issues relating to Indigenous rights and racism. The notion that political leaders and the socio-political context play important roles in legitimising or delegitimising particular opinions or positions about minority-majority relations is developed upon in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Given that the broad research question guiding this thesis is regarding the social psychological factors might help movements take a form that it is consistent with action, I decided to focus on the issue of the apology and Reconciliation policies more generally and the specific incipient groups that may have been forming around opinions about addressing the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In the next chapter, I link the results of these interviews with a critical review of the social psychological literature on the issue of action about Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations.

CHAPTER 3:
KEY CONCEPTS IN THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF ACTION ABOUT
INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

Indigenous peoples around the world suffer from profound discrimination, marginalisation and extreme poverty (Kissane, 2009; UN, 2009). Governments are increasingly recognising this suffering and taking action to atone for past wrongs, including land claims settlements and constitutional amendments as well as important symbolic actions such as apologies for past treatment of indigenous peoples. However, such actions are often met with significant resistance. In particular, there are often contentious debates by the members of a privileged majority about what action to take in relation to the disadvantage experienced by minority groups (e.g., Leach et al., 2002; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

In Australia, the Indigenous population die 17 years earlier than other Australians, have an unemployment rate four times higher than non-Indigenous Australians, and are 11 times more likely to be imprisoned compared to other Australians (see FaHCSIA, 2009). Despite these objective inequalities, there has been a fierce debate between members of the majority non-Indigenous population about the nature of Indigenous Australian disadvantage; whether it should be seen as a result of past injustices (e.g., land dispossession, removal of children from their families); and if so, whether there is a need to address this past injustice through government action.

As highlighted in Chapter 1, specific contentions have emerged regarding whether the Federal Government should make symbolic efforts to atone by apologising to Indigenous peoples. Since the apology was given, dynamic debates have also focused

on whether the government should take more expensive measures such as providing financial compensation to Indigenous Australians for past wrongs (examined in Chapters 4 and 5). Other government policies that have been the site of debate have been those classified as “practical measures” to address Indigenous disadvantage, such as the “Close the Gap” policy initiative which aims to reduce the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in areas such as health and education, and in more recent years the contentious “Northern Territory Emergency Intervention” policy (examined in Chapter 6). At the very crux of this debate is whether the government should be responsible for addressing Indigenous disadvantage and, more importantly, whether government actions such as these are necessary to foster Reconciliation between the Indigenous minority and non-Indigenous majority.

The Social Psychology of Reconciliation

The concept of reconciliation has developed in response to atrocities and human rights violations in various parts of the world where wrong doing has been inflicted from one group upon another. Reconciliation is seen as a process of change in intergroup relations: from hostility and conflict, to mutual respect, acceptance, and future cooperation (see Lederach, 1999; Short, 2003a, 2003b). Along with the movements for decolonisation, the women’s and environmental movements, the Indigenous rights movement has been one of the most active, advocating for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations around the world. For example, reconciliation has been a key approach to establishing intergroup cooperation between groups that have been the site of intergroup violence and conflict (e.g., Rwanda, Germany, and Israel and Palestinian conflicts) as well as in colonial contexts such as

Australia, Canada, and the United States. Although the precise definition of reconciliation depends on the socio-political context and the nature of the intergroup conflict, the psychological change in the relevant groups, defining both who the majority and minority groups are, and how they should relate to one-another are the same (Bartal, 2000; Nadler & Liviathan, 2004).

In Australia, the objectives and aims of the “Reconciliation movement” are complex⁷. Broadly speaking, however, the desired outcomes include the promotion of understanding and recognition of the history of Australian Indigenous peoples, adopting a shared ownership of that history, and the development of a greater awareness about the causes of disadvantage (Dudgeon & Pickett, 2000). If positive social change is to occur to foster Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, the role that group memberships play in this process appears to be crucial.

Building on the premise that collective action is an outcome of or expression of a relevant group-membership, I proposed a number of social psychological conditions that might affect the development of well-defined and effective movements that seek to achieve change in minority-majority relations in Chapter 1. These included the possibility of there being compromised national identities and a lack of alternative identities (e.g., non-Indigenous), problems with efficacy beliefs, and with intergroup emotions such as group-based guilt compromising the development of action-orientated

⁷ In Australia, the Reconciliation and the Indigenous rights/sovereignty movements are usually conceptualised as related but distinct (and for some, contradictory) movements. The Indigenous rights/sovereignty movement focuses solely on fighting for the recognition of Indigenous rights and the transfer of responsibilities and controls to Indigenous people for Indigenous empowerment through actions such as a Treaty and Native Title. While the Reconciliation movement also focuses on such outcomes, its aims extend to addressing and repairing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Not all of those involved in pro-Indigenous activism identify with the Reconciliation movement nor believe that its aims are necessary or indeed useful to address issues affecting Indigenous Australians. Some go as far as arguing that the Reconciliation movement concretises and reinforces the very social disadvantages that it seeks to change.

social identities, and macro socio-political issues such as contentions about specific government policies and the degree to which there is social consensus about these issues. In Chapter 2, a number of these factors were perceived as legitimate barriers to social movement formation by the activists interviewed. In view of the changes in the Australian socio-political context with regards to the apology, in the empirical chapters 4 – 7, I explore the question of what mechanisms might help movements take a form that is consistent with action to produce change regarding in Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. In this chapter, therefore, I offer a review of the relevant social psychological literature for this question.

The Social Psychology of Collective Action and Social Movements

There is a wealth of research that has focused on understanding the social psychological factors involved in determining when and why individuals engage in collective action in support of a specific cause (e.g., reconciliation). Before discussing the relevant social psychological theory and research relevant, it is important to define what I mean by “collective action”. Traditionally, collective action has been defined as any action that aims to improve the status, power, or influence of an entire group, rather than that of one or a few individuals (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Tajfel (1981, p. 244), however, defines collective action as “efforts by large numbers of people, who define themselves and are defined by others as a group, to solve collectively a problem they feel they have in common, and which is perceived to arise from their relations with other groups”. In this thesis, I define collective action as action that is undertaken by people on behalf of a psychologically meaningful group. At the same time, however, it is important to acknowledge that

traditional forms of action (e.g., mass protests) are supported by a back-story that increasingly involves discussion using technologies such as the Internet, mobile phones, and the mass media that are often undertaken by isolated individuals (e.g. sending an email, filling out an online petition). In view of the changing nature that actions can be undertaken in support of a cause, I extend my conceptualisation of collective action to encompass actions that can also include actions that can be engaged by a single individual acting alone (see Louis, 2009)⁸.

With regards to collective action, a challenge to minority-majority relations requires not only a belief and commitment to a cause but also requires those committed people to take actions compatible with achieving social change. For example, while evidence suggests that the majority of Australians agree with the principle of equality between groups (see Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, & McDonald, 2004), it is also fair to say that relatively few people actually take action in line with this goal in the form of social or collective action (the well-supported marches for Reconciliation in 2000 being an exception). Disconnections between supporting a cause and taking action about that cause raise important questions about the ways that members of the general public might be mobilised to take action, how committed members might be motivated to engaged in more sustained, long-term action, and how movements develop in the first place.

The work of Klandermans (1997) offers a useful theoretical framework to distinguish between sympathisers of a cause and activists. I argue that this work can also extend to provide a useful way to distinguish between incipient and fully realised, active social movements. Specifically, Klandermans (1997) argues that social movement mobilisation involves four phases: (1) becoming sympathetic to a cause (or part of the

⁸ Collective action is also referred to as “socio-political action” in Chapter 5

mobilisation potential for a cause); (2) becoming a target for mobilisation attempts; (3) becoming motivated to participate; and (4) overcoming barriers to participation (see also Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). I argue that those involved at Step 1 can be said to be involved at an incipient stage of social movement formation while those at Step 4 can be said to be involved in a fully developed and realised social movement level. Similarly, Simon and Klandermans (2001) offer their concept of a politicised collective identity (PCI) as a way to explain *how* specific politicised or “activist” identities are developed at these later stages of social movement mobilisation, which they propose develops through a process of group members engaging in a political struggle for power in the wider public domain. In much the same way that Stürmer et al. (2004b) argues that social movement participation is the “ultimate” form of collective action, I argue that a PCI is likely to be most relevant in contexts where social movement is fully formed and functioning.

Although there is widespread agreement that different social psychological processes drive activists to take action compared to sympathisers (see Wright, 2009), researchers in this tradition have so far largely focused on understanding when people will, or will not, engage in action in the first place. Knowing what might move people sympathising with a social movement to being an active member, and how they are influenced to take sustained action in the final steps are important aspects of capturing the dynamics of social change. These dynamics are also important in understanding how social movements might be blocked from developing in the first place.

Within the disciplines of social psychology and sociology, there is also widespread agreement that social movements should be seen primarily as a

manifestation of a social group or collective (Klandermans, 1997; Snow et al., 2004; Tajfel, 1981). Importantly, however, Klandermans highlighted that social psychology should be at the forefront of social movement research because social movements “are collectives of individuals acting together and that the very fact that these individuals *are* acting together needs to be explained not taken for granted” (1997, p. 3, emphasis in original) (see also Snow et al., 2004, for a recent summary of social movement definitions). Thus, understanding what motivates individuals to form particular types of groups can shed light on how social movements form and develop.

Indeed, recent models that integrate insights from the social identity perspective and relative deprivation theory might be used to gain insight as to what factors foster the development of collective action in the first place (Stürmer & Simon, 2004b; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Most recently, van Zomeren et al. (2008) propose SIMCA, which points to three broad psychological underpinnings and motivators of collective action: efficacy, injustice (cognitive and affective), and social identity. Crucially, van Zomeren, Postmes, et al. proposed a central role for identity (and in particular politicised social identity) in their model, suggesting it is a key predictor of not just collective action but also of perceptions of injustice (cognitive and affective) and efficacy.

Given the powerful influence that social identities are believed to have on collective action I would expect social movements that seek to change minority-majority relations will encounter challenges due to the conflicting (and potentially conflicted) emotions and beliefs that their members and other members of the society hold. Before unpacking this broad proposition, however, I turn to three broad social psychological influences on collective action that are dealt with in van Zomeren and colleague’s

SIMCA: social identification, perceived injustice/ emotion and collective efficacy. I explore how each of these classes of variables might be applied to uncovering the social psychological mechanisms that help social movements take a form that it is consistent with action that produces change in Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian relations.

The Social Identity Perspective

Social identity (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theories (SCT, Turner et al., 1987) describe the ways in which social identities can shape how people think, feel, and behave. From a social identity perspective, the self is a complex system and can be defined at different levels of abstraction: on a subordinate/personal level, the intermediate/social level, and the superordinate/human level. At the very core of this tradition is the assumption that the psychological shift from personal to a social level of abstraction underlies the behavioural shift from individual to collective action (Turner et al., 1987). The corollary is that when social self-categories are salient, group members tend to see self and others in terms of the social categories they belong to and not in terms of their specific individual characteristics. When self-perception is depersonalized in this way people are expected to act in line with the perceived shared norms of these groups.

As such, significant attention has been paid to the importance of psychologically meaningful groups in understanding social behaviour, rather than nominal physical or sociological groups. Tajfel (1978, p. 63) defines social identity as; “part of an individual’s self-concept which derives his [sic] knowledge of his [sic] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”. Thus, we have a series of social identities that become salient in

different contexts. As identities become salient, it is proposed that people act in terms of the norms, beliefs and values associated with that category (P. M. Brown & Turner, 2002; Hogg & Abrams, 1988). In other words, it is social identity *content* (i.e., the norms, beliefs and values associated with that identity) that affects when and how identity-related attitudes and beliefs will be translated into action (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987).

The implication here is that collective action is proposed to be, first and foremost, the outcome or an expression of a relevant psychologically meaningful social identity (for reviews, see Haslam, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Given the theoretical importance of social identity for intergroup behaviour, it is crucial to ask what types of social identities have might be used to understand the development of social movements that aim to challenge minority-majority relations.

From a social identity perspective, two broad approaches have been proposed to resolve the issue of challenging intergroup inequality: intergroup cooperation and prejudice, and collective action (see Wright & Lubensky, 2008). Although my focus is on the types of social identities that might be relevant in the context of collective action because the desired outcome of Reconciliation is the development of mutual respect, acceptance and future cooperation between minority and majorities groups, I will also briefly review the types of identities proposed by some scholars as essential for the development of intergroup cooperation.

Social Identity Processes in Intergroup Cooperation

A number of models propose to provide an answer to the question of what types of social identities might be relevant to fostering intergroup cooperation. Brewer's (1988) decategorization model, for example, suggests that prejudice can be overcome and intergroup cooperation can be fostered through making salient individual identities and fostering an interpersonal mode of thinking and behaving. Arguably, however, taking an interpersonal approach to an intergroup problem is unlikely to be a practical solution, particularly because such categorisations are unlikely to be sustainable in a non-experimental setting (R. Brown & Hewstone, 1995; McGarty, 2006).

An alternative to decategorisation has been to highlight superordinate identities in contexts of intergroup conflict. The Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachevan, & Rust, 1993; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005), for example, is at the core of this approach and it has shown that re-categorization at a superordinate level increases helping intergroup behaviour. In a similar vein, Reicher, Cassidy, Wolpert, Hopkins, and Levin (2006) recently put forward a social identity model of helping. From this perspective, intergroup helping is thought to best occur when there is a superordinate categorisation available (e.g., national identity), where the content of ingroup membership promotes intergroup helping behaviour; and where ingroup interests are served by helping. Overall, however, the superordinate approach has a number of problems including the fact that superordinate recategorisation does not reflect the reality in which perceivers usually operate (McGarty, 2006). This is particularly true of the issue of Reconciliation in Australia, where the superordinate category of national identity has been the site of considerable contestation.

A number of other models have been developed to overcome the shortcomings of the decategorization and superordinate models in the context of fostering intergroup cooperation including Mummendey and Wenzel's (1999) ingroup projection model. Mummendey and Wenzel argue that discrimination will occur when both subgroups project their own group's prescriptive norms as being prototypical of the superordinate group and that cooperation will occur where content of the superordinate is diffuse. Other models such as the dual identity model also attempt to overcome some of the limitations of the superordinate approach by suggesting that attempts should be made to simultaneously retain the subgroup identity within the superordinate group (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a, 2000b).

Given the centrality of the concept of intergroup cooperation to reconciliation as outlined by Dudgeon and Pickett (2001), these reviewed models have certain relevance. However, these models are also argued to be associated with a social cohesion approach and tokenism and therefore may not be associated with social justice outcomes for minority groups (Wright, 2001; Wright & Lubensky, 2008). Specifically, because prejudice reduction and intergroup cooperation strategies focus on improving the attitudes of the majority toward the minority, rather than explicitly motivating the minority's capacity to act collectively to challenge the status quo, this may undermine the perceived need for the majority to take action to challenge minority disadvantage. A similar concern was raised by an activist interviewed in Chapter 2 regarding the actions that foster members of the majority to "feel good about cultural diversity" but that do not foster systemic change between minority-majority relations.

A solution to this problem has been to focus on the social identities that encourage people to engage in collective actions that directly challenge intergroup inequality (see Reicher, 2004; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2008 for reviews; Wright, 2001). This work has primarily examined collective action by disadvantaged group members, but in recent times the role of advantaged group members and other groups that include both advantaged and disadvantaged group members has also been investigated. For these purposes, I now turn to the types of social identities that have been used to capture when advantaged majority group members might work to challenge disadvantaged groups' subordinate social position.

Social Identity Processes in Collective Action

Social identity processes have featured strongly in explanations of collective action. Intergroup perspectives such as relative deprivation theory (Runciman, 1966; Walker & Smith, 2002) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) have traditionally focused on understanding when low status group (often minorities) members might band together to challenge disadvantage. This work has primarily focused on identities shaped by membership with a disadvantaged social category such as women (Kelly, 1993; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Tougas & Veilleux, 1988). Others have emphasised identification as an activist (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995), with a specific social movement (Stürmer & Simon, 2004b; Stürmer, Simon, Loewy, & Jorger, 2003), or with a group based on a shared opinion (Bliuc et al., 2007). I will consider each of these in turn and their potential relevance in the context of social movements challenging minority disadvantage such as those experienced by Indigenous Australians.

Identification with a social category. Some researchers have focused on identities shaped by shared membership with a social category such as gender and race to understand and capture collective action (e.g., Ellemers & Barreto, 2009; Iyer & Ryan, 2009; Kelly, 1993; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Tougas & Veilleux, 1988). Although this focus has utility, I argue that it also has important limitations. Perhaps most significantly is the fact that examples of collective action often cannot be equated with broad social categories or (political) institutions. For example, consider the rallies that took place in the United States, Britain and Australia in 2003 against the invasion of Iraq. Protestors involved in these rallies were drawn from wide a range of religious, cultural, political, institutional, and organisational social categories and thus participation could not be reduced to belonging to one single social category. The one characteristic that they had in common was the belief that it was wrong for their nation to invade Iraq. Interestingly, opponents of the invasion were argued to be disloyal to their own nation and lending comfort to terrorism and Saddam Hussein (see also, McGarty et al., 2009 on this issue).

In a similar vein, the content of the broader social categories as “non-Indigenous Australian” or “Australian” that might be used to explain people’s willingness to undertake pro-Reconciliation actions are bitterly contested (as discussed in Chapter 1). For example, non-Indigenous Australians who support Reconciliation may well have a developed politicised identity about this issue – but they are well aware that many other non-Indigenous Australians have sharply opposing views, and others are undecided. Thus, if it is the content of an identity that prescribes action, the non-Indigenous identity may be too contested to foster action about reconciliation. Indeed, as argued by

McGarty et al. (2009), often the conflicts that underpin collective action are not so much battles *between* social categories as battles about the *relations* between social categories or groups, or on behalf of social categories or groups (see Chapter 5 for a more in-depth discussion on this issue).

The important point to note here is that, according to self-categorization theory, when a social identity is made salient (i.e., is activated) people act in terms of the social identity content prescribed by that identity (i.e., the consensually shared group-based beliefs, values, and norms) (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Turner et al., 1987). The related implication is that social identification should predict collective behaviour to the extent that the content of that identity prescribes action (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1996; Turner, 1999). In the case of Reconciliation, social categories such as “Australian” or “non-Indigenous Australian” are so deeply divided on the issue of reconciliation that they are not likely to be associated with norms that are consistent with pro-reconciliation action.

Politicised identities. Other research has focused on the role of social movement identities/social movement organisation (Klandermans, 1997; Simon et al., 1998) and activist identities (Simon et al., 1998), which Klandermans et al. (2002) argue are necessarily politicised. Simon, Stürmer, and colleagues have found that identification with a social movement predicts intention to take action in line with that movement in the context of the gay movement (Simon et al., 1998; Stürmer & Simon, 2004a, 2004b), the fat acceptance movement (Stürmer & Simon, 2004a), and the older people’s movement (Simon et al., 1998). Interestingly, comparison studies show that identification with a social movement is a much stronger predictor of action intention

than is identification with a disadvantaged social category (e.g., Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Simon et al., 1998; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

In a similar vein, Simon and Klandermans (2001) propose their idea of a PCI as being central to the development of sustained collective action. PCIs are proposed to develop when people have an awareness of their shared grievances, become aware of an opponent to blame for the situation, and participate in an ongoing power struggle to win over the support of a third party (e.g., public or the government). In line with a central tenant of the social identity perspective that when an identity is salient group members act in line with the norms and content associated with that identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), it is proposed that politicised identities such as are better predictors of collective action because they foster a deeper internal obligation to enact the content of the identity, that is, to take action (see also van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Certainly, there are plausible theoretical and empirical reasons to suggest that more politicised collective identities are better predictors of collective action in comparison to alternative social identities such as those based on social category members. Perhaps most significant of these reasons is that to better understand collective action it is necessary to explore identification with the specific categories relevant in the context of action. There are, however, also a number of limitations associated with these identities, particularly in contexts of dynamic socio-political debate.

One issue relates to the point that many apparently genuinely collective instances of action occur without it being obvious that a PCI as defined by Simon and Klandermans (2001) has developed. According to Simon and Klandermans, the

development of a PCI requires a collective shared awareness of a grievance. Clearly, for non-Indigenous Australians taking action about Indigenous disadvantage, they do not personally share the grievances relating to the profound discrimination, marginalisation, and poverty experienced by many Indigenous peoples. Similarly, it is also the case that groups tend to be called social movements when they are trying to achieve change (and are engaged in visible acts such as protest), while the other side can still act collectively in defence of the status quo but they are not considered a movement (as they are not trying to go anywhere but their behaviour is collectively organised to capitalise on and protect the status quo) (on this point see Wright, 2009).

In the Australian context, might we better understand collective action by focusing on identification with organisations formed around the Reconciliation cause? This may help to capture the action intentions of some people but there is also the problem that participation in established social movement organisations only captures a tiny proportion of the population. In addition, however crucial activists may be to social movements, they are rare and mass movements (by definition) involve large number of people who mostly do not fall into the activist category (i.e., people often avidly reject such a label).

On the other hand, there are no obvious social movement organisations that capture or represent those who are anti-Reconciliation orientated other than tiny groups that would be defined as ultranationalist or racist, despite research by Dunn and colleagues that up to 20% of the Australian population may be self-described racists (Dunn et al., 2004). In addition, a focus on politicised social identities does not help us

understand how a PCI might develop in the first place or help us capture or understand how incipient movements might transform into fully realised movements.

Identification with an opinion-based group. Bliuc, McGarty, and colleagues argue that the concept of opinion-based groups can be used to address cases where PCI and identification with broader social categories do not seem applicable (Bliuc et al., 2007; McGarty, Bliuc, Thomas, & Bongiorno, 2009). Opinion-based groups are psychologically meaningful groups in the sense suggested by SCT but are defined by a shared opinion (Bliuc et al., 2007). Although opinions and attitudes have been traditionally defined by social psychologists as individual cognitive structures (e.g., Bohner & Wanke, 2002; Eagly & Chaiken, 2005; Fazio & Olson, 2003), from a social identity perspective opinions can also be seen as “windows on identity” (Hogg & Smith, 2007, p. 89) that are shaped by group memberships (e.g., Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003) and can be used to voice group-based grievances, capturing ideology and provide the broad ideological base for the mobilisation of social movements (Bliuc et al., 2007; Cameron & Nickerson, 2009; Wright, 2009). So, just like other types of attributes (e.g., social categories), opinions are also proposed to be a base for collective self-definition. In this sense, merely holding an opinion is not the same as opinion-based group membership; rather, to the extent that the opinion engenders a shared sense of identity with other people of the same orientation, opinion-based group formation could be said to occur.

Evidence suggests that opinion-based groups have excellent predictive power in a range of intergroup contexts, including support for political parties (Bliuc et al., 2007), support and opposition for the War on Terror (Musgrove & McGarty, 2008), support for

international development and poverty reduction (Thomas & McGarty, 2009), stereotypes of those with mental disorders (Gee, Khalaf, & McGarty, 2007), Reconciliation (McGarty et al., 2009), and political attitudes to the War on Iraq and to the mandatory detention of asylum seekers (O'Brien & McGarty, 2009). It is important to note here that the opinion-based group concept is different to the interaction method used to crystallise and sharpen opinion-based groups identities as discussed elsewhere (see Thomas & McGarty, 2009; Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009a).

Perhaps most significant for the purpose of the current thesis is the theorised role that opinion-based groups play in capturing ideology. As Wright (2009, p. 869) proposes:

McGarty et al. make perhaps the strongest case for ideology, describing opinions (shared ideological beliefs) as not only the motivator of collective action but as the basis for the shared collective identity around which the action is organised. In this case “the cause” not only motivates group members, but is the defining feature of the collective identity as well.

In this thesis, I explore whether opinion-based groups play a particularly valuable role in understanding the development of social movements. In particular, I explore the idea that opinion-based group identities may be particularly useful in capturing the collectives involved in majority debates about minority disadvantage. I investigate this idea in Chapters 4 - 7 and, based on the findings from my research, propose that in some contexts opinion-based group identities play an important role in capturing collective action, while in other contexts such groups can face challenges from alternative views (government decisions, public opinion and the policies of

organisations) that can compromise or undermine the likelihood of the social identity promoting the level of engagement necessary to promote social change.

Perceptions of Injustice and Group-based Emotion

Research has shown that people are likely to take collective action to the extent that they perceive injustice and feel a sense of group-based emotion in relation to this injustice (Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007; Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006, 2007; van Zomeren et al., 2004; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003). Specifically, group-based relative deprivation and the affective reactions that follow, such as group-based anger, appear to be the strongest emotional predictors of action (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Thus, exploring perceptions of injustice and related emotions are one useful way of capturing collective action intentions.

When it comes to specific emotional reactions, two appear most relevant in the context of Indigenous Australian inequality: group-based guilt and anger. Group-based guilt has been central to the debate about the appropriateness of an apology to the Stolen Generations (Augoustinos et al., 2002; Augoustinos & Penny, 2001; Halloran, 2007; McGarty et al., 2005). This emotion is predicated on perceptions of responsibility for harm and thus group-based guilt explains intergroup inequality by implying that the advantaged are responsible (indeed Berndsen & Manstead, 2007 argue that responsibility derive as a secondary appraisal from the experience of guilt). As such, group-based guilt is usually only be experienced by those in advantaged groups: the disadvantaged cannot feel guilt for their own situation.

The usefulness of group-based guilt in fostering collective action has been the site of much theoretical and empirical debate (Iyer & Leach, 2008, for a review). Recent

research by Berndsen and McGarty (2010) found that the perceived difficulty of making reparations for historical harm was mediated by the experience of group-based guilt. Specifically, when reparations were seen as unfeasible, levels of group-based guilt were also low. This suggests that group-based guilt might only motivate action under very specific circumstances (i.e., when the required action to make reparation is moderately effortful). Other research gives weight to the idea that group-based guilt is limited as an emotion that fosters action. For example, some research has found that group-based guilt can be useful for predicting support for restitution (e.g., Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003) while other research suggests that it does not predict willingness to engage in action that aims to challenge inequality (e.g., Iyer et al., 2007; Leach et al., 2006). Other researchers have argued that because group-based guilt is a self-focused emotion it motivates people to either avoid experiencing the feeling (e.g., through a denial of group-based advantage) or motivates narrow attempts at restitution in an attempt to assuage the aversive state (Iyer et al., 2003).

Recent research also suggests that anger can be useful for motivating collective action in contexts of intergroup inequality (e.g., Leach et al., 2006; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Indeed, some authors argue that anger plays a powerful role in politicising a social identity to a point where it is more ready for collective action (Simon & Klandermans, 2001) and other research suggests that anger does not produce sustained commitment to action for people *already* participants in a social movement (Stürmer & Simon, 2009). Therefore, the levels of anger that non-Indigenous experience may be particularly important to explore when considering in action intentions between sympathisers and activists.

It is important, however, to clarify what types of anger reactions should be most relevant in motivating non-Indigenous Australians to take action in line with their opinions about Indigenous disadvantage. Traditionally, research has explored the role of anger experienced by disadvantaged group members towards an advantaged outgroup (e.g., van Zomeren et al., 2004). However, as pointed out by Thomas et al. (2009b), people who are in situations of relative advantage can feel *self-focused* anger that is directed towards the advantaged ingroup for being responsible for an outgroup's disadvantage (see also Iyer et al., 2007). Indeed, Thomas et al. (2009) argue that self-focused anger is a pro-social because it focuses on motivating people to challenge structural inequality. On the other hand, advantaged members who deny their structural disadvantage can feel *other-focused* anger that is directed towards a disadvantaged group for receiving perceived "unfair" advantages (such as welfare benefits). Indeed, Leach, Iyer, and Pedersen (2007) found that non-Indigenous Australians who perceived their ingroup as relatively deprived compared to Indigenous Australians were more likely to oppose government action for redress. And lastly, other research suggests that feeling anger towards a particular issue or situation can also motivate action, although there is debate as to whether this type of anger is "group-based" as outlined in Intergroup Emotions Theory (Mackie et al., 2002) (see Iyer & Leach, 2008 for a review of this debate). Given the focus on non-Indigenous Australians the current thesis, I explore the role of that self-focused, other-focused, and situation-focused anger from a majority member perspective in various chapters in this thesis.

Efficacy Beliefs

Recent theory also re-emphasises the importance of instrumental and practical issues confronting potential supporters of social change (van Zomeren et al., 2004). When choosing to engage in action it is hypothesised that people may weigh up the potential costs and benefits and other practical concerns that can influence participation (Klandermans, 1997). van Zomeren and colleagues (van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004) argue that the construct of group efficacy effectively captures the instrumental aspect of participation in collective action. Collective efficacy is the belief that the group's actions will be effective at achieving desired goals (see Bandura, 1997).

Several studies have attempted to integrate the concept of efficacy in understanding and explaining social action. For example, Mummendey et al. (1999) showed that group efficacy stems from identification with a group, and predicts engagement with social action. Similarly, van Zomeren et al. (2004) viewed collective efficacy (and its precursor, social action support) as central to promoting social action. However, Stürmer and Simon (2004) found that efficacy did not mediate the relationship between social identification and action and (with some caveats) questioned whether efficacy was as relevant to their work on social movement participation as it was to the intergroup competition domains explored by Mummendey et al. and van Zomeren et al. That is, in contexts where there is a direct comparison against one who feels relatively deprived, efficacy could play more of a role than for social movement contexts. It is equally plausible that efficacy may play different roles for mobilising action around social issues.

In this respect, Hornsey et al. (2006) argue the contradictory empirical evidence for the link between perceived efficacy and collective action is in part due to

conceptualisations of efficacy being limited to whether engaging in collective action is perceived as influencing decision makers and succeeding in the desired outcomes of the group. In view of this, Hornsey et al. argue that collective actions also may vary in the extent to which they are seen to be effective in satisfying *intragroup* motivations (e.g., whether the action seeks to solidify connections within the group), broader *societal* motivations (e.g., going beyond the power struggle between the in-group and the out-group trying to gain support from a third, non-aligned party such as the general public or the government), and *individual* motivations (e.g., the need for the expression of personal values). The role of efficacy beliefs in motivating action for members of the majority about Indigenous injustice is explored in Chapters 4 and 6.

Perceptions of Social Consensus

Building on work from many different traditions, there is evidence to suggest that the degree to which there is perceived to be a relevant consensus about a particular course of action should be important for determining collective action. For example, insights from sociology (e.g., role theory, see Ebaugh, 1988), political sciences (e.g., public opinion theory, see G. Wilson, 1962) and social psychology (e.g., system justification theory, see Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003; social representation theory, see Moscovici, 1988) all point to the role of social consensus at the broader societal level in shaping individual and social behaviour. Other perspectives from social and organisational psychology (e.g., groupthink see Janis, 1982; false consensus effect, see Ross, Greene, & House, 1977) converge on the point that consensus processes within organisations or movements are important in determining collective behaviour (just as Sani & Reicher, 1998 show that intractable dissensus can lead to group schisms).

Similarly, van Zomeren et al. (2004) proposed that people take action when they feel that relevant others share their opinion (perceived opinion support) and/or that relevant others are prepared to act in the same way (perceived social action support). The common thread across this literature is that the degree of social consensus within a given relevant social context (whether it be “real” or perceived) has potential implications for whether or not someone is likely to engage in group-based actions.

Building on these perspectives, I argue that the level of perceived social consensus that a particular position about solving a social problem has in a specific target community (that might be an organisation, nation or, for some issues, a real or imagined transnational community such as Internet users, scientists, or women) should have implications for the development of sustainable social movements. In Chapters 1 and 2, the role of political leaders in this process was highlighted. Following Reicher and colleagues (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a, 1996b) who emphasise the ways in which leaders can act as agents of influence, through consensualisation they are able to establish identities to meet their political and social goals. I explicitly explore the role of perceptions of social consensus in Chapter 6.

Prospective Thesis Revisited

On the basis of the above review, I suggest that if collective action is first and foremost an expression of a relevant social identity then if social movements are structured around well-defined and effective identities they should be more ready to produce social change. That is, we should expect members of successful and effective social movements to express sustainable action-oriented social identities while members of what we can term compromised social movements fail to express these. From this

literature review, coupled with insights from the review of the Australian socio-political history in Chapter 1 as well as the interviews with activists in Chapter 2, it can be argued that a number of social psychological factors may be instrumental in compromising the formation of sustainable majority movements aimed to reduce minority disadvantage. To review, these include micro-level concerns derived mainly from recent models of collective action (e.g., SIMCA) such as group-based emotions and efficacy beliefs, as well as macro-political concerns such as challenges from alternative views (e.g., government decisions, public opinion about various policies) and perceptions of consensus about various policies regarding Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. The implication here is that those causes that appear to form a social identity that addresses such challenges should be more likely to sustain action. I have argued also that groups formed around opinions (i.e., opinion-based groups) may be one way in which we can understand how sustainable movements develop. In the remaining chapters, I empirically explore these ideas.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXT STATEMENT

In February 2008, the newly elected Government of Australia at its first sitting of Parliament House apologised for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country. In a statement, the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd apologised for:

... the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians... For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry... We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians. A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again.

As noted in Chapter 1, Rudd's historic apology was motivated by a national inquiry in 1997 regarding the systematic removal of Indigenous children from their families during 20th Century (HREOC, 1997). When the apology was offered, new debates came to the fore regarding the next actions to further progress Reconciliation. Some Australians argued that actions should focus primarily on practical measures, such as improving the life expectancy and living standards of Indigenous Australians ("practical Reconciliation"), while others argued that symbolic actions that foster a

recognition and respect of Indigenous rights should also be emphasised (“symbolic Reconciliation”).

Intense debate also emerged as to whether the government should be providing financial compensation to members of the Stolen Generations. Despite the fact that the national inquiry made 11 of the 54 recommendations about financial compensation (see HREOC, 1997), Rudd and the Leader of the (Liberal-National coalition) Opposition at the time (Brendan Nelson) stated that a compensation fund would not be established. Many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians raised concerns that without compensation, an apology is meaningless. For example:

Monetary compensation for the Stolen Generations is inevitable and essential to the fair and just resolution of the trauma and damage resulting from the forced removal of children from their families — Helen Moran, Indigenous co-chair National Sorry Day Committee (H. Moran, 2008, p. 33)

Symbolism can be a cop out. It needs to be linked with something very, very positive. If the government is ruling out compensation they will have an argument on their hands — John Moriarty, Stolen Generations member. (Moriarty, 2007, p. 8)

Public opinion polls conducted around the time of the apology demonstrated that there was more support for an apology compared to previous years (see Chapter 4 for more detail). These changes in the opinion polls may reflect a positive trend: that there had been a positive shift in public sentiment towards Indigenous issues. Alternatively,

and perhaps more cynically, it may suggest that support for the apology grew once it became clear that the gesture would not imply compensation. Nevertheless, these changes in public opinion about the future actions to foster Reconciliation are rich context in which to explore issues relating to the social psychology of collective action, social movement formation and social change. In Chapter 4, I explore whether the concept of opinion-based groups may be particularly useful in capturing the fault lines of majority public opinions in emerging debates about Indigenous issues policy. If, however, political leaders can act as agents of influence and can actively construct the subjective meaning of an identity (Reicher, Hopkins et al., 2005) then the impact political decisions have in undermining or compromising the formation of pro-change movements formed around a specific opinion is also important to consider.

In this respect, it is interesting to consider the mobilising impact that Rudd's apology had for the activists interviewed in Chapter 2. It remains to be seen what impact the major political parties' opposition to compensation might have for the formation of pro-compensation action-orientated groups. Similarly, the activists in Chapter 2 also highlighted the effect that an oppositional political climate can have on beliefs about how effective engagement in action will be. These ideas are taken up in the current chapter.

As a final note, this chapter has been submitted as a paper to the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* and is being revised for resubmission to reflect reviewer comments. However, the presentation of the results in this chapter is presented in a way that is readily comparable with other chapters. The data from this chapter was also presented at The International Society for Social Justice Research Conference in 2008.

The reference is as follows: Hartley, L. K., & McGarty, C. (2008). *Opinion-based groups, group-based guilt and Reconciliation in Australia*. The International Society for Social Justice Research Conference, Adelaide, on August 17, 2008.

CHAPTER 4:
UNDERSTANDING DISAGREEMENT WITHIN THE MAJORITY ABOUT
ACTION TO ATONE FOR PAST WRONGS

Abstract

Policies atoning for past wrongs against minority groups are often contested within the majority. During the year after the apology to the Indigenous Australian Stolen Generations, predictors of non-Indigenous' (majority) collective action intentions focusing on support or opposition to reform Reconciliation policies (Study 1, $N = 206$) and compensation to the Stolen Generations (Studies 2, $N = 215$, and 3, $N = 298$) were examined. Action was analysed as a function of national identity, opinion-based group identity, group-based guilt, political orientation, and collective efficacy. Opinion-based group identification was an independent predictor of action for all groups except for anti-compensation, where efficacy strongly predicted action. Findings highlight opinion-based groups' role in capturing the fault lines of disagreement within majority groups.

Policies that aim to atone past wrongs against minority groups are often contested within the majority. In Australia, there has been a fierce debate between members of the majority non-Indigenous population about whether the government should make symbolic efforts to atone by apologising to Indigenous Australians who have been harmed or to take more expensive measures such as compensation Indigenous Australians for past wrongs, or to take what are often called “practical measures” to reduce Indigenous disadvantage. Much contention has focused on a recommendation from a 1997 National Inquiry that the Australian Parliament apologise for the systematic removal of Indigenous children from their families during 20th Century, known as the Stolen Generations (National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, 1997). After a change of government, the apology was made in February 2008. In the aftermath of this apology, debates about compensation and steps to address ongoing disadvantage have intensified and it is in this context that we explore the predictors of non-Indigenous’ (majority) collective action intentions.

Intergroup perspectives such as relative deprivation theory (Runciman, 1966; see Walker & Smith, 2002, for a review) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) have traditionally focused on predicting when low status group (often minorities) members might band together to challenge disadvantage. However, it is also important to understand the role of members of high status groups (often majorities) in maintaining or challenging this disadvantage. In the current paper, we explore when the majority non-Indigenous are likely to work collectively in support of or opposition to policies that aim to address past wrongs committed against Indigenous Australians.

In recent years, a number of models of the motivators of collective action have been proposed (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Stürmer, Simon, Loewy, & Jorger, 2003; van Zomeren, Spears, & Leach, 2008a; van Zomeren, Spears, Leach, & Fischer, 2004). Most recently, van Zomeren et al. (2008a) conducted an integrative meta-analysis of collective action research that yielded the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA). This model points to three psychological factors that uniquely predict collective action (but are also proposed to be interrelated): identity, injustice (emotion), and instrumental (efficacy). We draw upon this body of research to answer the question of what factors make majority group members more likely to engage in action to support or oppose policies that address past wrongs against Indigenous Australian. To do so, we conducted a series of three studies in the context of dynamic socio-political debate over the 12 month period immediately following the apology to the Stolen Generations.

Social Identity and Collective Action

Social identity (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theories (SCT, Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) describe the ways in which social identities can shape how people think, feel and behave. Central to this perspective is the assumption that when social identity becomes salient individuals define and see themselves less as differing individual persons and more as interchangeable representatives of that group (Turner et al., 1987). Thus, a salient group identity should encourage individuals to attend to group-level concerns and collective action should be more likely.

Consistent with this line of reasoning, research suggests that group identification is a good predictor of collective action. In particular, politicised identities (e.g.,

identification with a social movement organisation) have been found to be better predictors of action than broader identities (e.g., identification with a disadvantaged group) (e.g., de Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Klandermans, 2000; Klandermans, Sabucedo, & Rodriguez, 2002; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Simon et al., 1998; Simon, Stürmer, & Steffens, 2000; Stürmer & Simon, 2004; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008b). It is proposed that politicised identities are better predictors of collective action because they foster a deeper internal obligation to take action (see Van Zomeren et al., 2008).

While we agree that much collective action stems from politicised social identities, important questions arise as to their applicability in capturing disagreements among non-Indigenous Australians, such as those taking place in the aftermath of the apology. For example, it is true that there are social movement organisations that are orientated towards promoting Reconciliation (e.g., Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation), but these organisations capture a tiny proportion of the population. Conversely, there are no obvious social movement organisations that capture or represent those who are opposed to Reconciliation efforts other than groups that would be defined as ultranationalist or racists. Similarly, given that activists are rare (and quite often, people often avidly reject such a label) and mass movements (by definition) involve large number of people who mostly do not fall into the activist category.

For this purpose, we focus on groups formed around shared opinions (opinion-based groups) as one way to capture disagreements within majority members. In doing so, we apply a well-established approach used in the study of social influence (in particular minority influence, e.g., Maass & Clark, 1984) to the domain of collective

action. Although opinions and attitudes have been traditionally defined as individual cognitive structures (e.g., Bohner & Wanke, 2002; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Fazio & Olson, 2003), from a social identity perspective, opinions are seen as “windows on identity” (Hogg & Smith, 2007, p 89) that are shaped by group memberships (e.g. Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003) and can be used to voice group-based grievances, capturing ideology and provide the broad ideological base for the mobilisation of social movements (Bliuc et al., 2007; Cameron & Nickerson, 2009; McGarty et al., 2009; Wright, 2009). So, just like other types of attributes (e.g., social categories), opinions are also proposed to be a base for collective self-definition.

Importantly, though, merely holding an opinion is not the same as opinion-based group membership; rather, to the extent that the opinion creates a shared sense of identity with other people of the same orientation, opinion-based group formation can be said to occur (Bliuc et al., 2007; McGarty et al., 2009). Social identification with groups based on shared opinions has been found to be an excellent predictor of commitment to take socio-political action (Bliuc et al., 2007; Cameron & Nickerson, 2009; Musgrove & McGarty, 2008; O’Brien & McGarty, 2009). Other research also shows the usefulness of groups based on opinions in capturing intergroup processes, such as Mackie, Devos, and Smith (2000) who found that groups based around opinions about pro- and anti-punishment, pro- and anti-homosexual marriage, and pro- and anti-drug punishment fostered divergent group-based group emotions. In this paper we specifically seek to address the question of what does opinion-based group membership add to explaining commitment to collective action?

To answer this question, it is important to consider what other social identities that might be relevant in the context of debates within the majority about whether the government should apologise to and compensate Indigenous Australians for past wrongs. Given that any official policy would come from the Australian government on behalf of the Australian people, the most obvious alternative is national identification. Previous research highlights the importance, but sometimes ambiguous role of national identification in the context of understanding majority reaction to efforts to address past wrongs against minority groups (e.g., Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2004; McGarty et al., 1995). Political orientation might also be considered as being important for predicting action. However, the official policies of both major political blocs in February 2008 (the Liberal and National Party Coalition that held government until November 2007 and the Labor Party that held government after then) that accounted for over 85% of votes in the 2007 federal election were that they supported an apology to members of the Stolen Generations but not financial compensation. Therefore, commitment to action by majority members is hard to capture in terms of political affiliation and may be difficult to capture in terms of political orientation. We examine the predictive value of both national identification and political orientation in this paper.

Group-Based Emotion and Collective Action

In the meta-analytic test of their SIMCA model, van Zomeren et al. (2008) found that emotional reactions to injustice are better predictors of action than cognitive reactions to injustice. Specifically, group-based relative deprivation, and the affective reactions that follow appear to be the strongest emotional predictors of action, such as

group-based anger. Group-based guilt has been central to the debate about the appropriateness of an apology to the Stolen Generations (e.g., LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001; McGarty et al., 2005). This emotion is purported to arise from the cognition that one's ingroup is responsible for the predicament of a disadvantaged outgroup. There is evidence to suggest feeling group-based guilt predicts majority member's support for restitution (Doosje et al., 1998; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003) and action about outgroup mistreatment (Mallet, Huntsinger, Sinclair, & Swim, 2008). However, other research suggests that group-based guilt does not predict willingness to engage in action that aims to challenge inequality (e.g., Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007; Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006). Given the salience of the concept of group-based guilt in the Australian context, we explore whether group-based guilt play a role in predicting collective action intentions for majority members who support or oppose policies that aim to address past wrongs committed against Indigenous Australians.

Efficacy and Collective Action

Instrumental concerns, in particular perceptions of efficacy, have also been theorised to constitute an action-relevant construct (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Stürmer et al., 2003; van Zomeren et al., 2004; van Zomeren et al., 2008a). Previous research has emphasised the practical issues confronting people considering undertaking collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2004; van Zomeren et al., 2008a). For example, van Zomeren et al. (2004) argue that people are more likely to take action when they feel a relevant group-based emotion and/or believe that they can achieve change (collective efficacy). There is some evidence to suggest that collective efficacy is important (e.g., Bandura, 1995; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999);

however, there are some caveats (e.g., as noted by Stürmer & Simon, 2004). We explore the predictive value of collective efficacy in the current research.

Overview of Studies

In the context of emerging debates about policies aimed to atone the past-wrongs against Indigenous Australians, we examine predictors of non-Indigenous (majority) intentions to engage in collective action about their position regarding these policies. Study 1 focuses on majority members' support for changing the policies regarding Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (pro-reform) or not (anti-reform) and Studies 2 and 3 focus on majority members' support or opposition to financial compensation for members of the Stolen Generations. In line with recent social psychological models on the predictors of collective action (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2004; van Zomeren, et al., 2004; van Zomeren et al., 2008a), we consider the independent and combined role of identity (national and opinion-based group identification), collective efficacy beliefs, and emotion (group-based guilt). Given the politically loaded nature of the debates about policies to atone past wrongs, we also examine the predictive value of political orientation.

In each study we test two models. The first tests the predictive value of all the social psychological variables (efficacy, group-based guilt, political orientation, and national identity) on action intentions *without* opinion-based group identification. The second model tests the prediction that adding opinion-based group identification has an independent effect on action when included in the model. In each case, in addition to these hypothesised models, we also report modified models with improved fit statistics.

Study 1

Study 1 was conducted during the week of the Australian government's apology to the Stolen Generations in February, 2008. During the years leading up to this apology, debate largely centred on whether an apology was an appropriate form of governmental action. For example, between 1996 — 2007, the Prime Minister at the time (John Howard) refused to make a symbolic apology, advocating for more “practical” policies to improve the living standards of Indigenous Australians. Public opinion polls were split on this issue, with 50% of Australians supporting an apology and 40% opposed to it (Newspoll & The Australian, 1997). After the apology speech was made in 2008, however, national support was located at 69% and opposition was around 26% (Newspoll & The Australian, 2008).

This transformation in public opinion reflected a debate between the previous government's approach to Reconciliation (i.e., “practical” policies only approach) that was being challenged by the new government's reform agenda that favoured supplementing the so-called “practical policies” with symbolic measures (e.g., the apology). In the context of this massive political transformation, we explored majority members' support or opposition to policy reform and the utility of the opinion-based group concept to capture these.

Method

Participants

Two hundred and six people (119 female, 84 male, and three did not record their gender) agreed to participate when approached on campus during the week of the apology. All participants were supporters of greater efforts for Reconciliation between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Within this sample, 70% ($n = 144$) were supporters of reform (adding symbolic gestures to practical measures) and 30% ($n = 62$) were opponents of reform (favouring only practical measures). Participants were aged between 18 years and 62 years (mean age of 24 years) and were well educated (70% were undertaking an undergraduate degree). The majority of the participants (64%) preferred political parties that are traditionally classified “left of centre” (The Labor Party and The Democrats/Greens) and 33% preferred political parties traditionally classified as “right of centre” (The Liberal/National Party and One Nation). All participants were non-Indigenous Australian with the majority being from an Anglo-Australian background (92%).

Procedure

Individuals were approached on a university campus and asked to fill in a short questionnaire (see Appendix B). Those who agreed were asked whether they supported efforts to foster Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Only those who supported Reconciliation filled out the questionnaire and were asked to categorise themselves as either a supporter of practical Reconciliation (i.e., anti-reform) or a supporter of practical and symbolic Reconciliation (i.e., pro-reform). There were two versions of the questionnaire; one for supporters of reform and one for opponents of reform.

Measured Variables

All of the items apart from the socio-demographic questions were measured on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Social identification. To measure social identification with an opinion-based group we used two modified items from Bliuc et al. (2007): ‘I identify with other

supporters of practical [practical plus symbolic] Reconciliation' and 'I define myself as a supporter of practical [practical plus symbolic] Reconciliation' ($r = .70$).

Collective action intentions. This scale was based on two items from Bliuc et al. (2007): 'I would like to be involved in some way in a community-based group that supports practical [practical plus symbolic] Reconciliation' and 'I feel committed to engage in future group activities to support practical [practical plus symbolic] Reconciliation' ($r = .79$).

Collective efficacy. This scale was based on two modified items from Bliuc et al. (2007): 'Supporting greater efforts to promote Reconciliation will be a waste of time effort and money', a reverse-scored item; and 'Supporting greater efforts to promote Reconciliation will make a difference to relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians' ($r = .65$).

Group-based guilt. This scale was based on two items from McGarty et al. (2005): 'I feel regret for non-Indigenous Australians' harmful past actions toward Indigenous Australians' and 'I feel guilty about the negative things non-Indigenous Australians did to Indigenous Australians' ($r = .60$).

National identity. This scale was based on two items from McGarty et al. (2005): 'Being an Australian is an important part of how I see myself' and 'I identify with other Australians' ($r = .71$).

Socio-demographics. Participants were asked to state their age, gender (1 = male, 2 = female); political party support (1 = Australian Democrats/Greens, 2 = Labor Party, 3 = Liberal/National, 4 = One Nation Party); highest level of education; and cultural/ethnic background.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables are shown in Table 4.1. First, comparing the two groups, supporters of reform had significantly lower levels of national identification, $t(204) = 6.49, p < .001$, higher levels of group-based guilt, $t(204) = -2.26, p = .012$, and were more left-wing orientated $t(204) = 6.49, p < .001$. The correlations show that for the pro-reform group all variables apart from national identity were associated with action intentions. For the anti-reform group only social identification was associated with action intentions.

Table 4.1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Measured Variables for Opponents of Reform (above the diagonal) and Supporters of Reform (below the diagonal) for Study 1 (N = 206).

	M (SD)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
M (SD)		5.9(0.9)	4.2(1.6)	5.2(1.2)	3.8(1.7)	5.9(0.9)	1.6(0.5)
1. Opinion-based group identity	5.1(1.3)	-	.65**	.40**	.14	.40**	-.07
2. Collective action	4.4(1.5)	.71**	-	.13	-.19	.18	-.15
3. Collective efficacy	5.5(1.3)	.63**	.45**	-	.36**	.19	.01
4. Group-based guilt	4.9(1.4)***	.49**	.41**	.32**	-	.21	-.11
5. National identity	5.4(1.5)*	.01	.07	.13	.19*	-	-.03
6. Political orientation	1.2(0.4)***	-.30**	-.33**	-.42**	-.23**	.01	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

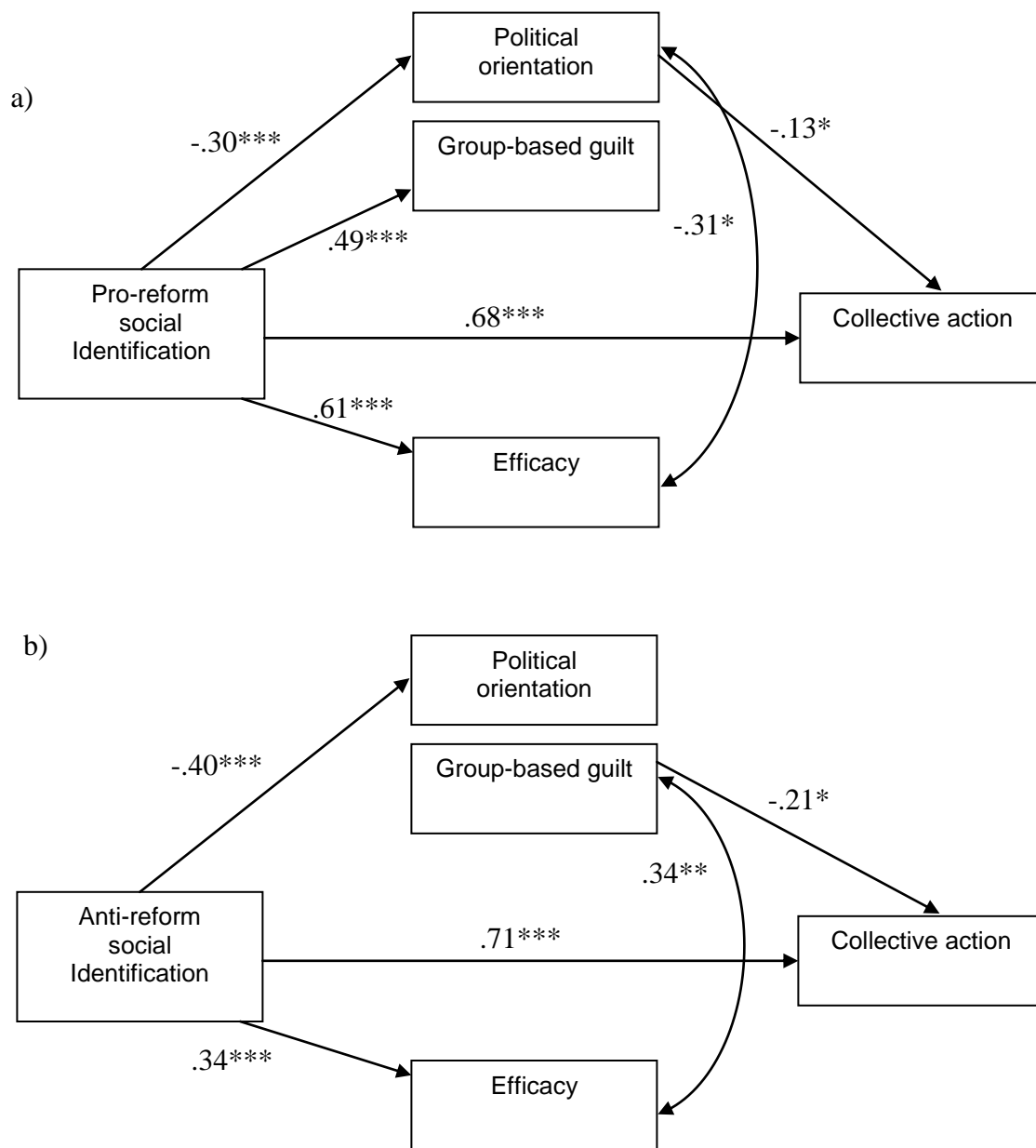
Multiple-group SEMs were conducted using AMOS 16.0. The first predictive model did not include a direct path between social identification and collective action intentions. The model showed poor fit for both supporters of reform, with $\chi^2(7) = 75.9$, $p < .001$, (CMIN/df) = 11.35, comparative fit index (*CFI*) = .686, and root mean square error of approximation (*RMSEA*) = .269 and for opponents of reform with, $\chi^2(7) = 43.3$, $p < .001$, CMIN/df = 6.191, *CFI* = .360, and *RMSEA* = .292 (see Figure 1 in Appendix E).

We tested the alternative model that allowed a direct path from opinion-based group identification to collective action. This model showed greatly improved goodness-of-fit statistics for both groups, with the model for supporters of reform yielding $\chi^2(6) = 22.3$, $p = .001$, CMIN/df = 3.712, *CFI* = .929, and *RMSEA* = .138 and the model for opponents of reform yielding, $\chi^2(6) = 10.2$, $p = .214$, CMIN/df = 1.074, *CFI* = .926, and *RMSEA* = .107. There were strong paths between opinion-based group identification and collective action intentions for both groups ($\beta = .71$ and $\beta = .66$), with a small negative path between political orientation and action for supporters of reform ($\beta = -.13$) and a small negative path between group-based guilt and action for opponents of reform ($\beta = .20$) (see Figure 2 in Appendix E).

To produce a final model with good fit statistics (in line with conventions, see Ullman, 2007) we revised the models by dropping non-significant predictors and allowing correlated error terms. For supporters of reform, we allowed a correlated error path between efficacy and political orientation which yielded good fit with the data, $\chi^2(4) = 2.9$, $p = .577$, CMIN/df = .722, *CFI* = 1.00, and *RMSEA* = .000 (see Figure 4.1a). For opponents of reform, political orientation was not connected to any other variables

so it was dropped, but when the error terms for efficacy and guilt were correlated there was good fit, $\chi^2(5) = 3.6$, $p = .607$, $CMIN/df = .721$, $CFI = 1.00$, and $RMSEA = .000$ (see Figure 4.1b).

Figure 4.1 Models of Predictors of Collective Action for Pro-Reform and Anti-Reform Groups for Study 1



Discussion

The results of Study 1 suggest that social identification strongly predicts commitment to collective action in different ways for the pro and anti-reform groups. The final models show that social identification added significantly to the prediction of collective action intentions. It was the biggest predictor of action intentions for both groups and it was the only predictor for the opponents of reform. The former result is more intriguing because it suggests that social identification is a strong predictor that cannot simply be reproduced by a set of other plausible predictors of action intentions that have been identified in the previous literature (i.e., group-based guilt, political orientation, collective efficacy and national identification) and were measured at the same level of precision as social identification.

Statistically speaking then, the construct of social identification adds value as a convenient and compact predictor of politically relevant action intentions. This is consistent with the findings of Bliuc et al. (2007) and Musgrove and McGarty (2008) but these data go further in suggesting that identification with these opinion-based groups has discriminant validity in that social identification is related to action for both groups but is related to a constellation of other variables in different ways. Not surprisingly, social identification is associated with group-based guilt and a left-wing political orientation for supporters of reform but it is associated with national identification for opponents of reform. Again these findings underscore the validity of the construct.

The strong associations between social identification and action intentions in these results and those of Bliuc et al. (2007) raise a possible misunderstanding of these results. Is identification strongly associated with action because the two variables

measure the same construct? A quick glance at the results for the anti-reform group in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 (a and b) refutes this interpretation. Although action intentions and social identification are highly correlated (with social identification associated with around 50% of the variance in action intentions) the results demonstrate that the constructs are distinct in that they are related to other variables in different ways. Social identification for opponents of reform predicts collective efficacy and national identification but these are unrelated to action intentions.

The results thus suggest that social identification with these constructs is a useful construct for predicting action, but this does raise other issues. A strength (and potential weakness) of this approach is that such identities appear to be flexible — perhaps flexible enough to capture fluid socio-political debates that do not lend themselves to analysis in conventional political terms. This is especially important for cases where a political reform (such as an apology) has taken place and the debate moves on to new issues. In Study 2 we followed up the matter as the debate about the Stolen Generations took new twists. To capture these new debates, we conducted a second study measuring new social identities and measures in May 2008.

Study 2

In the months after the apology, the relevant debate shifted from discussing the appropriateness of apologising, to the question of whether the Australian government should also provide financial compensation to the Stolen Generations. Both Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the then leader of the opposition party Brendan Nelson also stated that they did not support compensation, despite the National Inquiry recommending that compensation was essential for reparation (National Inquiry into the

Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, 1997). In Rudd's apology speech, the idea of a compensation fund for members of the Stolen. While Indigenous Australian commentators and many commentators around the world noted that Kevin Rudd made the apology, they also argued its symbolism was undermined because no financial compensation was offered (e.g., Pearson, 2009; Graham, 2009; Nason, 2009). This change in the debate to the issue of compensation is reflected in the questions asked in major opinions polls published during this time that suggested a clear majority of Australians (64%) opposed compensation in every demographic and political group (Newspoll and The Australian, 2008).

In view of the political opposition to compensation from the leaders and (polled) supporters of the major political parties were tested the applicability of opinion-based group identities based around support and opposition to compensation to the Stolen Generations.

Method

Participants

Two hundred and fifteen people (136 female, 78 male, one did not record their gender on the questionnaire) participated in this study. Within this dataset, 164 individuals agreed to participate when approached at a university campus, and 64 first-year psychology students from another university participated for course credit. Of the 215 participants, 40% ($n = 86$) identified themselves as supporters of compensation to the Stolen Generations and 60% ($n = 129$) identified themselves as opponents. Participants were aged between 18 and 62 years (a mean age of 22 years) and were well-educated overall (63% were undertaking an undergraduate degree). The majority of the

participants were also from Anglo-Australian backgrounds (82%). In terms of political orientation, 33% of the sample identified themselves as left-wing, 48% identified themselves as right-wing, and the remaining identified themselves as neither left-wing nor right-wing orientated.

Procedure

Participants were asked to complete a two page questionnaire (see Appendix C). On the top of the first page, participants were asked whether they supported or opposed financial compensation to the Stolen Generations. This page was split into two columns; one side of the page was for supporters and the other side for opponents of compensation. All participants filled out the second page of the questionnaire which contained questions about group-based guilt, national identity, and socio-demographics. All the items apart from the socio-demographic questions were rated on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Measured Variables

The key measures were similar to those used in Study 1. These included social identification as an opinion-based group member ('I identify with other people who support [oppose] providing compensation to Indigenous Australians for past wrong-doings' and 'I define myself as someone who supports [opposes] providing compensation to Indigenous Australians', $r = .74$), collective action intentions ('I feel committed to engage in group activities to support [oppose] providing compensation to Indigenous Australians for past wrong-doings' and 'I would like to be involved in some way in a community based group that supports [opposes] providing compensation to

Indigenous Australians for past wrong-doings', $r = .79$), collective efficacy ('Supporting [Opposing] greater efforts to provide compensation to Indigenous Australians for past wrong-doings will be a waste of time, effort and money' and 'Supporting [Opposing] greater efforts to provide compensation to Indigenous Australians for past-wrong doings will have a positive outcome for Australian society', $r = .68$), group-based guilt and national identity (same as Study 1, $r = .71$ and $r = .65$, respectively), and socio-demographic questions. All the socio-demographic measures were the same apart from political orientation, which ranged from 1 (strongly left-wing) to 7 (strongly right-wing).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables are shown in Table 4.2. On average, supporters of compensation had higher levels of perceived collective efficacy, $t(213) = 5.76, p < .001$, higher levels of group-based guilt, $t(204) = 5.07, p < .001$, lower levels of national identification, $t(204) = -3.71, p < .001$, and were more left-wing orientated $t(204) = -3.90, p < .001$ than opponents of compensation.

There were significant links of moderate size between pro-compensation social identification and collective efficacy, group-based guilt, (left-wing) political orientation, and collective action intentions. There were similar links between anti-compensation social identification, collective efficacy, national identity, (right wing) political orientation and collective action intentions.

Table 4.2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Measured Variables for Supporters (above the diagonal) and Opponents of Compensation (below the diagonal) for Study 2

	<i>M (SD)</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
<i>M (SD)</i>		4.4(1.0)	3.4(1.1)	5.3(1.4)	5.2(1.3)	4.9(1.6)	3.7(1.4)
1. Opinion-based group identity	4.5 (1.3)	-	.52***	.40**	.33**	-.18	-.12
2. Collective action	3.1 (1.7)	.33**	-	.41**	.31**	-.20	-.26*
3. Collective efficacy	4.2 (1.3)***	.19*	.50***	-	.21	.20	-.07
4. Group-based guilt	4.1 (1.6)***	-.24**	-.17	-.01	-	.08	-.08
5. National identity	5.7 (1.6)***	.18*	.20*	.02	-.03	-	-.26*
6. Political orientation	4.5 (1.5)***	.16	.19*	.01	-.04	-.12	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

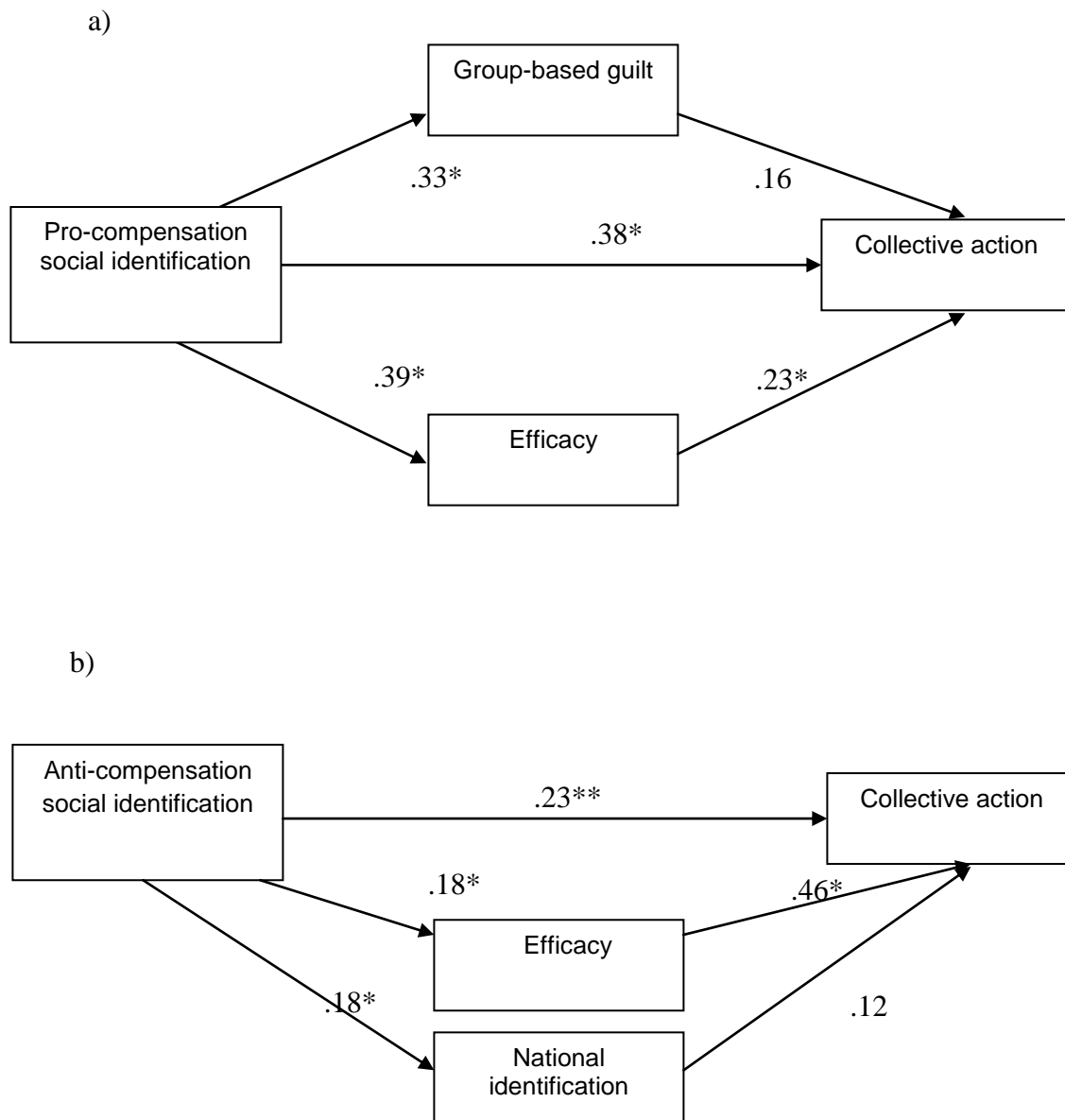
SEM

The model with no direct path between social identification and collective action intentions showed poor fit for supporters of compensation, $\chi^2(7) = 38.1, p < .001$, $CMIN/df = 4.35$, $CFI = .637$, and $RMSEA = .204$ and for opponents of compensation $\chi^2(7) = 10.2, p = .117$, $CMIN/df = 1.46$, $CFI = .945$, and $RMSEA = .060$ (see Figure 3 Appendix E).

We again tested an alternative model that had a direct path from opinion-based group identification to collective action. This model showed greatly improved goodness-of-fit statistics for both groups, with the model for supporters of compensation yielding, $\chi^2(6) = 18.6, p = .005$, $CMIN/df = 3.073$, $CFI = .818$, and $RMSEA = .156$ and the model for opponents of compensation yielding, $\chi^2(6) = 4.8, p = .570$, $CMIN/df = .800$, $CFI = 1.00$, and $RMSEA = .000$ (see Figure 4 in Appendix E).

Finally, we revised the models by dropping non-significant predictors and allowing correlated error terms. For supporters of compensation, we allowed a correlated error path between efficacy and political orientation which yielded a final model good fit with the data, $\chi^2(1) = 0.6, p = .434$, $CMIN/df = .613$, $CFI = 1.00$, and $RMSEA = .000$ (see Figure 4.2 a). For opponents of compensation, political orientation was not connected to any other variables so it was dropped, but we allowed a correlated error path between efficacy and group-based guilt, which yielded good fit with the data, $\chi^2(1) = 0.1, p = .875$, $CMIN/df = .025$, $CFI = 1.00$, and $RMSEA = .000$ (see Figure 4.2 b). Importantly, social identification is the strongest predictor for the pro-compensation group but collective efficacy was a stronger independent predictor for the anti-compensation group.

Figure 4.2 Models of Predictors of Collective Action for Pro-Compensation and Anti-Compensation Groups for Study 2



* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Discussion

The results of Study 2, using new groups based on support and opposition to compensation, suggest that these groups can be characterised as being quite distinct from each other (in terms of political orientation, national identification and group-based guilt). For the supporters of compensation, social identification was the strongest predictor of action intentions (and the other predictors contributed very little independent variance) but for opponents of compensation collective efficacy was a strong independent predictor.

The results clearly refute the possibility that opinion-based group identification is a redescription of action intentions. It is a statistically significant predictor for both groups but the relations between the construct and other variables is different. Again, the results suggest that social identification adds predictive power to the pattern provided by national identification, group-based guilt, and political orientation.

While the relatively weak association between social identification and action intentions for the anti-compensation refutes the possibility that these are the same constructs it does raise a new question. Do opponents of compensation actually see themselves as comprising a group? To address this question we conducted a third study.

Study 3

Study 3 was conducted in February, 2009 during the anniversary week of the apology to the Stolen Generations. Coinciding with this anniversary, the Australian government delivered their first annual report detailing the very slow progress in what could be termed practical measures to reduce disadvantage (for a full report see FaHCSIA, 2009). In reaction to this report, some commentators and Indigenous activists

argued that the government had done little to address Indigenous disadvantage since the apology, again criticising their failure to offer financial compensation to the Stolen Generations. The issue of compensation was therefore still salient in this political context. In this study, we sought to determine whether the opinion-based groups examined in Study 2 (pro and anti-compensation) had changed in intensity or form. We also made some changes to the measures based on development in the literature.

First, in line with the arguments developed by Cameron (2004), Leach et al. (2008) that social identification is multi-dimensional we replaced our identification measures with items drawn from Leach et al.'s (2008) five components of ingroup identification. Secondly, following Bliuc et al. (2007, Study 2), we included a measure of ingroup depersonalization, that being the degree to which members see the opinion-based group as sharing collective properties such as identity, values and goals. Third, we addressed the possibility that the collective efficacy items in the Studies 1 and 2 may have been tapping into aspects of solidarity or participatory efficacy, rather than a belief that the group's actions will be effective in achieving desired goals. We therefore used Hornsey et al.'s (2006) measure collective efficacy. Fourth, in view of previous research that has found the powerful role of anger in predicting collective action intentions (e.g., Leach et al., 2006; Iyer et al. 2003) and the involvement of this factor in major recent models (e.g., van Zomeren et al., 2004; van Zomeren et al., 2008a), a measure of group-based anger was also included in the questionnaire.

Method

Participants

Two hundred and ninety eight people (190 female, 104 male, and four did not record their gender on the questionnaire) agreed to participate when approached on campus. Within this sample, 46% ($n = 137$) were supporters of financial compensation for the Stolen Generations and 54% ($n = 161$) were opponents. Participants were aged between 18 years and 52 years (mean age of 21 years) and had an education level higher than the general Australian population (88% were undertaking an undergraduate degree). The majority of the participants were from Anglo-Australian backgrounds (78%). In terms of political orientation, 47% of the sample were more left-wing, 14% were more right-wing, and the remaining (39%) were neither left-wing nor right-wing orientated.

Procedure

Participants were recruited in the same way as in Study 2. There was one version of the two paged questionnaire (see Appendix D). On top of the first page, participants answered socio-demographic items and three items measuring perceptions about Reconciliation since the apology was made one year ago. Participants were then asked whether they supported or opposed financial compensation to the Stolen Generations. The remaining of the first page contained questions about collective action intentions, group-based guilt, and national identity. The second page was split into two columns; one column was devoted to supporters of compensation, and the other column was devoted to opponents. Participants were asked to rate items relating to social identification, to provide four characteristics that they thought they shared with other

people who hold their opinion, and to rate their level of other-focused anger. All the items were rated on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) apart from collective action intentions (1 = not effective at all to 7 = very effective); collective efficacy (1 = not effective at all to 7 = very effective), and other-focused anger (1 = extremely to 7 = not at all).

Measured Variables

Perceptions of Reconciliation one year after the apology. Participants were asked to record the extent to which they agreed with the following statements: ‘I support the apology offered to the Stolen Generations’; ‘The Australian government has fulfilled its commitments regarding Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians’; and ‘Australia is close to achieving Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians’.

Social identification. Social identification with the respective opinion-based group was measured using five modified items from Leach et al. (2008): ‘I feel a bond with other supporters [opponents] of providing the Stolen Generations with financial compensation’; ‘I am glad to be a supporter [opponent] of providing the Stolen Generations with financial compensation’; ‘I often think about the fact that I am a supporter [opponent] of providing the Stolen Generations with financial compensation’; ‘I have a lot in common with the average supporter [opponent] of providing the Stolen Generations with financial compensation’; and ‘People who support [oppose] providing the Stolen Generations with financial compensation are very similar to each other’ ($\alpha = .84$).

Ingroup depersonalization. The degree to which people perceived the ingroup in depersonalized terms was measured by three adapted items from Bliuc et al. (2007): ‘People who support [oppose] providing the Stolen Generations with financial compensation share a sense of identity’; ‘People who support [oppose] providing the Stolen Generations with financial compensation share common ideals or values’; and ‘People who support [oppose] providing the Stolen Generations with financial compensation share common goals’ ($\alpha = .89$).

Collective action intentions. Participants were asked to rate how likely or unlikely it would be for them to engage in the following actions in the future; ‘challenge other people’s views that are opposing to my own on this issue’; ‘write a letter to a politician and/or newspaper on this issue’; ‘sign a petition about this issue’; and ‘join a protest march about this issue’ ($\alpha = .78$).

Collective efficacy. To obtain an indication of how efficacious participants perceived engaging in collective action would be, four modified items from Hornsey et al. (2006) were used: ‘Influencing government leaders and policy makers’; ‘Influencing public opinion’; ‘Helping to build a movement that supports your position on this issue’; ‘Expressing values that you hold’ ($\alpha = .79$).

Group-based guilt. Three items were used to measure the group-based guilt adapted from McGarty et al. (2005): ‘I feel blameworthy for non-Indigenous Australians harmful past actions toward Indigenous Australians’; ‘I feel guilty about the negative things non-Indigenous Australians did to Indigenous Australians’; and ‘I feel responsible for the negative things non-Indigenous Australians did to Indigenous Australians’ ($\alpha = .85$).

Other-focused anger. Three items were used to measure the degree to which participants felt angry towards people who held the opposing opinion to their regarding financial compensation to the Stolen Generations. These items were outraged, furious, and angry ($\alpha = .94$).

National identity. The two items were the same as Studies 1 and 2 ($r = .70$).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for the variables in Study 3 can be found in Table 4.3. Comparing the two groups shows that opponents of compensation felt less group-based guilt, $t(296) = 9.83, p < .001$, felt less efficacy, $t(296) = 2.33, p < .030$, and were more right-wing orientated, $t(296) = 9.83, p < .001$.

There were only small differences between the five items designed to capture the multi-dimensional nature of social identification proposed by Leach et al. (2008) and the other variables. For ease of comparability, we therefore treated social identification as a single factor. Social identification with the pro-compensation group was associated with ingroup depersonalization, action intentions, collective efficacy and group-based guilt but in this study it was not associated with (left-wing) political orientation. Anti-compensation social identification was associated with ingroup depersonalization, (right-wing) political orientation and opposition to the apology but importantly it was not a predictor of action intentions.

Perceptions of Reconciliation one year after the apology. As seen in Table 4.3, there was a significant difference between groups regarding perceptions of Reconciliation one year after the apology. Compared to supporters of compensation,

Table 4.3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Measured Variables for Supporters (above the diagonal) and Opponents of Compensation (below the diagonal) for Study 3 (N = 298).

	M (SD)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
M (SD)		4.51 (0.86)	4.76 (1.00)	4.41 (1.31)	4.54 (1.08)	3.30 (1.37)	5.00 (1.54)	3.19 (1.22)	4.84 (1.40)	5.89 (1.40)	3.59 (1.43)	3.26 (1.32)
1. OBG identity	3.25 (1.09)***	-	.57***	.52***	.23**	.19*	.01	.05	-.09	.10	.04	-.02
2. Depersonal- -tion.	3.38 (1.44)***	.75***	-	.38***	.16	.21*	-.05	-.03	-.05	.26**	.06	.08
3. Collective action	3.00 (1.16)***	-.02	-.06	-	.19*	.16	-.04	-.21*	-.12	.30**	-.17	-.11
4. Collective efficacy	4.00 (1.27)***	.01	.12	.37**	-	.04	.20*	-.12	-.16	.19*	.06	.15
5. Group-based guilt	1.87 (1.13)***	.15	.15	-.09	.04	-	.06	-.15	-.01	.25**	-.09	-.09
6. National identity	5.33 (1.43)	.12	.13	.09	.13	.03	-	-.02	-.04	.04	.00	.01
7. Political orientation	3.72 (1.04)***	.16*	.03	-.7	-.28**	-.05	-.08	-	.17	-.39	.27*	.20*
8. Anger	5.06 (1.71)	.16	.17*	.04	.15	.19*	.27**	.12	-	-.08	.03	.00
9. Apology support	4.23 (1.86)	-.20*	-.05	.07	.26*	.13	.03	-.15	.16	-	-.12	-.04
10. Gov. commitment.	4.30 (1.59)	.15	.13	-.04	-.09	-.08	.13	.20*	.16*	.10	-	.57**
11. Close to reconciliation	3.29 (1.48)	.13	.10	.08	.12	.03	.18*	.22**	.18*	.08	.42**	-

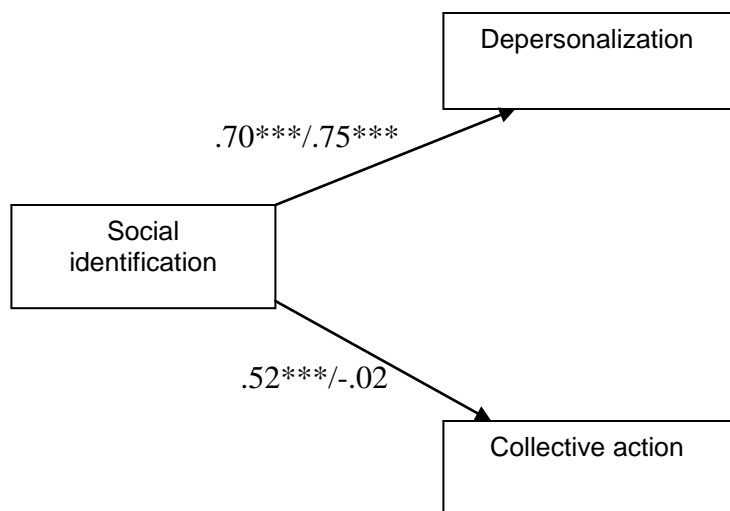
Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

opponents of compensation were more likely to believe that the Australian government had adhered to their policy commitments regarding Reconciliation, $t(295) = 8.51, p < .001$, but were less likely to have supported the apology in the first place, $t(296) = -4.00, p < .001$. There were no significant differences between the opponents and supporters of compensation with respect to whether they believed that Australia was close to achieving reconciliation between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians, $t(295) = -0.23, p = .820$.

SEM

Testing the ingroup depersonalization model. We first sought to test the degree to which the group was perceived in depersonalized terms. As shown in Figure 4.3, this model fit the data well for both groups, the pro-compensation group yielding, $\chi^2(1) = 1.7, p = .189, CFI = .999$, and $RMSEA = .003$ and the anti-compensation group yielding, $\chi^2(1) = 0.5, p = .537, CFI = 1.00$, and $RMSEA = .000$. The strong path between depersonalization and the pro and anti-compensation social identification ($\beta = .57$ and $\beta = .75$, respectively) implies that both groups are perceived in group terms by people who themselves identify with the group. Those same high identifiers are committed to take action in the pro-compensation group ($\beta = .52$) but not in the anti-compensation group ($\beta = -.02$).

Figure 4.3 Model of Social Identification and Ingroup Depersonalization Predicting Collective Action in Study 3 (supporters of compensation before the slash, and opponents of compensation after the slash).



*** $p < .001$

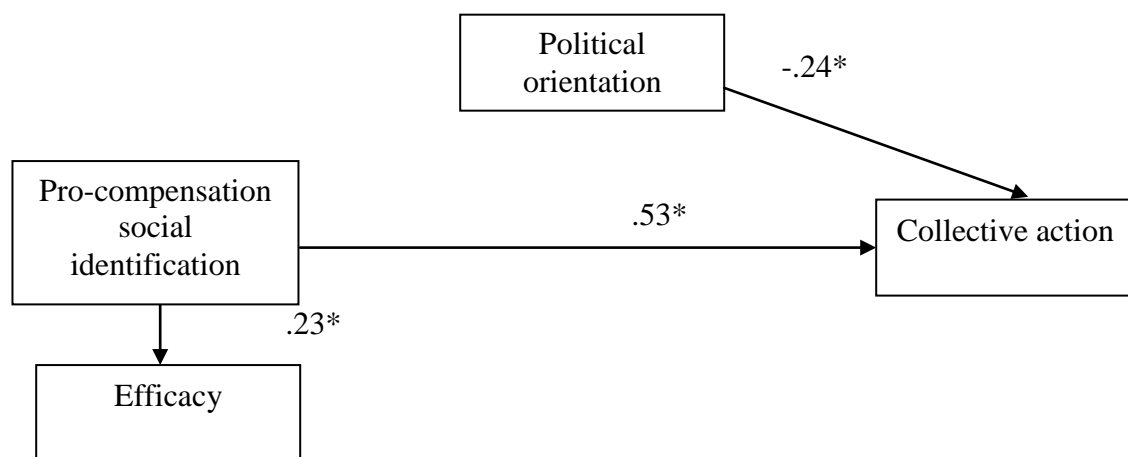
Predicting collective action intentions. We again tested models with and without a direct path between identification and action intentions. The model without a direct path fit poorly for supporters $\chi^2(7) = 53.7, p < .001, CMIN/df = 7.67, CFI = .207,$ and $RMSEA = .222$ and opponents of compensation, the model also showed poor indications of fit, $\chi^2(7) = 18.3, p = .011, CMIN/df = 2.62, CFI = .659,$ and $RMSEA = .100$ (see Figure 5 in Appendix E).

Adding the direct path greatly improved goodness-of-fit statistics for supporters of compensation yielding, $\chi^2(6) = 12.4, p = .055, CMIN/df = 2.05, CFI = .892,$ and $RMSEA = .088$ but not consistently so for opponents of compensation, $\chi^2(6) = 18.6, p = .570, CMIN/df = 3.02, CFI = .634,$ and $RMSEA = .112$ (see Figure 6 in Appendix E).

As in Studies 1 and 2, we developed final models by dropping non-significant predictors and allowing correlated error terms where variables were correlated. For

supporters of compensation, the model included opinion-based group identification and political orientation (left-wing) as independent predictors of action ($\beta = .53$ and $\beta = -.25$), which fitted the data well, $\chi^2(3) = 3.2$, $p = .367$, CMIN/df = 1.05, CFI = .997, and RMSEA = .020 (see Figure 4.4). Efficacy was the only significant predictor of action ($\beta = .38$, $p < .001$) for opponents of compensation, and therefore a model for this group is not depicted.

Figure 4.4. SEM predictive model of social identification, political orientation, group-based guilt, national identity and collective efficacy predicting action intentions for supporters of compensation in Study 3.



* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Discussion

The results again underscore the utility opinion-based groups have for predicting action intentions. The results show that the key variables are related to action for both groups but in different ways. At the same time the zero correlation between identification and action for the anti-compensation group refutes the possibility that

social identification and action intentions are the same construct. By showing that the high identifiers in both groups see their group in collective terms (as acting from shared identity, values and goals) the results also demonstrate that the lack of connection is not because one group is seen by its keenest adherents to be less group-like. This picture is nuanced, however, because in terms of mean differences it was the case that the anti-compensation group was seen to be less depersonalized (by all members not just high identifiers).

The different result for the two groups can probably be attributed to their social status. The anti-compensation group may be a “silent” majority that reflects a new dominant coalition between the opponents of apology and a selection of supporters of that apology. The group has a position that is supported by both major political parties and its members have no reason to act until their position is strongly challenged (a point we return to in the General Discussion). On the other hand, the pro-compensation group (a minority in our sample and in the broader society) is in a position where they need to act if they wish to change the status quo. Reassuringly for this group, it seems that its’ most committed adherents as also the people who are most committed to take action.

General Discussion

Taken together, our findings underscore the important role that opinion-based group memberships can play in explaining commitment to collective action where there is dynamic socio-political debate between members of the majority. Specifically, social identification with the anti-reform, the pro-reform, and the pro-compensation opinion-based groups were strong predictors of collective action intentions. Our results are more intriguing because they suggest that social identification is a strong predictor that cannot

simply be reproduced by a set of other plausible predictors of action intentions that have been identified in the previous literature (group-based guilt, political orientation, collective efficacy and national identification). These findings contribute to the growing body of research that has shown that social identification for groups formed around shared opinions is a useful tool for accounting for collective action intentions (e.g., Bliuc et al., 2007; Cameron & Nickerson, 2009; O'Brien & McGarty, 2009; Musgrove & McGarty, 2008; Thomas & McGarty, 2009). Our research extends on these findings, however, by demonstrating the relevance of such groups in contexts of emergent debates, over one year.

Our research also extends this body of literature by showing contexts in which opinion-based group membership can become *disconnected* from action. As seen in Studies 2 and 3, social identification with the anti-compensation opinion-based group did not predict collective action intentions despite opponents of compensation in Study 3 perceiving the group in depersonalized terms. Indeed, the path between social identification and action intentions became less connected over the eight month period between studies. Previous research has found that high identifiers are particularly likely to engage in collective action in contexts that are framed in conflictual intergroup terms (Veenstra & Haslam, 2001). In Studies 2 and 3, opponents of compensation may have felt no need to act because both the Federal Government and the opposition party also opposed compensation (and therefore constituted the silent majority that does not need to act on its views). In other words, in the absence of an obvious conflict or challenge from the alternative position there was no need for the entrenched dominant group to take action.

In all, the results suggest that groups based on a shared opinion are flexible — perhaps flexible enough to capture fluid socio-political debates that do not lend themselves to analysis in conventional political terms.

Discriminant Validity of the Opinion-Based Group Construct

Across all three studies, there was evidence that construct of social identification with groups based on a shared opinion adds value as a compact predictor of politically relevant action intentions, suggesting that identification with these groups has discriminant validity in that social identification was related to action for three of the four groups, but are also related to a number of other variables in different ways. As discussed, the generally strong associations between social identification and action intentions in these results raises a possible question of whether the identification measures capture opinion strength (rather than a commitment to a group) and predicts collective action intentions for this reason. However, the fact that anti-compensation opinion-based group membership was a weak predictor of action in Study 2 and not a predictor of action in Study 3 — despite the group being perceived to be depersonalized - provides additional evidence for the discriminant validity of the opinion-based concept.

Disambiguating the Relationship between Group-Based Guilt and Social Identity

The social psychological variables associated with each of the opinion-based groups are also intriguing. Our findings are contrary to previous research that has found weak relationships between identification and group-based guilt (or strong negative relationships, see Doosje et al., 1998). If group-based guilt is a group-based

phenomenon then it should be associated with commitment to group memberships. In line with the arguments of McGarty et al. (2005; see also McGarty & Bliuc, 2004), we suggest that group-based guilt may be a group-normative response not so much of those committed to a broad social or racial category such as “Australians” (as we examined in the current study) but to a more specific opinion-based group. The Australian identity should only be linked to group-based guilt and support for an apology to the extent to which Australians, as a group, develop norms about guilt and the apology in that context. Thus, while group-based guilt did not become a feature of the overarching Australian identity, guilt may nonetheless become part of a normative response of a more specific opinion-based group. Our research suggests this is the case.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

We acknowledge that the cross-sectional nature of the research means that we cannot tease apart the social psychological processes at play. Future research may seek to determine the causality and interrelations between opinion-based group identification in longitudinal studies. Having said that, we believe that a strength of our research is that it offers an invaluable insight into the role that social context plays in influencing the shape and form of the predictors of action intention over time. Second, as with most research in this domain, our measures of collective action rely on behavioural intentions rather than actual behaviours. Ideally, actual behaviour would have been measured, although evidence suggests that measures of intentions are good predictors of behaviour (e.g., Armitage & Conner, 2001).

We conclude with the claim that opinion-based group identities are very useful in capturing the fault lines of disagreement within the majority in emergent socio-

political debates about the minority and that these identities change in relevance and connection to action as the social context changes. Importantly, our research builds upon previous work that has explored the role of broader politicised collective identities in predicting collective behaviour by suggesting the specific role opinion-based groups might play in capturing the collectives involved in emergent debates. As revealed in our final study, majority members on both sides of the debate agree that there is still much work to be done before Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is achieved. If we are to understand the way in which opinions might be connected to collective action and social change in this domain, continuing attention to the formation of opinion-based group identities is crucial.

A central contribution is that this set of studies shows how social psychological variables can be used to provide insight into emerging political dynamics with a degree of texture and nuance that lies at an intermediate level between the techniques of opinion pollsters, that tend to be restricted to categorical analyses in terms of political affiliation and demographics, and the fine-grained market research conducted in focus groups, that seek to determine why members of the public support particular policies. The fact that social identification was a consistent strong predictor for at least one group in three studies suggests that these measures will continue to repay close attention.

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CHAPTER 5: CONTEXT STATEMENT

As highlighted in Chapter 1, the 2007 Australian Federal election marked the beginning in a transformation in the Australian media sphere that saw the first significant integration of Web 2.0 technologies into a national election campaign. For example, the two major parties both embraced blogs, online video and popular social networking sites in an attempt to win votes. This engagement of Web 2.0 in political campaigning has opened up new avenues for the development of support base for politicians but also new avenues for fostering the formation of groups to engage in collective action about contentious socio-political issues.

In this chapter, I explore groups formed around contrasting opinions about minority-majority relations in Australian society. Similar to the studies conducted in Chapter 4, the data in this chapter were collected over the critical time period of the apology to the Stolen Generations. However, this chapter is a qualitative exploration of the issues explored in Chapter 4 and therefore affords a more nuanced understanding of the processes involved in the formation of groups about minority-majority relations and the factors that might facilitate or hinder members from taking action. It also allows us to examine some of identity formation processes involved in the organic development of groups formed around shared opinions (and thus the possible factors that might stunt group members from taking action). Here, I conduct an in-depth analysis of a pro and an anti-apology group by analysing the content of group members' discussion via their posts. Through this analysis, I pay particular attention to actions that group members propose to address the position that they hold.

In Chapter 4, we saw that members of opinion-based groups that held a position that was in line with the political status quo (i.e., those who opposed financial compensation to the Stolen Generations) were disconnected from taking action. In this chapter, I consider whether members in the group that supports the apology (i.e., the political status quo) was similarly disconnected from action. I would like to thank anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments on the earlier version of this chapter.

CHAPTER 5:
**THE INTERGROUP DIMENSION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES: SOCIO-
POLITICAL ACTION AND INTERGROUP CONFLICT ON FACEBOOK**

Abstract

Despite the growing popularity of social networking sites, the processes by which intergroup conflict and political action about contentious issues develops on these sites is yet to be fully explored. The present research examines Facebook groups that had conflicting positions about minority and majority relations in Australian society. In Study 1, we conducted a content analysis of group names formed around these issues. Groups were classified into “ethnocentric” and “counter-ethnocentric” categories. Analyses revealed that there was significant conflict between groups, some of which had actually formed in response to other Facebook groups. In Study 2, the discussion board of two groups that had opposing positions about the Australian government’s apology to the Indigenous minority for past injustices was analysed. The intergroup dimension of the group discussion was evidenced by the use of hostile arguments towards intruders to the group and the convergence of members’ arguments that justified their groups’ position about the apology. The discussion content and socio-political action advocated also changed with changes in the offline political environment. Findings highlight Facebook as a vehicle for people to express identities and to promote socio-political action relating to intergroup conflict and cooperation.

Social researchers have made important steps in documenting the ways that the Internet can transform relations between groups and the nature of socio-political action (e.g., Postmes & Brunsting, 2002; see also Brimber, Flanagin, & Stohl, 2005; Brunsting & Postmes, 2002). However, in the short time since this work was published the second generation of web development including social networking sites (also known as Web 2.0, DiNucci, 1999) has increasingly been involved in socio-political action. Despite the growing popularity of social networking sites, their involvement in socio-political action is yet to be fully explored.

Of the numerous social networking sites, Facebook.com - with over 300 million active users worldwide - is of particular interest because it offers a number of tools and applications that allow members to communicate with others about socio-political issues. These tools include “groups”, “causes”, and “fan pages”. In the present research, we focus on groups (hence termed “Facebook groups”) as these are constructed for the purpose of discussion between Facebook users without other requirements (causes and fan pages can be involved in socio-political action but causes also raise money for registered charities and fan pages are largely promotional tools for people and products).

Facebook users are able to create new groups or join existing groups. To create a group, a unique name and group description must be provided. Groups can be set to be open to anyone (public), closed (where users must get administrator approval to join), or secret (by invite only). Public and closed groups can be found via the Facebook search tool and creators can invite members to join via Facebook mail (where the group has less than 5000 members). Group members can also post to discussion boards and add photos, videos, and post news and links.

These features help place Facebook intriguingly at the interface of two social psychological issues. First, Facebook is an increasingly popular 21st Century vehicle for expressing identity. Indeed the very name “*Facebook*” refers to the physical feature that is routinely used to convey and express identity for most people in most societies (e.g., on a drivers license). Facebook identities often closely reflect public off-line identities but they can involve pseudonyms created for this purpose. In both cases though, these identities are managed and expressed to other people. As with other identities, Facebook identities can be long lasting and many users are concerned about the reputation of these identities. As we discuss below, both identifiability and anonymity have been considered in relation to the Internet’s “dark side” of fostering hostile intergroup relations (cyberhate).

Second, social networking sites are attracting increasing public attention as locations for socio-political action that are linked to profound social changes. Indeed given Facebook’s affinity with issues of identity it is not surprising that Facebook is becoming deployed in identity politics. Arguably, social networking sites such as Facebook have an underexplored role as vehicles for social identities (in the sense used in the social identity approach, Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987).

In this paper, we explore the intersection of these two themes. We consider Facebook as a vehicle for people to express identities and to promote socio-political action relating to intergroup conflict and cooperation. We focus in particular on debates within the majority European Australian population about minority group relations.

Before turning to this context it is useful to review the state of knowledge about the two key themes.

Identity Management, Identifiability and Cyberhate on the Internet

For many years it was argued that the anonymity created by the Internet encourages people to express socially undesirable attitudes and behaviours, such as prejudice and stereotypes (Jessup, Connolly, & Tansik, 1990; Kiesler & Sproull, 1992). Research exploring the social effects of traditional Internet technologies such as bulletin boards, email, and chat rooms has revealed their role in fostering the formation of racially motivated hate groups (e. g., Douglas, McGarty, Bliuc, & Lala, 2005; Gerstenfeld, Grant, & Chiang, 2003; see also Lee & Leets, 2002). However, the Social Identity model of Deindividuation Effects (SIDE model: Reicher et al., 1995; see also Lea & Spears, 1991; Postmes, Spears, & Lea, 1998; Reicher & Levine, 1994a, 1994b; Reicher, Levine, & Gordijn, 1998; Spears & Lea, 1992, 1994) paints a more complex picture. This model posits that anonymity to an outgroup with the capacity to punish the communicator may indeed help increase hostile actions towards that outgroup. This reflects what the SIDE theorists call the strategic or identity enactment aspects of SIDE. On the other hand, identifiability to an ingroup may increase the capacity of members to resist the outgroup by establishing co-presence and solidarity with those people.

Facebook groups differ from earlier online community technologies in that Facebook is organised around persons (Boyd & Ellison, 2006). When Facebook users join groups or contribute to group discussion via the discussion board, these actions are visible to “friends” in their social network. Facebook group members are therefore effectively more identifiable to other Facebook members when compared to many other

online community members (even those who use their real names). Facebook identifiability extends well beyond traditional internet identifiability (as defined by Douglas & McGarty, 2001, 2002, in Web 1.0 contexts as identifiability based on cues about geographical location, gender).

Although it might be argued that identifiability on Facebook may limit the degree of behaviour that is punishable by powerful others, Facebook may create the potential for precisely the form of solidarity that Reicher et al. (1995) refer to. That is, although identifiability may limit the presence of illegal and other actions punishable by authorities that can be found on fully anonymous sites, it is also possible that by enabling connection to other people who share the user's views that the Facebook groups may help sustain action that reflects relevant social identities. It is to that action and those identities that we now turn.

Facebook as a Vehicle for Political Opinion and Identities

Facebook is used by broad segment of the population in western countries (Hargittai, 2007). According to CheckFacebook.com, for example, over 6.4 million Australians use Facebook, representing nearly 40% of the Australian online population, with 60% between 18-34 years of age and 30% 35 years and older. Although there is little reliable data detailing the demographics of those involved in traditional forms of online communities to discuss social and political issues (see Boyd & Ellison, 2006), social networking sites are becoming a popular technology to do so. A recent study conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2008), found that that 33% of American Internet users had a profile on a social networking site and 31% of these social network site members had engaged in activities with a civic or political focus,

such as joining a political cause, or getting campaign or candidate information. This suggests around 10% of American Internet users had used a social networking site for some form of political or civic engagement.

Even though there is an apparent engagement of social networking sites to discuss controversial socio-political issues, most of the empirical research focuses on users' personal characteristics and intentions (e.g., Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Fogel & Nehmad, 2009; Goodings, Locke, & Brown, 2007; Hargittai, 2007; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Subrahmanyama, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008) or on the use of such sites for partisan political purposes in electoral campaigns (e.g., Gueorguieva, 2007; Westling, 2007; Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer, & Bichard, 2009).

Facebook groups provide a platform for users to present their personal views by calling for support on a certain issue on a massive range of topics. For example, some groups are formed for residents of a particular area, for members of an offline club, for pet lovers, and- the interest of the current study- opinions about socio-political issues. Recent research suggests that most Facebook groups formed around US political positions are partisan; providing an ideal setting for like-minded members to discuss issues (see Westling, 2007).

Recent world events also point to the apparent power of social networking sites to promote socio-political action relating to intergroup conflict and cooperation (e.g., Shaheen, 2008). The 2009 Iranian presidential election is a poignant example. Prior to the election, supporters of independent candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi started a denial of service attack (where multiple systems flood the bandwidth of a targeted system)

against President Ahmadinejad's Facebook page and Twitter.com account by using social networking sites to share the attack tools with other users. After the election, graphic videos of the protests were posted on a range of social networking sites (Harvey & Ahmed, 2009). This example demonstrates that emerging social movements can use social networking sites as part of their wider offline operations.

Social psychology has a long tradition of intergroup relations theory that might help understand the relations between and within groups formed on Facebook. Early social psychological theorising argued that opposing group interests in obtaining scarce resources promotes competition and overt social conflict (known as realistic group conflict theory, Sherif, 1967). For Sherif, real conflicts between groups create both intergroup antagonism and increases identification with the group.

More recently, social identity theory (SIT) established by Tajfel and Turner (1979), carried on in self-categorization theory (SCT, Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) focuses on the role of group identity and social context in intergroup relations. SCT, for example, purports that collective behaviour (including what we term socio-political action here) occurs when people see self as part of a group and that they share a social identity with fellow group members and come to act in line with the norms of that group.

What socio-political behaviours might we expect from members of Facebook groups forming around contentious socio-political issues? SIT posits that there are two broad approaches that groups can adopt to achieve social change for their group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). First, groups can adopt socially competitive strategies that directly challenge the outgroup such as open hostility and conflict (e.g., protests and violence).

Second, groups can adopt socially creative strategies that engage in transforming the nature of intergroup comparisons so that they tend to favour their own group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) or minimise a disadvantage (so that a rich group might take pride in its economic exploitation of a poor group and a poor group value happiness or honesty over wealth).

How do these issues of identity management and intergroup relations play out in for Facebook groups addressing minority relations? We next consider the debates about minority and majority relations in Australia.

The Political Context: Debates about Minority and Majority Relations in Australia

Relations between majority and minority groups based on categories such as race and ethnicity have often been contentious in Australian society. In particular, there have been heated debates about the desirability of the policy of multiculturalism, the scale of immigration, the treatment of asylum seekers, and past treatment and current inequality of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. During the centre-right government of the former Prime Minister John Howard (1996-2007) multiculturalism was abandoned as a government policy and replaced with a more mono-centric view of “Australian culture”: as being predominantly white and Anglo Saxon (Markus, 2001). This shift was manifested at a political level in the implementation of policies to tighten immigration and border control and a rejection by the Australian Government of the recommendation of a National Inquiry that all Australian governments should apologise for the systematic removal of Indigenous children (known as the Stolen Generations) from their families during 20th Century (Marr & Wilkinson, 2003).

November 2007 marked a significant change in the socio-political makeup with the election of the centre-left Australian Labor Party (ALP). In the election campaign the ALP challenged some of the prior government's policies and implemented new policies following the election. In particular, the incoming Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised to the Stolen Generations on the first day of the new Parliament in February 2008. The period of time surrounding the apology to the Stolen Generations was a significant period of socio-political change in Australian society. The current research explores activity in Facebook groups during this period of time.

We anticipated that the Facebook groups formed during the period would reflect the conflicting positions about minority and majority relations and would be classifiable into two broad categories that we term: "ethnocentric" and "counter-ethnocentric". Groups classified as counter-ethnocentric promote multiculturalism and cultural diversity in Australian society (e.g., "Australia Has Many Colours not Just White") and/or support steps toward Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (e.g., "One million Australians feel sorry"). Ethnocentric groups can be characterised as supporting the maintenance of the traditional domination of Australian society by people of European backgrounds (with names such as "AUSTRALIA, Respect Our Flag. Speak English. Love It or Leave It") and/or oppose steps towards Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians such as the apology to the Stolen Generations (e.g., "19 million Australians aren't too sorry").

We explore the idea that Facebook is a vehicle for people to express identities and to promote socio-political action relating to intergroup conflict and cooperation, and aimed to map the intergroup relations first *between* (Study 1) and then *within* (Study 2)

Facebook groups that espoused ethnocentric and counter-ethnocentric positions about minority and majority relations in Australia. We wished to gauge in the first instance the degree to which Facebook groups were being formed to pursue ethnocentric and counter-ethnocentric socio-political objectives (the focus of Study 1) and then to gauge the degree to which the strategies being used in the online discussion could be understood in intergroup terms (the focus of Study 2).

Study 1

In the context of dynamic socio-political change in Australian society, the aim of this study was to establish whether groups were forming in relation to debates about minority and majority relations in Australia. We conducted an analysis of the names of public Facebook groups coalescing into ethnocentric and counter-ethnocentric themes. In particular, we examined whether there was conflict *between* groups who have opposing views about minority and majority relations in Australia.

Method

Data collection

The data were drawn from the Facebook's search tool (at the time the data were collected in July 2008, this tool allowed users to restrict the search to groups that nominated themselves as belonging to the Australian network) by locating all public profile groups within the Australian network that could be classified as ethnocentric or counter-ethnocentric in theme (i.e., addressing in some way the issue of minority and majority relations in Australian society). Group names that did not have a strong reference to the Australian context were excluded from analyses (e. g., "Why is

FACEBOOK allowing racist groups to exist?”). Conceptions of both “old-fashioned racism” (premised on notions of biological and racial superiority) and “modern racism” (a more subtle approach that is nevertheless rejecting of and exclusionary towards perceived outgroups) were used to guide the process of classifying groups into the ethnocentric and counter-ethnocentric categories (see Verkuyten, 1998).

To obtain an overall indication of the level of group member interaction and changes over time, the groups were sampled in a six month period that spanned an important socio-political change in Australian society. For ease of comparison, this six month block of time was divided into three two-month periods. These were:

1. November - December 2007: The lead up to the Australian federal election and the election of the ALP government of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on the 24th November 2007.
2. January - February 2008: The announcement of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations and the offering of this apology on February 13th 2008.
3. March - April 2008: The period after the apology was made.

Coding Procedure

The coding categories fell into three broad domains: group category, group issue, and intergroup context.

Group category. Groups were classified as “ethnocentric” (i.e., groups that had names that can be characterised as supporting the maintenance of the traditional domination of Australian society by people of white, Anglo Saxon backgrounds and/or oppose steps towards Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians such as the apology to the Stolen Generations) and “counter-ethnocentric”

(i.e., groups that have names that promote multiculturalism and cultural diversity in Australian society and/or support steps toward Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians).

Group issue. The political context of the study was one that was marked by shifts in policy and debate about minority and majority relations. To capture how this context impacted the formation of Facebook groups and to further refine the position of the groups coalescing into “ethnocentric” and “counter-ethnocentric” themes, groups were further classified according to the issue that group was addressing. Because discussion about minority and majority relations in Australian society often includes discussion about multiculturalism and Indigenous Reconciliation, the coding categories that were used were multiculturalism (e.g., groups addressing the issue of cultural diversity), the issue of Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and those that did not fit into either of these two categories (other).

Intergroup context. The content of group names were cross-checked to see whether there were any groups in the opposite group category addressing the same issue. During this process we observed that the social category “Australia/n” was present in a large percentage of the group names. As a result, the number of groups that had this category in their group name was recorded as an additional means of mapping the intergroup context.

To test the coding reliability of these three broad coding categories, two independent raters coded a random sample of 25 group names. Written descriptions of the ten codes were given to raters before coding and Cohen’s Kappa (κ) coefficient for

inter-rater agreement (Cohen, 1960) was used to calculate inter-rater reliability. All of the six coding categories had inter-rater agreement with $\kappa > .70$.

Analysis and Discussion

The frequencies of ethnocentric and counter-ethnocentric groups coded into each category, the mean number of numbers per group, and the mean number of group discussion posts over the three two month periods are reported in Table 5.1. Although there were more counter-ethnocentric ($n = 53$) than ethnocentric group ($n = 20$), the two types of groups were of comparable mean size ($n = 1879$ and $n = 1890$). Averaging across the three two month periods, there were also more discussion posts made in the ethnocentric groups, compared to counter-ethnocentric groups.

Table 5.1

Frequencies of Ethnocentric and Counter-Ethnocentric Groups, Group Members, and Posts in Group Discussion in Study 1

	Ethnocentric groups ^a	Counter-ethnocentric groups ^b
	Mean (range)	Mean (range)
Members per group	1890 (19- 13401)	1879 (23- 43375)
Posts in group discussion		
Federal election period (Nov- Dec '07)	47 (0- 605)	42 (0- 194)
Apology period (Jan- Feb '08)	92 (0- 814)	50 (0- 245)
Post-apology period (Feb- Mar '08)	103 (0- 746)	62 (0- 323)

^a $n = 20$. ^b $n = 53$

Group Issues

In general, the groups formed around two broad issues in Australian society; the issue of multiculturalism and the issue of Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (see Table 5.2). There were two noteworthy trends. First, there were more counter-ethnocentric groups focused on the issue of Reconciliation between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (72%), compared to the ethnocentric groups (30%). Second, the ethnocentric groups were more frequently formed around the issue of multiculturalism in Australia (60%), and largely constructed multiculturalism as a threat to the national identity (e.g., “fly the flag or fly the **** home”. Censorship in the original). By contrast, 21% of the counter-ethnocentric groups were formed around the issue of multiculturalism but constructed cultural diversity as a positive aspect of Australian society (e.g., “Australia Has Many Colours not Just White”).

Table 5.2

Frequencies of Group Categories, Frequencies and Proportions of Group Names, Group Issues and use of Australian National Category in Study 1

Group issue	Group category			
	Ethnocentric ^a		Counter-ethnocentric ^b	
	Frequency (% of total no. of groups)		Frequency (% of total no. of groups)	
Reconciliation	6(30%)	19 million Australians aren't too sorry	38(72%)	One million Australians feel sorry
Multiculturalism	12(60%)	fly the flag or fly the **** home	11(21%)	Australia Has Many Colours not Just White
Other	2(10%)	Asian Drivers should be forced to display A Plates	4(7%)	SOOOO fed up with flag-wavers, bogans and racists

^a $n = 20$. ^b $n = 53$

Intergroup Context

The intergroup context of the formation of the Facebook groups was demarcated by two observations: the frequency in which the social category “Australia/n” was mobilised in group names and that some of the groups were explicitly forming in reaction to groups with opposing positions, representing a battle between groups.

Contested use of the Australian social category. Many of the ethnocentric and counter-ethnocentric groups names appeared to be engaged in a battle over the definition of the Australian category (see Table 5.3). While both the ethnocentric and counter-ethnocentric groups used the social category “Australian” in their group name, ethnocentric groups did this more frequently (65% compared to 19% of counter-ethnocentric groups). The ethnocentric group names appeared to be particularly focused on defining what types of groups threaten their definition of Australia (e.g., those who are perceived to be “culturally diverse”). For example, in the group name “Learn The Aussie Language, Respect Our Way Of Life, IT'S NOT HARD!!!!!!” the mobilisation of “Aussie language” and “*our way of life*” (italics added) constructs the category of Australian for those who speak English (“Aussie”) and that those who violate this norm (i.e., people from non-English speaking backgrounds) do not belong. For the counter-ethnocentric groups, the Australian social category was used in more inclusive ways, constructing Australia and Australians as tolerant and accepting of cultural diversity (e.g., “Australians respect all races”).

Reactive formation of groups. A number of groups appeared to have formed in reaction to groups with opposing opinions (see Table 5.3). There were four examples of this intergroup conflict with respect to the issue the issue of multiculturalism. For example, the group “You're in Australia... SPEAK ENGLISH!!!” appears to be in direct contrast to the group “You're in Australia, speak whatever you want!” Here, the prior group asserts that English should be the only language spoken in Australia, while the latter constructs Australia as a country in which all languages are accepted and embraced. Perhaps the most explicit example of intergroup conflict is evident between

the anti-immigration ethnocentric group “We're full, so f@%k OFF!!” and the counter-ethnocentric group “Shame on you “we're full so f@%k off”.

This explicit form of intergroup conflict was also strongly evident between groups that had opposing views about the appropriateness of the apology made to the Stolen Generations by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. In total, there were six examples of this conflict. For example, the counter-ethnocentric group “One million Australians feel sorry” group appears in direct contrast to the ethnocentric group “19 million Australians aren't too sorry”. Both groups evoke “Australian” in their group name, but do so in contrasting ways. The first group utilises “Australian” in order to evoke widespread support for the apology within the Facebook context by aiming to get one million group members to show their support. By contrast, the latter groups' use of the terms “19 million Australians” positions opposition to the Apology as a majority viewpoint within Australian society and thus constructs support for the apology as “un-Australian”.

Table 5.3

Examples of Intergroup Conflict between Facebook Groups in Study 1

Group issue	Ethnocentric groups	Counter-ethnocentric groups
Use of Australian national category	Australia - Love it or PISS OFF! (65% of ethnocentric groups)	I am a white Australian and I want to say sorry (19% of counter-ethnocentric groups)
Multiculturalism examples	You're in Australia... SPEAK ENGLISH!!! AUSTRALIA, Respect Our Flag. Speak English. Love It or Leave It... We're full, so F@%K OFF!!	You're in Australia, speak whatever you want! SOOOO fed up with flag-wavers, bogans and racists Shame on you “we're full so f@%k off”
Reconciliation examples	19 million Australians aren't too sorry	One million Australians feel sorry

Summary

The content analysis of the group names demonstrate the formation of a competitive intergroup context of the form anticipated in social psychological traditions extending back to realistic group conflict theory (Sherif, 1967) but including social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theories (Reicher et al., 1995; Turner et al., 1987). It is clear that many of the groups formed in oppositional terms but it is important to note that this conflict is not between the majority and minority social categories (e.g., white Anglo-Saxon Australians versus other minority groups) but is primarily about relations between the majority and minority as demonstrated by the broad coalescing of groups into counter-ethnocentric and ethnocentric themes in a mutually reactive and reinforcing way. Specifically, the debate about relations between the majority and minority underpins the formation and popularisation of the Facebook groups.

Importantly, it appears that these groups parallel broader debates about minority and majority relations in Australian society. For example, a survey of Australians by Dunn, Forrest, Burnley, and McDonald (2004) found that while the vast majority of respondents thought that cultural diversity was a positive aspect of Australian society (85%), 45% also perceived cultural diversity to be a threat to Australia's nationhood. This apparent contradiction in opinion about the value of multiculturalism was certainly evident in many of the counter-ethnocentric group names, particularly those that constructed cultural diversity as a treat to the Australian nation state. Similarly the Facebook groups formed around Reconciliation parallels work by Augoustinos, Lecouteur, and Soyland (2002) that looked at the arguments Australians used to justify their positions about giving an apology. These findings points to the utility of Facebook

to not only document public opinion in times of socio-political change but as a vehicle for people to express identities.

It seems plausible then that polarised, conflicting identities formed in this online context but several questions remain open. Most importantly, given that there is apparent conflict *between* the Facebook groups is there also conflict *within* them? In addition, how might communication between group members show evidence of socio-political action relating to intergroup conflict and cooperation? These questions are the central concern for Study 2. Because of the broader social context of the study and the salience of the issue of an apology to the Indigenous Stolen Generations, we focused on one ethnocentric and one counter-ethnocentric group based on the iconic issue of Rudd's apology.

Study 2

In this study, following from Swaab, Postmes, van Beest, and Spears (2007), who showed that through communication, identity can lead to shared meaning and shared meaning can lead to the development of identity, we examined whether communication between group members on a Facebook group discussion board fostered socio-political action relating to intergroup conflict and cooperation. Specifically, we examined the posts made on the discussion board of two groups with opposing views about the appropriateness of giving an apology to the Stolen Generations; the counter-ethnocentric group "One million Australians feel sorry" and the ethnocentric group "19 million Australians aren't too sorry".

These two groups were chosen because they related to a key issue during a period of political change in Australian society. The most notable of these changes was

the apology that was made to the Stolen Generations. The idea of an official apology for the systematic removal of Indigenous children from their families during the 20th Century has had varying public support. An opinion poll in 1997 showed that 50% of Australians supported the idea while 40% opposed (Newspoll and The Australian, 1997). In February 2008 after the apology was made, national support had increased to 69% and opposition had dropped to 26% (Newspoll and The Australian, 2008). These changing political opinions may reflect important transformations in Australian society and provide a rich context in which to explore issues relating intergroup relations and socio-political action on a social networking site. It is important to be clear that the nature of our research method means that the research cannot be used to make generalisations of the form “70% of Australian Facebook members believe X” as might be made on the basis of a representative sample obtained from a polling company. Rather our methods allow us to test the strength of hypothesised relationships in a sample and to generalise on the basis of that relationship.

In this case, the intergroup relations of interest do not relate to a conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians but to a conflict within broad Australian society between supporters and opponents of an apology by the Australian government to the members of the Stolen Generations. Such groups based around positions rather than other social categories have been termed opinion-based groups (Bliuc, McGarty, Reynolds, & Muntele, 2007; McGarty, Bliuc, Thomas, & Bongiorno, 2009). Opinion-based groups are psychological groups in the sense used by Turner et al. (1987) but which have a social identity defined by a shared opinion. In this way, people can come to perceive and define themselves in terms of their opinion-group membership in the

same way as with any other psychologically meaningful social category or group. Using this framework we can term the two Facebook groups as pro and anti-apology, respectively.

We chose the pro-apology group, “One million Australians feel sorry” and the anti-apology group, “19 million Australians aren’t too sorry” because they were the two that most explicitly formed in relation to one another. While it would be interesting to explore groups that were formed around the same time, the reactionary nature of the formation of these two groups meant that the pro-apology group was formed first and then the anti-apology group. By analysing groups that were explicitly in conflict with each other provides an ideal context to explore intergroup conflict processes on a social networking site.

For the pro-apology group, we predicted that the content of discussion would show support for the apology and more broadly Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (i.e., social change) as opposed to a conflict between the social categories of “Indigenous” and “non-Indigenous”. For the anti-apology group, we predicted that the content of discussion would focus on the maintenance of the traditional dominance and privilege of Australian society by people of European Australian backgrounds (i.e., would be “ethnocentric” in content). In terms of the types of socio-political action that we expected to emerge from group discussion, we aimed to explore whether the groups engaged in social creative and/or social competitive strategies as proposed by SIT.

Method

Data Collection

The data analysed in this study were posts on the discussion board of each of the two groups. As in Study 1, the data were organised in three consecutive two month periods of socio-political change in Australian society. All posts in these three two-month periods were included in the analyses.

Analytic Procedure

Our analysis of the communication of the two Facebook groups is based broadly upon SAGA (Structural Analysis of Group Arguments) as outlined by Reicher and Sani (1998) and illustrated by Sani and Reicher (2000). SAGA is a means of exploring intra-group argumentation in the definition and re-formulation of group meanings and identity that arise through group discussion and for analysing the impact of argumentation for particular outcomes, such as socio-political action. Reicher and Sani assert that the particular forms taken by these different phases of the analysis depend upon the precise issue that is under investigation.

In this study, our focus is on dynamics taking place at the intra-group level in each of the Facebook groups' discussion board. In particular, we are concerned with how pro and anti-apology Facebook groups position their group and the ways in which they construct certain types of action or outcomes for the group. This requires us to provide a qualitative analysis of all of the arguments used in each group. Reicher and Sani (1998) note that where a SAGA analysis is applied, data should be grouped by "faction" (group) before coding and that such categories should be (at least initially) theoretically grounded. Thus, from the outset data will be considered in light of our

theoretical hypotheses, and then initial categories were constructed. In the first phase of our analysis, we pay particular attention to the way in which the group opinion is being categorised and constructed by each of the groups. By doing this, we can see whether a particular type of group identity is being fostered. In the second phase of our analysis, explore how these arguments lead (or do not lead) to particular types of socio-political behaviour. The theoretical lens that we used is SIT's assertion that there are two broad approaches that groups can adopt to achieve social change for their group, social competitive strategies that directly challenge the outgroup such as open hostility and conflict (e.g., protests and violence) and socially creative strategies that focus on transforming the nature of intergroup comparisons.

Analysis and Discussion

The findings from our analyses are presented in two phases. In the first phase, we analyse the arguments used by members of both groups that justify their group's position about the apology, paying close attention to whether there is an intergroup context to these arguments. We classify the arguments in both groups into: (a) hostile arguments towards "intruders" to the group; and (b) arguments made by members to justify their groups' position about the apology. In the second phase of our analyses, we examine whether group discussion shows evidence of socio-political behaviour. The overall findings of phase one and two are detailed in Table 5.4. In this table, we explicitly map out the way in which group discussion changed with changes in the political environment over the six months that the data were analysed. Below, we present a detailed analysis of these findings.

Table 5.4

Timeline Detailing the Political Context, Dates in which the Pro and Anti-Apology Groups Formed, and the Content of Group Discussion in Study 2

	Nov 2007	Dec 2007	Jan 2008	Feb 2008	Mar 2008	Apr 2008
Political context	Prime Minister elected		Apology announced	Apology made		
Pro-apology group	A * group formed	A	A, B, D,	A, B, C, D, E,	A, B, D,	A
Anti-apology group	-	-	A, B * group formed	A, B, F, G	A, B, F, G	A, B, F, G

Note. A= hostility towards ‘intruders’ to the group; B= asymmetrical arguments about group position; C= calls to action aimed to ensure the pro-apology stance is represented in the wider community; D= other calls to socio-political action; E= claims about representing the Australian social category; F= hostility towards the pro-apology position; G= hostility towards Indigenous Australians

Phase One: An Overview of Arguments Justifying the Groups’ Position

Hostility towards “intruders” in the group. In this section, we present extracts from both groups that demonstrate the way in which members constructed those who belong to the group and those who do not. The most common argument used was that only those who subscribe to the group position regarding the apology should be allowed to be members. This argument was present through the whole six months (see Table 5.4). Posters in both groups constructed those who do not share the same position as the group name as “intruders”. For example:

Extract (anti-apology): If ya [sic] dont [sic] like what we're all discussing, or what we believe in, Why bother coming to this group in the first place?... Cause ya know at the end of the day, we'll still believe what we want to believe and

you'll still be trying to dictate what YOU think WE should believe, which is really never going to happen so you can quit wasting your time and ours.

Extract (pro-apology): This group was established as a voice for those who support the Sorry process...All too often cyber-communities lose opportunities for like minded people to commune, create, share and advance the stated theme as arguments, debates, in-house fighting gets a hold...especially when people who do not support the cause decide that they will join the community solely [to] argue all of the points AGAINST the Groups Intent rather than contribute to the stated Intent

These two extracts illustrate that people who expressed positions contrary to the group position were seen as outsiders. In doing so it also illustrates the broader intergroup dimension to the discussion.

The vast majority of posters in both groups clearly subscribed to the group's position about the apology but views that conflicted with the group's position about the apology were portrayed as unwelcome. For example, the use of "YOU" and "WE" (capitals in original) in the anti-apology extract suggests that this group member perceives "trolling" as a threat to the collective opinion of the group (and not just a personal opinion). Similarly, in the pro-apology extract the poster argues that people "AGAINST the Groups Intent" (capitals in original) are not welcome. In both extracts, the group is constructed as a place where people with similar positions about the issue can communicate.

Arguments about group position. Here, we present arguments that were mobilised by members of one group to justify their position on the apology that are the

complete opposite of an argument used by members of the other group about their position on the apology. As seen in Table 5.4, such arguments were present throughout the whole data collection period. We summarise the two main arguments as relating to (a) constructions of the relationship between being “sorry” and being responsible; and (b) constructions of Indigenous (dis)advantage. The extracts that we draw upon highlight the intergroup nature of the group discussion.

Constructions of the relationship between being “sorry” and being responsible. A prevalent argument that was mobilised by anti-apology posters to position the apology as inappropriate was that the present generation cannot be blamed for mistakes of past generations. Group members regularly equated the giving of an apology with personal responsibility and argued that an apology was inappropriate because they could not be held personally responsible for past laws, policies, and actions. For example:

Extract (anti-apology): Why should we apologise for something we didn't do... Should Germans forever apologise to the Jews... Should the Japanese forever apologise to the Americans and Australians? I hate this continued guilt trip that they try to put over us... We have to stop living in the past and shifting blame to people who weren't even alive when it happened.

In this extract, the apology is constructed as inappropriate because it focuses on “living in the past”. This use of time is juxtaposed with the question of whether Germans should “forever” be required to apologise to Jews. The poster constructs “they” (presumably those who support the apology) as trying to make current Australians feel (personally) guilty. Pro-apology group members also constructed the

apology as not implying personal guilt or responsibility but as requiring *collective* responsibility:

Extract (pro-apology): This group was set up for individuals to express their own sorrows for the practices and maltreatments that were put forth to ensure Indigenous Australians remain an oppressed race. No one here (for the reasons in which this group was set up for) feels any personal obligation [or] responsibility. As stated in the group's description, we should feel collectively responsible.

This poster presents a construction of the relationship between (collective) responsibility and apology and then aligns the group's position with the argument commonly mobilised by the anti-apology position (i.e., "no one here" feels personally responsible). This allows the poster to counter the anti-apology position. In particular the poster argues that group members should express "sorrow", but there is an absence of the word "guilt". This absence works to distance the relationship between the group's position and implications of being personally responsible (i.e., the anti-apology's argument).

Constructions of Indigenous (dis)advantage. Within both groups, there was also considerable discussion about the relationship between the perceived status of Indigenous Australians and the appropriateness of apology. Within the anti-apology group, Indigenous Australians were regularly constructed as relatively "advantaged" compared to non-Indigenous Australians and thus undeserving of an apology. The specific nature of the advantage claimed by group members varied (e.g., from Indigenous Australians receiving more lenient university entry, to receiving more

government welfare than other Australians). This perceived advantage is constructed as being undeserving. For example:

Extract (anti-apology): I am getting a little sick of do gooders [sic] having opinions. Don't get me wrong people I am not a racist. I believe in equality for all... I took my son to regiseter [sic] for football yesterday and the first question they asked him was ... "are you aboriginal or torres straight islander [sic]... I felt like saying "" Why will we get the registration for free" I know heaps of people feel like I do... so speak up in this group! No way for apology!

This extract offers an interesting insight into the intergroup dynamics of the group discussion. Even though the poster is talking to other anti-apology group members, they orient their response to “do gooders” (i.e., the pro-apology position). The poster positions themselves as “not racist” by justifying that they “believe in equality for all”. However, the definition of equality mobilised by the group member equates to equal treatment for all Australians, regardless of systemic or structural disadvantage experienced by those groups.

In comparison, pro-apology group members largely constructed Indigenous Australians as disadvantaged compared to non-Indigenous Australians. In particular, Indigenous Australians were constructed as people living in “third world conditions”, as having poor health conditions, and as the victims of abuse. A national apology was constructed as reparation for this disadvantage. For example:

Extract (pro-apology): People who oppose the apology assume we can feel pride for what has happened in the past but not shame? What a childish way to look at history, clearly we can afford an apology if not for the symbolic meaning for the

indigenous population but as a step forward in fixing the fact that our economically [sic] prosperous country has people living in third [sic] world conditions!

Notice that the poster orients their argument that past atrocities are directly related to Indigenous disadvantage towards “people who oppose the apology” which highlights the intergroup conflict inherent in the discussion. Also interesting their use of the emotion of shame, as opposed to guilt in the other anti-apology extracts. Again, in contrast to the anti-apology position, the poster constructs non-Indigenous as being the advantaged group members.

Phase Two: Socio-Political Behaviour Arising from Group Discussion

In phase one of the analyses we highlighted the intergroup dimensions of the two conflicting Facebook groups by demonstrating that the meanings that group members attached to their group membership were directly contrasting to the opposite Facebook group (e.g., constructions around what the apology meant) and that those perceived to violate the group’s position regarding the apology, were ostracised and constructed as intruders. In this phase, we turn to the types of socio-political behaviour arising from group discussion. To clearly document the changing nature of group discussion over time, we present our analyses of socio-political behaviour of the pro and anti-apology groups separately and document this over the six month period, as seen in Table 5.4.

Socio-political behaviour for the pro-apology group. Prior to the announcement of the apology, discussion within the pro-apology group largely reflected discussion and consensualisation around what it meant to be a member of the group (see Table 5.4). In mid-January 2008 when the Australian Prime Minister announced the date

in which the apology would be made, the content of discussion changed considerably in form. Group members became increasingly focused on encouraging others to undertake actions to ensure that support for the apology was represented in the media and society at large. After the apology was made, the content of group discussion shifted towards claiming ownership over the Australian identity. We turn to these developments in detail.

Before the apology: Calls to action to ensure the pro-apology stance is represented in the wider community. These calls to action revolved around the goal of making sure that support for the apology was represented in the wider community. The content of these posts encouraged members to sign online petitions and online polls about the apology, to make commentaries to online articles, to encourage group members to invite friends to join the Facebook group and to join other Facebook groups orientated around the same issue. This type of socio-political action is clearly social competitive in nature, with group members directly challenging the legitimacy of the anti-apology position. For example:

Extract (pro-apology): Thank you very much to everyone who voted on the Daily Telegraph's poll yesterday. The final tally was 48% yes and 52% no. So a narrow loss, but not the whitewash most tabloid-style polls usually generate on Indigenous issues. The Australian said it would be having a poll today ... I'll also post here and on a few of the other groups when I see it goes up. Come on fellow supporters. Let's show them who's right!

In this extract, the goal of making the pro-apology position visible in the general community is clear. Members of the pro-apology group appear to be engaging in a

struggle aimed at ensuring that the pro-apology position is seen to be representative of Australian society as a whole.

After the apology: Claims regarding representation of the Australian social category. On the day of the apology and the month following, the content of the posts after the apology underwent a subtle but powerful change. There was a trend for posts to reflect a general sense that the pro-apology position had a claim on the national identity.

For example:

Extract (pro-apology): PM Rudd, the government of Australia, all us Aussies and this group should be incredibly proud of today. The speech itself was delivered with great humility and compassion. For the first time in a very long time I am an incredibly proud to be Australian. May it be the start of a new era. Moving forward with a compassionate and uniting Government and a community that has empathy.

Here, the Australian category is constructed as being compassionate in part because the Australian national identity (for this poster) has been transformed by the apology. In a fascinating transformation saying “sorry” (associated with the negative emotion of guilt) is presented as a basis for the positive emotion of pride.

After the apology: Other calls to socio-political action. In the period after the apology, some group members argued that members of the group should undertake “practical” actions to address Indigenous inequality, as opposed to the symbolic action of trying to get the pro-apology position as representative in general public. For example:

Extract (pro-apology): ...terrific to see so much support for the apology but for those who have not yet heard of the Oxfam campaign you may wish to check out www.oxfam.org.au/campaigns/indigenous-health. They have great strategies on how we can do something practical to address Indigenous inequality. We need to do something on top of apologising to stop the injustices going on

After the apology: Doubts about the efficacy of group actions. There was also a degree of dissensus regarding the types of socio-political actions that the pro-apology group sought to foster:

Extract (pro-apology): I just think [that forming a pro-apology Facebook group is] a pathetic way of addressing white guilt...I really believe that this is a lost cause and if you really wanted to ‘apologise’ the least you could do is go and offer social services in one of these indigenous communities and then you can really see the damage we've caused. And if you are involved in something like that, encourage it! Don't just make people feel good about themselves by thinking they've done their part on a Facebook group.

While this poster (ostensibly) supports the apology they highlight serious concerns that membership in the Facebook group will undermine participation in, what the poster constructs as, “real” action such as being involvement in social services. The poster suggests that by making people “feel good”, Facebook groups are problematic in that they might substitute for “real” action. While this could well reflect a legitimate view the post might have been offered by a “concern troll”

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troll_\(Internet\)#Concern_troll](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troll_(Internet)#Concern_troll)).

Socio-political behaviour of the anti-apology group. Despite there being a fundamental shift in the Australian government's position appropriateness of giving an apology to the Stolen Generations after 11 years of staunch opposition at a Federal level, there was no evidence of socially competitive socio-political actions fostered within the anti-apology group to directly challenge the legitimacy of apology (e.g., organising offline protests, signing online petitions). However, some anti-apology group members did adopt social creative actions arguably aimed at maintaining and enhancing their position relative to the pro-apology position by redefining the elements of the comparative context (bearing in mind that the anti-apology group formed *after* the date that the apology was to be made was announced, see Table 5.4). We also found that group members adopted socially creative actions aimed towards Indigenous Australians, which mainly took the form of racist talk. Thus, depending on whether Indigenous Australians or apology supporters were constructed as the "outgroup" within the posts different socio-political strategies were mobilised.

Before and after the apology: Hostility towards the pro-apology position. As anticipated, we found evidence of anti-apology group members redefining and altering the elements of the comparative situation with the pro-apology position. These social creative strategies mainly revolved around constructing in-group members in a more positive light, by positioning themselves as "true" Australians and as "anti-racist".

Before and after the apology, group members worked to construct the anti-apology members as "true" representative Australians. For example, the anti-apology group name "19 million Australians aren't too sorry" explicitly orients to the existence of the pro-apology group "One million Australians feel sorry". The nature of the

intergroup conflict here centres on what position represents “what it means to be Australian”. Bearing in mind that the population of Australia was popularly believed to be 20 million at the time, the anti-apology group name presents the argument that the apology is invalid because it is contrary to the “true” wishes and feelings of the vast majority of the Australian people. Put simply, saying sorry us “un-Australian”. For example:

Extract (anti-apology): freedom of speech is for those brave enough to use it ...we have more than the 260 odd Facebook members on our side. Try most of the Liberal Party, National Party, Family First and other such conservative parties, coincidentally the Police Force has quite a number of supporters as does the Military, we have to realize we're not the Minority in this argument, we're the percentage of the Majority brave enough to voice our opinions... I voted for Rudd and I am ashamed to be Australian now.

Here, the poster challenges the idea that the support for the apology anti-apology opinion as a majority viewpoint within Australian society by arguing that the anti-apology position is embraced by powerful groups in society such as the military, the police and a variety of political parties.

Group members also worked to construct their position regarding the apology as “anti-racist” in comparison to the pro-apology group position. For example:

Extract (anti-apology): Rape, alcohol and chroming!!! if you where white and you did this you would have your children taken from you straight away ...I think you left wing do gooders (but really good for nothing) are the only ones who are arrogant!!!! Face the facts you are racist because your [sic] trying to

make us feel guilty for being born white!!! Well I'm telling YOU, we DON'T feel guilty.

This extract appears to be provoked by the pro-apology's political success. The anti-apology group position has become loaded with the baggage of being racist, and in needing to construct the ingroup more positively the group member attempts to position the pro-apology position racist. This strategy of defining their group as being anti-racist was particularly salient theme in the content of group discussion after the apology was made (see Table 5.4).

Before and after the apology: Hostility towards Indigenous Australians. Some posts on the anti-apology discussion board took the form of explicit racism. For example:

Extract (anti-apology): F@%k the stolen generation, they can go to hell, we're not racist! I dont see colour, all I see is people and 90 percent of aboriginals are not people. They are filthy animals.

Explicitly racist discourse is evident in this extract (even as it is denied), constructing "aboriginals" as "animals" and "not people". It is also worth noting that while group members worked hard to position the anti-apology group as anti-racist (as evidenced by the number of posts employing the rhetoric device "we're not racist but"), when explicitly racist posts did appear on the discussion board were few visible efforts at counter-argument from supporters of the group's position. We argue that this shows an example of social creativity strategy designed to re-define the outgroup in a negative light.

Summary

It is important to bear in mind that few of the posters identified themselves as Indigenous Australians. It follows then that if we understand the heated debate as intergroup conflict then that debate cannot be understood simply as a conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The concept of opinion-based groups seems to be helpful for capturing the fault lines of this conflict and we return to this point in the General Discussion.

It is also evident that the content of the two Facebook groups' online discussion changed in relation to the political environment, as seen in Table 5.4. Members in the two groups also developed and consensualised around arguments that justified the respective group's position about the apology over time (e.g., constructions of the relationship between sorry and responsibility and around Indigenous disadvantage). Interestingly, the types of arguments mobilised to justify the group opinion about the apology are very similar to those found in research on public opinion about the apology conducted nearly 10 years ago (e.g., Augoustinos et al., 2002; LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001), underscoring the validity and vitality of our analyses. As detailed in Table 5.4, before the apology was made to the Stolen Generations discussion in the pro-apology group was largely centred on encouraging members to ensure that the support for the apology was presented in the media and society at large (i.e., what could be defined as a social competitive strategy). After the apology, discussion was focused on claiming the national identity. By contrast, the anti-apology group discussion focused on redefining the intergroup comparison context with the pro-apology position, at the same time as reaffirming and reasserting their position with Indigenous Australians through explicitly overt racism (i.e., what could be defined as socially creative strategies).

General Discussion

Our analysis of groups formed around minority and majority relations in Australian suggests that Facebook is at the interface of two social psychological issues; as a popular 21st Century vehicle for expressing identities formed around shared opinions, and second as location for socio-political action that are linked to profound social changes. The findings from Study 1 demonstrate that groups forming around minority and majority relations in Australia coalesced similar and disparate categories (i.e., ethnocentric and counter-ethnocentric) and that groups in both of these categories often formed in conflict with another. As evidenced in the analysis of group names in Study 1, intergroup conflict was present *between* groups and this is anticipated by social psychological theories of intergroup relations that suggest that real conflicts between groups create both intergroup antagonism and increases identification with the group (e.g., Sherif, 1967; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). The findings from Study 2 demonstrate that there is also intergroup conflict *within* groups and that within intra-group discussion, there was a convergence of members' arguments that justified their groups' position about the apology.

Socio-Political Action and Issues of Identifyability

As anticipated by the social identity perspective (Haslam, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), the presence of social competitive or social creative actions appeared to be a function of changes in the socio-political context. For example, during the period around which the apology to the Stolen Generations was made, pro-apology group members largely engaged in explicitly socially competitive strategies such as rallying members to undertake actions that ensured that the groups' apology position

about the apology was being represented in the (offline) wider context. Although public opinion polls at the time suggested that support for the apology was in the majority in the Australian community (67%, according to Newspoll and the Australian, 2008), a substantial segment of the population was also opposed (26%).

Although it might be argued that the degree of identifiability on Facebook may limit the presence of illegal and other actions punishable by authorities that can be found on fully anonymous sites, it appears that by enabling connection to other people who share the user's views, Facebook groups may help sustain action that reflects relevant social identities. For example, as Haslam (2001) argues, when group members feel that their group is under threat, they may band together to resist change. This appears to be the case in Study 2. Arguably, opposition to the apology represented a threat to the legitimacy of a "national" apology and this fostered a need for pro-apology members to engage in socially competitive strategies to ensure the stability of the pro-apology position. In the months after the apology, however, the content of group discussion shifted to focusing on other issues affecting Indigenous Australians.

For the anti-apology group, because it formed after the Australian Prime Minister announced that he would be giving the apology, much of the group discussion was centred on defending the legitimacy of their opposition. This was mainly in the form of socially creative strategies that redefined the intergroup context by constructing pro-apology supporters as "racist" and "un-Australian". This is in line also with Haslam's (2001) interpretation of SIT, where he suggests that in circumstances where groups are engaging in intergroup conflict but where one group is not resisting change, members are much more likely to engage in social creativity.

Extending on past research, an important question that our research conjures is whether the special features of Facebook groups such as the fact that the acts such as joining a Facebook group and contributing to group content are visible to users' "friends" alter the types of socio-political behaviours that we might ordinarily expect for traditional online groups formed around contentious social issues. The finding that anti-apology group engaged in social creativity by stereotyping people who did subscribe to the group's position about the apology as "racists" and "un-Australian" is consistent with Douglas and McGarty's (2001) analysis of flaming in computer mediated communication. These authors found that communicators stereotyped out-group White supremacist targets more strongly under conditions of identifiability to a like-minded in-group audience than under conditions of anonymity or identifiability to an out-group audience. The finding that anti-apology group members engaged in social creativity is also in line with predictions from SIDE that people communicate strategically depending on their identifiability and their audience (Reicher et al., 1995).

What Type of Groups are Facebook Groups?

An important question that also emerges from our research is what type of groups are Facebook groups? Study 1 found that the Facebook group names were largely formed around single positions about specific issues and that these names reflected a conflict about relations between the ethnic and racial majority and the minorities that could not be reduced to conflicts between specific social categories (e.g., European Australians versus other minorities). Our analysis of the communication between group members in the pro and anti-apology groups in Study 2 revealed a similar finding: people who did not support the group's position about the apology were

constructed as ‘intruders’ to the group. We argue that the intergroup relations of interest relate to a conflict between groups formed around specific opinions (i.e., opinion-based groups).

One important aspect of opinion-based groups is that they are often formed *about* the relations between social categories or groups, or *on behalf* of those social categories or groups (McGarty et al., 2009). It appears that the groups in our research were broadly formed around ideologies about relations between social categories based on ethnicity and race, either supporting the maintaining of the dominance of Anglo-Saxon culture (ethnocentric), or supporting the inclusion of people from a diverse range of cultures (counter-ethnocentric). Thus, the intergroup conflict that we found *between* and *within* the groups was not so much between social categories based on ethnicity or race but between opinion-based groups that have competing views about these social categories and the relationships between them.

Understanding the intergroup conflict present in the current research as opinion-based groups helps us capture the collective nature of Facebook groups more clearly than identities often drawn upon in the social psychological research of collective action, such as politicised collective identities as proposed by Simon and Klandermans (2001) and social movement identities (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Stürmer, Simon, Loewy, & Jorger, 2003). We argue that opinion-based groups are more general than these identities because they can serve to foster collective responses without the members meeting the specific preconditions identified by Simon and Klandermans, such as a shared grievance against and conflict with other groups. The argument proposed by McGarty and colleagues (2009) is that these experiences are important drivers but they

may be sufficient but not necessary for the formation of groups that take socio-political action in emergent political contexts. Indeed, as our findings illustrate intergroup conflict and socio-political action can also be taken by spontaneously formed groups and by groups that are in positions of apparently dominant status in society.

The Role of Facebook in Fostering Socio-Political Action

What conclusions might we draw from the current analyses for the question of the utility of Facebook “group” tool in fostering sustained socio-political action and the development of dynamic social movements? The results from Study 2 suggest that offline “physical” action is a rare outcome of group discussion. In this sense, the act of joining a Facebook group may become a substitute for traditional types of offline action (e.g., protests) that can help to maintain social injustices rather than address them. Having said that, made the abundance of media attention afforded to controversial Facebook groups around the world (e.g., Andersen, 2009; de Beer, 2008; Jamieson, 2009) in pragmatic terms, the act of joining a Facebook group may be a more effective form of protesting because it is far easier to encourage people to join a Facebook group than to take part in offline protests.

Facebook groups may also play a role in the development of socio-political action by helping to build a general awareness about socio-political issues for people who might not be engaged ordinarily. Although it is impossible to know whether people deliberately sought out the groups that they joined or simply joined because someone on their network had done so, the fact that a more mainstream population is accessing Facebook compared to traditional forms of online communities suggests that a broader range of people are being exposed to groups addressing socio-political issues. In this

sense, the mere existence of Facebook groups may offer a new domain from which to build a social movement mobilisation potential for socio-political issues in similar ways that social networking sites have been used to muster support during political electoral campaigns in the US (e.g., Gueorguieva, 2007; Zhang et al., 2009).

Although the groups in our research did not mobilise offline protest marches or rallies, recent world events suggests that Facebook groups are very important for doing this (e.g., the 2009 Iranian elections, Burma monk protests in 2008). Facebook groups and other Web 2.0 technologies such as YouTube might be particularly important in countries under authoritarian systems where there is censored state running media (see Roas, 2008).

Future Research

In mid-2007, the Facebook application "causes" was launched, which focuses on recruiting people to join a cause to support a wide range of social causes (e.g., "Save Darfur"). Unlike Facebook groups, "causes" allow people to make donations via credit card and to recruit members. Future research might seek to explore the social consequences of such groups and, in particular, how effective these "causes" are in encouraging donation and other offline actions. Returning to the Facebook group tool though, when comparing the number of people who had joined the sampled Facebook groups and the number of posts made to the discussion board it is clear that only a minority of group members use that board. This finding parallels a recent survey of US university students that found that of the 40% who joined groups as part of their Facebook activities, over 90% had never contributed to a group discussion board (Pempek et al., 2009). It may be that group members who do not engage in group

discussion are trying to portray a particular construction of their personal identity in the sense anticipated by Pempek et al. (2009) and Zhao et al. (2008). However, the results of Study 2 suggest that communication may become the basis for the development of a salient social identity.

Future research is also needed to explore what form identity formation might take in Facebook groups. We argue that Facebook group membership neatly captures the personal and collective elements that are emphasised in recent social psychological theorising such as Postmes and colleagues' Interactive Model of Identity Formation (IMIF). IMIF suggests that there are two theoretically distinct (but interconnected) pathways to the formation of a sense of shared social identity: the deductive route, where the group identity is deduced from social context within the group members act, and the inductive route, where group identity is developed by members through a process of communication, negotiation, and consensualisation (Postmes, Haslam, & Swaab, 2005; Postmes, Spears, Lee, & Novak, 2005). Facebook group identities might be formed through both inductive and deductive routes. As seen in Study 2, members in both groups frequently constructed those who opposed the group's position about the apology as intruders, and thus members might be deducing aspects of the group's identity from the group name. Similarly, as evidenced in the types of group arguments that were mobilised and consensualised interactively through group discussion to support the groups' opinion about the apology, may reflect more "bottom-up" inductive processes.

The importance of these future research directions is neatly underscored by the current findings. The results show that processes of developing intergroup conflict that

have been shown in offline and online contexts are also present in a massively subscribed Web 2.0 environment. This highlights the generalisability of social psychological theories that have themselves been modernised and extended through the study of computer-mediated communication via social networking sites in socio-political contexts (Bliuc et al., 2007; Musgrove & McGarty, 2008; Postmes, Baray, Haslam, & Morton, 2006; Postmes et al., 2005; Reicher et al., 1995; Spears & Lea, 1992; Thomas & McGarty, 2009; Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009). The results from Study 1 and 2 add to the burgeoning evidence that there is no clear divide between a virtual social environment on the Internet and a real world in other contexts. To echo the arguments of Turner (1981) in another context: they are both part of the same real world.

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CHAPTER 6: CONTEXT STATEMENT

In this chapter, I extend the analysis of majority responses to potential government actions to foster Reconciliation (namely the apology and financial compensation) to two policies that claim to explicitly address Indigenous disadvantage: the “Close the Gap” policy and the “Northern Territory Emergency Response” (NTER). Although many Australians viewed Rudd’s apology and the commitment he made to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians on a range of health and education outcomes as a welcome step towards Reconciliation⁹, there was also heated debate about the government’s continuation of the NTER. Of particular concern was that to implement the NTER, the Racial Discrimination Act was overridden (Celermajer, 2009).

The NTER was first implemented by the former Australian Prime Minister John Howard and Minister for Indigenous Affairs Mal Brough on the 21st June 2007. Their reference point was a report known as the *Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle*, “*The Little Children are Sacred*” report that concluded that the sexual abuse and neglect of children in Indigenous communities had reached crisis levels, demanding that it “be designated as an issue of urgent national significance by both the Australian and Northern Territory governments” (Wild & Anderson, 2007). The measures implemented are widely regarded as the most invasive of governmental intervention into Indigenous affairs in the last forty years (Anderson, 2007; Hinkson, 2007). For example, the NTER

⁹ Although the “Close the Gap” policy is widely supported, it has been criticised as undermining Indigenous self-determination (Kowal, 2008)

legislations (including the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007) enabled the government greater control over Indigenous communities. These measures included the controlling of goods and services in Indigenous communities such as alcohol, pornographic material, gambling and tobacco; controlling the way all Indigenous people living in prescribed townships in the Northern Territory can spend their welfare payments; making income support and family assistance welfare contingent on school attendance; compulsory health checks for all Aboriginal children, and the Commonwealth takeover of Aboriginal land on five-year leases. Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) for unemployed Indigenous people, were also abolished. To facilitate in the implementation of such measures, additional police, as well as the Australian army were mobilised.

While the NTER as a whole was welcomed in the general community, aspects were strongly criticised both from within and outside of Indigenous communities and there were serious concerns that the governing principles of the NTER were perceived to be both paternalistic and controlling. In particular, there was a sense that the control-based measures would not address issues that are thought to be risk factors into child abuse and neglect, including community safety, the breakdown of the family, poverty, and the lack of access to essential services including housing, health care, and education (Anderson, 2007).

Intriguingly, seemingly quieter concerns were raised about the NTER by many of the non-Indigenous Australian social movement, community and non-government organisations. Indeed, political commentators have argued that the Federal Government's use of wedge politics in constructing those who voiced that the NTER

should be stopped as condoning child abuse had compromised organisations from making an explicit and clear cut stand against the NTER (e.g., Behrendt, 2008).

The contentious and highly politicised nature of the NTER provides a fertile context in which to explore the social psychology of collective action and in particular, to explore the factors that might compromise the formation of action-orientated identities. Extending upon the variables in van Zomeren et al.'s SIMCA, I explore whether perceptions of such as the perceived level of social consensus for the goals of a social movement in the wider community compromises or undermines the likelihood of the social identity promoting the level of engagement necessary to promote social change. As a point of comparison, I consider the "Close the Gap" policy initiative which has received a clear articulation of support across political, social movement and public spheres.

Specifically, I explore support and opposition for the "Close the Gap" and NTER policies are compared for two samples: members of the general community and activists affiliated with the organisation Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR). ANTaR is the main non-Indigenous Australian social movement organisation that is dedicated to the rights and overcoming the disadvantage of Indigenous Australia. According to ANTaR's website, its core aims include:

changing the attitudes and behaviours of non-Indigenous Australians so that the rights and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are respected and affirmed across all sections of society... and (generating) moral and legal recognition of, and respect for, the distinctive status of Indigenous Australians as First Peoples (through) advocacy and lobbying, to show genuine leadership and

build cross-party commitment to Indigenous policy (see http://www.antar.org.au/who_we_are)

ANTaR's official position on the NTER states that it should be continued but with serious improvements need to be made, particularly with regards to the government's suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act (see http://www.antar.org.au/issues_and_campaigns/nt_intervention).

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CHAPTER 6:
CHALLENGES TO INTERGROUP INEQUALITY: CONTRASTING PATHWAYS
TO COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR SYMPATHISERS AND ACTIVISTS

Abstract

This study compares collective action predictors for sympathisers ($N = 295$) and activists ($N = 243$) regarding two policies addressing Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian inequality (economic development versus intervention). Consensus about these policies within the samples' social context is measured. Group-based emotion, social identity and efficacy predicted action but in differing ways. For sympathisers and activists, social identification was a good predictor of action for economic development but not for action to stop or reform intervention. Anger about Indigenous inequality contributed additional independent predictive power for economic development for sympathisers, but efficacy did for activists. For intervention, a blend of emotion, efficacy and attitudinal variables were predictors. The role of perceived consensus in these differing collective action pathways is discussed.

Systemic inequalities between minorities and majorities occur in many societies. In Australia, for example, the Indigenous minority experience higher rates of incarceration, mortality, disease and disability, and unemployment and lower rates of education compared to the non-Indigenous majority (see FaHCSIA, 2009). Understanding the factors that fosters action that challenges intergroup inequality has attracted much recent attention in social psychology (see van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Wright, 2001 for reviews). This work has primarily focused on action by disadvantaged groups but in recent times has also included the role of advantaged groups and groups that include both advantaged and disadvantaged group members. This diversity in the literature raises the question of whether the same factors predict action for sympathisers of a cause compared to activists who are already committed to achieving social change. Understanding what transforms sympathisers into activists and how activists are influenced to take sustained action are important aspects of social change.

In this regard, the work of Klandermans, Simon and colleagues offer useful theoretical frameworks to distinguish between sympathisers and activists. Klandermans (1997), for example, argues that social movement mobilisation involves four phases: (a) becoming sympathetic to a cause; (b) becoming a target for mobilisation attempts; (c) becoming motivated to participate; and (d) overcoming barriers to participation (see also Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Similarly, Simon and Klandermans' (2001) propose that the concept of a politicised collective identity (PCI) helps explain *how* specific politicised or “activist” identities are developed at these later stages of social movement mobilisation, which they propose develops through a process of group members

engaging in a political struggle for power in the wider public domain. Although these frameworks suggest different social psychological processes for those at the incipient stages of action compared to in the final stages, little empirical research has explicitly explored this issue.

Critically important here is that both activists and sympathisers contemplate action (or inaction) in the specific social context that they face. According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the action that people take in response to a social structure depends upon their belief systems about the relevant intergroup context (Ellemers, 1993; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1982). For example, it is proposed that group members are most likely to band together and take action when they perceive a group-based disadvantage, where the boundaries are permeable, and the advantage is both unstable and illegitimate (Ellemers, 1993). Although these beliefs about social structure have been shown to be very important in some contexts (e.g., Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999; Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel, & Blanz, 1999), in recent years scholars have highlighted the need to conceptualise more broadly the impact that social context has on collective action processes (e.g., Klandermans, 2007; Reicher, 2004; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2007; van Stekelenburg, Klandermans, & van Dijk, 2009; Wright, 2009).

Building on work from many different traditions, there is evidence to suggest that the degree to which there is perceived to be a relevant consensus about a particular course of action should be important for determining collective action. Indeed, insights from sociology (e.g., role theory, see Ebaugh, 1998), political sciences (e.g., public opinion theory, see Wilson, 1962), and social psychology (e.g., system justification

theory, see Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003; social representation theory. see Moscovici, 1988) all point to the role of consensus at the broader societal level in shaping individual and social behaviour. Other perspectives from social and organisational psychology (e.g., groupthink, see Janis, 1972; false consensus effect, see Ross, Greene, & House, 1977) converge on the point that consensus processes within organisations or movements are important in determining collective behaviour (just as Sani & Reicher, 1998, show that intractable dissensus can lead to group schisms). Similarly, in a recent social psychological model of social action, van Zomeren et al. (2004) proposed that people take action when they feel that relevant others share their opinion (perceived opinion support) and/or that relevant others are prepared to act in the same way (perceived social action support). The common thread across this literature is that the degree of consensus within a given relevant social context (whether it be “real” or perceived) has potential implications for whether or not someone is likely to engage in group-based actions.

Building on these perspectives, we argue that the level of perceived consensus that a particular position has in a specific target community (that might be for activists the organisation they belong to, but for then and others a nation or, even for some issues, a real or imagined transnational community such as Internet users, scientists, or women). In the current study, we compare the predictors of action about two government policies designed to address Indigenous- non-Indigenous intergroup inequality for members of the general public (i.e., sympathisers) and activists. We now offer a brief review of these two policies.

Policies Addressing Intergroup Inequality: The Australian Context

The Australian Federal Government has recently implemented two policies to address inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The first involves assisting the economic development of Indigenous communities through engagements between governments and Indigenous communities and organisations, with the assistance of non-government organisations. This approach has been termed “Close the Gap” and is a commitment to achieve equality in health status and life expectancy by the year 2030 (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), 2008). This commitment was implemented as official government policy largely as a result of a concerted public awareness campaign, led by a grassroots movement of a number of non-government organisations including Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR). “Close the Gap” has enjoyed a clear articulation between governments and Indigenous and non-government organisations, and is supported by the clear majority of Australians (70% according to a survey conducted for Amnesty International, 2009, though it is worth noting that polls by major organisations have never conducted).

In contrast, the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) is an interventionist policy that was introduced in June 2007 with the support of the (then opposition) Liberal Party and has been retained with some modifications by the Labor government when Labor took office after the November 2007 federal election. The NTER was triggered by a report indicating high rates of sexual abuse and neglect of children in Indigenous communities in Australia’s Northern Territory (see Wild & Anderson, 2007), and the measures implemented included an income management regime, imposition of compulsory leases, and community-wide bans on alcohol

consumption and pornography. This initiative has been criticised as being discriminatory, coercive and paternalistic by the United Nations (see Anaya, 2009), within Indigenous communities and other non-government organisations, and has been bitterly contested: with some activists supporting the continuation and reform of the NTER, while others calling for its immediate abolition (see Gibson, 2007). Opinion polls conducted at the time of its implementation highlight the inherent contention, with 61% supporting the intervention, 23% disapproving, and 16% being undecided (Newspoll and The Australian, 2007).

Clearly, the “Close the Gap” and NTER policies differ in a number of important ways. For our purposes, however, they provide a stark contrast. The Close the Gap program is an initiative developed and championed by the Reconciliation movement. We would expect active members of the organisations that spawned this proposal to strongly endorse the proposal and to see this endorsement as normative for their group. On the other hand, the NTER is problematic for these same organisations. Although it was opposed at the time of its introduction by Reconciliation organisations and has received trenchant international criticism, the official position of many of these organisations is to reform rather than to stop the NTER.

The situation is less clear for the general public. We would expect a higher degree of consensus to be perceived in relation to Close the Gap than the NTER, but in the absence of relevant polling data we are forced to be more speculative.

Social Psychological Approaches to Collective Action

Social psychology has a wealth of knowledge about the factors that motivate people to engage in collective action (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Stürmer, Simon,

Loewy, & Jorger, 2003; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). Most recently, van Zomeren et al. (2008) conducted an integrative meta-analysis of collective action research that yielded the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA). This model points to three psychological constructs that contribute to predicting collective action: social identity, injustice and group-based emotions, and instrumental concerns (efficacy). While SIMCA suggests that social identity and in particular, politicised identities are central in the appraisal of group-based injustice, emotion and efficacy beliefs, whether they are more important for activists compared to sympathisers is not clear. With this in mind, we consider each of these constructs in turn.

Social Identification

According to self-categorization theory, when group identity becomes salient, individuals define and see themselves less as differing individual persons and more as interchangeable representatives of that group (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). A salient group identity should therefore foster individuals to attend to group-level concerns, which renders collective action more likely. In line with this, evidence suggests that particular types of group identification predict collective action. In particular, politicised identities (e.g., identification with a social movement — SM or social movement organisation — SMO) have been found to be better predictors of action than broader identities based on sociological categories (e.g., identification with a disadvantaged group such as male, female, black or white or a national category, see, de Weerd & Klandermans, 1999; Klandermans, 2000; Klandermans, 2002; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Simon et al., 1998; Stürmer & Simon, 2004).

Politicised identities form where groups gradually become aware of their shared grievances, identify an opponent who is to blame for the situation, and participate in the ongoing power struggle (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Similarly, both Reicher (1996) and Stürmer and Simon (2004) have suggested that collective action participation itself may encourage the development of a politicised identity. In part, these identities are believed to be better predictors of action because they have clearer norms for action compared to broader sociological groups (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

However, social movements can also be internally subdivided on the most effective and appropriate way of taking action. For example, the question of whether the NTER should be stopped is contentious within Indigenous communities and in relevant SMOs. Previous research has found that intra-group disagreements that are seen as essential aspects of a group's norms, values, or behaviours, can create group schisms resulting in fragmentation or dissolution of a social movement (Reicher & Sani, 1998). While we agree that much collective action is captured by politicised collective identities, if a particular position about policy is not supported by a social movement or organisation, then identification with this category should be a poor predictor of action. Similarly, participation in established social movements and SMOs only captures a tiny proportion of the population and thus questions remain as to what group memberships would be useful for capturing the broad ideological positions held by members of the general community.

For these purposes, groups formed around shared opinions (opinion-based groups) might be particularly useful (see also Wright, 2009). Opinion-based groups are

social identities in the sense suggested by the social identity approach but are bound only by a shared opinion (and not any other sociological category or organisational identity, Bliuc, McGarty, Reynolds, & Muntele 2007; McGarty, et al., 2009). There is growing evidence that suggests that opinion-based group identification is a good predictor of commitment to action (Bliuc et al., 2007; Cameron & Nickerson, 2009; McGarty et al., 2009; Musgrove & McGarty, 2008) and can come to be associated with very clear norms for action (Thomas & McGarty, 2009). As argued by McGarty et al. (2009), opinion-based groups may be useful to explain how it is that people come to identify with social movements or as an activist in the first place.

Perceptions of Disadvantage and Group-Based Emotion

Research has shown that people are more likely to take collective action if they perceive injustice and feel a sense of group-based emotion in relation to this injustice (Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007; Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006; van Zomeren et al., 2004; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003). If, for example, Indigenous Australians are perceived as structurally disadvantaged compared to non-Indigenous Australians, then this should be related to support for policies that aim to ameliorate or at least make restitution for that inequality (e.g., Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2007; McGarty et al., 2005, Study 1).

Focusing on group-based emotions has also been shown to be a useful way of differentiating and predicting different collective action strategies (e.g., Iyer et al., 2007). In the meta-analytic test of their SIMCA model, van Zomeren et al. (2008) found that emotional reactions to injustice are better predictors of action than cognitive reactions. When it comes to specific emotional reactions, two appear most relevant in

the context of Indigenous Australian inequality: group-based guilt and anger. Group-based guilt has been central to the debate about the appropriateness of an apology to the Stolen Generations (Augoustinos, Lecouteur, & Soyland, 2002; Halloran, 2007; LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001; McGarty et al., 2005). This emotion is purported to arise from the awareness that one's ingroup is responsible for the predicament of a disadvantaged outgroup. There is evidence to suggest feeling group-based guilt predicts an advantaged group member's support for restitution (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003) and action about outgroup mistreatment (Mallet, Huntsinger, Sinclair, & Swim, 2008). However, other research suggests that group-based guilt does not predict willingness to engage in action that aims to challenge inequality (e.g., Iyer et al., 2007; Leach et al., 2006). Recent research also suggests that anger is particularly useful for predicting support for engaging in action regarding non-Indigenous relative advantage (e.g., Leach et al., 2006; Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2007; Mackie & Smith, 2000). However, other research suggests that anger does not produce sustained commitment to action for people who are already participants in a social movement (Stürmer & Simon, 2009).

Efficacy and Instrumental Factors.

Recent work also re-emphasises the importance of instrumental, practical issues confronting potential supporters of social change (see van Zomeren et al., 2004). When choosing to engage in action, it is hypothesised that people weigh up the potential costs and benefits and other practical concerns that can influence participation (Klandermans, 1997). van Zomeren and colleagues argue that the construct of group efficacy captures this instrumental aspect of collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2004; van Zomeren,

Spears, & Leach, 2008). Group efficacy is the belief that the group's actions will be effective in achieving desired goals and has been shown to be useful in predicting collective action in a range of contexts (e.g., Cocking & Drury, 2004; Drury & Reicher, 1999, 2005; Hornsey et al., 2006; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; van Zomeren et al., 2004). However, there are some caveats (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2004). To explain this inconsistency in the literature, Hornsey et al. (2006) argue that group members do not necessarily always undertake action to achieve the stated aim of their group but other aims (e.g., to solidify connections within the group and mobilise support from other areas of society) and that traditional measures of efficacy do not tap into this.

Research Overview

In the present research we explore people's willingness to take action about two government policies designed to address inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (economic development versus paternalistic intervention). First, we compare and contrast the predictors of action for members of the general community (i.e., sympathisers) and activists involved in promoting Reconciliation between the Indigenous minority and the non-Indigenous majority. Second, we consider the implications of aspects of the social context on action intentions by measuring the level of perceived consensus that a particular position about the government policies has within in a specific target community (i.e., sympathisers versus activists)

Building on recent research that highlights the role of factors such as social identity, perceived injustice and group-based emotions, and instrumental concerns in collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2008), we explore whether these factors differentially predict action for sympathisers and activists about the two policies. In

particular, we ask to what degree social identities based on opinion-based groups, social movements and the national categories are applicable in the general community and activist samples, and also the degree to which identification with a SMO adds value to understanding the activist sample.

We make three broad predictions. First, we predict that identification with the Reconciliation social movement or a relevant SMO will be a good predictor of willingness to take action reflecting one's position about government policy for activists and opinion-based group identification will be a good predictor for sympathisers. However, we also expect that this relationship will vary depending on the level of perceived consensus about the specific policy initiative within the relevant social context. Our second hypothesis is thus that, for a policy initiative that has low levels of consensus within the social movement (a condition we expect for NTER), social movement and SMO identification will be poor predictors of action. Third, for the general community, we expect the same relationship between opinion-based group identity and action intentions for a low consensus and high consensus issue.

Method

Overview

We purposively sampled two different populations to create two samples of convenience: one comprised of general community members and one comprised of activists. As we were interested in the different predictors of actions for these two groups, the means are analysed separately. Importantly, we were not seeking to construct a representative sample of the Australian population or even of the SMO, rather as with the vast majority of empirical psychological research, we are seeking to

test the strength of hypothesised relationships in a sample and to generalise on the basis of that relationship (see Haslam & McGarty, 2003).

Participants

General community. Two hundred and ninety five people (160 female, 130 male, and 5 did not indicate their gender) filled out the online survey. Within this dataset, 220 individuals were recruited through a survey sampling company and 75 were recruited from a university online participant database of members of the general community. Participants were aged between 18 and 75 years ($M = 42$ years) and their educational background was varied (35% had either not completed or completed secondary school, 16% had completed vocational training, and the remaining had completed an undergraduate diploma or above). Every Australian state and territory was represented in the sample and over 78% were born in Australia; 56% of these people identified as having an Anglo-Australian heritage and 1% having an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. Political party support was tilted towards the left of centre, with 16% supporting the Australian Greens, 32% supporting the centre-left Australian Labor Party, and 14% supporting the centre-right Australian Liberal Party.

Activists. Two hundred and forty eight people (187 female, 57 male, and four did not indicate their gender) filled out the online survey. Participants who indicated that they had not spent any time in any social movement (SM) or SMO activities in the past were excluded from the analyses. On average, participants spent 5.3 hours per month in SM activities and 6.4 hours per month in SMO activities suggesting that, on average, the sample are highly active

The activist sample was aged between 20 and 83 years ($M = 48$ years), and was highly educated with over 80% having completed a bachelor degree or above. The sample was drawn from every Australian state and territory. Over 80% were born in Australia, with 70% of these people self-identified as having an Anglo-Australian heritage and 4% as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. Overall, participants supported left-wing orientated political parties, with 50% supporting the Australian Greens Party and 27% supporting the Labor Party.

Procedure

General community. The data for the general community sample were collected from two online databases, one a database managed by a university (25%) and the other a commercial survey sampling company (75%). Participants in both of these databases are offered prizes for filling out the surveys on its system. The first page of the online survey introduced the study as a survey on opinions about issues affecting Indigenous Australians and the factors that influence people to take action, or not, about these issues. The survey company sent out 1891 invitations to people on their system, yielding a response rate of 11% while the university managed database yielded a response rate of 15%. There were no significant differences between the samples on any of the relevant constructs, so the datasets were combined and treated as one.

Activists. The data for the activist sample were people on the email list of Australia's largest non-Indigenous organisation in the Reconciliation movement: Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR). An advertisement was included in a monthly email newsletter that invited people to fill out the survey by clicking on a web link (see Appendix F for example of the advertisement). The

advertisement introduced the study as a survey on the factors that motivate people to take action about issues affecting Indigenous Australians. To increase the participation rate, participants were offered a chance to go in the draw for either a digital camera or an MP3 player. We chose to collaborate with a SMO for practical and theoretical reasons. First, it afforded the research team the legitimacy to explore the contentious issues contained in the survey. Second, it increased the likelihood that the email recipients were part of the mobilisation potential of the Reconciliation movement and regularly a target of specific mobilisation attempts. Overall, 248 activists filled out the questionnaire. Considering the advertisement reached approximately 5000 people, this is a very healthy response rate and is probably in part due to the contentious and topical content of the survey¹⁰

The Surveys

All of the measures used in the surveys had good internal consistency (see Appendix G for the activist version of the questionnaire and see Appendix H for the general community version). For ease of comparison, we outline the measures that were common to both surveys and then those that were different. The social identity measures comprised of five modified items from Leach et al. (2008): ‘I feel a bond with other [people of the group]’; ‘I am glad to be a [member of the group]’; ‘I often think about the fact that I am a [member of the group]’; ‘I have a lot in common with the average supporter [member of the group]’; and ‘People who are a [member of the group] are very similar to each other’ (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Collective

¹⁰ Research on online “click-through” rates (the total number of people who click through on web-based advertisements divided by the exposure population reach of the advertisement) suggests the average rate is 0.9% (e.g., Chandon, Chtourou, & Fortin, 2003). Our research yielded a click-through rate of approximately 5%.

action intentions was measured by asking participants to rate the likelihood of engaging in the following actions: ‘challenge other people’s views that are oppose my own’; ‘sign an online petition’; ‘put up a poster’; ‘join a protest march’; and ‘write a letter to or meet with a politician’ (1= very unlikely and 7= very likely). Because we are comparing multiple groups we needed a measure of efficacy that was not affiliated with a particular social identity. We therefore measured the perceived efficacy of different goals using four modified items from Hornsey et al. (2006): ‘Influencing government leaders and policy makers’; ‘Influencing public opinion’; ‘Helping to build a movement that supports your position on this issue’; ‘Expressing values that you hold’ (1 = not at all effective and 7 = very effective)¹¹. There were no differences in the predictive value of each of these items separately and thus were combined to form one single efficacy scale.

Measures Common to both Surveys

Perceived advantage/disadvantage. A single item asked participants whether they perceived non-Indigenous Australians as advantaged relative to Indigenous Australians: ‘In your opinion, which group of Australians is more advantaged; non-Indigenous Australians or Indigenous Australians’ (1 = Indigenous advantaged and 7 = non-Indigenous Australians advantaged).

Group-based guilt and anger. Emotions were assessed by asking how they felt about the answer that they gave to the perceived advantage/disadvantage item. A list of emotion terms that were taken from Leach et al. (2006) where participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt each emotion (0 = not at all and 5 = extremely).

¹¹ Therefore, the measurement of efficacy we use here diverges from “group “or “collective efficacy” according the way it is traditionally defined (i.e., belief that it is possible to achieve group goals through joint effort) (see Bandura , 1995, 1997; Mummendey et al., 199; van Zomeren et al., 2004),

Three items assessed group-based guilt: guilty, regretful, and remorseful; and anger: angry, outraged, and furious.

Opinion strength: “Close the Gap” and NTER. Participants were asked to indicate how strongly they felt that ‘Action be taken to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in health, employment, education and other outcomes’ and ‘The Northern Territory Emergency Response (also known as the Northern Territory Intervention) be stopped’; (1 = not strongly at all and 7 = very strongly).

Perceived consensus: “Close the Gap” and NTER. For the general community survey, participants were asked to indicate their perceived level of consensus within the Australian community for their position on “Close the Gap” (support, oppose or neither) and the NTER (stop, reform, or neither). For the activist survey, participants were asked to indicate their perceived level of consensus within the Reconciliation movement and the SMO for each of these two issues (1 = no consensus; and 7 = complete consensus).

“Close the Gap” position. Participants were asked to indicate whether they support or oppose action to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in health, employment, education, and other outcomes (1 = I support action to “Close the Gap”; 2 = I oppose action to “Close the Gap”; and 3 = I do not take either of these positions).

NTER position. Participants were asked to indicate whether they think that there should be an immediate suspension of the Northern Territory Emergency Response or whether it should be continued, with improvements where necessary (1 = I think the Northern Territory Emergency Response should be stopped so its objectives can be

achieve by other means; 2 = I think the Northern Territory Emergency Response should be continued, with improvements where necessary; 3 = I do not take either of these positions). These positions are referred to as Stop NTER and Reform NTER below.

“Close the Gap” and NTER social identification. Social identification with the respective opinion-based group was measured using five items (e.g., ‘I feel a bond with other supporters [opponents] of action to “Close the Gap” and ‘I feel a bond with other supporters of stopping the NTER [continuing the NTER, with improvements where necessary]).

“Close the Gap” and NTER collective action intentions. Participants’ intentions to engage in actions to support their opinion about efforts to “Close the Gap” and their opinion about the NTER were measured by five items (e.g., ‘challenge other people’s views that are opposed to my own’).

“Close the Gap” and NTER efficacy. The perceived level of group efficacy around undertaking such collective action in line with their opinion about “Close the Gap” and the NTER was measured by four items.

Socio-demographics. Participants were asked to state their age; gender (1 = male, 2 = female, 3 = other/do not wish to disclose); education level (1 = did not complete secondary school, 2 = completed secondary school; 3 = vocational training, 4 = undergraduate diploma, 5 = bachelor degree, 6 = higher degree; 7 = do not wish to disclose); Australian state or territory of residence; country of birth; Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage (1 = yes; 2 = no); heritage other than Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (open ended); Federal political party support (1 = Australian Democrats, 2 = Australian Greens Party, 3 = Australian Labor Party, 4 = Christian Democratic

Party, 5 = Family First, 6 = Liberal/National, 7 = other; 8 = varies; 9 = do not wish to disclose); political party support importance (1 = not important at all, 7 = very important).

Measures Specific to the General Community Survey

Reconciliation position. We assumed that activists would generally support efforts to foster Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and therefore only the general community sample were asked whether they support or oppose actions to foster Reconciliation (1 = support; 2 = oppose; and 3 = neither of these positions). Participants who indicated that they supported or opposed such efforts were directed to a page that asked questions about their identification with people who support [oppose] efforts to foster Reconciliation (e.g., People who support [oppose] efforts to foster Reconciliation share a sense of identity'), past action regarding their position about Reconciliation, collective action intentions about their position about Reconciliation, and perceived efficacy of undertaking such actions.

Measures Specific to the Activist Survey

SM identification. Participants were asked the extent to which they identified with the Reconciliation movement by responding to 5 items (e.g., 'I feel a bond with other members of the Reconciliation movement').

SMO identification. Participants were asked the degree to which they identified with the SMO (e.g., 'I feel a bond with other members of the social movement organisation').

SM and SMO activity. Participants were asked to record how many hours per month they spend participating in activities in line with the Reconciliation movement and, participants who indicated that they were affiliated with a SMO were also asked to

record how many hours per month they spend participating in activities related to the organisation.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Past collective action participation. The collective action activity level of activists compared to self-identified supporters of Reconciliation in the general community (i.e., sympathisers) is presented in Table 6.1. The vast majority of activists had participated in the range of socio-political actions; including actions such as participating in a protest march and contacting or meeting with a politician, indicating that the activist sample was more active overall than the sympathiser sample.

Table 6.1

Past Collective Actions of Activists and the General Community

	Activists ^a %	General community ^b %
Past collective actions		
Challenged alternative opinion	98	41
Petition (online)	96	20
Poster	50	4
Protest march	68	7
Contacted or met with politician	69	8

^a*n* = 248, ^b*n* = 180

Policy initiative positions. While it was assumed that all activists would support efforts to foster Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, the majority of people in the general community sample also supported such efforts (61%, with 6% opposed Reconciliation and 33% choosing neither position). There was broad support for efforts to “Close the Gap” in the activist sample (98%, while 2% chose

neither position) and the majority of people in the general community sample also supported such efforts (67%, with 6% opposed and 27% chose neither position).

There was much more division about the NTER. The majority of the activist sample supported efforts to stop the NTER (57%), while 23% wanted to reform the NTER and 20% chose neither position. For the general community, only 15% wanted to stop the NTER, while 36% supported efforts to reform the NTER and 50% chose neither position. Note, for the activists there were no significant differences between SMO affiliation and positions about the NTER, $F(1, 217) = 1.247, p = .284$, or “Close the Gap”, $F(1, 240) = .924, p = .479$.

Correlations between measured variables. The intercorrelations between measured variables for the activist and the general community samples for the different policy approaches are presented in Tables 6.2 to 6.5

On the basis of these data we can conclude that the situation was qualified for the activist sample in precisely the way we expected. There was much less division about the Close the Gap program than the NTER. The data also suggest that these differences were rather less stark for the general community sample. The next question is whether this division was also reflected in the level of perceived consensus and in other variables.

Table 6.2

Correlations for Measured Variables Supporters of “Close the Gap” in the Activist Sample

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1. Opinion-based group identity	-										
2. Collective action	.17**	-									
3. Group efficacy	.01	.26**	-								
4. SM identity	.23**	.26**	.15*	-							
5. SMO identity	.28**	.10	.11	.55**	-						
6. Guilt	.10	.14*	.20**	.09	.05	-					
7. Anger	.14*	.27**	.19**	.25**	.31**	.35**	-				
8. Perceived advantage/disadvantage	-.09	.14*	.03	.05	.06	.04	.14*	-			
9. Opinion strength	.04	.16*	.17**	.02	.04	.01	.20**	-.03	-		
10. SM consensus	-.01	.26*	.18**	.15	-.02	.02	.14*	.09	.43**	-	
11. SMO consensus	-.03	.10	.17*	-.04	.09	-.14*	.11	.12	.36**	.60**	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 6.3

Correlations for Measured Variables Supporters of “Close the Gap” in the General Community Sample

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Opinion-based group identity	-								
2. Collective action	.40**	-							
3. Group efficacy	.21**	.20**	-						
4. Guilt	.32**	.36**	.24**	-					
5. Anger	.24**	.33**	.15*	.52**	-				
6. Perceived advantage/disadvantage	.16*	.35**	.18*	.44**	.20**	-			
7. Opinion strength	.29**	.02	.24**	.30**	.18**	.38**	-		
8. Australian consensus	.09	-.06	.20**	-.05	-.50	-.01	.23**	-	
9. National identity	.14*	.02	-.01	-.12	-.20**	-.08	-.09	.10	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 6.4

Correlations for Measured Variables for Supporters of Stop NTER (above the diagonal) and Reform NTER (below the diagonal) in the Activist Sample

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1. Opinion-based group identity	-	.02	.11	.34**	.45**	-.08	.18*	.07	.03	.08	-.02
2. Collective action	.29*	-	.15	.18*	.10	-.01	.28**	.05	.34**	.18*	.22*
3. Group efficacy	.15	.64**	-	.17	.10	.04	.22*	.00	.14	.33**	.31**
4. SM identity	-.03	-.09	-.02	-	.62**	.06	.17	.08	.10	.28**	.14
5. SMO identity	-.01	-.03	-.09	.31*	-	-.02	.25**	.07	.05	.14	.07
6. Guilt	.22	.16	.11	.03	.09	-	.31**	-.00	.18*	.01	-.08
7. Anger	.13	.02	.14	.15	.29*	.56**	-	.20*	.16	.07	.05
8. Perceived advantage/disadvantage	.21	.04	.05	.05	.19	.18	.09	-	-.00	.08	.08
9. Opinion strength	.39**	.23	.05	-.05	-.14	.22.	.17	-.02	-	.26**	.20
10. SM consensus	.26*	.28*	.20	.25	-.12	-.16	.13	-.04	.56**	-	.48**
11. SMO consensus	.14	.19	.14	.18	-.10	-.01	.07	-.18	.62**	.70	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 6.5

Correlations for Measured Variables for Supporters of Stop NTER (above the diagonal) and Reform NTER (below the diagonal) in the General Community Sample

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Opinion-based group identity	-	.33*	.41**	.24	.14	.51**	.10	.10	.08
2. Collective action	0.5	-	.47**	.54**	.38*	-.17	.08	.03	.03
3. Group efficacy	.08	.49**	-	.17	.06	.15	.10	.13	.16
4. Guilt	-.09	.22*	.15	-	.49**	-.09	.46**	.16	-.09
5. Anger	-.09	.24*	.04	.36**	-	-.23	.24	-.15	-.13
6. National identity	.07	-.01	-.04	-.10	.03	-	-.10	.22	.28
7. Perceived advantage/disadvantage	-.05	.23*	.13	.46**	.10	-.03	-	.11	-.15
8. Opinion strength	-.18	-.02	.21*	.12	.03	-.05	.07	-	.23
9. Australian consensus	-.12	.14	.14	.15	.10	-.10	.22*	.31**	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Mean differences in perceived consensus. Activists who were supporters of “Close the Gap” perceived there to be a high degree of consensus about their position in the SM ($M = 6.16, SD = 1.2$) and SMO ($M = 6.17, SD = 1.2$). By contrast, there was a degree of dissensus about the different NTER policy positions within the SM and SMOs. Supporters of Stop NTER perceived there to be significantly more consensus about their position within the SM ($M = 4.95, SD = 1.4$) compared to those who supported reform ($M = 3.22, SD = 1.6$). Similar patterns were revealed for perceived consensus within the SMO, with supporters of Stop NTER perceiving there to be significantly more consensus with the SMO for the Stop NTER position ($M = 5.52, SD = 1.4$) compared to those in reform position ($M = 4.01, SD = 1.9$). In sum, the Pro-“Close the Gap” position was perceived to be unquestionably supported by members of the SM and SMO while the Stop NTER position was the most dominant position, there was still dissensus.

General community supporters of “Close the Gap” perceived there to be significantly more consensus about their position within the Australian community ($M = 4.58, SD = 1.9$) compared to opponents of “Close the Gap” ($M = 3.83, SD = 2.3$). Supporters of Stop NTER perceived there to be significantly less consensus about their position within the Australian community ($M = 3.62, SD = 1.6$) compared to those who supported reform ($M = 4.19, SD = 2.4$). In sum, although the Pro-“Close the Gap” position and the Reform NTER position were perceived to be the more prevalent in the general community there was not perceived to be unanimity on these issues.

Mean differences across issues, samples and positions. Tables 6.6 and 6.7 shows the mean responses of activists and general community supporters. Although it is

unwise to seek to generalise these mean levels to the populations the samples are drawn from the data do provide a context for the correlational analyses we report below.

Reassuringly the activists differed from the general community sub-samples in the expected ways.

For “Close the Gap”, there was no difference between the level of SMO identity ($M = 5.16$, $SD = 0.9$) and SM identity ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 1.0$). For activists, there was no difference between the two NTER positions and SMO identity (Stop NTER, $M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.2$; Reform NTER, $M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.4$) and SM identity (Stop NTER, $M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.2$; Reform NTER, $M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.4$).

Table 6.6

Means and Standard Deviations of Measured Variables for the “Close the Gap” Positions for Activists and General Community Samples

Variable	Activists	General community	
	Pro-CTG ($n = 244$)	Pro-CTG ($n = 200$)	Anti-CTG ($n = 18$)
Anger	3.6(1.10)	2.5(1.18)	3.6(1.91)*
Guilt	3.3(1.02)	2.2(1.17)	1.6(1.14)*
Collective Action	5.8(1.62)	3.6(1.46)	3.1(1.75)
Efficacy	5.5(1.13)	3.9(1.43)	2.6(1.06)
Perceived advantage/disadvantage	6.3(1.52)	4.7(1.91)	3.3(2.77)*
Identity	4.8(1.14)	4.2(1.01)	3.40(0.86)
Depersonalization	4.7(1.63)	3.9(0.52)	3.4(0.85)
Opinion strength	6.9(0.56)	5.6(1.42)	3.3(2.03)*
Australian identity	4.4(0.94)	4.9(1.34)	5.7(1.32)*

Note. No activists opposed efforts to “Close the Gap” (i.e., Anti-CTG)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 6.7

Means and Standard Deviations of Measured Variables for the NTER Policy Positions for Activists and General Community Samples

Variable	Activists		General community	
	Stop NTER (<i>n</i> = 140)	Reform NTER (<i>n</i> = 54)	Stop NTER (<i>n</i> = 43)	Reform NTER (<i>n</i> = 104)
Anger	3.8(1.04)	3.2(1.28)*	2.9(1.56)	2.5(1.26)*
Guilt	3.4(1.35)	3.2(1.08)	2.3(1.17)	2.0(1.16)
Collective Action	5.7(1.26)	4.4(1.47)	4.1(1.25)	3.3(1.83)
Efficacy	4.8(1.27)	4.3(1.46)	3.8(1.58)	3.5(1.43)
Perceived advantage/disadvantage	6.4(1.54)	6.4(1.23)	5.0(1.93)	4.0(1.94)**
Identity	4.7(1.22)	4.1(1.03)	4.0(1.32)	4.1(1.02)
Depersonalization	4.6(1.32)	4.1(1.14)	4.0(1.54)	4.1(1.04)
Opinion strength	6.3(1.13)	3.8(1.75)**	5.5(1.91)	3.5(2.35)**
Australian identity	3.4(1.31)	3.2(1.06)	4.6(1.41)	5.2(1.24)**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

Multiple-group SEMs were conducted using AMOS 16.0 to obtain the best fitting set of predictors for collective action intentions for the two policies for each sample. To produce a final model with good fit statistics (in line with conventions, see Ullman, 2007) we revised the models by dropping non-significant predictors and allowing correlated error terms. This analytical approach allows us to address multiple questions. First, do all three classes of predictors (identification, emotion and efficacy) contribute independently to the prediction of action intentions for activists and for members of the general community? Secondly, do the various social identification constructs (national, opinion-based group, and, for the activist sample, SM and SMO identification) make overlapping or independent contributions to prediction. We present

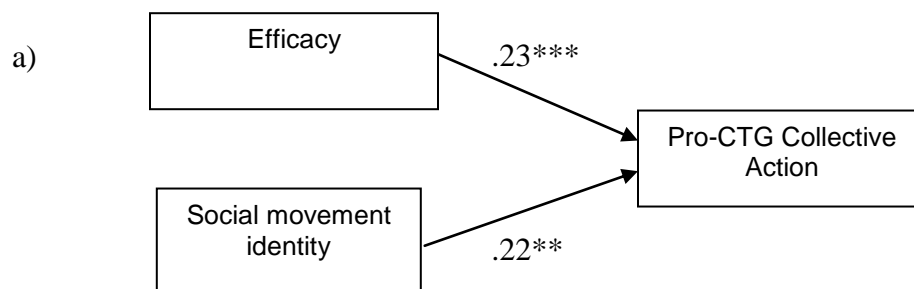
the SEMs for the activist sample first and then for the general community in Figures 6.1 and 6.2 (see also Appendix I for multiple regression tables of the full set of variables).

Pro-“Close the Gap” (activists). The final model for supporters of “Close the Gap” included higher levels of efficacy and SM identity, allowing the error terms efficacy, identity and anger to be correlated there was which yielded good fit with the data, $\chi^2(1) = 5.34$, $p = .210$, CFI= .889, and RMSEA = .013. The obtained model with, standardised path weights (betas), is shown in Figure 6.1 a.

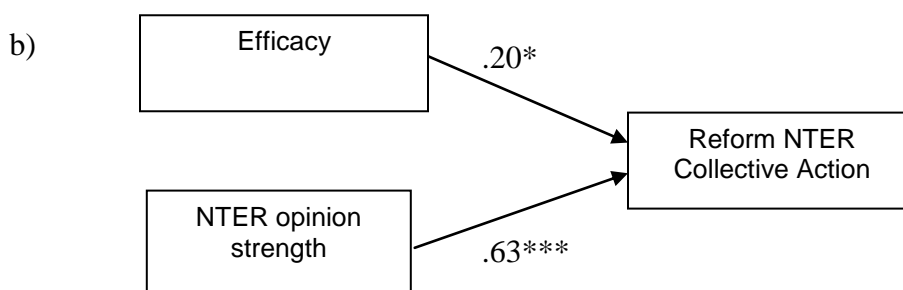
Reform NTER (activists). A different set of relationships applied in relation to the NTER. Here we have separate models for people who supported reforming the NTER and for stopping the NTER. The final model for supporters of reforming the NTER in the activist sample included higher levels of opinion-strength about the NTER and efficacy, $\chi^2(1) = .141$, $p = .707$, CFI= 1.00, and RMSEA = .000 (see the obtained model with, standardised path weights in Figure 6.1 b)

Stop NTER (activists). The final model for supporters of stopping the NTER in the activist sample included higher levels of opinion-strength and anger, $\chi^2(1) = 3.14$, $p = .054$, CFI= .887, and RMSEA = .014 (see the obtained model with, standardised path weights in Figure 6.1 c)

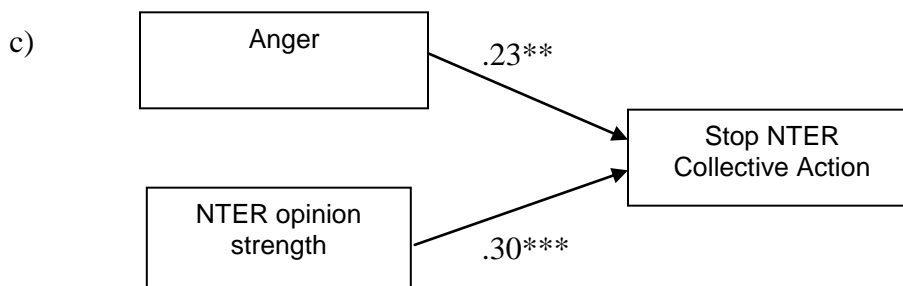
Figure 6.1 Models of Predictors of Collective Action for Pro-“Close the Gap” and the NTER for Activists



Note. $\chi^2(1) = 5.34, p = .210, CFI = .889,$ and $RMSEA = .013$



Note. $\chi^2(1) = .141, p = .707, CFI = 1.00,$ and $RMSEA = .000$



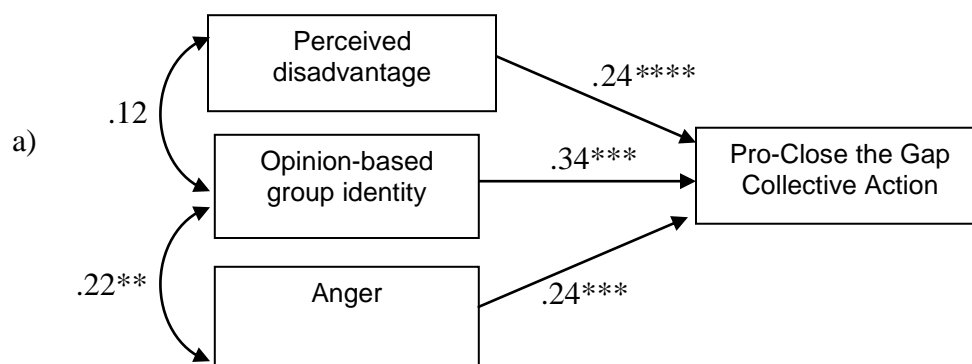
Note. $\chi^2(1) = 3.14, p = .054, CFI = .887,$ and $RMSEA = .014$
 * $p < .05;$ ** $p < .01;$ *** $p < .001$

Pro-“Close the Gap” (general community). Turning to the general community sample, the final model for supporters of “Close the Gap” included higher levels of perceived disadvantage of Indigenous Australians, Pro-“Close the Gap” identification, and anger predictors of collective action intentions, $\chi^2(1) = 7.90$, $p = .050$, CFI= .991, and RMSEA = .016 (see the obtained model with, standardised path weights in Figure 6.2 a). In summary, emotion and identity concerns were independent predictors but these were supplemented by perceived Indigenous disadvantage.

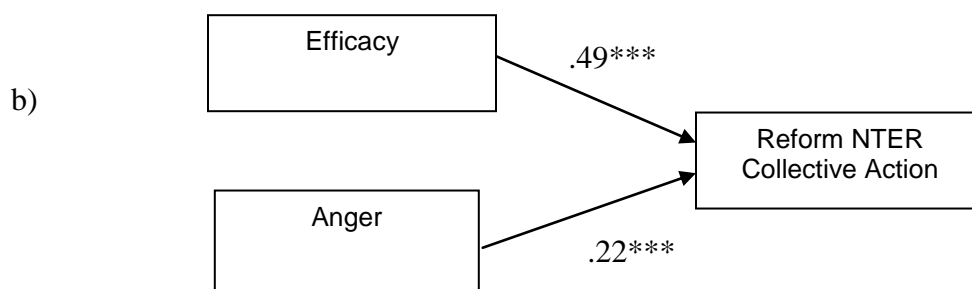
Reform NTER (general community). The final model for supporters of reforming the NTER in the general community sample included higher levels of efficacy and anger action intentions, $\chi^2(1) = .175$, $p = .676$, CFI= 1.00, and RMSEA = .000 (see the obtained model with, standardised path weights in Figure 6.2 b).

Stop NTER (general community). The final model for supporters of stopping the NTER in the general community sample was the same as supporters of reform, with levels of efficacy and anger action intentions predicting action intentions, $\chi^2(1) = .159$, $p = .690$, CFI= 1.00, and RMSEA = .000 (see the obtained model with, standardised path weights in Figure 6.2 c). The only difference here is that anger is a weaker predictor of action compared to the reform NTER model.

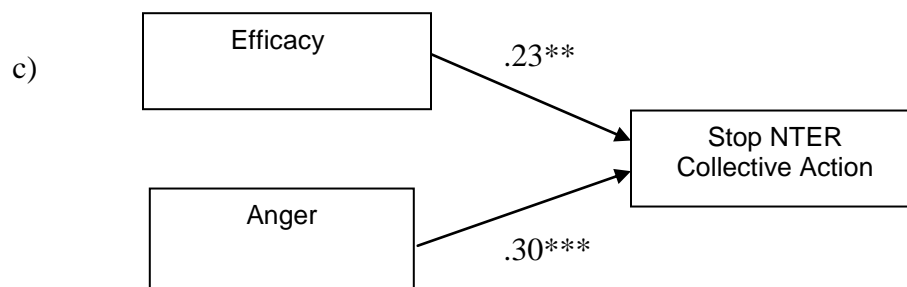
Figure 6.2 Models of Predictors of Collective Action for Pro-“Close the Gap” and the NTER for the General Community



Note. $\chi^2(1) = 7.90, p = .050, CFI = .991,$ and $RMSEA = .016$



Note. $\chi^2(1) = 175, p = .676, CFI = 1.00,$ and $RMSEA = .000$



Note. $\chi^2(1) = .159, p = .690, CFI = 1.00,$ and $RMSEA = .000$

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

Discussion

The present study demonstrates that very different relationships predict the same form of action for members of the general community compared to activists with regards to two government policies seeking to address intergroup inequality. These results suggest that activists and members of the general community, including those nominally committed to the same cause, differ not only quantitatively in the strength of their commitment to a cause and their willingness to take action but also qualitatively in the predictors of the action they take. These findings offer an empirical support for the theoretical work that purports different social psychological processes for action of sympathisers and activists (e.g., Klandermans, 1997; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; Simon & Klandermans)¹².

The novelty of our research is also notable. Nested within dynamic, real debates about the issue of intergroup inequality in Australia, we have combined insights from the collective action literature, and in particular van Zomeren et al.'s (2008) SIMCA model, to unpack the different motivators of action for members of an advantaged general community sample compared to activists. Building on the work of van Zomeren et al. (2004) and Simon and Klandermans (2001) our work provides initial work to interpret different aspects of social context through perceived consensus. This is promising but requires further research in different contexts.

Our results also affirm the existence of many of the relationships hypothesised in existing models of collective action (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Stürmer et al., 2003;

¹² Although our correlational design does not allow us to prove that different causal processes apply for the two samples our results do refute the proposition that the same processes apply. That is, although correlation does not imply causation, causation does imply large correlations (leaving aside the very real prospect of suppressor variables) and the large correlations obtained here are variable.

van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Specifically, our findings suggest that group-based perceptions of disadvantage, identity and efficacy beliefs are all relevant to predicting commitment to action but not for both issues and not for both groups. For example, two different types of social identification were a good predictor of action intentions for supporters of the economic development initiative (i.e., “Close the Gap”) in the activist and general community samples, respectively. Anger about the treatment of Indigenous Australians contributed additional independent predictive power for Pro-“Close the Gap” supporters in general community members while efficacy did for activists. A very different pattern applied in relation to action about the NTER initiative. Social identification did not independently contribute to predicting action intentions for either sample. Instead, a blend of emotion, efficacy and attitudinal variables was sufficient to predict action intentions.

Although in the path analyses, perceptions of consensus did not play a predictive role, the differences between policies with regards to perceptions of consensus suggests that it is important to understand the relevant social context. Given that we have found differing patterns of predictors for activists and sympathisers for the two policies, it follows that these findings will have implications for theorising about identity, group-based emotion and efficacy. We now address this in turn.

Differing Patterns of Social Identification

If collective action is, as posited by the social identity perspective, an expression of a person’s identification as part of a relevant collective (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), the results for the “Close the Gap” policy initiative help clarify what collective that is. As predicted, opinion-based group identification was a very good

predictor of action for the general community while SM identity was a predictor for activists. The most general conclusion here is that it is important to distinguish between social identity constructs in collective action research. For activists, opinion-based group identification is distinct from identification with the SM, from identification with the SMO and from national identification. This is not to say that any of these constructs is not potentially useful in its own right, but none of them perform the same predictive role.

A more specific conclusion is that in some contexts opinion-based groups may capture the political cleavages at the incipient stages of action mobilisation (i.e., sympathisers) and as social movement participant proceeds down the steps of Klandermans (1997) model, more politicised identities, such as social movement identification, become more important. Because identification with the Pro-“Close the Gap” opinion-based group for members of the general community suggests that such identities may be useful to explain how it is that people come to identify with social movements in the first place (see also McGarty et al., 2009 on this point).

Our results also suggest that for issues that are highly contentious such as the NTER policy initiative, the role that different forms of social identification play is not so straight forward. In the general community, we had anticipated that regardless of the level of consensus that particular policy position had in the Australian general community, opinion-based group identification would predict action intentions. Instead, we found that opinion-strength was a more powerful predictor.

For activists, as hypothesised, SM and SMO identification were poor predictors of action about the NTER initiative arguably due to the degree of dissensus about this

policy within the Reconciliation movement and SMOs. It is often assumed that a lack of consensus within broader social groups indicates the presence of different smaller-subgroups (see Reicher & Sani, 1998), and thus it might have been anticipated that opinion-based group membership would capture the fault line of the debate about the NTER within the Reconciliation movement. However, reform or stop the NTER opinion-based group identities did not predict collective action intentions.

The lack of predictive value of social identification for the NTER issue across both samples perhaps reflects there has been a failure of development of identities compatible with social change. In a recent social psychological model of social change, Thomas, McGarty and Mavor (2009) propose that sustainable and ongoing commitment to action often involves crafting a social identity with a relevant pattern of norms for emotion, efficacy, and action. On the other hand, in contexts where there is intense dissensus about an aggrieved issue we suggest that identities can become compromised (i.e., disconnected from action) because there has not yet been an effective organisation around an identity that has action-orientated norms such as relevant efficacy beliefs and action orientated emotions.

The idea of compromised social identities maps nicely onto Klandermans' (1988) differentiation between "consensus formation" and "consensus mobilisation" in the development of social movements. Klandermans argues that consensus formation involves the convergence of opinions about a particular issue but produces no more than collective definitions of a situation or particular grievance. In other words, the outcome of consensus formulation does not guide how people should form as a collective to develop norms around how to address their shared grievance. Consensus mobilisation,

by contrast, involves the deliberate attempt of people joining together to form a common cause and to take action. It is possible that positions around the NTER initiative are still in the consensus formation or the incipient stage because there is not yet a social identity that represents people's views to either support or reform the intervention policy that has clear norms regarding "what it means" to be a group member (particularly as it relates to collective action).

Differing Patterns of Emotion and Efficacy Beliefs

A key question also raised by the data is how to make sense of the differing predictive patterns of emotion and efficacy beliefs for the two different groups. Anger was a consistent predictor of action for both "Close the Gap" and the NTER policy positions for sympathisers, but was only a predictor for the Stop NTER for activists. Similarly, efficacy was a predictor of action for both NTER policy positions for sympathisers while efficacy was a predictor for Pro-"Close the Gap" and Reform NTER for activists. These findings extend van Zomeren et al.'s (2004) dual model of collective action suggesting that emotion and efficacy beliefs work differently for different samples and social contexts.

To tease apart the differing patterns, Wright's (2001) distinction between stability and efficacy offers potential insights. Wright proposes that stability captures the extent to which people believe that situations will change without any action or interference while efficacy is the belief that one's group in particular can execute behaviours necessary to produce desired changes. Wright suggests that if the system does not require change, the question of efficacy is irrelevant. By contrast, if the system is perceived to be unstable (e.g., there is ambiguity about its support within the relevant

social context) then there is a basis to consider the in-group's capacities in encouraging social change about this issue (Wright, 2009). Using this logic, for the NTER issue which was the focus of much dissensus within the general community, the question of efficacy would appear more relevant for predicting whether one will take action or not. In the case of the "Close the Gap" issue for sympathisers, participants perceived there to be broad support for the Pro-"Close the Gap" position within the wider community. Using Wright's analysis, we would expect that efficacy would be not so important for this sample. Efficacy was, however, predictive of action for the activist sample. Another reason for these differing patterns might be due to different conceptualisation of efficacy. Wright's suggestion is based on efficacy in terms of achieving a group's aim where as the items used in this study focused on the different levels of efficacy beliefs.

Although recent research has begun to unpack the conditions under which anger (e.g., Stümer & Simon, 2009) and efficacy (e.g., Hornsey et al., 2006) will be more effective motivator of actions (see also van Zomeren et al., 2008), our findings point to the possibility that aspect of another relevant social context of groups - consensus -is important to consider. More research examining the differential role of group-based efficacy and emotions in certain social contexts would therefore seem valuable.

Practical Implications and Future Directions

An important question for all social movements and SMOs is what factors move people from being sympathisers with the cause to becoming committed to its mission and aims. The findings from our study have provided a more nuanced understanding of the processes involved in encouraging or resisting social change at different levels of Klandermans (1997) social movement mobilisation model by showing that different

relationships predict the same form of action for sympathisers and activists. The results also point to the potential of measures of perceived consensus to capture some of the aspects of social context in social psychological terms. Although we cannot judge that these measures capture “reality” or individual perceptions, they do suggest that sympathisers and activists face different social realities and these social realities were associated with different paths to action. Future research might seek to manipulate the level of consensus to provide a more nuanced understanding of its role.

In this regard, however, an important practical implication is not only that calls for collective action should be framed in different ways to target various groups (a point made elsewhere including by Hornsey et al., 2006; Iyer & Ryan, 2009), but they may need to be specifically crafted for different issues. Our results suggest that this is particularly important for issues that are deeply contested. For the “Close the Gap” initiative, there was a clear articulation of support within the Reconciliation movement but less so within the general public. For the NTER initiative, however, there was dissensus within both the activist and general community samples and support for either position (stop or reform) could not be reduced to any specific social category (e.g., national), social movement or SMO affiliation.

Where the opinions of social movement members and the general community are not endorsed by their existing organisation or the wider movement, or where there is a disconnection between the views of the members and the organisation, we argue that it makes sense to strategically organise groups that are clearly ideological; that is, groups about which there can be little debate about consensual position. Put another way, where social change campaigners wish to shape productive support for an issue that is highly

contentious, calls to action may need to organise around groups based on shared opinion (opinion-based groups). In this sense, the use of opinion-based groups can deal with issues of sub-grouping in a broader supporter population and can deal with the political cleavages at the incipient stages of action formation (see also McGarty et al., 2009). Experimental research undertaken by McGarty, Thomas and colleagues suggests ways in which groups shaped around shared opinion can be sharpened and crystallised to promote more concerted action (see Gee, Khalaf, & McGarty, 2007; Thomas & McGarty, 2009; Thomas et al., 2009).

This is not to argue that for politically contentious issues that identification with a minority opinion group or a counter-normative social movement is not useful. In fact, often dissensus about an issue at a public or political level is what such fuels the formation of such groups (e.g., the fat acceptance movement, lesbian and gay liberation). Rather, it is to suggest that channelling action around groups that have more specific identity content might help in the initial stages of action mobilisation, particularly when action has been so clearly compromised at a political level.

In conclusion, empirical work has led to the development of powerful models of collective action that emphasise three broad social psychological variables: social identity, the experience of group-based injustice, and group efficacy. Our results have important implications for such models of collective action, as they suggest that no single set of predictors will satisfactorily predict collective action intentions for people at the incipient stages of action (i.e., sympathisers) compared to those more politicised (i.e., activists). We propose one explanation for why this might be the case, by focusing

social context through perceptions of consensus from within political, public and social movement spheres. Further research should focus on determining the psychological mechanisms that help to explain the influence of social context.

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CHAPTER 7: CONTEXT STATEMENT

An important focus of this thesis has involved exploring the potential role of opinion-based groups in capturing the fault lines of majority public opinions in the context of emerging socio-political debate. For example, analyses of groups formed online point to the validity of the opinion-based group construct in capturing debates about a range of minority-majority relational issues and the data presented in Chapters 4 and 6 offers cross-sectional evidence for the value of opinion-based group identities in predicting collective action intentions. Given the use of cross-sectional surveys in my research, important questions arise regarding the measurement of the opinion-based group construct. In this chapter, I address a number of these measurement issues.

The statistical analyses presented here are from the data used in Chapter 6. On the advice of the academic peers who commented on a pre-submission draft of Chapter 6 (see the Chapter 6 context statement for these details of these academics), the analyses presented here are excluded from Chapter 6. Because they are germane to the thrust of the thesis, I have included them as a technical digression in this chapter. I intend to submit the general argument presented as a short technical note to *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*. However, the final content depends on the publication outcome of Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 7: TECHNICAL DIGRESSION: MEASURING OPINION-BASED GROUPS

In recent years, the idea of groups formed around a shared opinion (opinion-based groups) has been taken up in social psychological accounts of collective action. In particular, it has been argued that manifestations of collective action are often the material expression of opinion-based group membership (McGarty et al., 2009). As with other types of attributes, such as social categories, it has been argued that opinions are available for people to use as a basis for collective self-definition (see Hogg & Smith, 2007). If this is the case, it follows that opinion-based groups can be groups in exactly the sense proposed by self-categorization theory (Bliuc, et al., 2007). Following from this proposition, then, merely holding an opinion is not the same as opinion-based group membership; rather, to the extent that the opinion engenders a shared sense of identity with other people who hold that opinion, opinion-based group formation can be said to have taken place.

Indeed, there is growing evidence to suggest that opinion-based groups can be psychologically meaningful and excellent predictors of collective action. For example, cross-sectional research suggests that social identification with a relevant opinion-based group is an excellent predictor of commitment to take social and political action in both Australia and Romania (Bliuc et al., 2007) and about globalisation grievances (Cameron & Nickerson, 2009). Other research has found that different opinion-based groups relating to support for, or opposition to, the war on terror have been associated with contrasting emotional reactions (Musgrove & McGarty, 2008). In addition, while they did not explicitly label them as such, Mackie and colleagues used opinion-based groups

to explore the predictions of intergroup emotion theory. Mackie et al. showed that groups based around opinions about pro- and anti-punishment (Study 1), pro- and anti-homosexual marriage (Study 2), and pro- and anti-drug punishment (Study 3) provided a useful intergroup context in which to invoke divergent group emotions.

Experimental work points to the possibility of sharpening and crystallising pro-action identities around groups formed on opinions, but note that opinion-based group concept is separate to the interaction method discussed in this research (Gee et al., 2007; McGarty et al., 2009; Thomas & McGarty, 2009). Analyses of groups formed online also point to the validity of the opinion-based group construct in capturing socio-political opinion about contentious issues in Chapter 5. In addition, the work presented in Chapter 4 points to the differential predictive value of opinion-based groups in certain contexts. For example, it was found that the opinion-based group concept is a good predictor of action for some policy positions regarding addressing Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian relations (e.g., support to financial compensation to the Stolen Generations) but not for others (e.g., opposition for financial compensation to the Stolen Generations). The findings that opinion-based group identification has variable predictive value are important because it offers insights into understanding when and how opinion-based group identities might be important in the development of collective action.

Despite the growing empirical support for the utility of the opinion-based group concept in the context of collective action and also the growing support for the utility of this construct by various experts (e.g., van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; Wright, 2009) a very important conceptual question remains relating to its measurement in cross-sectional

contexts where there is no pre-existing physical interaction between group members. It is to this issue that we now turn.

Measuring Opinion-Based Group Identification

If groups can form around opinions then standard social identification measures (e.g., Cameron, 2004; Leach et al., 2008) should be able to capture the extent to which people perceive themselves to belong to such groups at least as well as they do in minimal groups where participants have no interaction or experience with other group members (see also Bliuc et al., 2007). However, it is also possible that identification with opinion-based groups is a measure of attitude. If so we would expect it to be at least weakly correlated with action intentions. Having said that, we know from the vast amount of research on the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) that such correlations tend to be of small size when we use general measures of attitudes and specific intentions. Nevertheless, it is possible that measures of opinion-based group membership may simply be exceptionally good measures of the strength of participants' attitude or opinion. If this is the case, it should follow that measures of social identification with an opinion-based group will tend to be reliably good measures of action intentions, across all samples and all contexts.

Although previous research has highlighted the excellent predictive value of opinion-based group identification (see Bliuc et al., 2007; Musgrove & McGarty, 2008) as discussed in Chapter 4 we found that opinion-based group identities can be variable predictors of action in certain contexts and circumstances. For example, Study 1 of Chapter 4 found that while opinion-based group identification was a strong predictor of

action intentions, the relations between identification and other variables differed for the two groups. Additionally, in Study 2 we found a relatively weak association between social identification and action intentions for opponents of financial compensation for the Stolen Generations. I argued that these results provided evidence of the differential predictive value of opinion-based group concept; but I also raised the question of whether opponents of compensation actually saw themselves to comprise a group.

From a self-categorization theory perspective, it is crucial to know whether people perceive themselves in group terms (what is termed *depersonalised* self-perception) in order to understand the social psychological processes at play. Specifically, self-categorization theory assumes that the psychological shift from personal to a social level of identification underlies the behavioural shift from individual to collective action (Turner et al., 1987). When self-categorization occurs at a group level, the self is assimilated to other ingroup members, and at the same time differentiated from outgroup members. This cognitive redefinition of the self is called *depersonalization* (Turner, 1999). The consequences of depersonalization are many, including that individuals perceive and act in terms of their social identity, not in terms of their personal identity (see Oakes et al., 1994, for a review).

Following on from the work of Bliuc et al. (2007, Study 2), in Study 3 of Chapter 4 I included items designed to measure whether members perceived their groups to be real (which Bliuc et al. term “ingroup depersonalization”). It was found that identification with the pro-compensation opinion-based group predicted action intentions while the anti-compensation group did not. However, the perceived depersonalization measures suggested that high identifiers in both groups perceived their

groups in collective terms. At the same time the weak correlation between identification and action for the anti-compensation group refuted the possibility that social identification and action intentions are the same construct, by showing that the high identifiers in the anti-compensation group saw their group in collective terms (as acting from shared identity, values and goals), it could be argued that the lack of connection with action is not because one group is seen by its keenest adherents to be less group-like.

As a test of whether measurements of opinion-based group can be seen as different from opinion-attitude, in this chapter I provide empirical tests of the practical distinction between commitment to an opinion-based group and strength of an opinion. I also explore whether the opinion-based groups can be perceived in depersonalized terms.

Overall Aims

Following Chapter 4 (Study 3) and Bliuc et al. (2007), I provide measures that capture consequences of depersonalization and test the ingroup depersonalization model tested in Chapter 4 using structural equation modelling. I also go beyond this work to include measures of opinion strength that are distinct from the social identification measures. The interest here is in establishing the discriminant validity of opinion strength and opinion-based social identification. I expect that opinion-based group identification and opinion strength will be shown to be distinct constructs via their different relations to action intentions. I also examine whether opinion-based group identification offers any additional predictive power, over and above opinion strength in predicting collective action outcomes.

Method

The data used in the chapter are from the activist and general community surveys in Chapter 6. Therefore, the participants, procedure, and measures used are as they are detailed in that chapter with the additional measure as described below:

“Close the Gap” and NTER: Consequences of Ingroup Depersonalization

Three adapted measures from Bliuc et al. (2007) measured the consequences of depersonalisation: ‘People who [are members of a group] share a sense of identity’; ‘People who [are members of a group] share common ideals or values’; and ‘People who [are members of a group] share common goals’ (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Across samples and policy positions, this scale had very good internal reliability as measured by Cronbach’s alpha (all above $\alpha = .79$).

Results

Primary Analyses

Means and standard deviations for opinion strength, depersonalization and opinion-based group variables can be found in Tables 7.1 and 7.2. Of importance here is that all scale means are above the mid-point for the Close the Gap and the NTER policy positions.

Table 7.1

Summary of Means and Standard Deviations for Measured Variables for “Close the Gap” (CTG) for Activists and the General Community

Variable	Activists	General Community
	Pro-CTG ^a	Pro-CTG ^b
CTG identity	4.80(1.12)	4.18(1.07)
CTG Depersonalization	4.70(1.64)	3.93(0.52)
CTG Opinion strength	6.87(0.54)	5.59(1.41)

^a $n = 244$. ^b $n = 200$

Table 7.2

Summary of Means and Standard Deviations for Measured Variables for the NTER for Activists and the General Community

Variable	Activists		General Community	
	Stop NTER ^a	Reform NTER ^b	Stop NTER ^c	Reform NTER ^d
	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>M</i> (SD)
NTER identity	4.69(1.22)	4.06(1.01)	4.02(1.32)	4.09(1.02)
NTER Depersonalization	4.60(1.31)	4.05(1.06)	4.01(1.5)	4.09(1.02)
NTER Opinion strength	6.34(1.12)	3.79(1.71)***	5.50(1.9)	3.46(2.31) ***

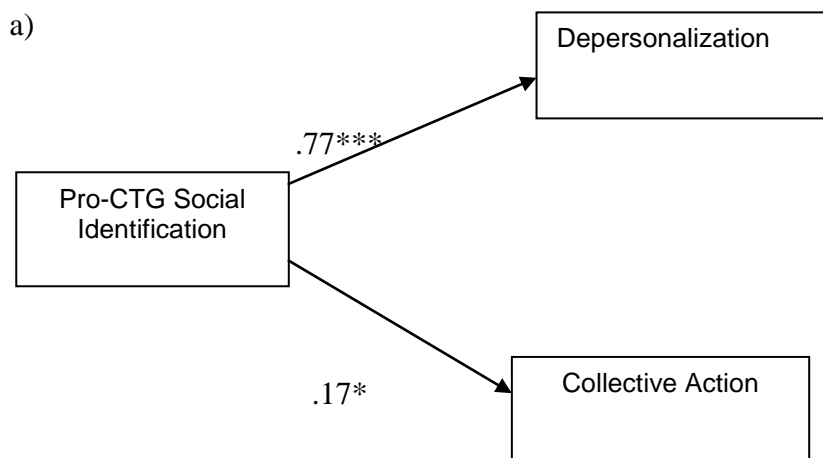
^a $n = 140$. ^b $n = 54$. ^c $n = 43$. ^d $n = 104$

Note . **** $p < .001$

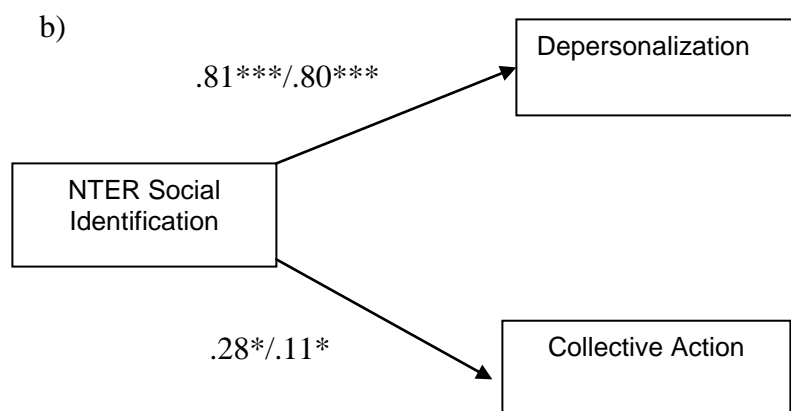
Testing the Ingroup-Depersonalization Model

For both activists (see Figures 7.1 a and b) and the general community (see Figures 7.2 a and b), those who identified with the “Close the Gap”, Stop NTER and Reform NTER opinion-based groups also perceived their opinion-based group in group terms (note, cell sizes were too small in both of the samples to analyse the anti-”Close the Gap” position). All of these same high identifiers were also committed to take action with respect to their opinion, apart from people in the general community who supported reforming the NTER (see Figure 7.2 b).

Figure 7.1 Models of Social Identification and Ingroup Depersonalization Predicting Collective Action for Activists (for model b, supporters of Stop NTER are before the slash and supporters of Reform NTER are after the slash).

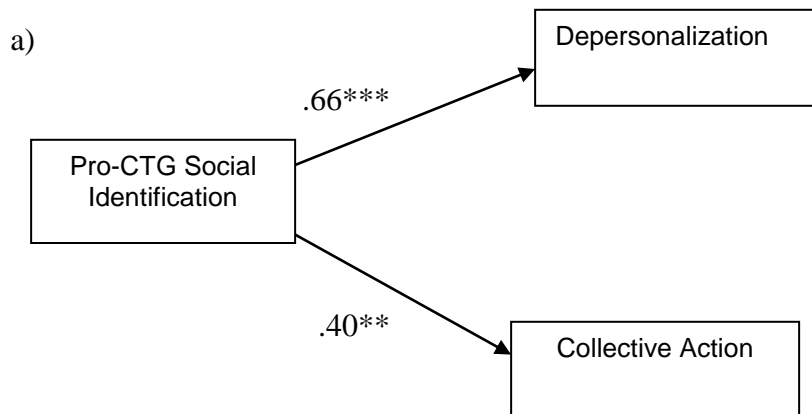


Note. $\chi^2(1) = 3.69, p = .051, CFI = .987,$ and $RMSEA = .002.$

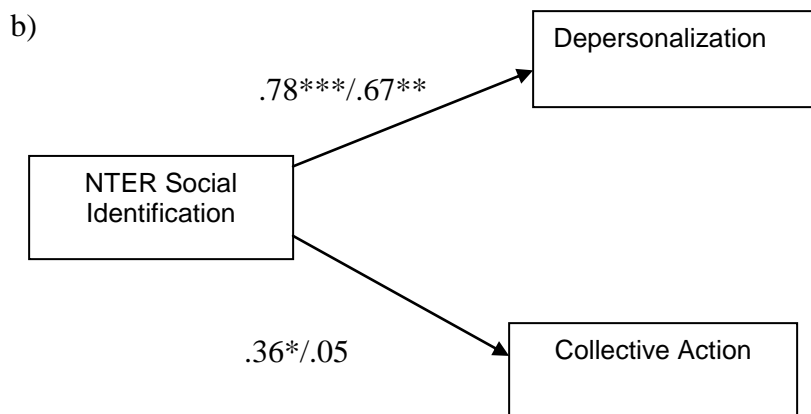


Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$
 $\chi^2(1) = .794, p = .373, CFI = 1.00,$ and $RMSEA = .000/ \chi^2(1)$
 $= .504, p = .478, CFI = 1.00,$ and $RMSEA = .000$

Figure 7.2 Models of Social Identification and Ingroup Depersonalization Predicting Collective Action for the General Community (for model b, supporters of Stop NTER are before the slash and supporters of Reform NTER are after the slash).



Note. $\chi^2(1) = 2.04, p = .159, CFI = .993,$ and $RMSEA = .007$



Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$
 $\chi^2(1) = 4.13, p = .420, CFI = .841,$ and $RMSEA = .002/ \chi^2(1) = .063 p = .802, CFI = 1.00,$ and $RMSEA = .000$

Predictive Value of Opinion-Based Group Identification

To examine the additional predictive power of opinion-based group identification for collective action intentions, over and above opinion strength, six hierarchical multiple regressions were performed, one for each sample and each policy position. For each regression, opinion strength was entered as a control variable in step one and social identification with the opinion-based group was entered in step two. Structuring the equations in this way allowed us to see whether opinion-based group identification added any unique predictive value to collective action intentions.

As seen in Table 7.3, opinion strength and opinion-based group identification have varying predictive relationships with collective action intentions for the two samples. For activists for the Pro-Close the Gap issue, in the first step opinion strength accounted for 2% of variance in collective action intentions, $F(1, 243) = 6.02, p = .015$. In the second step, opinion-based group identification accounted for an additional 3% of the variance in action intentions, $F_{\text{change}}(2, 241) = 6.54, p = .01$. For the general community for the Pro-Close the Gap issue, in the first step opinion strength accounted for 12% of variance in collective action intentions, $F(1, 198) = 27.80, p < .0001$. In the second step, opinion-based group identification accounted for an additional 10% of the variance in action intentions, $F_{\text{change}}(2, 198) = 28.29, p < .0001$.

For activists and the general community in the Reform NTER position, there was no relationship between collective action intentions and opinion, or opinion-based group identification. However, for the Stop NTER position, very different results occurred for activists versus the general community. For activists, in the first step opinion strength accounted for 11% of variance in collective action intentions, $F(1, 139) = 17.48, p < .0001$. In the second step, opinion-based group identification accounted for an additional

1% of the variance in action intentions, $F_{\text{change}}(2, 139) = 28.29, p = .354$. For the general community, in the first step opinion strength accounted for 1% of variance in collective action intentions, $F(1, 41) = 0.03, p = .858$. In the second step, opinion-based group identification accounted for an additional 11% of the variance in action intentions, $F_{\text{change}}(2, 41) = 2.42, p = .101$.

Table 7.3

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Collective Action Intentions for the Policy Positions for Activists and the General Community

Policy position	Predictor	Activists			General Community		
		β	R^2 change	Cumulative R^2	β	R^2 change	Cumulative R^2
Pro - Close the Gap	Step 1						
	Opinion strength	.16*		.02*	.35**		.12***
	Step 2						
	Opinion strength	.15*			.26***		
	Identification	.16*	.03*	.05*	.33***	.10***	.22**
Reform NTER	Step 1						
	Opinion strength	.23		.05	-.00		.00
	Step 2						
	Opinion strength	.14			-.00		
	Identification	.23	.04	.09	.05	.00	.00
Stop NTER	Step 1						
	Opinion strength	.34** *		.11***	.03		.01
	Step 2						
	Opinion strength	.33** *			.03		
	Identification	.10	.01	.12***	.33*	.11	.11

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Discussion and Conclusion

Building on the results from Chapter 4, the differential relationship between opinion-based group identity and action intentions presented here suggests that the opinion-based group concept is distinct from a measure of attitude or opinion. The findings also suggest that opinion-based group identification can be used to provide additional predictive power for some issues. For example, for supporters of “Close the Gap” for both activists and the general community, highly identifying with the opinion-based group construct helped explain one’s willingness to take action about the issue, over and above one’s strength in their opinion. Similarly, for members of the general community, highly identifying with a group based on wanting to Stop the NTER provided additional explanatory power to predicting action intentions compared to opinion strength.

Curiously, the findings also suggest that opinion-based group identification does not always provide additional predictive explanatory power and in some cases, opinion strength may be a more important predictor of action. For example, for activists wanting to Stop the NTER, opinion strength was the only independent predictor of action. Conversely, in both samples for those wanting to Reform the NTER, opinion-based group identification did not provide any additional predictive power, over and above opinion strength. It could be suggested that the lack of predictive power suggests that supporters of Reform NTER did not see themselves in group terms. However, finding that all group members perceived their groups in depersonalised terms refutes this possibility.

These findings in the chapter are important because they provide empirical evidence of the psychological reality (and validity) of opinion-based groups measured in

a cross-sectional research context. They also offer the important contribution of demonstrating that in some contexts, opinion-processes might be a more relevant construct to predict action intentions. At a theoretical level, I argue that these findings provide a case example of where opinion-based groups can be formed (in that high identifiers perceive the group in depersonalised terms) but where the characteristics of that identity are not in line or consistent with action. The findings in this thesis offer a number of social psychological reasons as to why groups may be compromised in this way, such as having low efficacy beliefs. Future research is needed to explore the ways in which opinion-based groups may be crafted in ways to overcome such potentially demobilising and compromising factors in the context of emerging socio-political debate.

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The research presented in this thesis documents dynamic and contentious socio-political debates in Australian society involving members of the privileged majority about the position they should take in relation to the disadvantage experienced by some minority groups. My research offers important insights into the social psychological factors that may hinder the development of well-defined and effective movements aimed to produce social change for minority-majority relations. The answers to the questions that I have posed have relevance for all societies struggling with problems regarding minority-majority relations. The findings in this thesis are also of special concern in Australian society because of the systemic discrimination, marginalisation, and poverty experienced by many members of the Indigenous Australian population.

In recent years a number of scholars have suggested that the role of social context on social psychological processes of collective action has to be considered more carefully (e.g., Reicher, 2004; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2007; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; Wright, 2009). Such concerns were explicitly taken up in this thesis through a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods, in a number of different contexts (e.g., online and offline), and for different samples of people in Australian society (e.g., with general community and activist samples as well as university students). This research was conducted against the backdrop of significant socio-political transformations in Australian society, starting with the defeat of a social conservative Australian Prime Minister and the succeeding Prime Minister's apology to the minority Indigenous population for past wrongs.

From an initial focus on the development of movements formed more broadly around the issue of minority-majority relations in Australia, interviews with activists suggested that a range of social psychological factors played an important role in hindering and fostering the formation of well-defined movements. Activists also perceived that the election of the Rudd government and the apology to the Indigenous Stolen Generations appeared to offer new hope to a waning Reconciliation social movement. In view of these interviews and the socio-political transformations occurring within the broader society at the time, I sharpened my focus towards incipient and actual members of movements forming about Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations.

In the remaining empirical chapters, I explored the potential social psychological factors that play a role in the formation of well-defined and effective social movements that produce social change about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and specifically Reconciliation. This research was guided broadly by insights from social identity (Tajfel, 1979) and self-categorization theories (Turner et al., 1987) which seek to explain the ways in which social identities can shape how people think, feel, and behave. This perspective asserts that collective action is, first and foremost, an outcome or expression of a relevant social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). After highlighting some potential limitations of other social identities commonly used to explain the occurrence of collective action, such as social movement identities and activist identities, I proposed that Bliuc et al.'s (2007) conceptualisation of opinion-based group (Bliuc et al., 2007) as one way in which we might be able to capture the collectives involved in dynamic debates within the majority.

The Thesis Restated and Summary of Research

The central idea proposed in the initial stages of this thesis was that movements that seek to change minority-majority encounter challenges due to the conflicting (and potentially conflicted) emotions and beliefs that their members and other members of the society hold. I proposed that those social movements whose members are able to form and adopt social identities that answer such challenges are more likely to foster and sustain action and that a failure to achieve this form of identity would result in what I termed “compromised” movements. If this proposition is true then we should be able to detect social psychological markers of the mechanisms behind these successes and failures.

Initial ideas for the specific factors that might act in compromising movements in the broader thesis context were developed through a review of Australia’s recent socio-political history (Chapter 1) and interviews with activists (Chapter 2). These ideas were further developed through a review of the existing social psychological literature around collective action and social movement mobilisation (Chapter 3). In these chapters, I proposed a number of social psychological factors that might affect the development of well-defined and effective movements that seek to achieve change in minority-majority relations, such as the possibility of there being compromised national identities and a lack of alternative identities (e.g., non-Indigenous), problems with efficacy beliefs and intergroup emotions such as group-based guilt compromising the development of action-orientated social identities, and macro socio-political issues such as contentions about specific government policies and the degree to which there was social consensus about these issues.

The empirical papers provided broad evidence for such claims. In Chapter 4 three cross-sectional studies across a critical year period provided correlational evidence for the concept of opinion-based groups in capturing positions in the context of emerging debate. Results also suggested that other social psychological factors such as group-based guilt and efficacy beliefs played important, but secondary roles in predicting action. In addition there was evidence that some opinion-based groups, namely those based around opposition to the provision of financial compensation to the Stolen Generations, can become disconnected from action.

In Chapter 5, these same ideas regarding the role of opinion-based groups in the formation of collective action and movements were explored in an online context. First, I conducted a content analysis of group names on Facebook.com that were around conflicting positions about minority-majority relations in Australian society and then I qualitatively analysed the discussion board posts of two groups that had opposing positions about the apology to the Stolen Generations (i.e., pro and anti-apology). It was found that the discussion content and collective actions promoted by group members changed with changes in the offline political environment. Most intriguingly, members in the pro-apology group were more likely to undertake specific actions (e.g., sign online petitions) compared to those in the anti-apology group. This result provides converging evidence to the idea that even for causes have shaped into dynamic movement, they can become compromised from taking action.

In Chapter 6, I asked whether the same social psychological processes underpin action for Reconciliation activists versus sympathisers regarding two government policies designed to address Indigenous disadvantage: economic development and

paternalistic intervention. The study allowed me to examine what processes might be underpinning the development of a fully functioning and realised social movement (i.e., activists being proposed to be involved at Stage 4 of Klanderman's 1997 model of social movement participation) compared to those at the incipient stage (i.e., sympathisers being proposed to be involved at Stage 1). In this study, differing patterns of predictors were found for sympathisers compared to activists across the two policy issues. Most noteworthy, for the economic development policy social movement identification was an important predictor for activists, while opinion-based group identification was an important predictor for the general community. For the intervention policy, social identity did not play a role for either group; rather opinion-processes were predictive of action.

In Chapter 7, I presented a digression to address the technical issue of measuring opinion-based group membership and I found evidence that the opinion-based groups under examination in Chapter 6 were perceived in depersonalised terms (that is, as psychologically real groups). The results of Chapters 6 and 7 combined provide additional evidence for the argument that in some contexts there are causes that appear compromised and appear unlikely to produce action. Indeed, if even highly committed supporters of a cause are ambivalent about the need to act on behalf of that cause then the cause is in trouble.

The research presented in this thesis, then, provides converging evidence for the idea that the incipient and actual members of the movements under examination could be seen to be involved in active processes of forming social identities that were suited to producing social and political change. These social movements also appeared to face

strong challenges from alternative views (e.g., government decisions, public opinion and the policies of organisations). In some cases these challenges appeared likely to compromise or undermine the prospect that social identities would be deployed to promote social change. The causes formed around contrasting positions on the contentious NTER policy appear to best reflect problems associated with “going somewhere”. As I detail more explicitly below, these findings have a number of important theoretical, methodological, and practical implications for the social psychology of social change, collective action, and social movement mobilisation.

Theoretical and Methodological Implications

The findings of this thesis offer diverse theoretical and methodological implications for social psychological accounts of social change. To illustrate these, I ask the question: what contributions do the current findings offer our existing knowledge on the social psychology of collective action and social movements?

The Role of Social Identity in Collective Action

From a social identity perspective, collective action is — first and foremost — an expression of a relevant social identity (Turner et al., 1987). Social psychology has traditionally tended to focus on understanding when and why minority group members might be willing to band together to take action to challenge their position. However, given the influential role the majority can play in determining and shaping government policy in democratic societies, I have explicitly focused on the role members of such groups can play in both maintaining and challenging structural disadvantage.

Understanding the factors that might motivate majority group members to take or

oppose action about minority disadvantage is necessary for understanding the dynamics of social change (for a discussion on this issue see Wright, 2009).

A wealth of research supports the idea that social identity processes underpin collective action outcomes and the formation of effective and sustainable social movements (Haslam, 2001; Klandermans, 2002). In line with this body of research, I have argued that we need to locate those psychologically meaningful groups that underpin action. This argument has been taken up very seriously by a number of scholars in recent years, including the work by Simon on social movement identities (e.g., Simon et al., 1998). Simon's work has reiterated the idea that some types of identities that are more closely linked to action than are others because the content of such identities implies action. The message here is that if we are to understand why social movement might falter, we need to pay close attention to the nature of the identities underpinning action.

I have argued that despite the obvious merits of approaches that focused on politicised identities (including social movement and activist identities), there are some limitations with using these identities particularly with regards to the Australian context. Of particular relevance is the argument that these politicised identities do not capture how activist identities develop in the first place and how social movements might be compromised from becoming well-defined and sustainable. In understanding the identity processes underpinning action, we can gain a better understanding of how movements about particular causes might develop into fully realised movements.

I have argued that other identities may be more relevant in the context of emerging debates about Reconciliation and I explored the concept of opinion-based

groups as being able to capture the aspects of ideology involved in emerging debate (see also Bliuc et al., 2007 and McGarty et al., 2009). In this regard, I have argued that the work of Klandermans and Oegema offers a useful theoretical framework to distinguish between sympathisers and activists and also to map the differences between an incipient versus a fully realised social movement. To recap, Klandermans (1997) argues that social movement mobilisation involves four phases: (1) becoming sympathetic to a cause (or part of the mobilisation potential for a cause); (2) becoming a target for mobilisation attempts; (3) becoming motivated to participate; and (4) overcoming barriers to participation (see also Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Conscious of this distinction, in this thesis, I have sought to cover a range of stages, and part of the contribution of the work has been to clarify processes that may be associated with the different stages.

There is an accumulation of evidence that identification with opinion-based groups is an excellent predictor of commitment to take social and political action (Bliuc et al., 2007; Cameron & Nickerson, 2009; Musgrove & McGarty, 2008). Indeed, McGarty et al. (2009) argue that much collective action reflects the crystallisation of opinion-based group identification. The research in this thesis provides some evidence for this claim. For example, I found that identification with groups formed around a shared opinion was an excellent predictor of action in some contexts – and was a much better predictor of action than were other social psychological variables such as national identity, efficacy, political affiliation, and group based emotions (see Chapter 4).

Similarly, evidence for the claim that collective action can reflect an instantiation of opinion-based group membership is also found in the study of the Facebook groups in

Chapter 5. In this case, the Facebook groups under examination are groups that are explicitly and organically forming around shared opinions. In Chapter 6, I found that opinion-based group membership is only predictive of action for members of the general community who support economic development policy for Indigenous Australians.

These are very important findings because they extend those of Bliuc et al. (2007) and suggest that there are some circumstances under which the characteristics of opinion-based group identities are inconsistent with action. In line with the work of Reicher and colleagues which has emphasised the ways that leaders can act as agents of influence to construct the subjective meaning of an identity to foster action, I argue that the findings in this thesis provide additional evidence for the influential role of political decision makers and politicians in mobilising or compromising the groups that are consistent with action. This point is very clearly illustrated in the interviews in Chapter 2, where activists highlighted the ways in which they perceived the former Prime Minister as being able to silence “pro-diversity views” and the way in which the election of Rudd had fostered a collective sense of identity for those who support Reconciliation.

Findings from Chapter 4 also suggest that groups formed around policy positions that have bipartisan political support (i.e., the anti-compensation position) are less likely to take action in line with their position. An interesting point about this is that groups tend to be called movements when they are trying to achieve change (and are engaged in protest). The other side can still act collectively in defence of the status quo but it does not make sense to call them a movement (as they are not trying to go anywhere but their behaviour is nevertheless collectively organised to achieve an outcome). One might question whether opponents of compensation will only gather and take specifically

“actions” if there was a serious challenge to their status quo position (e.g., if a politician or political party started to openly lobby for a compensation fund). Similarly, findings from Chapter 6 suggest that policy positions that are the site of considerable political contention (i.e., the NTER) can jar the relationship between identity and action, despite the results from Chapter 7 indicating that members perceived them in depersonalised terms.

Collectively, these findings suggest that although opinion-based group membership can capture the fault lines of collective action in some circumstances, highly identifying with an opinion-based group does not necessarily imply action. That is, incipient and actual members of the movements under examination in this thesis appeared to have faced challenges from alternative views (government decisions, public opinion and the policies of organisations). In some cases these appeared likely to compromise or undermine the likelihood of the social identity promoting the level of engagement necessary to promote social change. In the practical implications outlined below, I point to some strategies social change campaigners might use to overcome such challenges.

The Role of Intergroup Emotion and Efficacy Beliefs in Collective Action

The research in this thesis also contributes knowledge to existing models of collective action (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Stürmer et al., 2003; van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Specifically, the findings suggest that group-based perceptions of disadvantage, emotion, identity and efficacy beliefs are all relevant to predicting commitment to action but not for all issues explored in this thesis (e.g., the

apology, financial compensation to the Stolen Generations, the “Close the Gap” policy, and the NTER) and not for all samples (e.g., sympathisers, Facebook users, activists).

For example, in Chapter 6 two different types of social identification were good predictors of action intentions for supporters of the economic development initiative (i.e., “Close the Gap”) in the activist and general community samples, respectively. Anger about the treatment of Indigenous Australians contributed additional independent predictive power for Pro-“Close the Gap” supporters in general community members while efficacy did for activists. A very different pattern applied in relation to action about the NTER initiative. Social identification did not independently contribute to predicting action intentions for either sample. Instead, a blend of emotion, efficacy and attitudinal variables was sufficient to predict action intentions. These are important findings because they extend van Zomeren et al.’s (2004) dual model of collective action suggesting that emotion and efficacy beliefs work differently for different samples and social contexts.

A finding that is particularly noteworthy is the lack of relationship between group-based guilt and social identification in Chapters 4 and 6. If group-based guilt is a group-based phenomenon then it should be associated with commitment to group memberships. In addition, as Berndsen and Manstead (2007) have argued, rather than being an antecedent appraisal to guilt, responsibility may actually be an outcome of the experience of guilt. To the extent that this guilt, and accompanying acceptance of responsibility, becomes associated with the advantaged group membership, it could be argued that it is likely to lead to forms of assistance motivated by group normative

prescriptions related to “doing the right thing” rather than genuine desires to achieve social equality.

In line with the arguments of McGarty et al. (2005), I argue that group-based guilt may be a group-normative response not necessarily positively or negatively associated with a perpetrating category such as “Australian” (as we examined in this thesis) but to a more specific opinion-based group. The Australian identity should only be linked to group-based guilt and support for an apology to the extent to which Australians, collectively, develop (locally uncontested) norms about guilt and the apology in that context. Thus, while group-based guilt does not seem to be a feature of the overarching Australian identity, guilt may nonetheless become part of a normative response of a more specific opinion-based group. My research suggests this is not the case in the period I examined: the construct of group-based guilt may have been overtaken by events in Australia.

Capturing and Accounting for Social Context

If social psychology is to have a strong handle on the processes involved in social change, the role that social structure and context play in affecting the motives and actions of people is crucial. This is a key aim of the social identity tradition. In particular, according to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) the action that people take in response to a social structure is proposed to depend upon their belief systems about the relevant intergroup context (Ellemers, 1993; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1982). For example, it is proposed that group members are most likely to band together and take action when they perceive a group-based disadvantage, where the boundaries are permeable, and the advantage is both unstable and illegitimate (Ellemers,

1993). Although these beliefs about social structure have been shown to be very important in some contexts (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999; Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel, & Blanz, 1999), it is also true that other aspects of social structure aside from intergroup status differences can foster collective action.

Building on work from many different traditions such as sociology, the political sciences and social psychology, I propose that degree of consensus within a given relevant social context (whether it be ‘real’ or perceived) has potential implications for whether or not someone is likely to engage in group-based actions in Chapter 6. This initial work to interpret different aspects of social context through perceived consensus is promising but requires further research in different contexts.

The Use of Triangulating Research Methods

One of the major advantages in undertaking a social psychological analysis of social change is that there are explicit social psychological processes that are available for inspection via social psychological methods to understand the social world. Despite these advantages, there are ongoing debates about the virtues of various methodological approaches. Research from the social identity perspective has a particular wealth of options with a strong continuing argument that if one wants to understand social psychological processes then it is essential to control for extraneous variables (see Reicher, 2004, on this issue). The way to do this is through conducting controlled experiments and manipulating variables. While I acknowledge the inherent benefits of social psychological experiments and the nuanced understanding of social psychological processes that it affords, experiments do not allow us to manipulate the independent variables I have considered in my research for reasons to do with ethics and the time

course of the variables. As it does not make sense to manipulate variables of interest in my thesis, I have used converging methods in the same way as astronomy uses radio and light. Indeed as Haslam and McGarty (2001, p. 17) argue:

If researchers' primary concern is only to reduce methodological uncertainty, then the price they will pay is to have a social psychology of trivia. And this will be true whatever method they use, though it may be true that they will be more attracted to experimental methodology for the same reasons that members of the Light Brigade preferred horses to donkeys.

It is evident in my thesis that different methods can be used to answer a research question, and that these different qualitative and quantitative methods can complement each other. Although individually, each approach obviously has its limitations, the mix of methods has allowed these to complement each other. For example, the interviews with activists allowed me to refine the elements of potential social psychological variables relevant to the thesis question (and also establish the validity of the claims made about the Australian socio-political context), and the quantitative surveys in Chapters 4 and 6 allowed me to examine these variables more explicitly. Arguably, a central requirement to a commitment to understanding the social in social psychology - regardless of one's epistemological or theoretical position - is a commitment to employing research methods that help to answer the research question.

Practical Implications

The value of these theoretical implications lies in helping to map out social psychological factors that may contribute to the social stability of disadvantage. That is, the findings suggest that social change may be forestalled by a range of social

psychological processes that have the potential to go wrong. Given this, it offers some unique opportunities for pinpointing factors relevant for social change campaigners. I outline the practical implications by asking the question of how campaigners can use the findings of my research for shaping social change campaigns particularly with regards to the issue of Reconciliation in Australian society.

As I outlined in the theoretical implications above, when it comes to understanding collective action and social movement mobilisation, action should be understood as an outcome or expression of a relevant social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). Thus, I have argued that it is of critical importance to pay attention to the nature of these collectives. Based on findings that some social identities appear to become disconnected from action in certain contexts, I ask the question how social campaigners might try to avoid action-orientated identities becoming disconnected from action or from being compromised. On the basis of the findings in my thesis, a disconnection between identity and action appears particularly prevalent where people support a cause that is either politically contentious (Chapter 6) or where political leaders are shaping identities in a way that compromises action. In these cases, how might social change campaigners organise and foster people to take action about a cause? I argue this can be done in two ways of which I now turn to.

Lesson 1: Addressing Contention within an Existing Movement or Organisation

First, where the opinions of social movement members and sympathisers of a cause are not endorsed by their existing organisation or the wider movement, or where there is a disconnection between the views of the members and the organisation, I argue that it makes sense to strategically organise around groups that are clearly ideological;

that is, groups about which there can be little debate about consensual position. Put another way, where social change campaigners wish to shape productive support for an issue that is highly contentious, calls to action may need to organise around groups that are based on shared opinion. In this sense, the use of opinion-based groups is one way to understand subgroups that are associated with, what amount to political divisions that exist prior to action (see also McGarty et al., 2009). Experimental research undertaken by McGarty, Thomas, and colleagues suggests ways in which groups shaped around shared opinion can be sharpened and crystallised to promote more concerted action (see Gee, et al., 2007; Thomas & McGarty, 2009; Thomas et al., 2009).

I am not suggesting that identification with a minority opinion group or a counter-normative social movement are not useful when we consider mobilising action around contentious issues. Indeed, it is often dissensus that fuels the formation of such groups (e.g., the fat acceptance movement, lesbian and gay liberation). Rather, I am arguing is that channelling action around groups that have more specific identity characteristics that might help in the initial stages of action mobilisation, particularly in situations where taking action has been explicitly delegitimised at a political level. An example of this latter point is the formation of the group called “Stop the Intervention” who recently formed with the aim of explicitly opposing the NTER (see <http://stoptheintervention.org/>). However, it is also true that there are blockages at the broader political level that also need to be addressed if causes are to form into effective and well-defined movements, as I discuss next.

Lesson 2: Addressing Contention at Political Level for Incipient Movements

There is evidence to suggest that many movements (or incipient movements) face challenges from the rhetoric of politicians that can compromise the formation of action-orientated identities. For example, the work of Reicher and colleagues has emphasised the way in which leaders can act as agents of influence and can actively construct the subjective meaning of an identity to meet various political and social ends (Reicher, Haslam et al., 2005; Reicher, Hopkins et al., 2005). However, these same experts also argue that while social movements can impact individuals, individuals can shape and form the direction of a social movement. This opens up the opportunity for social change campaigners to actively seek out the fault lines of political rhetoric that directly seeks to undermine a particular cause.

Let us take the issue of the NTER, for example. As outlined in Chapter 6, some political commentators and Indigenous activists have argued that the stop NTER position has been wedged because political leaders argued that stopping the NTER would mean condoning the abuse of Indigenous Australian children (Anderson, 2007). Other commentators have gone further to argue that child abuse in remote communities can be attributed to the accommodation of Indigenous cultural differences that is associated with self-determination (Hughes & Warin, 2005). Although the research in this thesis points to a diverse range of issues that can potentially undermine the link between identity and action, political rhetoric appears to have some force (for example, the interviews with activists in Chapter 2). The position of stopping the NTER could have more force if supporters could craft its position away from one that is perceived to be based on supporting ideology (i.e., self-determination) above the rights of Indigenous children.

Indigenous Voices and Researching Non-Indigenous Activism

This thesis started with the assumption that reducing intergroup inequality involves, at least in part, the effective mobilisation and engagement of majority members. This argument is based on the premise that if in democratic societies such as Australia, the support of policies that seek to address systemic intergroup inequalities is impinged on the support of the majority, then understanding when members of the majority might band together and take action is important to capturing the processes underpinning social change.

While it is essential to examine majority responses to inequality, a focus on the majority also raises a number of difficult questions. For example, does the engagement of non-Indigenous majorities to strive towards social justice for Indigenous Australians limit and constrain Indigenous self-determination? Does a focus on majority members run the risk of sidelining critical political analysis of social situations and isolating members of these social categories as the only people capable of making or understanding claims to justice? And more explicitly, who is entitled or has the right to make claims to correct injustice for disadvantaged groups? These questions have been central to Indigenous critiques of western research in recent years (see Humphrey, 2001; Smith, 1999).

Due to my focus on majority support and opposition to various government policies (e.g., the apology, financial compensation, Close the Gap, the NTER), I should also acknowledge the limitations with my conceptualisation of social change. Focusing on government policy as the outcome of collective action runs the risk of undermining Indigenous voices and claims about the ways in which social justice and disadvantage should be addressed. It also runs the risk of framing any policy that “seeks” to address

Indigenous inequality as essentially “good”. Although it is not within the aims nor the scope of this thesis to offer an in-depth analysis of the political and social implications of the various government policies explored in this thesis, I do acknowledge that it is essential for social psychology to critically engage in considering the consequences of collective action. As Wright (2009, p. 876) argues, “We might want to take seriously whether the knowledge we offer has a meaningful chance of producing the change that is sought”.

In this regard, in aspiring to be a socially responsible social psychologist I acknowledge the inherent tensions involved in research focused on building an understanding of social change that focuses primarily on non-Indigenous peoples and on collective action outcomes that are primarily government policy. Arguably, the limitations with research of the form I have conducted encapsulate the very core of what is so difficult about social justice being achieved for Indigenous people: that being, the tension between principles of paternalism and self-determination (tensions at times so stark that even the term “self-determination” can be seen to be used in paternalist ways). These tensions reflect the same fragility that majority member activists and SMOs such as ANTaR experience. Indeed, the interviews with the activists in Chapter 2 highlighted the issues around collective actions that serve to make the actors feel good, but create no structural change. Similarly, people in the pro and anti-apology Facebook groups highlighted similar contentions.

In reflection of the research in this thesis, I argue that for social psychology to develop as a relevant player in the knowledge quest for social change — particularly with regards to Indigenous peoples —it is essential we all seek to acknowledge and critically engage with the complexities and fragilities inherent in any struggle for social justice. At the same time as critical engagement, another way forward may be to pass over information about non-Indigenous activism for comment by Indigenous activists (although there are also issues relating to placing a burden of responsibility) and to ensure the knowledge gained from such research enterprises are placed in the public domain so it is accessible for all.

Concluding Remarks

The question of why it is so difficult for effective and sustainable movements made up of majority members to challenge minority disadvantage remains a crucial and relevant social question. If social psychology is to foster real social change for those experiencing profound disadvantage, discrimination and poverty, we need to understand the processes by which those in the majority might work together and challenge it. The value of this thesis lies in helping to map out social psychological factors that may contribute to the social stability of disadvantage. That is, rather than explaining the lack of social change in terms explicit or implicit ideological resistance or economic and political conspiracies, we can explain the lack of change as resting on intricate social psychological processes that have the potential to go wrong.

Those of us, including very many social psychologists, who favour social change to redress oppression and disadvantage are not forced to explain the resistance to change in terms of the masterful communication skills of the proponents of the status quo, or to

attribute inertia to conspiracies, timidity, or the slavish operation of ideologies in the population that preclude change. The achievement of meaningful social change is a massive human enterprise: the results of this thesis show that a lot can go wrong on the road to getting things right. A continued focus on this issue will help us gather more meaningful knowledge of how we can continue to “go somewhere” on the path to social justice and equality.

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