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Abstract

Oppression, frustration, and humiliation are some of the most critical variables when predicting political violence. There are, however, other factors, such as group support and violent narratives/ideologies, involved in this relationship. Moreover, contextual and group characteristics should also be taken into account. Thus, we conduct an empirical study in the context of Catalonia vs. Spain conflict, taking into account group status and other related variables proposed by the 3N model of radicalization. Based on the principles of significance quest theory and identity fusion theory, the following four hypotheses were proposed: H1) fused individuals will be more prone to engage in different forms of pro-group behavior, as well as H2) more sensitive to collective losses of significance; H3) the collective loss of significance will mediate the relationship between identity fusion and pro-group behaviors; and H4) majority/minority-status will moderate these functional relationships. The results indicated that identity fusion predicted intentions of activism through perceived oppression in the majority- and minority-status groups, while identity fusion predicted the intentions of radicalism through perceived oppression in the minority- but not in the majority-status group. The theoretical and contextual implications of the findings are discussed.

Keywords: identity fusion, perceived oppression, intentions of activism and radicalism, majority/minority-status, Spanish context.

Paulo Freire stated that "The oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors" (Freire, 2018, p. 44). This statement about the consequences of oppression has found support for its account of oppression as having the power to lead to violence by way of its encouragement of the oppressed to obtain certain political goals. Theoretical frameworks, such as the frustration-aggression model (Berkowitz, 1989; Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939) and the relative deprivation model (Gurr, 1968), have proposed that oppression, frustration, and humiliation are among the most critical variables involved in triggering violence. However, over time, it has become clear that the situation is not so simple; feelings of oppression do not always lead to violence, and the perception of oppression is, to some extent, subjective. Thus, although oppression seems a vital predecessor of political violence, it is neither a necessary nor sufficient cause (Victoroff, 2009). The connection factors, according to Webber and Kruglanski (2018), are the violent narrative and the social network. Nonetheless, certain social and group characteristics may influence this relationship.

As stated, in a discussion of oppression, there are at least two actors: the oppressed and the oppressor. In this vein, it should be understood that the oppressor has more status and power than the one being oppressed. Thus, in this work, we intend to explore some of the related variables and group characteristics that make the relationship between oppression and violence more likely. Specifically, according to the theoretical knowledge of the 3N model of radicalization (Kruglanski et al., 2013; Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, & Orehek, 2009; Kruglanski, Gelfand, et al., 2014), and starting from the relationship between identity fusion and support for political violence (Gómez et al., 2017), we propose that oppression, conceptualized as a collective loss of significance, is a mediator of that relation, but just for the minority (vs. majority) group.

The radicalization processes

Trying to answer the question, what motivates "normal" individuals to become radicals? Webber and Kruglanski (2017) posit an intersection of three psychological forces, which they call

the 3N: 1) the needs of the individual, centered on the theoretical concept of the significance quest;

2) the cultural and ideological aspects (narratives); and 3) the group dynamics and social influences

(networks). According to this model, which is based on the significance quest theory (Kruglanski

et al., 2013, 2009; Kruglanski, Gelfand, et al., 2014), the path to radicalization begins with the

activation of the significance quest (i.e., individuals' need to "make a difference," "to matter," "to be

someone"), which directs attention to the means to achieve significance. A quest for significance is

awakened through the loss (real or perceived) or potential gain of significance. In this vein, there are

two varieties of loss of significance, collective and individual (Webber & Kruglanski, 2017), though

the evidence suggests that a collective loss of significance tends to bear a stronger relation to

extremism (Jasko et al., 2019). The means to achieve significance are found in the collective

narrative (ideology) of the ingroup, because the beliefs of the group inform what it means to be

significant or essential in the eyes of others. If such a narrative identifies violence and terrorism as a

means to achieve significance, people can support and commit to violence and terrorism. On the

other hand, the group processes are the ones that unite the two previous processes. In this vein, the

commitment to the group restores the significance of individuals, as it rewards them in various ways

(e.g., prestige, resources, feeling of belonging). Nevertheless, the three factors can appear in any

order. According to Bélanger, Moyano, et al. (2019), one possible trajectory may initially involve

having bonds with individuals who support violence, which increases the likelihood of a person

adhering to the group's ideology and its collective grievance.

This theoretical frame is supported by some empirical evidence that makes it relevant to the

comprehension of radicalization (for an extensive review, see Kruglanski, Bélanger, & Gunaratna,

2019). For example, it has been proven that a loss of significance increases the need for cognitive

closure, which makes individuals more prone to accept a radical narrative (Webber et al., 2018).

Other factors that mediate the relation between loss or gain of significance and the acceptance of

violent narratives are moral justification of violence (Bélanger, Moyano, et al., 2019), moral

disengagement (Bélanger, Schumpe, et al., 2019), anomia (Troian, Baidada, et al., 2019; Troian, Bonetto, et al., 2019), and sensation seeking (Schumpe, Bélanger, Moyano, & Nisa, 2018).

On the opposite side, we find evidence that loss or gain of significance does not lead to violence when there are other non-violent alternatives for the group to consider (Dugas et al., 2016; Schumpe, Bélanger, Giacomantonio, Nisa, & Brizi, 2018). In most cases, significance loss leads to non-violent forms of action. Indeed, Kruglanski, Gelfand, et al. (2014, p.79) stated that "whether a prosocial or antisocial behavior is enacted should depend on the ideology that identifies the means to significance." We find more support in collective action literature, which highlights grievances as one of the factors promoting pacific collective actions (Klandermans, van der Toorn, & van Stekelenburg, 2008). Thus, it is clear that, according to this theoretical model, extremism is produced by the same universal psychological processes that result in moderation (Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020).

Radicalization and identity

According to the 3N model of radicalization, the social network provides the narrative that provides instructions on how to gain or restore significance. This is related to the literature highlighting the relation between social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 2005) and the process of radicalization (e.g., Al Raffie, 2013; Raets, 2017). In this vein, Kruglanski (2018) states that the loss of significance is bound up in the individuals' social identity. Thus, the role of social identity is fundamental to the process of radicalization. However, recent studies have shown that other forms of identification, such as identity fusion, bear a closer relationship with violent extremism (Swann, Jetten, Gómez, Whitehouse, & Bastian, 2012).

Identity fusion is defined as a visceral sense of oneness with a group (Gómez & Vázquez, 2015; Swann & Buhrmester, 2015; Swann et al., 2012). It is characterized by a strong and simultaneous allegiance to the group category (i.e., collective ties) and to fellow group members (i.e., relational ties) (Gómez et al., 2019), and its main predictions are related to extreme pro-group

behaviors (e.g., the willingness to fight and die: Besta, Gómez, & Vázquez, 2014; Gómez et al., 2011; Swann et al., 2014; Swann, Gómez, Dovidio, Hart, & Jetten, 2010). Thus, identity fusion theory is considered as being in line with the 3N model propositions, particularly as a factor related to the network (Bélanger, Schumpe, Menon, Ng, & Nociti, 2018; Dugas et al., 2016). Providing evidence, Jasko et al. (2019) found that the quest for individual significance was strongly related to violent extremism for individuals fused with Muslims. Furthermore, individuals with fused identity are particularly sensitive to threats faced by the ingroup (Talaifar & Swann, 2019) and to context (Vázquez, Gómez, & Swann, 2017), so it seems legitimate to affirm that, once fused, individuals should be more ready to react to ingroup threats, like a collective loss of significance.

The moderating effect of group characteristics

A discussion about political violence must take the effect of social context as an essential element to take into account. Individuals inside or close to radical networks change their attitudes and behaviors to more radical ones, like people who joined al-Qaeda (Sageman, 2004). Thus, belonging to a radical group reinforces the belief that violence is a means to address significance. This has been confirmed in several studies by Jasko et al. (2019); they found that radical social contexts strengthen the link between a collective significance quest and support for political violence. Given that contextual factors can strengthen or weaken this relation, we propose that group characteristics can have a similar effect. Specifically, we consider the majority/minority-status of a group as a potential moderator in the relationship between needs, narrative, and network.

According to McCauley and Moskalenko (2010), radicalization is a process, through which an extreme growth of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors is produced in the context of intergroup conflict. Thus, to radicalize, the perception of a conflict (real or not) between two groups is necessary. Supporting this statement, Lobato et al. (2018) found that the perception of oppression by an outgroup (Muslims vs. non-Muslims) leads to violent disinhibition. However, they also found differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. Specifically, this relation was mediated by the

intention of radicalism just in the Muslim sample but not in the non-Muslim sample, while different

moderators acted differently for each other. To our understanding, this difference may speak more to

the majority-minority status of intergroup relations.

The experience of being a member of a majority- or minority-status group relates

fundamentally to the ways that people perceive and experience intergroup relations. There is

evidence that members of minority-status groups who expect rejection by majority-status groups

identify strongly and increase support for political action (Barlow, Sibley, & Hornsey, 2012). In the

same way, minority-status groups with power are more discriminatory (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1991)

and more likely to engage in violent rebellion when there is political discrimination (Jenne,

Saideman, & Lowe, 2007). Therefore, we expect minority-status groups to develop more serious

intentions to transgress the law than the majority-status groups.

The case of Catalonia in Spain

The case of Catalonia in Spain offers a framework of intergroup conflict where radicalization,

or at least cognitive radicalization, is possible, although it did not lead to violence, as we discuss at

the end. According to the analysis of the Real Instituto Elcano (2017) (Elcano Royal Institute), in

Catalonia, one of the most prosperous communities in Spain, around 50% of individuals support pro-

independence political parties in the regional elections, and about 35% do so in the general elections.

However, in recent years, factors such as the economic crisis and the deterioration of the legitimacy

of the Spanish political system, among others, have contributed to the increase in participation in

independence-favored mobilizations. Furthermore, independentist forces have paralyzed non-

independentist Catalan citizenry through indoctrination and social intimidation (Tobeña, 2017).

Thus, the conflict over Catalonia's independence has created a sharp political division (Oller,

Satorra, & Tobeña, 2019; Tobeña, 2018). It is characterized by an entrenched and tense political

stalemate within a fractured society, in which two sharply polarized positions, favoring and opposing

secession, are confronted (Tobeña, 2018). Accordingly, there is an identity division based mostly on

ethnolinguistic characteristics (Miley, 2007, 2013). Therefore, it is believed that this context is conducive to assessing the possible radicalization that emerges from an intergroup conflict. As the Elcano analysts conclude, although the independence process does not count with a social majority and has no capacity for effective control of the territory, the national constitutional crisis is profound, and will last for a long time.

The present investigation

Based on the previous evidence and relying on the 3N model of radicalization, we propose that the network, conceptualized as identity fusion, makes individuals more sensitive to a collective loss of significance, conceptualized as perceived oppression, increasing their predisposition to engage in activism and radicalism. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses. As strongly fused individuals are more prone to engage in pro-group behaviors, we hypothesize that H1) fused individuals will be more prone to engage in different forms of pro-group behavior than weakly fused individuals. Also, given that they are more threat-sensitive, H2) fused individuals will be more sensitive to collective losses of significance than weakly fused individuals. Given these relationships and connecting the three factors, we also hypothesize that H3) the collective loss of significance will mediate the relationship between identity fusion and pro-group behaviors. As we do not find any evidence of a difference between the engagement of legal and illegal-violent behaviors, we expect that both identity fusion and loss of significance will lead to greater commitment in both activism and radicalism pro-group behaviors. Finally, as we mentioned, we consider it important to take into account the status of the groups; thus, we hypothesize that H4) the majority- minority-status will moderate these functional relationships. However, although, in line with the literature, we expect that minority-status groups to be more sensitive to the loss of significance, we cannot make specific predictions of the specific paths moderated by the group status; we therefore consider this hypothesis as exploratory. All hypotheses will be tested in the context of the Catalonia vs. Spain "conflict."

Method

Procedure

The study was conducted in the two weeks before the referendum on self-determination carried out by the Government of Catalonia, suspended by the Constitutional Court on September 7, 2017, and finally held illegally in the autonomous community of Catalonia on October 1, 2017. The questionnaire was distributed via the Internet by placing it on web pages and blogs related to political issues. Once participants accessed the survey, they first accepted its terms and subsequently responded to the different measures included in the study and, in the end, the goals of the study were explained.

Participants

A questionnaire was completed by 214 individuals (125 men and 89 women) living in Spain. Of these, 97 lived in the autonomous community of Catalonia, and 117 lived in other communities throughout Spain. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 88 years ($M = 33.48$ years, $SD = 12.12$ years). Regarding participants' political orientation, it was assessed using a 7-point scale in which 1 indicated an orientation towards the far left and 7 toward the far right; the average score on this scale was 2.92 ($SD = 1.75$). Considering the time limitations of the present study, as it was necessary to collect the data before the referendum was held, the sample size was set as the maximum that was possible to reach in two weeks. However, based on similar studies (correlations and standard deviations from studies in Lobato et al., 2018 were used), we found that only around 100 participants were necessary to reach 80% power ($\alpha = 0.05$) in each of the samples, according to Monte Carlo power analysis for indirect effects (Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017).

Evaluation instruments and variables

All participants completed one of the four questionnaire versions. Two versions addressed the counterbalanced order of the measures, but no significant differences were found between the data collected. Using a group identification question, participants were prompted to choose whether they identified more with Spain or with Catalonia. Depending on their response, identity fusion and

radicalism intention toward the selected group were evaluated, and the feeling of being oppressed by

the other group was assessed (the other two versions). In all the proposed measures, except for those

in which another scale was specified, a 5-point Likert scale with response options of 1 to 5 (from

completely disagree to completely agree) was used.

Group identification

Participants were asked to select the national identity with which they identified themselves;

that is, if they identified more with Spain or with Catalonia.

Identity fusion

Identity fusion was assessed using the scale created by Gómez et al. (2011). This scale

comprises seven items (e.g., "I make Spain/Catalonia stronger") that measure the level of identity

fusion with the reference group. Higher scores on this scale indicate a stronger identity fusion.

Participants completed the measure after selecting their national identity, so the identity fusion was

measured only concerning the group with which they more (i.e., Spain or Catalonia; $\alpha = .91$).

Perceived oppression

Perceived oppression was assessed using the Reduced Perceived Oppression Questionnaire (R-

OQ; Lobato, 2017). This 10-item scale (e.g., "We feel humiliated in Spain/Catalonia") comprises

items from the scale developed by Victoroff and his team (Victoroff, 2009; Victoroff et al., 2006),

adapted to Spanish by Moyano and Trujillo (2016). Higher scores indicate a greater perception of

oppression by the outgroup (Spain or Catalonia; $\alpha = .92$).

Intentions of activism and radicalism

We used the 8-item intentions of activism and radicalism scale developed by Moskalenko and

McCauley (2009) and adapted to Spanish by Trujillo, Prados, and Moyano (2016). Four items of the

scale measure intention of activism (e.g., "I would donate money to an organization that fights for

Spain/Catalonia political and legal rights"; $\alpha = .90$) while the other four measure intention of

radicalism (e.g., "I would continue to support an organization that fights for the political and legal

rights of Spain/Catalonia, even if it sometimes transgresses the law"; $\alpha = .72$).

Results

Group identification

Concerning the national group with which participants identified the most (Spain vs. Catalonia), depending on their place of residence, it was found that 88.7% of the sample that did not reside in Catalonia selected Spain, while 11.3% selected Catalonia. Among those residing in Catalonia, 25.6% selected Spain while 74.4% selected Catalonia. Those who identified more with Spain ($N = 116$) were considered the majority-status group, and those who did identified more with Catalonia ($N = 98$), the minority-status group.

Comparison between groups by identification

As is evident from Table 1, no statistically significant differences appeared between those who identified more with Spain and those who identified more with Catalonia, in terms of identity fusion. However, significant differences were observed in perceived oppression and intentions of activism and radicalism. More specifically, those who identified with Catalonia presented higher scores on perceived oppression and intentions of activism and radicalism than those who identified with Spain. Correlations can be seen in Table 2.

[Insert Table 1]

[Insert Table 2]

Majority-status group

To test our hypotheses, first, we analyzed the results of the majority-status group (i.e., those who identify more with Spain), then the results of the minority-status group (i.e., those who identify more with Catalonia); finally, we compared both samples, attending to the group status. Thus, in this section, we used the PROCESS macro to conduct two mediation models (Hayes, 2018; Model 4) with identity fusion as a predictor, perceived oppression as a mediator, and intentions of activism and radicalism as outcome variables for the majority-status group sample (see Figure 1).

When the outcome variable was intentions of activism, the total effect of identity fusion on intentions of activism was significant ($b = 0.63$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$). Identity fusion predicted, in a significant way, oppression ($b = 0.59$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$) and when both variables were included, identity fusion ($b = 0.37$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < .001$) and oppression ($b = 0.44$, $SE = 0.11$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of intentions of activism. The indirect effect was also significant ($b = 0.26$, 95% CI [0.11, 0.40]).

When the outcome variable was intentions of radicalism, the total effect of identity fusion was significant ($b = 0.16$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .036$). Identity fusion predicted, in a significant way, oppression ($b = 0.59$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$), and when both variables were included, neither identity fusion ($b = 0.09$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .367$) nor oppression ($b = 0.12$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .227$) were significant predictors of intentions of radicalism. The indirect effect was not significant ($b = 0.07$, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.18]).

[Insert Figure 1]

Minority-status group

We followed the same procedure used with the majority-status group to test our hypothesis in the minority-status group (see Figure 2). When the outcome variable was intentions of activism, the total effect of identity fusion was significant ($b = 0.58$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < .001$). Identity fusion predicted, in a significant way, oppression ($b = 0.37$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$) and when both variables were included, identity fusion ($b = 0.44$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < .001$) and oppression ($b = 0.37$, $SE = 0.12$, $p = .003$) were significant predictors of intentions of activism. The indirect effect was also significant ($b = 0.14$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.29]).

When the outcome variable was intentions of radicalism, the total effect of identity fusion was significant ($b = 0.38$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$). Identity fusion predicted, in a significant way, oppression ($b = 0.37$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .001$) and when both variables were included, identity fusion ($b = 0.27$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .003$) and oppression ($b = 0.30$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .005$) were significant predictors of intentions of radicalism. The indirect effect was significant ($b = 0.11$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.21]).

[Insert Figure 2]

The moderating effect of group status

Finally, to test the group status differences in the proposed model, we used the PROCESS macro to conduct a moderated mediation model (Hayes, 2018; Model 59) with identity fusion as a predictor, intentions of activism and radicalism as outcome variables, perceived oppression as a mediator, and group status as a moderator of each path.

When the outcome variable was intentions of activism, the effect of identity fusion was significant ($b = 0.68$, $SE = 0.19$, $p < .001$), the effect of the group status was marginal ($b = 0.78$, $SE = 0.45$, $p = .088$), and the interaction between both was not significant ($b = -0.05$, $SE = 0.13$, $p = .698$). The effect of identity fusion on perceived oppression was significant ($b = 0.81$, $SE = 0.16$, $p < .001$) as was the effect of the group status on perceived oppression ($b = 1.54$, $SE = 0.37$, $p < .001$); the interaction between both variables was also significant ($b = -0.22$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = .044$). In particular, the effect was stronger for the majority-status group ($b = 0.59$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$) than for the minority-status group ($b = 0.37$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$), which reflects the fact that the majority-status group is more sensitive, although the minority-status group presents higher rates of perceived oppression, even when individuals are weakly fused. When we regressed all variables on intentions of activism, the effect of identity fusion was not significant ($b = 0.30$, $SE = 0.23$, $p = .178$), while the effect of oppression was significant ($b = 0.51$, $SE = 0.24$, $p = .037$) and the effect of group status was not significant ($b = 0.28$, $SE = 0.55$, $p = .611$). Regarding the interactions, neither the interaction between identity fusion and group status ($b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = .652$) nor the interaction between oppression and group status ($b = -0.07$, $SE = 0.17$, $p = .678$) was significant. Regarding indirect effect, the index of the moderated mediation was not significant (-0.12, 95% CI [-0.31, 0.10]).

When the outcome variable was intentions of radicalism, the effect of identity fusion was not significant ($b = -0.06$, $SE = 0.16$, $p = .728$) like the effect of the group status ($b = -0.07$, $SE = 0.38$, $p = .861$); the interaction presented a marginal significance ($b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = .052$).

Particularly, the effect was stronger for the minority-status ($b = 0.38$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$) than for the majority-status group ($b = 0.16$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .017$). The effect of identity fusion on perceived oppression was significant ($b = 0.81$, $SE = 0.16$, $p < .001$) as well as the effect of the group status ($b = 1.54$, $SE = 0.37$, $p < .001$); the interaction between both variables was also significant ($b = -0.22$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = .044$). When we regressed all variables on intentions of radicalism, the effect of identity fusion ($b = -0.10$, $SE = 0.20$, $p = .611$), oppression ($b = -0.06$, $SE = 0.22$, $p = .792$), and group status ($b = -0.72$, $SE = 0.49$, $p = .140$) were not significant. Regarding the interactions, neither the interaction between identity fusion and group status ($b = 0.19$, $SE = 0.13$, $p = .156$) nor the interaction between oppression and group status ($b = 0.18$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = .231$) was significant. Finally, regarding indirect effect, the index of the moderated mediation was not significant (0.04, 95% CI [-0.11, 0.20]).

Discussion

As radicalization arises within the perception of intergroup conflict (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2010), it seems relevant to consider group differences that could make radicalization more likely. Specifically, we refer to the differences between majority- and minority-status groups. In the context of the Spain vs. Catalonia "conflict," we propose that H1) fused individuals will be more prone to engage in different forms of pro-group behavior than weakly fused individuals; H2) fused individuals will be more sensitive to collective losses of significance than weakly fused individuals; H3) the collective loss of significance will mediate the relationship between identity fusion and pro-group behaviors; and H4) the majority- minority-status will moderate these functional relationships. The results showed that our hypotheses were partially accomplished.

Regarding the first hypothesis, we found that identity fusion was related to the intentions of both activism and radicalism (i.e., the total effects of mediations for each group). These results are in line with the proposals of the identity fusion theory (Gómez & Vázquez, 2015; Swann & Buhrmester, 2015; Swann et al., 2012). However, identity fusion more consistently predicted the

intentions of activism than the intentions of radicalism and the capacity to predict was stronger for the minority- than the majority-status group in the case of radicalism. This may be related to the context and to the group characteristics, as proposed. The minority-status group is the one "fighting" for a political goal, the independence of Catalonia, while the majority-status group is defending the unity of the national territory. Thus, the majority-status group has the law on its side—indeed Article 155 was applied days later—although the minority group has another source of legitimacy, in the sense that it enjoys popular support (Muro, 2018).

Regarding the second hypothesis, those who are strongly fused perceived greater oppression. It seems that fused individuals are more sensitive to group problems and more affected by them (Talaifar & Swann, 2019). Furthermore, minority-status group members feel more threatened by oppression even when majority-status group members are presenting more sensitivity (Dovidio et al., 2008; Victoroff, 2009).

Subsequently, it was proven that these feelings of oppression are conducive to developing activism intentions in both groups; that is, intentions to behave in support of the ingroup, in accordance with the law. This is in line with collective action literature, where grievances are one of the factors that promote pacific collective actions (e.g., Klandermans, van der Toorn, & van Stekelenburg, 2008). On the other hand, the perception of oppression led to intentions of radicalism in the minority-status group, but not in the majority-status group. In other words, in the context of intergroup conflict, a collective loss of significance motivates those in the minority-status group to accept and, ultimately, use violence in support of their political goals.

Regarding the proposed mediations, the third hypothesis was borne out for intentions of activism in both majority- and minority- status groups. Strongly identity fused individuals perceived more oppression and presented more acceptance for performing legal activities in defense of the ingroup; regardless, they were members of the majority- or the minority-status group. These findings serve as evidence supporting collective action models. As van Zomeren, Spears, and Postmes (2008)

demonstrated, identity leads to collective action through the perception of injustice. In this vein, these authors also included efficacy in their model, the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA), so it seems reasonable to think that perceived efficacy could present an important role. Lending more support to this idea, the motivation model, on which the 3N model is founded, includes expectancy as a key variable, together with desire (Kruglanski, Chernikova, Rosenzweig, & Kopetz, 2014). Thus, future studies should take into account the expectation of effectiveness related to the attainment of the political goals, but also to the gain of significance.

On the other hand, the mediation of intentions of radicalism was only present in the minority-status group. In line with our fourth hypothesis, the members of the minority-status group support violent activities to accomplish their political goals when they lose collective significance, but this is not the case for the members of the majority-status group. In other words, for majority-status group members, a loss of collective significance, embodied as perceived oppression, was not related to the support for illegal and violent measures. This difference that manifests regarding intentions of activism shows that different factors are involved in promoting the use of violence, or even considering the use of violence.

On the whole, our results furnish some evidence of the effect that group characteristics, operating as the group status, play in the process of radicalization. As we have seen, the process of radicalization and support for violent extremism are different from collective action, though they share intervening variables. One explanation for the disparity is that the cost is different for majority-status groups, whom the law favors. When they "know" that they will win using the law, they need not resort to violence, and this relates to efficiency expectations, though it may be associated more closely with expectations of the gain of significance than the achievement of political goals (Muro, 2019).

These results also relate to a common belief; minority-status groups are the ones that radicalized (Trujillo, Moyano, León, Valenzuela, & González-Cabrera, 2005). However, McCauley

and Moskalenko (2008) propose different mechanisms of mass radicalization, or mechanisms by which the majority-status groups are radicalized. Therefore, the radicalization of members of minority oppressed groups may seem more plausible, but this does not mean that the majority-status group cannot radicalize. It is merely a matter of comparative likelihood.

In theoretical terms, our study provides more evidence for the 3N model of radicalization (Webber & Kruglanski, 2017). As proposed, other trajectories, involving the three factors, are possible (Bélanger, Moyano, et al., 2019). In particular, a strong group bond makes individuals more sensitive to a collective loss of significance that makes them more prone to engage in activism and radicalism. Nevertheless, these statements are conditioned by context and group characteristics. Future studies should explore the effect of other group characteristics in a different context to identify theoretical moderator variables. Moreover, the research provides evidence that identity fusion theory can be considered within the context of the 3N model, as it has been proposed (Bélanger et al., 2018; Dugas et al., 2016). In this vein, just as identity fusion is context-sensitive (Vázquez et al., 2017), it may also be conditioned by group characteristics.

Finally, it is necessary to mention how events evolved on October 1, the day of the referendum. It was celebrated illegally, in the face of threats from the Central Government. On the one hand, according to figures provided by Catalonia's Regional Ministry of Health, 893 people were attended at primary healthcare centers and hospitals for wounds, bruising, or health issues resulting from the police action. On the other hand, according to the Ministry of the Interior sources, 19 National Police officers and 14 Civil Guard officers sustained injuries (Amnesty International, 2017). This use of violence by the National Police was rejected by international media and organizations (Amnesty International, 2017; Encarnación, 2017; Horowitz, 2017). However, despite the "repression," more than two million people in Catalonia voted to secede from Spain (Declós, 2017). By the day's end, both sides were claiming victory (Minder & Barry, 2017).

In the end, there were signs of violence, albeit mostly by the majority-status group members,

which could not be predicted by our hypotheses. At this point, it is necessary to clarify that radicalization does not always lead to violence. As McCauley and Moskalenko (2017) state, there is a difference between the radicalization of ideas and the radicalization of actions. Notwithstanding, some other possible explanations may account for the harassment and provocations reported by the National Forces ("Vídeos de agresiones," 2017), the lack of coordination between *Mossos d'Esquadra* (the autonomic police of Catalonia), National Police, and Civil Guard (Navarro, 2017; "Vídeos de agresiones," 2017), or, more in line with the 3N model, the perception of a potential gain of individual significance in the form of status in front of the nationalist supporters. Furthermore, anti-violence campaigns by secessionist organizations, intended to avoid losing legitimacy, may explain these facts (Rubio, 2019). On the other hand, after the referendum, there have been signs of violence by the minority-status group, although at an individual level. There are several examples: a schoolgirl claimed to have been attacked in Tarrasa (Barcelona) by her teacher for drawing a Spanish flag and writing *Viva España* (Viva Spain) ("Una niña dice en urgencias," 2019); there was an attack on a member of a motorbike group by an anarchist who did not like his suspenders, which bore the colors of the Spanish flag (López-Fonseca, 2017); and a young VOX (far-right Spanish party) supporter who was hit and attacked when a group observed him wearing a bracelet with VOX's logo and the colors of the Spanish flag (Tejero, 2019). Thus, we find few signs of violent actions by both groups, but the ideological radicalization seems more plausible for the minority-status group.

This study also suffers from some limitations that restrict the generalizability of the present findings. One of these limitations is related to the conceptualization of the majority- and minority-status groups. We consider the group status, but there are other differences that we can consider between both groups, such as power, economic status, cultural status, or political orientation. Given the context of the Catalonian independence, even when the pro-independentism group is small, compared with the Spanish population, it has half-size inside Catalonia (Oller et al., 2019) and it is formed mainly by elites (Miley, 2013), so power may be higher than is generally thought. Thus,

future studies can test whether other differences between both groups moderate the proposed relationships and facilitate the use of political violence to maintain the status quo, as evidence suggests (Jenne et al., 2007; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1991). Another limitation is the associative (relational) design of the study. Even when the effects of the variables are logical, experimental designs should be developed to confirm the direction of the effects. Last, there is a limitation related to the sample size. Although we almost reached the recommended sample size in both groups, the 100 individuals required to reach 80% of power, a large sample, drawn from different intergroup contexts, can provide more evidence to support our hypotheses.

In conclusion, the present research can provide evidence of the 3N model, when operationalizing perceived oppression as a collective loss of significance and measuring the network as the strength of identity fusion. As such, strongly fused group members seem inclined to perceive more oppression and, they therefore support, on the one hand, legal and non-violent actions and, on the other hand, illegal and violent actions in defense of the ingroup. Nevertheless, this effect may be conditioned by group characteristics. In other words, minority-status group members may be more affected by a collective loss of significance and, accordingly, more prone to transgress the law.

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Running head: Intentions to transgress the law

Table 1

Findings of the Student's t-test on the differences between participants who identified more with Spain or Catalonia in terms of the evaluated variables

	Spain *M* (*SD*)	Catalonia *M* (*SD*)	*t*	*p*	*d*
Identity fusion	3.30 (1.23)	3.23 (1.01)	0.47	.637	0.06
Perceived oppression	2.90 (1.15)	3.69 (0.86)	5.68	< .001	0.78
Activism intention	3.16 (1.36)	3.72 (1.12)	3.34	.001	0.45
Radicalism intention	1.89 (0.97)	2.52 (0.90)	4.88	< .001	0.67

Note: *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation.

Running head: Intentions to transgress the law   30

Table 2

Correlations of the evaluated variables for Spain and Catalonia identifiers

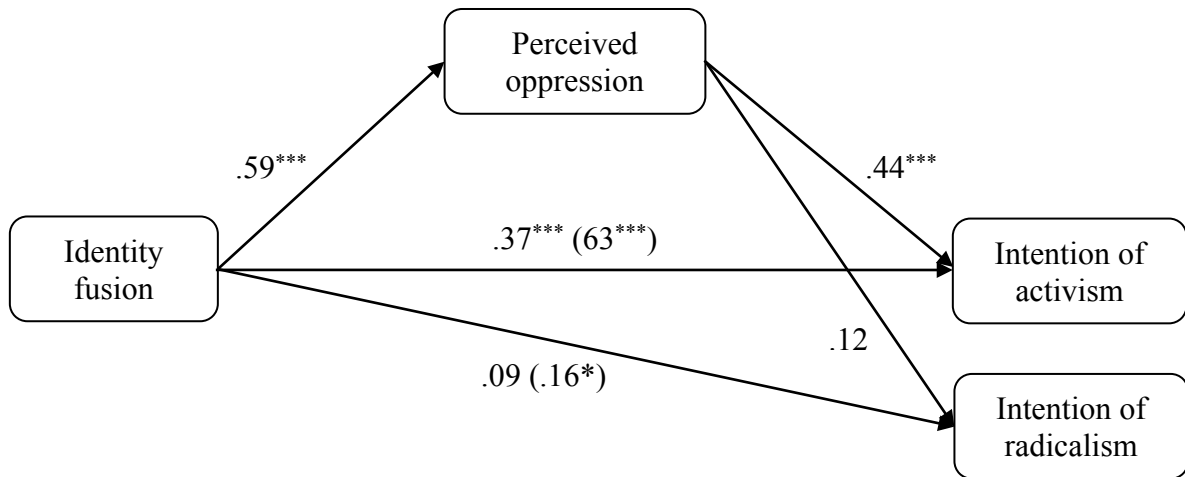|	1	2	3	4
1. Identity fusion	-	.62***	.57***	.21*
2. Perceived oppression	.44***	-	.58***	.21*
3. Activism intention	.52***	.46***	-	.45***
4. Radicalism intention	.43***	.42***	.58***	-

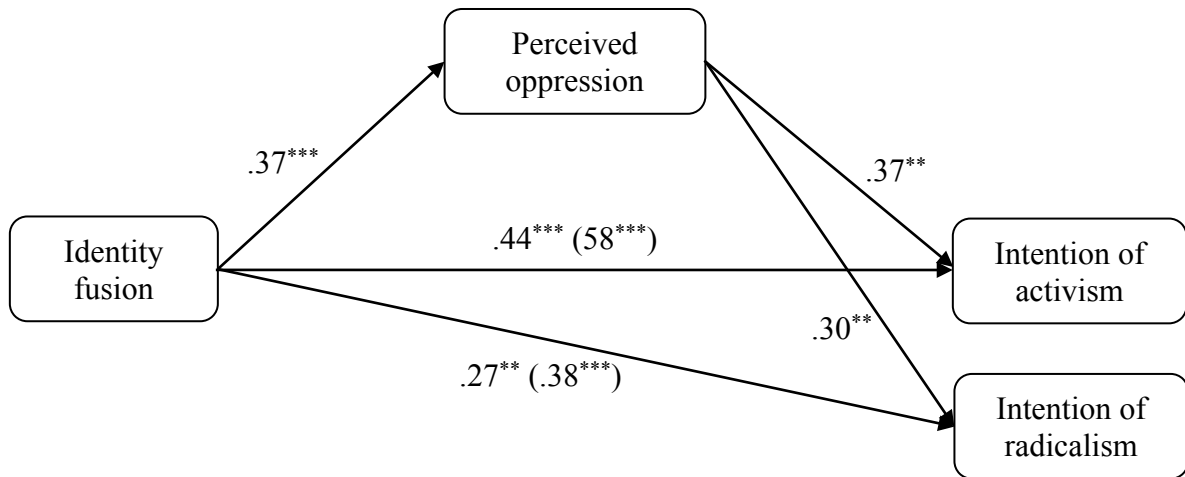*Note*: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

Figure 1

Results of the mediation analysis for the majority-status group. Direct effects are presented first, followed by total effects in parentheses. $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$.

Figure 2

*Results of the mediation analysis for the minority-status group. Direct effects are presented first, followed by total effects in parentheses. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.*