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Illegitimacy and identity threat in (inter)action: Predicting intergroup orientations among minority group members

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We test the hypothesis that intergroup orientations among minority group members are shaped by the interaction between the perceived illegitimacy of intergroup relations and identity threat appraisals, as well as their main effects. This is because together they serve to focus emotion-mediated reactions on the out-group's role in threatening in-group identity. In a large-scale field study ($N = 646$), conducted among the Welsh minority in the UK, we quasi-manipulated the extent to which Welsh identity was dependent on the 'threatened' Welsh language. Results supported our hypothesis that the illegitimacy $\times$ identity threat interaction would be strongest where Welsh identity was most dependent upon the Welsh language, and through intergroup anger would predict support for more radical, unconstitutional forms of action.

'Wales is one of the many small nations of Europe which have been historically deprived of the right to self-determination. Our country was annexed to England in 1536 by an Act of (England's) Parliament . . . The important thing now is to build a 'culture of resistance' against those forces which are destroying our language and our identity . . . This means a struggle for radical change'. (Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg – the Welsh Language Society)

Much theorising and research in social psychology has been devoted to understanding what leads people to march in protest, to start a petition, or even to engage in illegal forms of direct action. While this work has highlighted the role of intergroup appraisals in explaining group members' orientations towards these types of behaviour, the argument advanced in the present paper is that it is also important to examine the *interplay between* different appraisals. This is because, as the quote above suggests, subordination to a more powerful out-group may not only threaten the in-group's status or power, but also its very identity. Closely bound up with this threat is the perception of such a state of affairs as illegitimate and unjust. In this paper, we argue that there is value

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in keeping these constructs analytically distinct, not least in helping us to understand and predict the different forms that intergroup resistance can take.

Although research in the social identity tradition has examined the effects of identity threats and perceived illegitimacy, surprisingly little has considered how these factors might interact, especially in predicting more radical or antagonistic forms of behaviour. This is of theoretical significance given critiques of social identity theory (SIT) that see it as primarily geared to explaining in-group enhancement (Brewer, 1999) and therefore relatively benign forms of intergroup behaviour. Devising and testing a social identity based explanation of support for more 'extreme' intergroup behaviour in a real life minority group is a central aim of the current research.

The *range* of orientations and courses of action open to members of disadvantaged groups also raises important issues that have received little attention. Chief among these is the question of the conditions under which members of such groups start to consider potentially violent intergroup strategies. In particular, there is a need to look beyond the individual effects of key appraisals such as illegitimacy and identity threat, and to consider how they co-occur and interact in the course of long-standing intergroup dynamics. We begin by integrating perspectives that emphasise the importance of perceiving disadvantage as illegitimate or unfair (e.g., relative deprivation theory (RDT): Crosby, 1976; Runciman, 1966; Walker & Smith, 2002; SIT: Tajfel & Turner, 1979; and intergroup emotion theory (IET): Mackie, Silver, & Smith, 2004; Smith, 1993) with perspectives that emphasise the role of identity threat in shaping intergroup behaviour (e.g., Bourhis & Giles, 1977; Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a,b; Spears, Jetten, & Scheepers, 2002). We then test this integrated perspective in a large-scale field study of a relatively disem-powered minority group (the Welsh in the context of the UK), focusing on the interactive effect of illegitimacy and identity threat appraisals on intergroup orientations, the mediating role of intergroup anger, and how this effect varies as a function of the local context.

Illegitimacy and threat in intergroup relations

Both SIT and RDT posit that inclinations to engage in strategies of resistance, such as collective action, will increase to the extent that group members see in-group disadvantages as illegitimate or unfair (see Walker & Smith, 2002, for a review). While SIT suggests that tendencies towards group-based responses are also contingent on other variables (e.g., perceptions of intergroup boundaries as being impermeable and of intergroup status relations as being unstable), the salient point here is that, other things being equal, group-based responses are more likely as perceptions of illegitimacy increase (Ellemers, Wilke, & Van Knippenberg, 1993; Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

A second factor predicted to intensify group-based responses concerns threat to identity, and social identity researchers have been prominent in theorising the forms and consequences of such threats (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004; Spears, Jetten, & Doosje, 2001; Spears *et al.*, 2002). A theoretical question that needs to be addressed is how an analysis in terms of identity threat fits with the role of illegitimacy. We argue that theorising in the social identity tradition has not sufficiently distinguished these two important elements, making it more difficult to conceptualise and analyse how they might combine or interact.

The classical social identity position is that perceptions of illegitimacy combine with status instability to predict intergroup competition on the part of low status or disadvantaged groups by providing hope and scope for social change ('cognitive alternatives' to the *status quo* – see Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Implied in this analysis is that low status threatens the evaluative aspect of identity and motivates social change. However, because threat to status has been taken as a starting-point (i.e., as a given, a precursor), the possibility that other forms of threat – and identity threat in particular – and illegitimacy might interact has been underestimated. Working back from illegitimacy, there is also a sense in which the classical theory implies that the identity threat posed by low status might not even be *experienced* as a threat *unless* it is perceived to be illegitimate. Indeed, groups who perceived their disadvantage as legitimate may accept the *status quo* and even justify it (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), a theme developed in system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994).

The importance of identity threat becomes apparent when considering the strategies available to minority groups. When status (rather than identity itself) is threatened, exploiting status instability to promote social change is, other things being equal, a rational strategy. However, this may not be a viable strategy for other kinds of disadvantaged groups. In particular, disempowered minorities may suffer a more chronic threat to identity given that (almost by definition) they will be unlikely to gain the numerical power and support enjoyed by majorities. In such cases, the reasons for engaging in action against an out-group may have as much to do with existential concerns (e.g., a concern that the in-group's identity may be eroded or even disappear) as with rectifying a political or social inequality (Kelman, 1999), especially where group identity is defined by potentially vulnerable group attributes such as a threatened in-group language (e.g., Bourhis, Giles, & Tajfel, 1973; Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1977; Trosset, 1986).

The neglect of identity threat is also underlined by the fact that SIT predicts that *unstable* status will motivate intergroup action, whereas it is arguably *stable* low status that is more threatening to the value and integrity (existence) of social identity. This is supported by research reported by Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, and Manstead (2006), who showed that – in line with the classic SIT prediction – low-status groups whose position was unstable did tend to adopt intergroup competition strategies. However, these were of a relatively benign form such as maximizing in-group profit (an in-group enhancement strategy). In contrast, when their low status was stable, groups adopted the more aggressive strategy of maximizing differentiation in their allocations, suggesting that more severe forms of identity threat can also underlie more extreme forms of behaviour when groups have 'nothing to lose'.

The above considerations may also affect the course of action groups are likely to take. As is clear from the above, illegitimacy-based intergroup orientations are typically seen as driven by a desire to change the intergroup relationship, rectifying specific perceived disadvantages. To the extent that status has been examined in terms of social, political or economic inequalities, the focus has also been on tendencies towards *political* action and change. In contrast, the argument that we seek to test here is that intergroup orientations among members of minority groups can be shaped by appraisals of one's group's identity *per se* as threatened, particularly to the encroachment of out-groups that are high in power. As such, group enhancement strategies based on the collective strength or efficacy of the in-group may be ineffective and more radical forms of action may be seen as necessary.

The interaction between illegitimacy and identity threat

On the basis of the above reasoning, we suggest that the intergroup orientations of members of minority groups are based not only in appraisals of identity threat, and the illegitimacy of the intergroup relationship, but also the interaction between them. On the one hand, illegitimacy helps to focus attention on the out-group as the source of identity threat. When it is not framed by the illegitimacy of in-group–out-group relations, identity threat may instead lead to a primary focus on policing 'deviant' or non-prototypical in-group members, or even leave no discernable target for action at all. On the other hand, identity threat shapes reactions to illegitimacy by focusing attention on the need to protect in-group identity, in addition to (or even instead of) strategies for achieving equality in status. The co-occurrence of identity threat and illegitimacy therefore shapes reactions to either appraisal in ways that might not be reducible to their additive main effects. In short, this interaction reflects the way in which illegitimacy appraisals shape reactions to threats to in-group identity and vice versa, and should play an important role in predicting radical identity protection behaviour, in addition to or even instead of (political) status change. The combination of identity threat and perceived illegitimacy in such minority groups is therefore likely to be particularly potent and emotionally charged, evoking more radical, antagonistic measures to deal with them when 'cognitive alternatives' to the *status quo* seem unlikely.

The role of intergroup emotion

A focus on situations where problem-focused or efficacy-based strategies are not feasible for minority group members leads us to a further development of the social identity approach: IET (Mackie *et al.*, 2004; Smith, 1993). This is well equipped to deal with the multiple appraisals of threat and illegitimacy and the different emotions and behaviours to which these might lead. IET analyses the specific emotional feelings and action tendencies associated with illegitimacy and threat, and helps to explain *how* illegitimacy appraisals translate into intergroup tendencies. Intergroup appraisals (e.g., of unfair in-group disadvantage) generate particular collective (as opposed to individual) action tendencies because of the discrete emotions (e.g., anger) that are aroused as a result of the appraisal (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999; Weiss, Suckow, & Cropanzo, 1999).

Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, and Leach (2004) found evidence that an emotion-based pathway (centring on group-based anger) explained the effects of procedural unfairness and opinion support on collective action tendencies. This pathway was distinct from a group efficacy-based pathway to collective action tendencies, originating in appraisals of action support (see also Folger, 1986; Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). The distinctive emotion-based route to collective action reinforces our argument that the combination of illegitimacy and identity threat may speak to different, more affective processes than those based on efficacy or stability, and with potentially different behavioural outcomes. When we add appraisals of identity threat to those of illegitimacy, this is likely to give rise to anger as the primary emotional response to threats that are attributed to the actions of others (Lazarus, 1991, 2001; Roseman, 2001). In intergroup settings especially, anger has been shown to be the most relevant emotion in predicting tendencies to act against a transgressing out-group (e.g., Gordijn, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus, & Dumont, 2006; Mackie *et al.*, 2000; Van Zomeren *et al.*, 2004). We therefore predict that the specific emotional response of anger will in turn predict more active and radical behavioural means of addressing the threat in order to protect identity

(Tausch, Becker, Spears, & Christ, 2008). Although anger will likely play some role in instigating constitutional attempts to avert damage to an in-group's identity, we predict on this basis that it will be particularly relevant in eliciting unconstitutional actions aimed at identity protection.

The present study

We tested these ideas using a sample belonging to an existing group whose relatively low-power, minority status could also provide a basis for perceptions of identity threat – the Welsh. A key aspect of Welsh national identity is the importance of the Welsh language. It is the most important dimension in defining Welshness, even for those who do not speak it (Bourhis *et al.*, 1973; Giles, Bourhis, *et al.*, 1977; Giles, Taylor, *et al.*, 1977; Trosset, 1986). However, only around 20% of the population can speak Welsh (Welsh Language Board, 2003), exacerbating a sense of identity threat in the Welsh speaking community. This threat is heightened further by the historical absence of social and political structures that define Wales in relation to England (Fitz, 2000). Moreover, identity threat is often seen as originating from the influence of English culture and the influx of English people into traditionally Welsh-speaking areas (Bowie, 1993; Cloke, Goodwin, & Milbourne, 1998; Trosset, 1986). The potency of such threats is clear because, as Giles, Bourhis *et al.* (1977) argue: 'Ethnolinguistic minorities that have little or no group vitality would eventually cease to exist as distinctive groups. Conversely, the more vitality a linguistic group has, the more likely it will survive' (p. 308). It follows that group members who perceive threats to this vitality (and in-group identity) will be motivated to defend it where possible (see Bourhis & Giles, 1977).

As suggested above, the importance of examining the interplay between identity threat and illegitimacy stems in part from the need to address the *range* of orientations and goals open to members of minority groups. In the present study, we examine both *status change orientations* (i.e., support for change in the broader sociopolitical relationship between the in-group and out-group), and *identity protection orientations* (i.e., support for action to protect in-group identity from possible erosion and threat). In turn, we break down identity protection orientations into support for *constitutional* (i.e., legal) and *unconstitutional* (i.e., illegal) forms of action. The rationale here is to examine the consequences of illegitimacy and identity threat (and their interaction) in terms of support for different forms of action, rather than simply in terms of support for action *per se*.

Predictions

We predict in the first instance that while status change and constitutional identity protection will be predicted by illegitimacy and identity threat, respectively, support for unconstitutional identity protection will be predicted by both appraisals. Second, we expect that the effects of illegitimacy and identity threat on unconstitutional identity protection will be accounted for (mediated) by anger. This will contrast with support for status change, which is likely to be more of a problem-focused than an emotion-focused orientation (e.g., Van Zomeren *et al.*, 2004); and with constitutional identity protection, which although likely to have an emotional basis in common with unconstitutional identity protection, is also likely to reflect problem-focused coping that is not explained through emotion. In other words, (a) for support for unconstitutional forms of identity protection we predict full mediation of the effects of illegitimacy and threat appraisals by anger; (b) for support for constitutional identity protection strategies we predict

partial mediation of the effect of identity threat; and (c) for support for status change strategies we predict no mediation of the effect of illegitimacy by anger.

After testing these preliminary predictions, we test our main proposition that illegitimacy and identity threat will intensify (i.e., moderate) their respective emotional reaction. Specifically, we expect that identity threat (motivating defence of identity) will be associated with the highest levels of anger when the perceived illegitimacy of the situation is also high, justifying support for potentially violent action against the out-group. This represents a case of moderated mediation (as opposed to mediated moderation), whereby the effects of a predictor (identity threat) on the intervening variable (anger) depend upon the levels of another predictor (illegitimacy; see Muller, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2005; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007).

The moderating role of context

In addition to the role of the Welsh language, the Welsh context is a particularly good one in which to test our hypotheses because national identity in Wales has a varied, strongly regional flavour (Thompson & Day, 1999). We reason that this should have consequences for the extent to which illegitimacy and threat interact to predict anger and unconstitutional intergroup orientations. Specifically, we sample from two sets of regions known to differ in the prominence of the in-group language (Welsh) to identity and political concerns (see Balsom, 1985). We refer to these as Welsh-speaking regions, and non-Welsh-speaking regions. Their geographical composition is illustrated in Figure 1.

We reasoned that the hypothesised interaction between illegitimacy and identity threat on anger would be stronger in Welsh-speaking regions, due to three interrelated factors. First, the 'threatened' (minority) dimension of the Welsh language is much more prominent in Welsh-speaking regions, potentially heightening the sense of identity threat from the out-group. Second, this prominence is likely to mean that in-group (Welsh) identity is *defined more heavily* (or *essentialised*) in terms of this attribute. Third, identity threat in Welsh-speaking regions is therefore more likely to be unambiguously associated with the influence of the (English) out-group. In contrast, the nature and source of identity threat may not be as clear for Welsh people living in non-Welsh (i.e., English) speaking areas. This is because, in addition to the out-group's role in undermining the Welsh language, non-Welsh speakers can also feel that their identity is undermined by the implication (often directly from Welsh speakers) that their inability to speak Welsh makes them less Welsh (Livingstone, Spears, & Manstead, 2009). Consequently, identity threat can originate from comparison with Welsh speakers, as well as the out-group, meaning that identity threat in non-Welsh speaking areas is not unambiguously attributable to the out-group's influence. This is not to say that threat will necessarily be *greater* in this region; rather, it is likely to come from in-group as well as out-group sources. Together, these three features mean that reactions to threat in the Welsh-speaking region are more likely to be framed (i.e., moderated) by the historical illegitimacy of the in-group–out-group relationship.

Method

Participants and design

Participants were 646 adults who identified themselves as Welsh. There were 319 male and 327 female participants, with an age range of 18 years to over 80 years. Participants

Figure 1. Geographical representation of the Welsh-speaking (WS) and non-Welsh-speaking (NWS) regions.

were recruited as part of a survey of national identity processes in Wales. Four hundred and fifty-six were from non-Welsh-speaking regions and 190 were from Welsh-speaking regions.

Survey measures

After recording their sex and age group, participants were asked what they considered to be their nationality, choosing from *Welsh*, *British*, *English* or *Other (please specify)*. It was in response to this item that participants in the present study identified themselves as Welsh. Welsh language ability was measured on a single item. Responses to the question, 'How would you describe your overall ability to understand and use the Welsh language?' were recorded on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*excellent ability*) to 4 (*no ability*). Respondents' own 'Welshness' was measured on two items: 'Overall, how Welsh do you feel?', and 'If you were amongst Welsh-speakers, how Welsh would you feel?' Responses were recorded on scales of 1 (*not at all Welsh*) to 5 (*extremely Welsh*).

Three items measured the perceived importance of the in-group language for in-group identity, $\alpha = .76$: involvement in the Eisteddfod (an annual Welsh-language festival of Welsh culture) and other Welsh-language events; being able to speak Welsh yourself; other people in Wales speaking Welsh. These were rated on a scale from 1 (*not at all important*) to 5 (*extremely important*).

Two items measured intergroup appraisals. One item (*Do you feel that the identity of the Welsh is vulnerable to any extent?*) measured identity threat on a scale from 1 (*not at all vulnerable*) to 5 (*extremely vulnerable*), while the other measured the

perceived legitimacy (fairness) of Wales' relationship with England on a scale from 1 (*not at all fair*) to 5 (*extremely fair*). Importantly, the identity threat measure was worded so that it did not automatically implicate the out-group as a source of this threat. Anger was then measured in relation to each specific appraisal on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Participants thus reported how angry they felt in relation to both the identity threat appraisal and the legitimacy appraisal, giving two anger items.

Of the three outcome measures, two gauged support for specific forms of action aimed at protecting Welsh identity, while the third measured desire for (political) status change in the relationship between the in-group (Wales) and out-group (England). The first identity protection item asked about a constitutional or 'normative' (Wright, 2001; Wright & Taylor, 1999) form of action, namely whether participants would be willing to petition the Welsh Assembly Government to better protect and promote people's Welsh identity, on a scale from 1 (*not at all willing*) to 5 (*extremely willing*). The second identity protection item involved a more radical, unconstitutional or 'non-normative' form of action. It related to a series of arson attacks on empty English-owned holiday homes in Wales that took place during the 1970s and 1980s. These are well-known in Wales and are widely understood to have been a reaction to the perceived damage to local Welsh communities and identity caused by the influx of relatively wealthy English holiday home owners (Bowie, 1993). The item was worded as follows: 'During the 1970s and 1980s a campaign against English-owned second homes took place in Wales. How sympathetic or unsympathetic would you say you are towards the campaign?' Responses were recorded on a bipolar scale where 1 was labelled *completely unsympathetic*, 4 *neither sympathetic nor unsympathetic*, and 7 *completely sympathetic*.

Finally, one item measured desire for change in the relationship between in-group and out-group, focusing on the question of Wales' political relationship with the United Kingdom (UK): 'Ideally, what would be Wales' relationship with the UK?' (1, *complete integration into the UK*; 2, *greater integration with the UK*; 3, *no change to the present situation*; 4, *more power but still in the UK*; and 5, *completely independent*)[1].

Procedure

The survey was administered through telephone interviews. These were conducted using the computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system, which randomly generates telephone numbers. There were no gender or age exclusion criteria, except that participants should be adults.

After giving their informed consent and being assured of their right to withdraw at any stage, participants were offered the choice of whether the interview would be conducted in English or in Welsh. All interviewers had Welsh accents when speaking English, but those who made the initial telephone contact with participants were all monoglot English speakers. If the participant indicated a preference for a Welsh-medium interview, then the interviewer arranged a convenient time at which a Welsh-speaking

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[1] *Although strictly speaking this is an ordinal measure, it was treated as an interval scale in all analyses on the basis that scores were distributed normally (kurtosis = .07, skewness = .77); furthermore, the parametric tests employed in these analyses are generally robust to minor departures from distributional assumptions. Although it could be argued that the option of 'complete independence' might have different meanings compared to other scale points, excluding participants who selected this option did not qualitatively change any path in the final model, and the overall χ^2_{28} of 29.64 was also virtually identical.*

interviewer could telephone the participant to conduct the interview in Welsh; otherwise the interview was conducted immediately.

After recording the participant's sex and age group, the interviewer proceeded through the questions in the order outlined above, reading out the response scale before recording the participant's response. The interviewer then thanked and debriefed the participant.

Results

Similarity and difference between in-group regions

The first step in the analysis was to test our assumptions regarding the importance of the in-group language in the two sets of in-group regions, and the potential for comparison with Welsh speakers to undermine the 'Welshness' of those in non-Welsh-speaking regions[2]. Specifically, it was expected that respondents in Welsh-speaking regions would have greater ability to speak Welsh, and would see the Welsh language as more important for Welsh identity than would respondents in non-Welsh-speaking regions. Moreover, we expected that respondents in non-Welsh-speaking regions would report feeling less 'Welsh' amongst Welsh-speakers than would respondents from Welsh-speaking regions.

The predictions relating to Welsh language ability and importance were confirmed by results of one-way ANOVAs with in-group region as the independent variable and Welsh language ability, $F(1, 644) = 331.13$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .34$, and perceived importance of the Welsh language, $F(1, 644) = 60.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, as dependent variables. Specifically, Welsh language ability was greater in Welsh-speaking regions ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.99$) than in non-Welsh-speaking regions ($M = 1.73$, $SD = 0.94$). Likewise, the perceived importance of Welsh was greater in Welsh-speaking regions ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.84$) than in non-Welsh-speaking regions ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.08$).

The perceived Welshness of respondents was analysed in a 2 (Region: Welsh-speaking vs. non-Welsh-speaking) $\times$ 2 (Welshness: overall; amongst Welsh speakers) mixed ANOVA with repeated measures on the Welshness factor. This revealed a main effect of Welshness, $F(1, 641) = 99.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$, qualified by a significant interaction between Welshness and region, $F(1, 641) = 81.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. This is illustrated in Figure 2. Simple main effects analyses revealed that respondents in non-Welsh-speaking regions reported feeling less Welsh in comparison to Welsh-speakers than they did overall, $F(1, 641) = 304.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .32$. This effect was not reliable for respondents from Welsh-speaking regions, $F < 1$. This confirms that the 'Welshness' of respondents from non-Welsh-speaking regions was more compromised by comparison with Welsh-speakers than was the case for respondents from Welsh-speaking regions.

Path model construction and estimation

The second step in the analysis was to test our preliminary hypotheses in a path analysis. Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among all continuous variables

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[2] *Neither gender nor age had main or moderating effects on in-group language ability or on the perceived importance of the in-group language.*
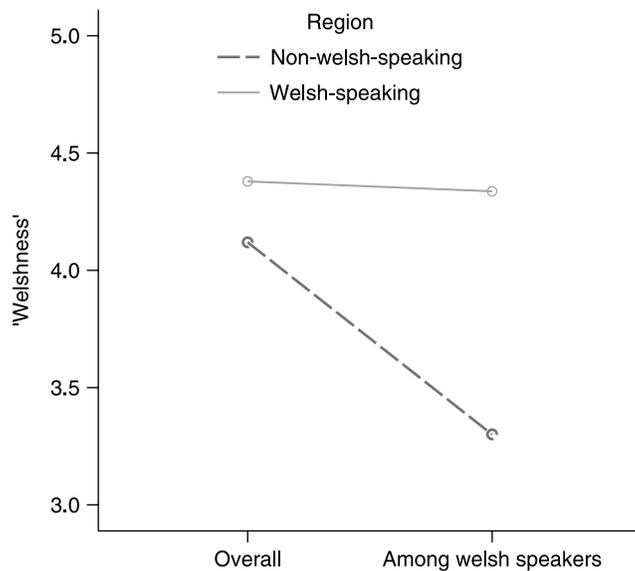
Figure 2. Ratings of own 'Welshness', overall and compared to Welsh speakers, by in-group region.

are reported in Table 1, broken down by region. In the first model, we tested the direct paths from perceived illegitimacy and identity threat to the three intergroup orientation measures (i.e., support for status change and the two identity protection measures). In the second analysis, we tested the mediating role of anger (a scale created by averaging scores on the two items measuring anger, $r = .48$, $p < .001$) on these direct effects. These models include covariance amongst illegitimacy and identity threat, and amongst intergroup orientations. All paths were constrained to be equal across in-group region. The models were constructed using AMOS 6.0, and all subsequent analyses were performed using this program.

The first analysis, illustrated in the upper portion of Figure 3, confirmed (1) that status change and constitutional identity protection orientations were predicted solely by illegitimacy and identity threat, respectively; and (2) that unconstitutional identity protection was predicted by both appraisals, reflecting its origin in identity threat and its focus on the out-group as the origin of that threat.

The second analysis, illustrated in the lower portion of Figure 3, confirmed that intergroup anger explained the effects of identity threat and illegitimacy on unconstitutional identity protection orientation. Sobel tests confirmed the significance of these indirect effects: $Z = 4.26$ for illegitimacy and 4.02 for identity threat in Welsh-speaking regions, and 4.26 for illegitimacy and 4.18 for identity threat in non-Welsh-speaking regions, all $p < .001$. While anger did predict support for constitutional identity protection, it only partially accounted for the link between this orientation and an appraisal of identity threat. This is consistent with the idea that whereas support for (political) status change or other constitutional forms of action represent primarily problem-focused reactions (while not precluding emotion entirely), more antagonistic or 'extreme' intergroup orientations have a stronger basis in emotion-focused processes that emerge when other, more efficacy-based strategies are not viable (e.g., Van Zomeren *et al.*, 2004).

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations between all variables in Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh-speaking regions

	M (SD)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Welsh-speaking										
Language ability (1)	3.23 (0.99)									
Language importance (2)	3.89 (0.84)	.35****								
Overall 'Welshness' (3)	4.38 (0.83)	.43****	.35****							
'Welshness' c/f WSpeakers (4)	4.33 (0.96)	.55****	.38****	.73****						
Illegitimacy (5)	3.66 (1.09)	.05	.02	−.08	−.06					
Identity threat (6)	2.67 (1.28)	.14	.19**	.13	.08	.15*				
Anger (7)	2.08 (1.16)	.13	.27****	.18**	.14*	.35****	.42****			
Status change (8)	3.63 (1.09)	.08	.22**	.30****	.22**	.08	.10	.15**		
Unconst'l ID protection (9)	4.14 (2.13)	.09	.27****	.24****	.26****	.10	.24***	.36****	.22***	
Constitutional ID protect. (10)	3.12 (1.44)	.20**	.27****	.13	.18**	.06	.29****	.23***	.20***	.13
Non-Welsh-speaking										
Language ability (1)	1.73 (0.94)									
Language importance (2)	3.21 (1.08)	.36****								
Overall 'Welshness' (3)	4.11 (0.93)	.27****	.28****							
'Welshness' c/f WSpeakers (4)	3.30 (1.39)	.40****	.29****	.61****						
Illegitimacy (5)	3.80 (1.10)	−.03	.08	.01	.05					
Identity threat (6)	2.42 (1.32)	.20****	.12**	.07	.09*	.14***				
Anger (7)	1.95 (1.15)	.07	.18****	.19****	.14***	.44****	.36****			
Status change (8)	3.47 (1.08)	.13***	.17****	.14***	.11**	.19****	.08	.14***		
Unconst'l ID protection (9)	3.90 (1.93)	.13***	.14***	.03	.00	.17****	.14***	.22****	.15***	
Constitutional ID protect. (10)	2.87 (1.38)	.26****	.39****	.21****	.18****	.07	.13***	.16***	.19****	.20****

*Note.* $*p = .06$; $**p < .05$; $***p < .01$; $****p < .001$.
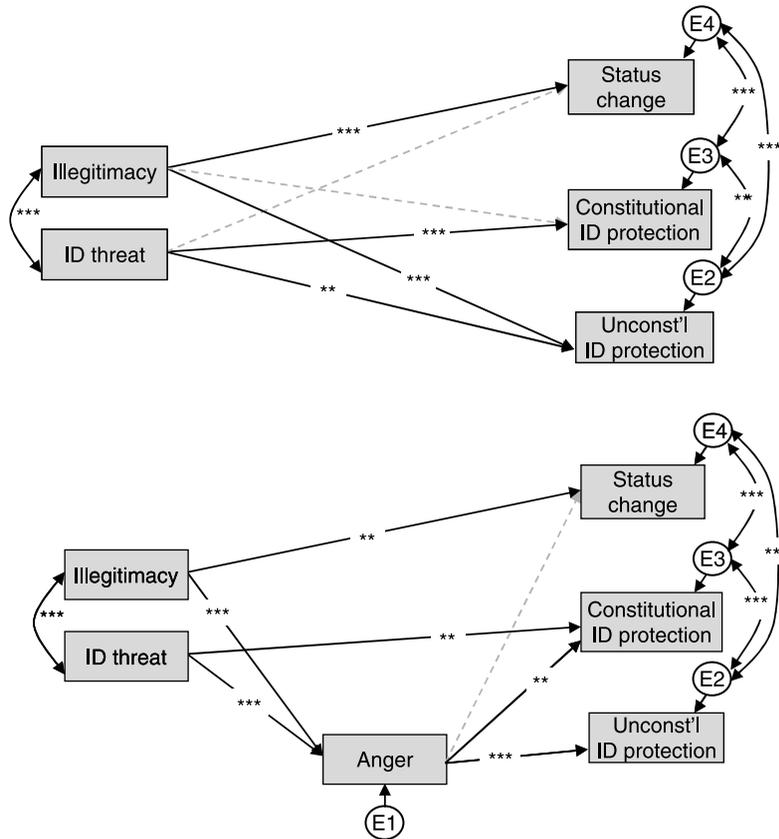
Figure 3. Path models of direct effects from illegitimacy and identity threat to intergroup orientations (upper panel), and of indirect effects through anger (lower panel). All paths were constrained to be equal in strength across in-group region. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

The interaction between identity threat and illegitimacy

Following these preliminary steps, we tested a model containing the indirect paths from identity threat and illegitimacy through anger to unconstitutional identity protection, the direct paths from illegitimacy to status change and from identity threat to constitutional identity protection, and the interactive effect of identity threat and illegitimacy on anger. This model is illustrated in Figure 4. The analysis confirmed that as well as their main effects, identity threat and illegitimacy interactively predicted anger[3]. Simple slopes analyses were conducted in a multiple regression analysis using the full data set in order to confirm the pattern of this interaction. These confirmed that identity threat was a stronger predictor of anger when illegitimacy was high (1 *SD* above the mean), $B = 0.33$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .001$, than when illegitimacy was low (1 *SD* below the mean), $B = 0.21$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .001$. The model fitted the data very well, $\chi^2_{30} = 38.05$,

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[3] *The direct association* B *(SE) between the illegitimacy × identity threat interaction term and unconstitutional identity protection, in the presence of the main effects, was − 0.06 (0.11) in the Welsh-speaking region and 0.02 (0.67) in the non-Welsh-speaking region.*
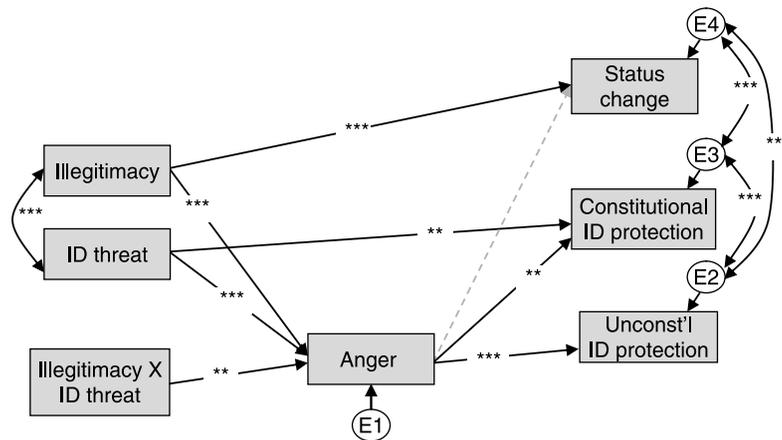
Figure 4. Path model including interaction between identity threat and illegitimacy on anger. All paths were constrained to be equal in strength across in-group region. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

$p = .149$, RMSEA $= .020$, CFI $= .975$, and we used it as a baseline against which to test our predictions relating to the moderating role of context[4].

### Multi-group analysis across region

The strategy here was to test whether the paths from illegitimacy, identity threat and their interaction term differed in strength across region. This was done by conducting pairwise region comparisons between models in which each of the three paths was constrained or unconstrained. If the $\Delta\chi^2$ value of freeing a path is significant, it is considered to vary in strength between Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh-speaking regions (Byrne, 2001). This process was then repeated for the paths between anger and intergroup orientations. This procedure represents a series of planned pairwise comparisons of the strength of each path between in-group regions, and allowed us to test the hypothesis that the illegitimacy × identity threat interaction on anger would be strongest, and would through anger predict support for unconstitutional identity protection orientations, where in-group identity was most contingent upon the 'threatened' in-group language: in Welsh-speaking regions.

Results indicated that, as predicted, the path between the identity threat × illegitimacy interaction and anger was significantly stronger in Welsh-speaking regions than in non-Welsh-speaking regions, $\Delta\chi^2_1 = 4.52$, $p = .03$. Consistent with our prediction that there would be a stronger orientation towards unconstitutional identity protection when illegitimacy interacts with threat, the path between anger and the unconstitutional identity protection orientation was also stronger in Welsh-speaking regions than in non-Welsh-speaking regions, $\Delta\chi^2_1 = 5.26$, $p = .02$. The remaining paths between illegitimacy and anger, identity threat and anger, anger and status change, and

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[4] *In order to check for any moderating effects of gender on the structural paths, the model in Figure 4 was tested first with all structural paths constrained to be equal in strength across participant gender, and then with all structural paths free to vary in strength across gender. The $\Delta\chi^2_8$ value of 8.8 was not significant, $p = .359$, indicating that structural paths did not vary in strength across participant gender.*

anger and constitutional identity protection did not differ significantly in strength between regions, all $\Delta\chi^2_1 < 1.5$.

The model tested to assess path strengths therefore allowed the paths between the interaction term and anger, and between anger and support for unconstitutional action to vary in strength across in-group region, reflecting the predicted moderating role of in-group region. The remaining paths were constrained to be equal in strength across in-group region. This model had excellent fit with the data, $\chi^2_{28} = 28.27$, $p = .450$, RMSEA $= .004$, CFI $= .999$, and standardised parameter estimates for Welsh-speaking (lower panel) and non-Welsh-speaking (upper panel) regions are reported in Figure 5.
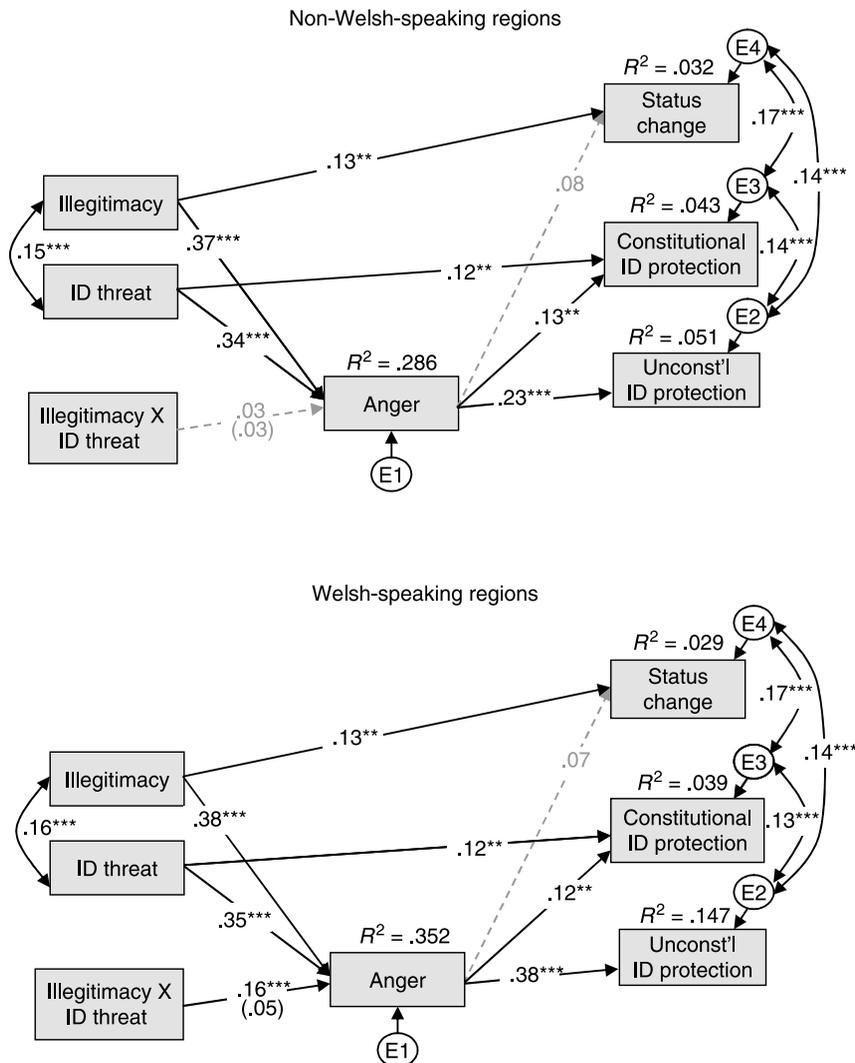
Figure 5. Path estimates for non-Welsh-speaking regions (upper panel) and Welsh-speaking regions (lower panel). Values are standardised (β) regression coefficients, with the exception of paths from the illegitimacy × identity threat interaction term, which instead report unstandardised (B) coefficients followed by the standard error in parentheses. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Discussion

A group's minority status can mean that as well as experiencing negative comparisons with a majority out-group, it may face threats to in-group identity itself as a result of that out-group's influence. For members of minority groups, the experience of identity threat and perceptions of illegitimacy in the in-group–out-group relationship can co-occur. Moreover, the range of strategies and orientations open to members of minority groups – from inaction through to intergroup violence – suggests that such orientations have a more complex basis than can be accounted for by individual appraisals. Nevertheless, existing research has typically focused either on illegitimacy appraisals or on identity threat, rather than the interplay between them, and has treated intergroup orientations as a global outcome, rather than examining their variety.

Our aim in this study was to address this shortcoming. We tested the hypothesis that among members of minority groups that have low power and face threats to in-group identity, appraisals of illegitimacy and identity threat would interactively predict intergroup emotion (anger), which would in turn predict intergroup orientations. This is because perceiving illegitimacy serves to focus attention on the out-group as the source of threat. Likewise, identity threat serves to focus illegitimacy appraisals on the need to protect in-group identity from the out-group's influence. The result is that intergroup orientations become focused on identity protection (particularly in terms of resisting the out-group's influence), rather than solely on change in the power relationship between the in-group and out-group. Further, we hypothesised that the stronger this interaction is, the more these orientations would focus on identity protection. Reasoning that this interaction would therefore depend on context, we sampled from two distinct sets of in-group geographical regions.

The results supported these hypotheses. Initial path analyses confirmed that support for unconstitutional identity protection was predicted by both identity threat and illegitimacy, underlining its origins in a sense of in-group identity being undermined coupled with a focus on the out-group's impropriety. This contrasted with support for status change, which was predicted only by illegitimacy (suggesting that such strategies require a degree of identity security/strength), and with constitutional identity protection, which was predicted only by identity threat (reflecting its focus on in-group authority, rather than the out-group). Moreover, the effects of identity threat and illegitimacy on unconstitutional identity protection were explained by intergroup anger, unlike the respective effects on status change and constitutional identity protection (although the latter was predicted by anger). This speaks to the relevance of intergroup emotion, and anger specifically, to an analysis of the conditions underlying more radical (or non-normative; Wright, 2001) forms of action (see also Van Zomeren *et al.*, 2004). Specifically, emotion can provide a basis for action in relatively adverse conditions (e.g., when a powerful out-group is seen to be undermining the in-group's identity) – and with more adverse consequences – where more efficacy-based strategies that require a secure identity basis and available resources, are not viable.

In support of our main hypothesis, there was also evidence that over and above the main effects of illegitimacy and identity threat appraisals, their interaction predicted intergroup anger. Moreover, this interaction was a stronger predictor of intergroup anger in Welsh-speaking regions than in non-Welsh-speaking regions. This was expected due to the greater prominence of the Welsh language and tendency to define Welsh identity more heavily in terms of the Welsh language in Welsh-speaking regions. Identity threat in Welsh-speaking regions is therefore more unambiguously associated with the

influence of the (English) out-group. In contrast, identity threat in non-Welsh-speaking regions can originate from comparison with Welsh speakers as well as the out-group, meaning that identity threat in non-Welsh speaking areas is not unambiguously attributable to the out-group's influence.

Intergroup anger was also a stronger predictor of unconstitutional identity protection in Welsh-speaking regions than in non-Welsh-speaking regions. Although anger did not differentially predict constitutional identity protection across regions, this is likely due to the fact that, relative to the unconstitutional measure, petitioning the Welsh Assembly Government is less focused on the English out-group as the source of threat. Specifically, petitioning an in-group authority does not clearly implicate the out-group as a source of threat, and so its link with anger arising from an out-group's actions is unlikely to be intensified under conditions where the out-group's corrosive influence is more prominent (i.e., in Welsh-speaking regions). Together, these findings indicate that the hypothesised indirect path from the illegitimacy × identity threat interaction to identity protection outcomes was reliable, and that it was stronger in Welsh-speaking regions than in non-Welsh-speaking regions.

Implications

We have sought to integrate and extend existing approaches to intergroup relations by examining the way in which appraisals of illegitimacy shape reactions to identity threat, and vice versa, among members of minority groups. Specifically, we have sought to address the relatively neglected issues of how identity threat and illegitimacy combine and interact when they occur together in 'real' settings, and how their interaction might help to explain shifts towards radical and potentially violent intergroup orientations. As argued above, this absence reflects the tendency in analyses of minority and low status/power groups to conflate illegitimacy and identity threat, and to focus on strategies of broad-based status change. Notwithstanding the insights from research on social change strategies, this tendency downplays the conceptually distinct role of the threats to identity (as opposed to status or value) that can accompany the relatively stable low power and/or status that often characterises minority groups. This is a vital issue when it comes to understanding different (potentially emotion-based) intergroup orientations and strategies available to minority group members. Put simply, it suggests that whereas minority political status will lead to action intended to produce status change (addressing an instrumental function), threats to identity per se are likely to foster action designed to protect, maintain or assert group identity (an identity function: see Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2002, 2006; see also Klein, Spears, & Reicher, 2007).

An important implication of the present study therefore relates to the different intergroup orientations open to members of minority groups, and their basis in intergroup appraisals. Specifically, the present findings suggest that there is value in examining differences in the nature as well as origins of minority group members' intergroup orientations (e.g., support for constitutional vs. unconstitutional – or even violent – action aimed at identity protection). The key point here is that not only did the interaction between identity threat and illegitimacy predict intergroup anger, but anger in turn became more strongly predictive of unconstitutional identity protection, in the form of sympathy for an arson campaign. Crucially, this emerged only in the context in which (1) identity was most strongly essentialised in terms of in-group language (providing a focus for threat appraisals), and (2) threat could most clearly be attributed

to the out-group. In other words, illegitimacy and identity threat are most likely to interact in this manner when identity is reified in terms of particular (threatened) attributes, and is not also compromised through comparison with more prototypical in-group members (as was the case in non-Welsh-speaking regions).

This suggests that explaining the transition from constitutional forms of action (e.g., working towards political autonomy; signing a petition) to unconstitutional or even violent ones (e.g., support for aggression against the out-group) requires an appreciation of how reactions to one set of appraisals (e.g., of identity threat) are framed by other sets of appraisals (e.g., of illegitimacy). Specifically, resorting to violence may be most likely when reactions to identity threat are framed by the historical illegitimacy of the in-group–out-group relationship. In the absence of this illegitimacy, it may be the case that action focuses solely on policing 'deviant' in-group members – or there may be no target for action at all. Likewise, reactions to illegitimacy might take constitutional forms when in-group identity is relatively secure, but turn to unconstitutional ones when the in-group is denied voice or even potentially its very existence through concurrent threats to its identity. Crucially, these outcomes are not solely the result of one appraisal or another, or their additive effects. Rather, identity threat and illegitimacy frame and give meaning to one another, producing orientations that are not reducible to either factor alone.

Limitations and future research

While there is a need to be cautious when interpreting correlational data in terms of causal relations, the present model is consistent with others that focus on the relationships between intergroup appraisals, emotions and orientations. Moreover, a key point of the present study relates to differences in the associations among variables as a function of the regional context from which the sample was drawn. This was made possible by the different regional contexts that provided the opportunity to examine pre-existing, cross-contextual patterns among members of a large-scale minority group (see also Livingstone & Haslam, 2008; Postmes & Branscombe, 2002). While future research would certainly benefit from more controlled tests of our hypotheses (e.g., through direct manipulation of illegitimacy and/or threat), the present findings provide encouraging support for them. This is particularly so bearing in mind the field setting used in this study. The value of these findings is therefore in demonstrating the relevance of our hypotheses to (and the failure to falsify them in) the most 'real' of contexts.

Replication of the present findings using multi-item scales would also serve to increase confidence in the nature of these processes, particularly regarding the role of intergroup appraisals and emotions. However, it is also worth noting that this is an issue of reliability rather than validity, and does not undermine the utility of the items used here as indicators of key constructs. Indeed, the use of single items measures arguably provides a more conservative test in terms of identifying correlations between measures. Finally, we would suggest that the use of discrete intergroup orientation items rather than a composite scale is best viewed as a strength, because it permitted an analysis of the contrasting roots of different orientations rather than treating intergroup action tendencies as a generic construct (see Wright, 2001).

While the results of the present study are encouraging, there is little doubt that other variables relevant to intergroup orientations would complement the model tested in this paper. In particular, it would be fruitful for future research to further explore the role of collective efficacy in contexts where members of minority groups perceive in-group

identity as threatened. In particular, while Van Zomeren *et al.* (2004) treat collective efficacy as a mediator between group-based support and collective action tendencies, it is also possible that it could act as a *moderator* of other intergroup appraisals. Specifically, it seems reasonable to hypothesise that illegitimacy would be more likely to lead to desire for status change when collective efficacy is high enough to make this goal realistic (similar to instability; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), reflecting a *lack* of vulnerability (Giles, Bourhis, *et al.*, 1977). This tallies with Van Zomeren *et al.*'s (2004) finding that the role of collective efficacy in predicting collective action tendencies is distinct from that played by intergroup anger (see also Van Zomeren, Spears, & Leach, 2008). Although neither Scheepers *et al.* (2006) nor Van Zomeren *et al.* addressed the question of identity threat considered here, it makes good sense that the security of in-group identity is likely to be an emotionally charged issue, lending itself to emotion-focused coping, with anger playing a central and mediating role when the role of the dominant out-group in producing the illegitimacy is more evident.

Clearly, then, intergroup tendencies and goals may differ markedly within any particular social group. While differences in local context clearly play a role, a key challenge for future research will be to account for how and why such differences emerge, and to investigate how group members seek to reconcile these differences in the pursuit of consensual collective strategies. Here, the role of other social-structural variables, such as the stability of intergroup relations (both perceived and objective) and possibilities for intragroup communication (e.g., Smith & Postmes, 2009), will most likely be of importance.

Summary and conclusion

While we acknowledge that the model presented here is not a full explanation of the intergroup orientations of minority group members, we nevertheless emphasise its value in moving us closer to providing such an explanation. This value lies primarily in its integration of previously disparate bodies of research on intergroup relations that have focused on the role of perceived illegitimacy and intergroup emotion (Mackie *et al.*, 2001, 2004; Mummendey *et al.*, 1999; Smith, 1993; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Van Zomeren *et al.*, 2004), and on the role of distinctiveness needs and identity threat (Branscombe *et al.*, 1999; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a,b; Jetten *et al.*, 2004; Spears *et al.*, 2002; Scheepers *et al.*, 2006). The present research shows that although there is value in distinguishing analytically between these facets of intergroup relations, in reality they are both operative (and most likely intertwined) within minority social groups. As Giles, Bourhis, *et al.* (1977) argue in relation to ethnolinguistic minorities, this is because 'psycholinguistic distinctiveness *vis-à-vis* a competing out-group does not in itself mean that an ethnic in-group has achieved a satisfactory social identity; this might be particularly true in a situation where economic and power disparities still exist between in and out-group' (p. 331). In turn, the relevance of these facets to members of a group at any given time will be shaped by the twin concerns of low power, on the one hand, and identity threat, on the other. Moreover, these differences are not simply to be located in some essentialised notion of identity, but rather are products of the interaction with the social context in which identity is embedded, and in which intergroup struggles playout.

Having presented an integrative analysis that marries insights from relatively distinct traditions of research on intergroup relations, we conclude by emphasising the heuristic value of further integrative efforts. Specifically, our intention has been to build-upon

rather than challenge other approaches, with the aim of stimulating further insights by highlighting the interplay of context and different forms of threat in shaping the intergroup orientations of group members. The evidence presented makes a contribution to achieving this goal by demonstrating that although perceiving illegitimacy can certainly engender a desire for (political) status change, it can also stimulate and stoke a concern for the very existence of in-group identity itself. In other words, while members of minority groups might ultimately want to say 'let us be *equal*', they may first need to say, 'let us *be*'.

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