History Matters: Effects of Culture-specific Symbols on Political Attitudes and Intergroup Relations

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A theory of the historical anchoring and mobilization of political attitudes is proposed, arguing that culture-specific symbols, configured by historical charters, are an important resource in defining nationhood and legitimizing public opinion in a way that makes some political attitudes difficult to change. Five studies in New Zealand and Taiwan using diverse methods converged to show that historical events with “charter status” have an additive effect in explaining variance in political attitudes regarding biculturalism in New Zealand and independence in Taiwan even after controlling for the effects of Social Dominance Orientation, Right-Wing Authoritarianism, relevant social identities, and collective guilt. Field and lab experiments showed that the impact of historical symbols did not depend on the mobilization of social identity (e.g., increasing mean scores and indirect effects), but the historical anchoring of political attitudes in representations was resistant to change. Manipulations of the salience of historical events changed levels of social identification, but did not change mean levels of support for New Zealand biculturalism or Taiwanese independence. Even an intense and immersive pretest/posttest design taking high school students on a national museum tour failed to change attitudes towards biculturalism in New Zealand.

KEY WORDS: history, social representations, anchoring, political attitudes, attitude change

Although many instances of violent intergroup conflict in recent memory have involved cultural groups built around ethnicity, nationality and religion; theory and research on the psychology of intergroup relations is typically formulated without making use of culture-specific systems of meaning (see Altemeyer, 1996; Sherif, 1966; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Symbolic meaning is at the center of virtually all psychological definitions of culture (Triandis, 1994), but for the most part, psychologists have left research on the functions of culture-specific symbols to anthropologists (Geertz, 1973) and sociologists (Olick & Robbins, 1998; but see Cole, 1996 for cultural psychology’s synthesis of these literatures). This is because they traditionally have lacked theory to direct a search on what symbolic domains to examine and what functions to expect of them. Liu and Hilton (2005) have offered
a solution to this problem by identifying a particular form of historical symbolism and representation that they refer to as “historical charters,” a core feature of societal beliefs linked to national identities (see also Hilton & Liu, 2008).

The present research examines how culture-specific historical symbols, such as the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand (Liu, Wilson, McClure, & Higgins, 1999) and the February 28th incident in Taiwan (Huang, Liu, & Chang, 2004), influence attitudes towards critical policy issues on the national agenda and provide content that may be linked to the mobilization of social identity (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). This research also provides new group-based answers to perennial questions about the nature of attitude strength: Why are some attitudes so malleable and easy to manipulate in laboratory situations; at the same time, how can public opinion be so enduring regarding basic political features of a society (Petty & Krosnick, 1995)?

From social representations of history to historical charters. There is a growing consensus across the social sciences that history is an essential ingredient in constructing and maintaining the “imagined community” of nationhood (e.g., Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Liu and Hilton (2005) argue that representations of history are particularly important for “peoples,” or groups that constitute or aspire to constitute societies. “Peoples,” like ethnic or national groups, either have or will seek to establish traditions for governance that allow the maintenance of temporal continuity between past, present, and future (Sani et al., 2007). History “confers immortality” to events and people, weaving them into stories with temporal form referred to by Malinowski (1926) as narratives of origin. According to Liu and Hilton (2005), “A central part of a group’s representation of its history is thus its ‘charter’, an account of its origin and historical mission, which will have been amended and renegotiated over time to reflect changing circumstances, and frame its responses to new challenges. Such charters are constitutional: they serve the function of a foundational myth for a society, defining rights and obligations for a group and legitimizing its social and political arrangements” (p. 538). Hilton and Liu (2008) go further to define an historical charter as “a widely shared and iconic representation where selective elements of group history, its causes, and consequences have been elaborated into a quasi-legal form that gives moral and sometimes legal implications for group action” (p. 351).

What form should such a charter take? Starting from Social Representations Theory (Moscovici, 1984, 1988), and the idea that widely shared general knowledge structures form the basis from which specific attitudes are derived, Liu and colleagues found that the main people and events in lay representations of national histories were shared across subgroups in society (Huang, Liu, & Chang, 2004; Liu et al., 1999), even in young and ethnically/regionally diverse nations (Liu & Gastardo-Conaco, 2011; Liu, Lawrence, Ward, & Abraham, 2002). In each of the five countries surveyed in earlier work (New Zealand, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines), there was a clear consensus across ethnic and regional groups about what event was the most important in the nation’s history. Rather than being more formally constituted, Liu and László (2007) argued that historical charters take a narrative form where certain groups and intergroup relations are central to the story-like structure of nominations, proceeding from a foundational event through to conflict and current events.

While there is substantial consensus around what constitutes history at the societal level, there is equally substantial debate and variability at the individual-level around the importance, relevance, and meaning of historical events and figures for present-day politics (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001, chap. 6; Sen & Wagner, 2005). History is an important symbolic resource in mobilizing support for public policies regarding intergroup relations, because temporal continuity is central to claims of legitimacy for peoples (Jetten & Hutchinson, 2011; Sani et al., 2007). Reicher and Hopkins (2001) argue that history is mobilized as a symbolic resource to define the group in a way that is consistent with the political agenda of elites. Consistent with this idea, Liu et al. (1999) claim that history “is the story of the making of an ingroup” (p. 1023).
History is especially appealing for political discourses of nation building because it offers concrete events and people with widely shared emotional resonance. Liu and Hilton (2005) argue that “A great advantage of history for politicians is that most of the participants in it are dead, and while immortal as symbols, can speak only through the tongues of present day interpreters” (pp. 539–540). History thus constitutes an important source for legitimate power (Raven, 1993) and legitimizing myths (Sibley, Liu, Duckitt, & Khan, 2008; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Though all groups agree on the central events and people in this history, individuals of different political persuasions may differ radically on the interpretation of their implications for the here and now.

A Theory of Historical Anchoring and Identity Mobilization


Moscovici (1988) makes an important distinction between hegemonic (widely shared across all segments of society), emancipated (smoothly interlocking alternative versions in different segments of society), and polemical representations (conflicting versions delineating group boundaries). Those historical events and people widely regarded as important across all segments of society constitute important symbolic resources for mobilizing public opinion. They are difficult to ignore in public debate because they carry such widely shared emotional resonance and political legitimacy (see Pennebaker, Paez, & Rimé, 1997). Imagine a debate about the war in Iraq, for example, without reference to 9/11, the Vietnam War, or World War II—many Americans cannot (see Schuman & Rodgers, 2004).

Hence, some historical events will be part of a group-level “historical charter” defining rights and obligations for society and legitimizing social and political arrangements (see Hilton & Liu, 2008; Liu & Hilton, 2005). Such events will be regarded as more relevant to current issues than others because they are regularly invoked in the context of debate as warrants of legitimacy (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Sibley et al., 2008). For example, in New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi signed between Maori chiefs and the British Crown in 1840 is consensually perceived by both Māori and NZ Europeans (its two largest ethnic groups) as the most important event in the nation’s history (Liu et al., 1999). It regularly appears in public discourse regarding all issues to do with ethnic diversity/equity and immigration (see Kirkwood, Liu, & Weatherall, 2005) and is the centerpiece of major recent histories of New Zealand (Belich, 1996; King, 2003).

Thus, we begin with a precondition rather than a hypothesis; this limits the scope of historical events that should influence public opinion, by defining the representational status of events. The relevance precondition is that only historical events and figures with “charter status” (i.e., among the most important events that are part of a widely shared and iconic representation with publicly elaborated implications for action) in society will be perceived as relevant to debate about issues pertaining to the historical charter. Other, more peripheral, historical events will rarely enter into the arena of debate and thus be perceived as irrelevant. Hence, the representational status of an historical event should be ascertained prior to research on its functions (for details, see Liu & Sibley, 2009).

At this point, there are three hypotheses about how historical representations influence public opinion. The first, following from Social Representations Theory (Moscovici, 1988), is the anchoring hypothesis. Historical events with charter status serve as anchors for public debate about new issues facing society. They “make familiar the unfamiliar,” interpreting, shaping debate, and ultimately integrating new information into historical representations that have become part of a charter-defining nationhood. Moscovici (1984) describes anchoring as a process of “convention-alizing” (p. 7). Public debate involving historical charters will rarely change the nature of these
representations. Rather, new information will be absorbed into existing categories and at most slightly modify the existing system of understanding (see Wagner, Kronberger, & Seifert, 2002).

According to the anchoring hypothesis, the invocation of historical events of charter status will not function to change public opinion (i.e., increase or decrease the mean levels of support on major issues). Rather, attitudes towards issues of central importance to society are embedded within or networked to historical representations (see Wagner & Hayes, 2005 for extended discussion). Issues relevant to national interests are debated and thought about in the context of representations that serve to maintain and legitimize national identity (see Billig, 1988). A person will form an attitude by talking to and listening to debate, both interpersonally and in mass media, at times drawing on historical events (Liu & Sibley, 2006), and sometimes internalizing these conversations (Petty & Krosnick, 1995) often within the context of their relevant in-groups (Liu & Sibley, 2006).

Hence, individual difference measures of the relevance and meaning of historical representations will predict attitudes towards important societal issues. But invoking a widely shared historical representation will not necessarily affect mean levels of attitudinal support because these attitudes are themselves constructed through contestation and debate generated by, filtered through, and linked to historical representations. Invoking an historical charter in the laboratory may be like activating a schema (see Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Wertsch, 2002): It will frame a certain interpretation of the issue at hand that has already been thought and talked through. Except during the initial stages of the formation of a new opinion about an unfamiliar issue, it should not be expected to change attitudes. If the anchoring hypothesis is correct, then individual differences in the perceived relevance and meaning of historical representations should be predictive of attitudes and opinion, but invoking an historical representation will not change mean levels of support in issues critical to public opinion.

There is another plausible path for how historical representations may influence public opinion that follows from Reicher and Hopkins’ (2001) reading of social identity/self-categorization theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987): Invoking particular aspects of historical representations can mobilize identities, not only making them salient, but imbuing them with specific content purposefully aligned to the speaker’s vision for the nation. This is a more dynamic view of history than what is implied by the representational theorists like Moscovici (1988) or Wagner and Hayes (2005). Reicher and Hopkins’ (2001) reasoning suggests that invoking an historical representation may “prime” or make salient particular social identities (e.g., Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Schmidt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003) that should then mediate the effect of historical representations on support for public policies. Providing a novel account of an historical event may be able to shift perceptions towards a new narrative, and hence in Reicher and Hopkins’ view mobilize identity, and change attitudes (e.g., minority influence, see Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972). Hence, our second hypothesis, the identity mobilization hypothesis, is that the invocation of historical events may function to change mean levels of support on important issues facing society to the extent that it is able to simultaneously increase the salience and meaning of a relevant social identification, and this mediates attitude change.

Regardless of the process of influence, our third and final hypothesis is that the effects of historical representations are unique. According to the additive hypothesis, historical representations furnish content-rich and culture-specific symbols whose effects on public opinion cannot be accounted for by variables drawn from relatively culture-general theories of intergroup relations, like social identifications (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1996), or Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). This is a claim that symbolic resources derived from the history of a nation cannot be reduced to universal and content-free measures that can be applied with equal force in any culture. We therefore predict that perceptions of historical representations will account for a significant amount of the variance in
intergroup issues relevant to the historical charter even after controlling for measures from all the aforementioned theories.

In five studies we examine the relative contribution of historical representations in shaping political attitudes in New Zealand and Taiwan compared to variables from more established theories. Study 1 focuses on establishing the preconditions of the anchoring hypothesis by comparing effects of the most important event in national history versus a minor event of secondary importance that is still part of the same narrative. Study 2 provides improved measures of dependent variables and puts the anchoring hypothesis to an extreme test of a powerful field intervention designed to change political attitudes through identity mobilization. Study 3 adds additional control and dependent variables, especially the theoretically interesting variable of collective guilt (focusing on personal affect rather than shared knowledge), and Study 4 provides limiting conditions to the effects of historical representations. Study 5, in Taiwan, generalizes the findings to a second cultural context and symbols, further delineating the operation of historical charters as narratives.

**Study 1: The Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand**

The Treaty of Waitangi, signed between Maori (the indigenous peoples) chieftains and The British Crown in 1840, is widely considered to be the most important event in NZ history (Liu et al., 1999). Present-day NZ sovereignty is officially considered to emanate from this event, commemorating a relationship between Maori and NZ Europeans (King, 2003; Liu, 2005). The overall narrative of NZ history may be characterized as a bicultural relationship between two groups, Maori and Europeans; their arrival; the signing of the Treaty; the Land War between them; and their struggle to create a shared nation (see Belich, 1996; Liu, 2005). The Treaty should be part of an historical charter that anchors public opinion on the most important intergroup issue relevant to New Zealand’s historical charter, bicultural race relations (Sibley & Liu, 2004): It should thus predict bicultural attitudes but not necessarily raise mean levels of support for biculturalism if primed.

In contrast, we chose as our second historical event the cutting of the British flagpole by Hone Heke. This occurred prior to the signing of the Treaty and was a Maori expression of disdain for British sovereignty. While somewhat well-known, it was not among the 10 most important events in NZ history enumerated by Liu et al. (1999). Hence, it is hypothesized to lack the representational status to serve the function of historical anchoring.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were 122 New Zealand-born psychology undergraduate students who identified as NZ European (39 males, 83 females) and participated for partial course credit. Participants ranged from 17 to 42 years of age ($M = 19.43$, $SD = 3.29$).

**Procedure and Materials**

Participants were randomly allocated to one of two experimental conditions (the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, $n = 59$; Hone Heke’s actions cutting down the British flagpole in 1844, $n = 63$). Participants in each condition were given a series of eight bipolar (true/false) items referring to differing interpretations of the reasons why the event occurred (e.g., “The Treaty of Waitangi was signed because the indigenous people of New Zealand were falsely led to believe they were ensuring their autonomy”; “The Treaty of Waitangi was signed because it was necessary to come to an explicit agreement in order for the different groups of New Zealand to move forward together in harmony”).
Participants were then asked to write a short half-page essay describing whether or not they thought the event was an important aspect of New Zealand’s history and to outline why this is so. This was done to ensure that the appropriate representation was brought to mind.

Six items were developed to assess perceptions of the historical event in question. Exploratory factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation identified two correlated factors with eigenvalues greater than one that explained 67.65% of the variance. The first factor, with three items, assessed the historical importance of the event: (“[The historical event] was an important foundation of New Zealand culture”; “[The historical event] set down an important foundation for New Zealand society”; “[The historical event] was an important milestone in New Zealand history”; \(\alpha = .79\). The second factor assessed the current relevance of the event (“[The historical event] should be seen as relevant in current New Zealand politics”; “[The historical event] is in the past and should remain there (reversed)”; “[The historical event] should not be seen as topical in New Zealand (reversed)”; \(\alpha = .70\).

Social Dominance Orientation was measured using the 16-item SDO\(_6\) scale developed by Pratto et al. (1994; \(\alpha = .91\)). Right-Wing Authoritarianism was measured using 16 balanced items randomly selected from Altemeyer’s (1996) scale (\(\alpha = .75\)). Ethnic (\(\alpha = .83\)) and national identity (\(\alpha = .81\)) were assessed using the identity subscale of Luhtanen and Crocker’s (1992) collective self-esteem scale. Support for the symbolic principles of Maori-NZ European (i.e., bicultural) relations was assessed using Sibley and Liu’s (2004) measure of biculturalism in principle (\(\alpha = .64\)). This scale was developed for use specifically with NZ Europeans and contained five items (e.g., “The New Zealand national anthem should be sung in both Maori and English”; “New Zealand should be known and seen as a bicultural society, reflecting an equal partnership between Maori and Pakeha” [a Maori word for NZ Europeans]) assessing general support for a partnership between Maori and Europeans as a principle of New Zealand sovereignty. All items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 6 and anchored by the endpoints strongly disagree and strongly agree.

Results

Main Effects across Historical Conditions

A 2 (Treaty/Hone Heke) \(\times\) 2 (current/historical importance) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between condition and repeated measures of perceived importance, \(F(1,120) = 7.84, p = .006, \eta^2 = .06\). A comparison of the means (presented in Table 1) suggests that the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi was seen as important in both a historical and current context, and Hone Heke’s actions were perceived as less important historically and especially less relevant. Hence, the relevance precondition was confirmed for the Treaty of Waitangi, but not for Hone Heke.

A MANOVA revealed few other significant main effects across conditions (refer to Table 1) despite the greater importance and relevance of the Treaty. Invoking an historical charter did not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Results of MANOVA Assessing Differences in Attitudes across Historical Conditions in New Zealand (Study 1).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treaty of Waitangi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Historical importance of event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Current relevance of event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Biculturalism in principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social Dominance Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Right-Wing Authoritarianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. National identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Ethnic identity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*p < .01, *p < .06.
change public opinion (i.e., attitudes towards biculturalism). Support for hypothesis two, identity mobilization, was not found.

As can be seen in Table 2, perceptions of current relevance and historical importance of the Treaty of Waitangi were also correlated with attitudes towards the principles of biculturalism (r’s > .40). Support for Hypothesis 1, anchoring, was found. Additionally, perceptions of the relevance and importance of Hone Heke’s actions displayed notably weaker correlations with the same dependent variables, underlining the necessity of the relevance precondition—not just any historical event, but only a charter-event-anchored bicultural attitudes. SDO and RWA were both negatively correlated with attitudes towards the principles of biculturalism.

### Table 2. Correlations for the Treaty of Waitangi (Bottom Diagonal; n = 59) and Hone Heke (Top Diagonal; n = 63; Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
<th>6.</th>
<th>7.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Social Dominance Orientation</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>−.19</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>−.23</td>
<td>−.14</td>
<td>−.54**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Right-Wing Authoritarianism</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>−.13</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>−.29*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. National identity</td>
<td>−.22</td>
<td>−.05</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ethnic identity</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>−.14</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Historical importance of event</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td>−.17</td>
<td>−.06</td>
<td>−.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Current relevance of event</td>
<td>−.33**</td>
<td>−.42**</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>−.20</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Biculturalism in principle</td>
<td>−.59**</td>
<td>−.35**</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>−.05</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01

### Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Support for the Symbolic Aspects of Maori-NZ European Bicultural Race Relations in the Treaty of Waitangi and Hone Heke Conditions (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B (std. error)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
<th>R²adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treaty of Waitangi</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step one</td>
<td>Social Dominance Orientation</td>
<td>−.61 (.14)</td>
<td>−.54**</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right-Wing Authoritarianism</td>
<td>.10 (.14)</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step two</td>
<td>National identity</td>
<td>−.01 (.12)</td>
<td>−.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnic identity</td>
<td>.08 (.10)</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step three</td>
<td>Historical importance of event</td>
<td>.22 (.10)</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td>.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current relevance of event</td>
<td>.19 (.09)</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.92 (.80)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hone Heke</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step one</td>
<td>Social Dominance Orientation</td>
<td>−.42 (.12)</td>
<td>−.43**</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right-Wing Authoritarianism</td>
<td>.03 (.13)</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step two</td>
<td>National identity</td>
<td>.36 (.13)</td>
<td>.36*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnic identity</td>
<td>−.28 (.14)</td>
<td>−.27*</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step three</td>
<td>Historical importance of event</td>
<td>.04 (.09)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current relevance of event</td>
<td>.06 (.09)</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.89 (.78)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .001. Regression parameters are presented for the final (Step 3) models.

As can be seen in Table 2, perceptions of current relevance and historical importance of the Treaty of Waitangi were also correlated with attitudes towards the principles of biculturalism (r’s > .40). Support for Hypothesis 1, anchoring, was found. Additionally, perceptions of the relevance and importance of Hone Heke’s actions displayed notably weaker correlations with the same dependent variables, underlining the necessity of the relevance precondition—not just any historical event, but only a charter-event-anchored bicultural attitudes. SDO and RWA were both negatively correlated with attitudes towards the principles of biculturalism.

### Predictive Utility of Historical Perceptions

To untangle this pattern of correlations, hierarchical regression (see Table 3) with the stable individual-difference variables of Social Dominance Orientation and Right Wing Authoritarianism entered in block 1, followed by identities, and then the historical variables in block 3 was employed. This showed that the historical importance, β = .25, and current relevance of, β = .26, the Treaty of Waitangi (entered at step three), ΔR² = .15; Fchange(2,52) = 7.74, p = .001, accounted for significant additional variance in support for the principles of biculturalism on top of the 30%, R²adjusted = .30;
\[ F(4,54) = 7.24, p < .001, \] already predicted by the linear combination of, SDO and RWA (step one), and national and ethnic identity (step two).\(^1\) This provides a stringent test of the additive hypothesis (Hypothesis 3), by showing that history variables provide additional explanatory power after other independent variables have already been accounted for. The Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) for the parameters in the full model with all predictors ranged from 1.21 to 1.65, with a mean of \( M_{\text{VIF}} = 1.45 \), indicating that model was not unduly biased by multicollinearity (as these values were well within the range of tolerance).

As can be seen in the lower half of Table 3, the linear combination of SDO and RWA, and national and ethnic identity, predicted a similar amount of variance in support for principles of biculturalism in the Hone Heke condition, \( R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .34; F(4,57) = 8.95, p < .001 \). However, as anticipated, perceptions of the current relevance and historical importance of Hone Heke’s actions (entered at step three) failed to predict additional variance in support of the principles of biculturalism above and beyond that already predicted by the other variables included in the model, \( \Delta R^2 < .01; F_{\text{change}}(2,55) = .55, p = .75 \). Hone Heke chopping down the flagpole is a minor historical event for most people, it does not provide an anchor for bicultural attitudes. The VIFs for the parameters in the full model with all predictors ranged from 1.35 to 1.59, with a mean of \( M_{\text{VIF}} = 1.46 \), again values well within the range of tolerance.

SDO explained a majority of the variance regarding attitudes towards bicultural race relations, the most important intergroup issue facing New Zealand, regardless of the order of entry of the variables. When the order of steps 1 and 2 are reversed, the linear combination of SDO and RWA predicted similar amounts of variance in support for biculturalism in both the Treaty, \( \Delta R^2 = .31; F_{\text{change}}(2,54) = 12.91, p < .001 \), and Hone Heke, \( \Delta R^2 = .16; F_{\text{change}}(2,57) = 7.34, p = .001 \), conditions. The identity variables were significant only for Hone Heke (\( \Delta R^2 = .23 \)), even when entered first.

**Discussion**

In accord with hypothesis 1, political attitudes on a political issue relevant to New Zealand’s historical charter were anchored in (rather than mobilized by) historical representations. Unique explanatory effects for historical perceptions were obtained in addition to standard variables in social identity and intergroup relations in accord with the additive Hypothesis (3). The necessity of the charter status of the historical event used to anchor public opinion was revealed by the contrasting results obtained for the Treaty of Waitangi compared to Hone Heke. Though both historical events involved intergroup relations between Maori and Europeans, Hone Heke’s cutting of the British flagpole was perceived as less important and much less relevant to the current political situation than the Treaty. While it is recounted in some history books, this event was not among the most important historical events in NZ history and thus does not serve as an anchor.

Consistent with Sidanius and Pratto (1999), who state that “The groups most likely to be the targets of social dominance drives will be those groups which are both the most salient and define the sharpest power differential within society” (p. 61), SDO was a powerful predictor of attitudes towards bicultural race relations whereas the identity variables were not. Ethnic identity for NZ Europeans is not as clearly articulated, masked as it is within national identity claims (Liu, 2005).

\(^1\) Because the relevance precondition predicts differential effects for historical perceptions depending on whether the event has representational status, separate regressions for the two events are more appropriate than a single regression with a dummy-coded independent variable. Comparable results for the historical variables were obtained when experimental condition was dummy coded in a single regression equation.
Study 2: How Strongly Are Bicultural Attitudes Anchored?

A second study addressed two concerns. First is whether the previous experimental manipulations were too weak to get identity mobilization (Hypothesis 2) effects. In Study 2, we brought groups of high school students to participate in the national museum’s Maori experience guided tour that narrated biculturalism around a giant (30 foot tall) replica of the Treaty of Waitangi. Political attitudes were measured before and after the tour. Huang and Liu (2005) got impressive effects in Taiwan using an intervention like this, significantly changing levels of SDO by taking school children to a national museum. It was hypothesized that if identity mobilization (Hypothesis 2) occurred because of the tour experience, the mean levels of the relevant identity and political attitudes would change.

Second, some of the dependent measures in Study 1 were imprecise. Sibley and Liu (2004) and Huang et al. (2004) have emphasized the importance of distinguishing between realistic and symbolic conflict in intergroup relations. Sibley and Liu (2004) identified separate symbolic and realistic factors in NZ Europeans’ attitudes towards bicultural race relations (consistent with the work of Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Whereas biculturalism in principle involves attitudes toward the symbols of biculturalism in New Zealand that do not involve material costs but only symbolic inclusion (e.g., singing the national anthem in both Maori and English) and receive popular support, resource specific biculturalism involves such material issues as the repayment of Maori tribes for land confiscated during the colonial era (see Nairn & McCreanor, 1991; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) and are opposed by many NZ Europeans. Sibley, Robertson, and Kirkwood (2004) developed a precise measure of symbolic versus resource-based policy preferences used in the current study.

Method

Experimental context. A local high school was contacted and its history teachers agreed to bring their senior students to New Zealand’s national museum Te Papa to participate in an official Maori experience guided tour which focused on the Treaty of Waitangi. The two-hour tour is content rich and experientially novel in that it connects history to physical artifacts that provide a context for interpreting the relationship between Maori and the government as specified by the Treaty (and the ideal of biculturalism). The students completed surveys a week prior to their tour and shortly after the tour directly under a giant 30-foot-tall replica of the Treaty in Te Papa. None of the students had participated in such a tour previously, so this constituted a novel and experientially involving attempt at identity mobilization.

Participants

A total of 40 students completed pretests; two were deleted because they were foreign nationals. This left 11 boys and 27 girls (mean age 16.74, range 16–18) who participated as part of their advanced NZ history course, including 22 NZ Europeans, seven Maori, one Asian, and eight who didn’t indicate ethnicity; six students completing the pretest failed to turn up for the museum tour leaving a final sample of 32.

Materials

The survey included reliable measures of symbolic ($\alpha = .82$ pre, .90 post) and resource-based bicultural policy preferences ($\alpha = .66$ pre, .60 post; Sibley et al.’s 2004 measure), ethnic ($\alpha = .88$ pre, .91 post) and national collective self-esteem ($\alpha = .85$ pre, .85 post; 12 items from Historical Symbols, Culture, and Political Attitudes 65
Luhtanen and Crocker’s (1992) measure excluding the Membership Esteem subscale), and an objective test of bicultural knowledge (each of 12 items of culture-specific coded as correct or incorrect). Four students did not complete every measure, and so degrees of freedom in the statistical tests to follow varied from 31 to 27.

Results

A comparison of pretest and posttest means revealed that there was no difference in any of the measured variables as a consequence of the national museum tour except on bicultural knowledge. Means pre- and posttest for symbolic (M = 6.08 pre to 6.10 post, F(1, 31) = 0.08, NS) and resource-based bicultural policy preferences (M = 3.92 pre to 4.31 post, F(1, 27) = 2.42, p < .13), ethnic (M = 5.35 pre to 5.43 post, F(1, 30) = 0.62, p < .44) and national collective self-esteem (M = 6.06 pre to 6.04 post, F(1, 31) = 0.1, NS), revealed no significant differences as a consequence of participating in the national museum’s Maori experience tour. By contrast, bicultural knowledge increased significantly (M = 5.7 pre to 7.4 post, F(1, 29) = 33.84, p < .0001; eta² = .54), and participants reported much more positive than negative emotions regarding the tour. Removing Maori participants did not change the results; nor did pretest collective self-esteem moderate posttest bicultural policy attitudes.

Discussion

Mean levels of participants’ bicultural policy preferences and levels of national and ethnic identification appeared to be impervious to the informational influence of a Maori experience tour at the national museum. Only the degree of objective bicultural knowledge changed between pretest and posttest measures, suggesting that attitudes towards biculturalism in New Zealand (and identities relevant to this) are anchored to networks of attitude and belief (see Liu & Sibley, 2006) that are difficult to change even using emotionally engaging and experientially rich interventions. In support of Hypothesis 1, anchoring was again found. The best efforts of trained professional tour guides to bring New Zealand history and culture to life within a bicultural frame failed to achieve identity mobilization.

Study 3: New Zealand History and Collective Guilt

Our third investigation examined a potential alternative explanation to the results obtained in Study 1. There has been considerable recent interest in the concept of collective guilt (e.g., Branscombe, Slugoski, & Kappen, 2004; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; McGarty et al., 2005) as a potential mediator of intergroup attitudes and compensation for historical misdeeds. Collective guilt is tied notions of social identity and conceived largely in terms of affect rather than knowledge. Collective guilt, according to Branscombe and Doosje (2004), “stems from the distress that group members experience when they accept that their ingroup is responsible for immoral actions that harmed another group” (p. 3). Hence, while collective guilt is rooted in historical perceptions, the impact of historical representations (as a product of shared knowledge) should not be reducible to the affect of collective guilt.

Furthermore, we also wanted to provide further evidence for the anchoring account by demonstrating that historical perceptions of the Treaty of Waitangi serve as anchors on public opinion among a general population rather than students, even in the absence of explicit manipulation making history salient. Also, we wanted to rule out the alternative interpretation that our effects were not due to culture specific symbols, but a general orientation towards history.
Method

Participants

Participants were 178 members of the general New Zealand population who were born in New Zealand and who identified as NZ European. Participants (79 males and 99 females) ranged from 16 to 62 years of age (M = 27.27, SD = 10.01).

Procedure and Materials

People seated in public places (e.g., parks, beaches, bus stops, seated areas in malls) were approached by a male NZ European research assistant and asked if they were interested in participating in a study examining opinions of New Zealand culture. Participants were offered a movie voucher for participation. Of the 240 people who were approached, 238 agreed to participate. Two hundred and thirty participants completed the entire survey, yielding a final response rate of 96%. Fifty-four participants (23%) did not identify as NZ European and were excluded from analysis.

SDO (α = .81), RWA (α = .83), ethnic identity (α = .80), and perceptions of the current relevance (α = .80) and historical importance (α = .80) of the Treaty of Waitangi were assessed using the measures described in Study 1. Confirmatory factor analysis suggested that the hypothesized two factor structure of the historical perceptions scales (i.e., current relevance, historical importance) provided an adequate fit to the data, χ²(4) = 8.16, Goodness of Fit [GFI] = .98; Non-Normed Fit Index [NNFI] = .97; Comparative Fit Index [CFI] = .99; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA] = .07; standardized Root Mean Square Residual [sRMR] = .03). Refer to Hu and Bentler (1999) for a discussion of these fit indices. Chi-squared difference tests also supported this interpretation, as a two-factor solution described the data significantly better than an alternative single factor solution, χ²diff(1) = 65.11, p < 0.05.

Collective guilt was assessed using the items from Branscombe et al.’s (2004) scale which were reworded to refer to NZ European’s historical actions toward Maori (e.g., “I can easily feel guilt about the bad outcomes received by Maori that were brought about by NZ Europeans/Pakeha in the past”; α = .86). Five items were also developed which assessed general historical orientation (“Knowing the past is the best way to prepare for the future”; “If you don’t understand history then you cannot understand what needs to be done in society today”; “To know a people is to know their history”; “A people’s history is the best source of guidance about what they should do in the future”; “History is of no use in understanding society today [reversed]”; α = .73).

Support for the symbolic aspects of Maori-NZ European race relations (α = .78) and beliefs in the legitimacy of Maori claims of ownership of the foreshore and seabed of New Zealand (a realistic issue, α = .77; defining ownership and control of the area between the high and low tide) were assessed using the scales developed by Sibley et al. (2004). The foreshore issue at the time of survey administration was the most topical issue in New Zealand and the subject of both proposed legislation (claiming government ownership of the foreshore) and vigorous protest (a 50,000 person march on Parliament) on behalf of Maori against this legislation.

Support for symbolic aspects of bicultural race relations was assessed using five items, such as “The New Zealand national anthem should be sung in both Maori and English”; and “Maori culture should stay where it belongs—with Maori—because it has nothing to do with the rest of New Zealand as a whole [reversed].” Support for Maori ownership of the foreshore was assessed using a further five items, such as “The foreshore claims are legitimate as Maori have not yet been sufficiently compensated for the dispossession of their land” and “Maori claims over the foreshore that go beyond concepts of guardianship in an attempt to gain economic benefits are unjust [reversed].”
One section of the questionnaire contained items assessing SDO and RWA, and another section contained all other items. The order of these two sections was counterbalanced.

### Results

As can be seen in Table 4, consistent with Study 1, perceptions of the current relevance and historical importance of the Treaty correlated with support for both the symbolic and realistic aspects of Maori-NZ European intergroup relations, as did measures of collective guilt and measures of SDO, RWA, and ethnic identity.

#### Predictive Utility of Historical Perceptions

As shown in Table 5, hierarchical regression analysis showed that representations of the historical importance, $\beta = .15$, $p = .008$, and current relevance, $\beta = .12$, $p = .08$, of the Treaty of Waitangi (entered at step six), $\Delta R^2 = .03$; $F_{\text{change}}(2, 162) = 6.62$, $p = .002$, accounted for variance in support for the symbolic principles of bicultural (Maori-NZ European) relations in addition to the 59%, $R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .59$; $F(7, 164) = 35.51$, $p < .001$, already predicted by the linear combination of demographic variables (age, gender), SDO, RWA, ethnic identity, collective guilt, and general historical

Table 4. Correlations Between SDO, RWA, Collective Guilt, Perceptions of the Treaty Of Waitangi, and Attitudes Towards Maori-NZ European Bicultural Race Relations ($N = 178$; Study 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
<th>6.</th>
<th>7.</th>
<th>8.</th>
<th>9.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Social Dominance Orientation</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Right-Wing Authoritarianism</td>
<td>-1.09</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Ethnic identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.39*</td>
<td>-0.22*</td>
<td>.46*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. NZ European collective guilt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.28*</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.38*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. General historical orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.44*</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Historical importance of Treaty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.37*</td>
<td>-0.27*</td>
<td>.42*</td>
<td>.68*</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>.47*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Current relevance of Treaty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.51*</td>
<td>-0.32*</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.70*</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.46*</td>
<td>.60*</td>
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<td>8. Biculturalism in principle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Maori claims to foreshore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.56*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.34*</td>
<td>.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .01

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Attitudes Towards the Symbolic Principles of Maori-NZ European Bicultural Relations in New Zealand (Study 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>$B$ (std. error)</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2_{\text{adjusted}}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.01 (.01)</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.35 (.12)</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Dominance Orientation</td>
<td>-.26 (.09)</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-Wing Authoritarianism</td>
<td>-.08 (.08)</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step three</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic identity</td>
<td>-.04 (.04)</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step four</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ European collective guilt</td>
<td>.37 (.06)</td>
<td>.45*</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step five</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General historical orientation</td>
<td>.05 (.07)</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step six</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical importance of Treaty</td>
<td>.14 (.05)</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current relevance of Treaty</td>
<td>.09 (.05)</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.59 (.44)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .09; *p < .01. Regression parameters are presented for the final (Step 6) model.
orientation. The VIFs for the parameters in the full model with all predictors ranged from 1.06 to 2.24, with a mean of $M_{VIF} = 1.57$, values were well within the range of tolerance.

Similar results were observed when support for a topical resource-based issue (i.e., beliefs in the legitimacy of Maori claims to the New Zealand foreshore) was entered as the dependent variable. The current relevance, $\beta = .40, p < .001$, but not historical importance, $\beta = .02, p = .76$, of the Treaty of Waitangi (entered at step six), $\Delta R^2 = .08; F_{change}(2,160) = 11.41, p < .001$, accounted for 8% additional variance in support for the legitimacy of Maori claims to the foreshore on top of the 31%, $R^{adj}_{2} = .34; F(7,162) = 13.14, p < .001$, already predicted by the linear combination of demographic variables (age, gender), SDO, $\beta = .02, p = .77$, RWA, $\beta = .04, p = .62$, Ethnic identity, $\beta = -.02, p = .77$, collective guilt, $\beta = .41, p < .001$, and general historical orientation, $\beta = -.18, p = .007$. The anchoring and additive hypotheses (1 and 3) were partially supported for both symbolic and resource-based biculturalism.

**Discussion**

Collective guilt, operationalized as an intergroup attitude drawing on historical representations in an affect-laden and action implicit manner, was a highly significant predictor of NZ European attitudes towards biculturalism. However, even after controlling for collective guilt, the importance and relevance of the Treaty of Waitangi still exerted independent effects on public opinion. Of the two measures of historical representations, the impact of importance was more consistent. Hence, it appears that a culture specific operationalization of historical representations still added explanatory value even after controlling for an affect-laden and content-general measure of collective guilt. By contrast, general historical orientation had no impact on bicultural attitudes.

**Study 4: Women’s Suffrage and Ambivalent Sexism**

A fourth study aimed to ascertain boundary conditions for the influence of representations of history. While the Treaty of Waitangi has charter status as the most important historical event in NZ history, and the one overall narrative of NZ history is bicultural, this is not the narrative’s only strand (see Belich, 1996). New Zealand is also deeply rooted in Western civilization and liberal doctrines that have guided the evolution of democracy. Hence, a bicultural representation of history is not the only one capable of anchoring political opinion and legitimizing political agenda. Rather, arguments based on liberal doctrines of freedom and equality may be even stronger, though this is often not expressed with reference to historical events (see Nairn & McCreanor, 1991; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

We are not claiming that the general principles of liberal democracy, which are probably the ultimate warrant of political legitimacy for New Zealand, take representational form as historical events. However, liberal principles can be manifested through reactions to historical events. The main event in representations of NZ history that can be tied to liberal doctrine and the rise of democracy is women’s suffrage. In 1893, New Zealand became the first country in the world to grant women the right to vote. Liu et al. (1999) reported it as about the fifth most important event in lay representations of NZ history. New Zealanders rated women’s suffrage among the fifth most important event in world history as well (see Hilton & Liu, 2008). If history provides culture specific symbols for anchoring public opinion, then perceptions of the Treaty of Waitangi should be less influential than historical perceptions of women’s suffrage when it comes to issues of sexism. Unlike general orientations such as RWA or SDO, historical representations are content specific and are hypothesized to have a limited domain of influence that does not extend beyond the reach of their charter.
Method

Participants

Participants were 134 New Zealand European undergraduate psychology students who participated for partial course credit. Participants (40 male, 94 female) ranged from 17 to 54 years of age ($M = 20.95$, $SD = 4.52$).

Procedure and Materials

SDO ($\alpha = .81$; Pratto et al., 1994) and ratings of the current relevance and historical importance of both the Treaty of Waitangi ($\alpha = .81$, .81, respectively) and Women’s Suffrage ($\alpha = .72$, .60, respectively) were assessed using the measures described in Study 1. RWA was measured using a balanced set of 10 items randomly selected from Altemeyer (1996; $\alpha = .83$). Hostile ($\alpha = .83$) and benevolent ($\alpha = .79$) sexism were measured using Glick and Fiske’s (1996) Ambivalent Sexism Inventory.

Results

As can be seen in Table 6, SDO and RWA correlated with both hostile and benevolent sexism. The historical importance of women’s suffrage correlated with hostile, but not benevolent, sexism. The current relevance of women’s suffrage was uncorrelated with sexism. However, this measure was highly positively correlated with the current relevance of the Treaty of Waitangi ($r = .71$), suggesting that it may be largely redundant when perceptions of the Treaty are also considered.

Predictive Utility of Historical Representations

As shown in Table 7, hierarchical regression analysis found that gender (entered at step one, females coded as 0, males coded as 1) predicted 7% of the variance in hostile sexist attitudes, $R_{adj}^2 = .07$; $F(1,132) = 10.58$, $p = .001$. The linear combination of SDO and RWA (entered at step two) predicted an additional 25% of the variance in hostile sexist attitudes, $\Delta R^2 < .05$; $F_{change}(2,130) = 23.79$, $p < .001$. The entry of the current relevance and historical importance of the Treaty of Waitangi at step three, in contrast, failed to predict additional variance in hostile sexism, $\Delta R^2 < .01$; $F_{change}(2,128) = .31$, $p = .73$. However, as predicted, the historical importance of women’s

Table 6. Correlations Between SDO, RWA, Perceptions of Women’s Suffrage, and Sexism (Study 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>1.</th>
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<th>6.</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Right-Wing Authoritarianism</td>
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<td>.25*</td>
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<td>3. Historical importance of Treaty</td>
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<td>4. Current relevance of Treaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Historical importance of women’s suffrage</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Current relevance of women’s suffrage</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Hostile sexism</td>
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<td>8. Benevolent sexism</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .01$

Liu et al.70
Table 7. Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Hostile Sexism (Study 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>B (std. error)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
<th>R²adjusted</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step one</td>
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<td>.25**</td>
<td>.07**</td>
<td>.07</td>
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<td>.27 (.08)</td>
<td>.30**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Right-Wing Authoritarianism</td>
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<td>.21*</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step three</td>
<td>Historical importance of Treaty</td>
<td>.00 (.04)</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current relevance of Treaty</td>
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<td>-.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.21*</td>
<td>.04*</td>
<td>.33</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constant</td>
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</table>

*p < .01; **p < .001. Regression parameters are presented for the final (Step 4) model.

suffrage (entered at step four) predicted an additional 4% of variance in hostile sexism, ΔR² = .04; Fchange(1,127) = 6.94, p = .01. The VIFs for the parameters in the full model with all predictors ranged from 1.22 to 1.60, with a mean of MVIF = 1.35, and values were well within the range of tolerance.

Consistent with the nonsignificant correlations presented in Table 6, hierarchical regression analyses found that representations of the current relevance and historical importance of the Treaty of Waitangi (step three), ΔR² = .002; Fchange(2,128) = .18, p = .84, and the historical importance of women’s suffrage (step four), ΔR² = .002; Fchange(1,127) = .33, p = .57, failed to predict variance in benevolent sexism beyond the 20% already explained by the linear combination of gender β = .25, p = .003, SDO, β = .23, p = .01, and RWA, β = .31, p = .001, R²adjusted = .20; F(3,130) = 12.05, p < .001.

Discussion

Boundary conditions for historical anchoring were established in this study. Ratings of the importance and relevance of the Treaty of Waitangi were unrelated to sexist attitudes. The historical importance of women’s suffrage, by contrast, was able to predict hostile sexism. Perceptions of the Treaty derived from the historical charter of biculturalism were thus shown to be domain specific, in their implications, relating primarily to bicultural issues. An alternative warrant of legitimacy, one involving liberal democracy and values of freedom and equality of rights, may have been responsible for the correlations involving the historical event of women’s suffrage and sexism (see Moodie, Markova & Plichtova, 1995). More research would have to be undertaken to see whether there is also an historical charter for liberal democracy; it is more likely that representations of liberal democracy are powered by more timeless features like values.

Study 5: The February 28 and Meilidao Incidents in Taiwan

Our final study shifted nations to generalize findings to a second cultural context. The most important event in the history of Taiwan according to lay representations is the February 28, 1947 incident (see Huang, Liu, & Chang, 2004). This occurred shortly after the Japanese surrendered control of the island to the Kuomintang in 1945 after 50 years of colonial rule. Problems in the Kuomingtang administration of the island led to widespread discontent among local Taiwanese. The arrest and beating of an unlicensed cigarette seller sparked widespread public protests and social unrest, which continued for 10 days until Kuomingtang reinforcements arrived from mainland

2 Representations of the contemporary relevance of women’s suffrage were excluded from this analysis due to its high correlation with the contemporary relevance of the Treaty of Waitangi. However, comparable results were obtained when this variable was also entered at step four, ΔR² < .04; Fchange(2,126) = 4.35, p = .02.
China, and killed perhaps 20,000 people, arresting many others and seizing assets. This event is now
regarded by all groups (including outside province or mainland Chinese, who arrived in Taiwan with
the Kuomintang) as the most important event in Taiwanese history (Huang et al., 2004), even
though accounts were officially suppressed for decades.

The Meilidao incident in 1979 is a less important part of the same narrative that marked the
beginning of the end of authoritarian rule by the Kuomintang. It involved a crackdown that made
political dissidents and their family members even more popular and hence presaged the end of
martial law and the beginning of free elections. It was among the five most important events in
Taiwanese history reported by Huang et al. (2004) but was nominated half as often as the February
28th incident.

According to Huang et al. (2004), the historical charter of Taiwanese history is “democracy
developing out of colonization and authoritarian rule, with the most important event being the
February 28th incident” (p. 165). It can be mobilized as a symbol of the need for independence and
self-determination for Taiwan. According to our theory, the February 28th incident should be (1)
perceived as highly relevant to the most salient intergroup political issue in Taiwan (relevance
precondition), either (Hypothesis 1) anchor or mobilize identity (Hypothesis 2), and (additive
Hypothesis 3) predict support for independence or unification with mainland China, even after
controlling for other important variables. To the extent that the Meilidao incident is perceived as part
of the same historical charter, it should exert the same effects and further define boundary conditions
for historical charters.

Method

Participants

Participants were 861 Taiwanese (431 women, 429 men, 1 unreported), who ranged from 18 to
81 years of age (M = 32.76, SD = 12.20). Forty-one percent were university students, and the rest
were adults from the general population. Seventy-three percent identified as Mingnan (ethnic
Chinese native to Taiwan), 10% were Outside Province (from mainland China), 10% identified as
Hakka, 2% identified as aboriginal Taiwanese, and 5% did not record their demographic group.

Procedure and Materials

Participants were recruited by snowball sampling. Questionnaires were completed both in
university classes as a voluntary exercise and were also distributed at workplaces via contact persons.
Participants were paid $200 NT (about $6 US) for completing surveys.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (the February 28th incident,
n = 285; the Meilidao incident, n = 285; or a control condition, n = 291). Participants in the two
historical conditions read a brief account of the events of February 28th (471 words) or the Meilidao
incident (550 words). The accounts were taken from sources such as historical memorials to the
victims and were written to evoke emotional responses from the readers. Participants in the control
condition completed a measure assessing their perceived closeness to various groups (e.g., gender,
region, age, work, nationality), which took a similar amount of time.

After the reading the account, participants were asked about the importance and meaning of
lessons that could be drawn from the February 28th or Meilidao incident using three items (“From this
event, we should recognize the importance of self-determination and not put our fate in the hands of
outside powers”; “We must never forget this event and take lessons from this event in which
Taiwanese people were brutally oppressed”; and “From this event, we should recognize that only if
Taiwanese people band together can we protect ourselves from oppression”; α = .82).
SDO (α = .84) and RWA (α = .75) were assessed using the same scales as in Study 1. Participants also completed measures of Chinese (α = .94) and Taiwanese identity (α = .91; modified from Luhtanen & Crocker (1992) by Huang et al. (2004)). Support for Taiwanese independence (α = .67) was assessed using two items: “What is your attitude towards Taiwanese independence?” and “What is your attitude towards reunification with mainland China? (reversed).” A single item assessing support for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the pro-independence ruling party in Taiwan (since 2000) was also included as an additional control. This item was significantly correlated with voting intentions for the next election. All non-indigenous items were translated and back-translated from English to Chinese.

Results

Main Effects across Historical Conditions

As shown in Table 8, there were few significant main effects across conditions. Contrary to the identity mobilization hypothesis (2), reading the emotionally laden historical vignettes did not influence levels of support for Taiwanese independence but did significantly increase Taiwanese identity above the control condition. In terms of the relevance precondition, the Meilidao incident was perceived as being of similar importance to the February 28th incident. This suggests that the two events are perceived as part of one historical narrative, both having charter status; hence similar anchoring effects were expected for both historical conditions.

Predictive Utility of Historical Perceptions

Demographic variables were entered in the first block as controls, followed by the stable individual difference variables of Social Dominance Orientation and Right Wing Authoritarianism, then identities, then political orientations, followed finally by the evaluations of historical events (or historical symbols).

Table 9 shows that, in accord with the additive hypothesis (3), the historical symbols predicted unique support for the Taiwanese independence. Perceptions of the importance of historical lessons drawn from the February 28th event (entered last at step five), ΔR² = .008; F_change(1,262) = 5.42, p = .02, accounted for additional variance in support for the Democratic Progressive Party above and beyond the 61% already predicted by the linear combination of demographic variables (age, gender, income; step one), Social Dominance Orientation and Right Wing Authoritarianism (step two), Chinese and Taiwanese identity (step three), and political support (step four). If historical lessons are entered in the second step, after demographic controls, they account for 21% of the variance in the dependent variable, ΔR² = .21. The VIFs for the parameters in the full model with all predictors ranged from 1.35 to 1.59, with a mean of M_{VIF} = 1.46, values well within the range of tolerance.
Perceptions of lessons drawn from the Meilidao incident, $\Delta R^2 = .011; F_{change}(1,269) = 8.42, p < .005$, displayed similar effects and also predicted unique variance in support for Taiwanese independence beyond the 62% already predicted by other variables. If it is entered second in the hierarchical regression, it explains 20% of the variance in the dependent variable, $\Delta R^2 = .20$. The VIFs for the parameters in the full model with all predictors ranged from 1.06 to 1.63, with a mean of $MVIF = 1.42$; values were well within the range of tolerance.

In Taiwan, unlike New Zealand, identity variables were the most influential in explaining variance in opinion regarding Taiwanese independence and the nation’s relationship with China. Historical symbols were also significant, but slightly less influential, and SDO and RWA were not able to independently explain variance above and beyond that of the other variables.

**Discussion**

Consistent with the anchoring and additive hypotheses, lessons drawn from history provided a unique contribution to public opinion regarding issues central to intergroup relations in Taiwan above and beyond that explained by other variables. While lessons drawn from historical representations were able to uniquely predict variance in attitudes towards the most important intergroup issue facing Taiwan (independence from or reunification with China), contrary to the identity mobilization hypothesis, reading emotional historical accounts increased Taiwanese identification but did not affect the mean levels of support for independence versus reunification across the experimental and control conditions.

3 Similar results obtained in the control condition using a different measure of historical lessons are not shown to conserve space.
An event of historical significance (Meilidao, ranked around 5th) was related to public opinion in the same way as the most important event in Taiwanese history (February 28th; see Huang et al., 2004 for details). This suggests that historical events become part of an historical charter that configures history and public opinion rather than the anchoring phenomenon being restricted to a single foundational “charter event.”

The culture-specific nature of the most important intergroup issue facing Taiwan may have influenced the explanatory power of the other predictors. The central issue facing Taiwan is precisely one of identity: Are we Taiwanese, Chinese, or a mixture of the two? Social Dominance Orientation and Right Wing Authoritarianism are probably better suited to explaining public opinion on issues where there is a clear internal hierarchy of groups and a clear structure of orthodoxy versus deviancy (Huang & Liu, 2005).

General Discussion

Five studies provided robust support for the anchoring of attitudes in historical representations. Using specific lessons from history or general evaluations of importance and relevance, historical perceptions were able to explain unique variance in the most important intergroup issues facing New Zealand and Taiwan after controlling for other important variables. In accord with the additive hypothesis, and with previous research (see Hilton, Erb, McDermott, & Molian, 1996), the effects of historical representations could not be reduced to such variables as social identifications, SDO and RWA, or political party support. Instead, the effects of the historical variables were consistent in predicting a range of attitudes on politically central issues (r’s from .4–.6) on top of the effects of social identifications, RWA, and SDO.

The effect of historical perceptions was limited to events with “charter status”; that is, those widely regarded as among the most important and relevant events in the nation’s history that are configured within a major narrative, like biculturalism or liberalism. This suggests that rather than depending upon a single event, history is communicated as a temporal narrative about nationhood with people and events forming part of a themed story. As new events become relevant and are added (e.g., September 11; Hilton and Liu (2008) argued they may form a new anchor for perceptions of international relations distinct from World War II), the narrative may shift slowly, and as it does it may create new contexts in which identity is activated and mobilized (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Hone Heke chopping down a Union Jack flagpole, for example, was an expression of dissatisfaction with the British Crown and an assertion of tribal self-determination that happened soon after the signing of the Treaty but is rarely invoked in communications about current events; if a current Māori political figure were to do something similar, this could reinvigorate knowledge of the event and bring it into the narrative configuration of the bicultural historical charter.

This reasoning provides a societal-level perspective to augment individual-level theorizing about attitude strength (Petty & Krosnick, 1995) as a determinant of the impact of attitudes on political behavior. It also provides a new and more dynamic way to conceptualize political culture compared to the more stable values-based paradigm offered by cross-cultural psychology (e.g., Hofstede, 1980/2001; Schwartz, 1992) and also articulated by a fusion of anthropology and political science (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982). Political symbols according to the present theory are powered by a representational core that is difficult to change: but how this core is invoked, and what meanings it brings to mind are malleable and contested. Values, by contrast, are intergenerationally transmitted and often grounded in religion that seeks timelessness. The difference between the approaches is vividly illustrated by Taiwan: in terms of values, Taiwanese are (or at least were) very similar to mainland Chinese from which they are only a few generations removed. But Taiwan’s historical charter, which is only a few decades old, is radically different and produces radically different forms
of political legitimacy. Thus, the Meilidao and February 28 incidents form part of a charter for Taiwanese democracy that legitimize Taiwanese desires for independence from mainland China (Huang et al., 2004), using contemporary history rather than traditional values as the warrant. Such a charter brings Taiwan into direct confrontation with mainland Chinese, who according to Gries (2004), view the loss of Taiwan (originally due to Japanese war imperialism in 1895) as a national shame requiring reunification as a remedy. International conflict around historical charters is well worth future investigation.

Data from this study supported an anchoring hypothesis rather than a mobilization hypothesis. While experimental manipulations bringing historical events to mind were able to increase mean levels of some social identifications, this was not accompanied by a simultaneous increase in mean levels of support for the dependent variables. Even a highly involving field trip to the national museum in New Zealand failed to produce identity mobilization effects for bicultural attitudes. This suggests that the historical charter for liberal democracy in New Zealand, represented by such historical events as women’s suffrage, provide an immovable object against which the force of the bicultural historical charter for New Zealand can be resisted (see Liu, 2005 for discussion of these countervailing forces). The idea of equality for all can be mobilized against the idea of a bicultural society by describing the societal partnership between NZ Europeans and Māori as involving “special privileges” for minority individuals (Sibley et al., 2008). Thus, invocations of a bicultural historical charter for New Zealand probably have to avoid polemics with an equally embedded liberal democratic narrative to be maximally effective (see Liu, 2005).

Although we failed to find support for the mobilization hypothesis, it is premature to dismiss it as an important pathway for the influence of historical representations on public opinion. First, future studies that disentangle and more precisely target specific elements of the social identification process like salience, meaning, and in-group feeling might be better suited to find mobilization effects. The possibility that Māori might be more open to identity mobilization regarding bicultural issues than NZ Europeans is also worth exploring. Second, we purposely chose as dependent measures the most important intergroup issues facing society. These are widely debated issues for which every member of society is likely to hold an opinion, and hence the dependent measures are most resistant to change. On issues of central importance to society, we should heed Moscovici’s (1984) warning that representations cannot be created or destroyed experimentally. We may be more likely to obtain mobilization effects for more peripheral issues to society (see Doosje et al., 1998); as a peripheral or recent issue gains prominence, we should see it become anchored in social representations and again be less open to change (Liu & Sibley, 2006).

More radically, future research should examine the alternative causal pathway that identity mobilization produces a selection and reinterpretation of history. Sen and Wagner (2005), for example, have described how the ideology of Hindu nationalism, driven by a Brahminal interpretation of Indian history focusing on Hindu identity originating from the Vedas, has produced a narrative of Indian history that contrasts sharply with the interpretation of secular historians. The selective interpretation of Indian history (e.g., Babri Mosque as the birthplace of Hindu deity Ram) by Hindus in recent times has been a source of major intergroup conflict with Muslims and a massive societal determinant of public opinion. Wagner and Hayes (2005) argue that there is a “hermeneutical circle” of interpretive relationships between identity and representation, and the current research should not be read to advocate for unidirectional causality from historical representation to identity mobilization. Rather, our results suggest that going from identity mobilization to a selective interpretation of history may be a fruitful causal path to examine in swaying public opinion (see Dresler-Hawke & Liu, 2006). But this may require (a) use of an overarching historical charter to configure a narrative within which specific events become anchors or (b) investigating more peripheral issues of public opinion where experimental effects are more likely to be observed.
In conclusion, shared representations of history accumulate society’s wisdom about how it has dealt with issues of concern in the past, and these function as a source of legitimate power in debating its future. We have demonstrated that the utility of a social representations approach to conceptualizing the impact of shared representations of the past in anchoring public opinion in the present. Each culture has over time evolved a system of symbols configured by historical charters that legitimize political positions and warrant debate about political issues. Historical representations are an important cultural resource in the intergroup dynamics involved in producing nationhood.

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