

¹WORKING PAPER

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Perceived group deprivation, Intergroup Emotion, Identity

INTRODUCTION

The notion of relative deprivation (RD) has gained significant influence in the social sciences as an explanation of political violence and social protest. Gurr's thesis on "Why men rebel" argued for the essential role of psychological variables in explaining mass disruptive political behaviors in macro processes. That is, discontent, feelings of frustration, injustice felt by repressed individuals over time will ultimately sum up and result in large-scale revolutions. Although social psychology agrees with the assumption that widespread dissatisfaction at individual levels might have disruptive implications with regard to social and political status quo, empirical evidence suggests that RD is not a sufficient condition of mass protests. In fact, scholars have pointed out a missing link between dissatisfaction and frustration at a *personal* level and how it is translated to political behaviors directed to redress such frustration at the *social* level (McPhail, 1971).

Even though RD might not be a sufficient explanation of extreme political outcomes such as revolutions, it still holds important implications for political processes and behaviors. It offers an intriguing way to think about social interactions and social dynamics, as the psychological reasoning behind it is premised on social comparison and equity theory. Not only in macro-level political processes should we be concerned with relative deprivation and the negative feelings resulted from it. Extreme political outcomes such as political and social revolutions might be far-

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fetches; however, feelings of injustice and frustration can often bring about serious consequences to socio-political harmony and cohesion.

In this paper, I review some of the main conceptual developments of the concept in social psychology, focusing on perceived *group* (in contrast to *personal*) deprivation. I then propose an empirical investigation of the link between individual perceptions of group deprivation and intergroup attitudes using a representative survey sample from ANES study. In other words, compared to the conceptualization of RD in Gurr's and lots of other authors, RD in this paper is more about group discontent than a personal discontent. The main research question addressed is how ingroup members perceive their group's position in relation to other groups in society and the implications of such on intergroup attitudes and political behaviors.

Historical origin of RD

The concept "relative deprivation" was first used and popularized through the publication of the first American Soldier volume by American sociologist Samuel A. Stouffer and his associates in 1949, which describes a set of studies of soldiers' attitudes as related to their personal adjustment in the institutionalized Army life. These scholars introduced a new concept, "relative deprivation", to explain the paradox observed among certain groups of soldiers then: Better-educated soldiers, despite having more promotional opportunities, are found to feel less satisfied with their status and jobs compared to their less-educated counterparts. This same phenomenon was also observed when comparing soldiers in two different units, the Air Corps and the Military Police, as those in the Air Corps reported less satisfaction with their mobility prospects than those in the Military although they have better opportunities. In both cases, 'relative deprivation' was found to be a mediating factor between some objectively recorded

variables such as educational level or promotional rate and the subjective feeling of dissatisfaction with different aspects of the Army.

Merton and Kitt (1950) analyzed rigorously how this concept matters in sociological theory and for reference group theory. They concluded that 'expectation' was the key factor explaining the feeling of deprivation, as better-educated soldiers had higher expectation of the status they could receive compared to the less-educated ones. Similarly, soldiers in the Air Corps department had higher expectation compared to those in Military.

This assumption about the gap between expectation and achievement as the premise of relative deprivation was later confirmed by a series of experimental studies that manipulate expectations and even test the effect of it on negative feelings like dissatisfaction, sociometric hostility or group-related behaviors (Spector, 1956; Thibaut, 1950). With these findings, relative deprivation gained empirical support as an independent variable with observable causal significance.

There is an important consideration with respect to the measure of relative deprivation. The term 'relative deprivation' implies a process of comparing one's circumstances with a certain standard or threshold, which could be other individual's circumstances or ideals like justice or social equality (Adams, 1965). This differentiation is important as relative deprivation could be differently measured depending on the object of comparison. If comparison is made in relation with other individual's circumstance as opposed to with some standard that is objectively measurable, such as the comparable promotional rates or salaries between different army units, the resultant outcome will mostly be *perception* of relative deprivation, and whether such perceptions are plausible or not are of different matter. However, the political outcomes of such

perception hold important implications with regard to political behaviors, which could range from doing nothing to collective action (Wright and Tropp, 2002).

Relative deprivation as a grievance theory in social protest

In social movement and social protest studies, relative deprivation is frequently used to explain the links between grievances and collective action. Relative deprivation can be based on both personal and group comparisons (Runciman, 1966). Runciman specified two kinds of RD: egoistic (or personal) and fraternalistic (or group) deprivation. The former refers to experiences resulting from intrapersonal or interpersonal social comparisons; and the latter to those resulting from intergroup comparisons. It has been found that relative deprivation derived from comparison between groups is an important antecedent of engagement in protest (Major, 1994; Martin, 1986).

Feelings of group deprivation often result in negative group emotions including intergroup prejudice (Pettigrew et al, 2008), or envy (Smith, 2007). Pettigrew differentiated two interrelated components of RD, of which cognitive component is reflected in the observation that one or one's group receives less than the standard of comparison and the affective component is expressed by feelings of dissatisfaction, indignation or discontent about these outcomes. This is consistent with intergroup emotion theory, which posits that when a social identity is salient, situations are often appraised in terms of their consequences for the in-group, eliciting intergroup emotions and behavioral intentions. So, people experience emotions on behalf of their group when their identification with the group is at stake (Devos et al, 2002).

Theory in context: Perceived group deprivation among the structurally advantaged

Decades of research on 'relative deprivation' has shown that this is a phenomenon commonly observed among the structurally disadvantaged groups (for a review, see Walker and Smith, 2002), those who have less wealth, power, rights relative to other groups. Such perceived unfairness was what led them to actively engage in political action. However, recent research work focusing on why members of structurally advantaged groups were willing to engage in protests against government plans to redress or compensate for the disadvantaged or underprivileged found that these structurally advantaged groups perceived themselves as relatively deprived and their anger explained their opposition to systematic redress (Leach et al, 2006). In the US context, white Americans' individual views on race and the fraternal deprivation among some Whites – feeling that Blacks are getting ahead of Whites - was found to correlate with the perceived threat such groups pose to their status and modern racism or prejudice against them (Van Stekelenburg et al., 2010; Sniderman et al, 2004).

In this paper, I consider the phenomenon of RD among whites and its implications using the 2016 ANES pilot study. RD is conceptualized both in terms of its cognitive and affective component as the perceived ingroup disadvantage of whites in relative to other ethnic/racial groups. Based on the literature, I form the **hypothesis that the more white people perceive RD, the more negative feelings they have towards non-whites.**

Collective identity, politicized identity and resistance

Van Stekelenburg et al (2009) argued that in order to develop shared grievances and shared emotions, a shared identity is needed. In fact, a difference has been made between collective identity and politicized identity (Van Stekelenburg, 2009; Langer, 2010). Accordingly, when a collective identity is politicized, there is a political meaning to such identity. Research found that group with politicized identity are more likely to engage in collective action to further

their causes. An initial necessary element for the formation of a politicized identity is when group develops a conscious awareness of shared grievances among ingroup members. We can make a logical connection between such connection between consciousness and the perceived deprivation. That is, if an individual shows a strong individual opinion of group-related deprivation, there is likelihood that it would be associated with a higher awareness that this perception is shared and that corrective measures are needed to address this deprivation.

(Hypothesis: Perceived ingroup disadvantage (RD) correlates positively with group consciousness).

The term 'dual identity' was used to indicate that ethnic identity and national identity could work simultaneously (González and Brown, 2003). According to these authors, having identified with a subordinate entity (e.g. ethnic identity) does not necessarily interfere with one's identification with supraordinate entity (e.g. national identity). In fact, strong identification with both could be desirable as individuals feel both secure in his affiliation with his own personal group and less alienated or excluded from outgroup members who share the overarching identity (Van Stekelenburg, 2008). Research that combine this notion of 'dual identity' with relative deprivation and potential for collective action found that immigrants who displayed 'dual identity' reported higher satisfaction with their situation and thus lower rate of protest participation (Klandermans et al. (2008).

The question of concern is whether the same relationship could be observed among dominant groups and explains their reaction to the perceived group deprivation. There is not yet any conceptual basis or consistent empirical evidences to suggest how the majority groups, who both strongly identify with their group and a broader national identity would evaluate intergroup advantage/disadvantage. Thus, the following research question is formed: Is there a difference

between people who display dual (white + American) identity and those who do not in their judgment of white disadvantage and attitudes? **In other words, is there an interaction effect of American identity and White identity on a lower perception of RD?**

METHODOLOGY

The data set used in this study is the ANES 2016 Pilot Study, of which purpose is to test questions for inclusion on the ANES 2016 Time Series. The sample includes 1,200 US citizens aged 18 or older, who participated in an online opt-in panel, cross-sectional design from January 22 through 28, 2016. The subset of the sample that is of immediate concern, the white population, has 875 cases.

MEASURES

	Mean	Std. Deviation
RD 7-point	3.39	1.25
Ideology	3.25	1.33
Education	3.30	1.52
Family income	15.38	28.05
Gender	1.52	.50
Racial Resentment	3.54	1.21
White racial consciousness	2.83	1.20
American identity importance	3.98	1.19
Race identity importance	2.90	1.45
American identity*Racial identity	.62	1.96

- Conceptual component of RD (Perceived group RD):

Perceived group RD is measured by items that ask respondents to evaluate the ingroup advantage/disadvantage compared with the outgroup. As noted before, this is a pilot ANES study

conducted to test different sets of question with different wording and measurement. For this variable, a random variable is created so that each respondents receives one of two question sets, each consisted four question items.

Questions included in the first set are: "To what extent do white people have certain advantages that minorities do not have in this society?" (1: a great deal – 5: not at all); "Does having white skin generally give whites more opportunities in their everyday lives, fewer opportunities, or does it not make any difference?" (1: a lot more opportunity – 7: a lot fewer opportunities); "Does your skin color make your everyday life easier for you, make it harder, or does it not make any difference?" (1: a great deal easier – 7: a great deal harder); "How much does being white grant you unearned privileges in today's society?" (1: a great deal – 5: not at all).

Questions included in the second set are: "How many advantages do white people have that minorities do not have in this society?" (1: a great many – 5: none); "How many disadvantages do white people have that minorities do not have in this society?" (1: a great many – 5: none) (reverse coding); "Compared to other groups, do white people generally have an advantage, a disadvantage, or does it not make any difference?" (1: large advantage – 7: large disadvantage); "Does being white help you, hurt you, or make no difference for you personally in today's society?" (1: help a great deal – 7: hurt a great deal).

With consultation from ANES researchers, I compare the two sets of questions and decide to select the four items in the second question set ($N = 441$) because they seem to better reflect the construct. In the process of combining these four items to create an index of group RD, the question "How many disadvantages do white people have that minorities do not have in this society?" was dropped out because of its low reliability. Even though the three remaining items

have high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .864$), one question used a 5-point scale whereas the other two used a 7-point scale. Not wanting to contaminate the measurement, I decide to drop the 5-point item and only average two items with 7-point scale to create an index of RD ("Compared to other groups, do white people generally have an advantage, a disadvantage, or does it not make any difference?" and "Does being white help you, hurt you, or make no difference for you personally in today's society?"), with higher value indicates higher degree of perceived in-group disadvantage or group RD (mean = 3.39, SD = 1.25).

- Affective component of RD: is operationalized as measures of racial resentment.

For racial resentment, an index is created by averaging responses to four 5-point-scale questions asking whether respondents agree or disagree with following statements: "Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors" (reverse coding) ; "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class"; "Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve" and "It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites" (reverse coding). The Racial Resentment index is created so that higher value indicates higher degree of resentment (mean = 3.54, SD = 1.21).

- Importance of White identity and American identity: This is measured according to the question "How important is being white to your identity?" and "How important is being American to your identity?" Answers to the question are recoded so that higher value indicates higher importance of each identity (White identity: mean = 2.9, SD = 1.45; American identity: mean = 3.98; SD = 1.19).

- Politicized identity: is operationalized as the development of white racial consciousness. An index is created from two measures asking respondents "How important is it that whites work together to change laws that are unfair to whites?" and "How likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?" (Cronbach's alpha = .61). On a 5-point scale, the higher value indicates higher white consciousness, or more politicized identity (mean = 2.83, SD = 1.20).

Covariates:

- Gender
- Political ideology (5-point political viewpoint liberal-conservative) (mean = 3.25; SD = 1.33).
- Education: respondents are asked to indicate their highest level of education with six categories: no High School, High school graduate, Some college, 2-year college, 4-year college, post-grad.
- Family income: Respondents are asked what their family income was last year. The original variable has 16 categories, from "less than \$10,000" to "\$500,000 or more". I regroup these categories into four new categories: \$10,000 ~ \$39,999; \$40,000~\$79,999; \$80,000~\$199,999 and \$200,000~\$500,000 or more.

RESULTS

Two components of group deprivation

Table 1. Correlation matrix

		Perceived group RD	Racial Resentment
Pearson Correlation	Perceived group RD	1.00	.609*
	Education	-.219*	-.242*
	Ideology	.375*	.516*
	Family income	-.018	-.015
	Gender	-.005	-.037
	Racial Resentment	.609	1.00
	White consciousness	.354*	.463*
	Important to your identity - Being American	.134*	.280*
	Important to your identity - Your race	.025	.172*

*. Correlation is significant at the .000 level (1-tailed).

Table 1 shows the correlation matrix for all possible predictor variables and the two dependent measures of RD: cognitive component, measured by perceptions of group RD, and affective component, measured by racial resentment. It can be seen that there is a relatively strong relationship between the two components of RD ($r = .609$ at $p = .000$), meaning the more white respondents feel that their racial group is disadvantaged, the more resentment they hold against non-white groups. This confirms H1 that the more whites perceive RD, the more negative feelings towards the non-whites.

White identity, national identity and politicized identity as antecedents of group RD

As previous research suggests, when a national identity is highly valued, individuals tend to have more tolerant view towards other people who share their nationality. Out-group bias becomes less severe and people in general embrace more favorable attitude toward other people. If national identity has such impact, it is expected that a strong national identity would have a moderating effect on the relationship between white identity and the perception of white disadvantage. To answer RQ3 on whether there is any interaction between American identity and white identity, I include an interaction term between the two variables in two regression models predicting the two components of RD: perceived group RD and racial resentment (table 2 and 3).

Table 2: Regression results for Evaluation of group RD (cognitive component)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Constant)	2.87*** (.27)	2.82*** (.32)	3.06*** (.34)
Education	-.14*** (.04)	-.14*** (.04)	-.14*** (.04)
Ideology	.33*** (.04)	.33*** (.04)	.32*** (.04)
Family income	-.001 (.002)	-.001 (.002)	-.001 (.002)
Gender	-.06 (.11)	-.04 (.11)	-.05 (.11)
White identity		-.05 (.04)	-.03 (.04)
American identity		.05 (.05)	-.01 (.06)
White identity * American identity			-.06* (.03)
R-squared	.168	.172	.178
Adjusted R-squared	.160	.160	.165
No. of observations	441		

Dependent variable: Perceived group RD. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

*** $p < .01$, * $p = .059$

Model 1 regression in Table 2 shows that among demographic variables, only education and political ideology significantly predict group RD. Lower education level is more likely to lead to higher perception of deprivation ($\beta = -.14$) and more conservative ideology also associates with higher perception of deprivation ($\beta = .33$). In this sample, statistics shows that the coefficients for family income and gender are not significantly predict RD.

When white identity and American identity are entered into the model (Model 2), controlling for demographics, the high p-value indicates insignificant main effect of the two identities on RD. However, contradicting to the hypothesis that the stronger the white identity, the more perception about white disadvantage, the coefficient for white identity indicates a negative effect, such that the less importance white respondents consider their white racial identity, the more deprivation they perceive about their group's position ($\beta = -.05$). In contrast, higher importance put on American identity predicts higher perception of RD ($\beta = .05$).

Model 3 includes the interaction term between two kinds of identity. This interaction term is calculated by centralizing the two variables at their mean values and taking their product. At $p\text{-value} = .059$, the negative coefficient shows that for individuals who consider both national and racial group identity highly important, they experience less group RD. Including the interaction term also increases the variance of RD explained by the predictors from .160 to .165.

Turning to the influence of these same predictors on the affective component of RD, Racial resentment, the results are somewhat different (Table 3). Education and ideology are also significant and consistent factors explaining negative feelings towards other racial groups across three models. In model 2, white identity ($\beta = -.09$) and American identity ($\beta = .287$) independently and significantly predict Resentment at $p = .000$. Model 3 shows that the

combined effect of these two variables on racial resentment is negative ($\beta = -.01$), meaning higher importance put on both types of identity rather than one significantly reduces feeling of resentment, an affective companion with perceived group RD.

Table 3: Regression Results for Racial Resentment (affective component)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Constant)	2.41*** (.15)	1.73*** (.17)	1.75*** (.17)
Education	-.08*** (.02)	-.08*** (.02)	-.08*** (.02)
Ideology	.39*** (.02)	.34*** (.02)	.34*** (.02)
Family income	-.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)
Gender	-.03 (.06)	-.04 (.06)	-.04 (.06)
White identity		-.090*** (.02)	-.089*** (.021)
American identity		.287*** (.03)	.283*** (.026)
White identity * American identity			-.01* (.015)
R-squared	.219	.296	.296
Adjusted R-squared	.216	.292	.292
No. of observations	441		

Dependent variable: Racial Resentment. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

*** $p < .01$, * $p = .059$

It is also one of the main interests in this study to examine the relationship between racial identity, politicized identity and relative deprivation. Politicized identity is conceptualized as the process when members of a collective group develop consciousness about the socio-political implications of their group's status. Individuals, as a group member, can experience perceived group deprivation when they make judgments about the relative advantages and disadvantages

that are socially ascribed to their group. However, it is likely that not all of them would question what those advantages or disadvantages mean politically.

The concept of “politicized identity” is operationalized to probe into two issues: whether consciousness has been formed (respondents are asked to evaluate the likelihood that jobs are being taken away from whites because more chances are being given to racial minorities), and whether that consciousness holds any political significance (whether respondents think that it is important for whites to join hands to change laws that are unfair to white people).

H2 hypothesizes a positive relationship between politicized identity and perceived relative deprivation, in a sense that a strong perception of group deprivation is likely to go hand in hand with a strong racial awareness. This hypothesis is partly supported with regard to this sample. Correlation coefficients show that there is a positive but only moderate correlation between white consciousness and the two components of group deprivation. Politicized identity associates more strongly with the affective of racial resentment ($r = .463$) than the cognitive evaluation of group disadvantage ($r = .354$).

To further examine that three-way relationship between perceived group deprivation, white racial identity and politicized identity, I ran a mediation analysis to examine whether politicized identity would mediate the effect of white identity importance on perception of group RD. Table 4 presents results from a bootstrapping methods mediation analysis using ordinary least squares estimation (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The computer program drew 5000 samples from the dataset and derived asymptotic point estimates and confidence intervals for direct, indirect and total “effects” while controlling for all of the same variables as the models in table 2 and 3 above. Generally, the results show evidence that Politicized Identity fully mediates the

relationship between White identity and Racial Resentment and partially mediates the relationship between White identity and Perceived group RD.

Table 4: Results from media analyses showing how Politicized Identity affects the relationships between White identity and Perceived RD and Racial resentment.

Relationship	Beta (SE)
White identity importance -> Perceived group deprivation (RD)	
Direct effect	-.156 (.041)***
Politicized identity (indirect effect)	.116 (.022)***
Total effect	-.04 (.039)
R-squared	.17***
N	441
White identity importance -> Racial Resentment	
Direct effect	-.019 (.025)
Politicized identity (indirect effect)	.093 (.013)***
Total effect	.074 (.025)***
R-squared	.276***
N	441

Note: Table reports unstandardized OLS beta coefficients and standard errors from bootstrapping methods mediation analyses and indicate p-values as *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests). Models control for gender, ideology, education and family income.

With regard to the affective component of RD (Racial Resentment), mediation analysis shows that the direct relationship with White identity is nonsignificant, while the indirect relationship through Politicized identity is significant (beta = .093, SE = .013, $p < .001$), as is the ‘total effect’ of White identity on Resentment (beta = .074, SE = .025, $p < .001$). As per the cognitive RD (perception of group RD), there are both direct and indirect relationship observed, even though the total effect is not significant (total effect = -.04, SE = .039, $p = .301$). All in all,

these results show that Politicized identity significantly affects the links between white racial identity and the two measures of group RD.

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

This study sets out to systematically investigate the concept of ‘relative deprivation’ as evaluations of and feelings about one’s group status in comparison with other racial groups. Using a subset of the white population who participated in a pilot survey conducted by the American National Election Studies in 2016, the study focuses on how this cognitive and affective psychological phenomenon is experienced by white Americans, how it relates to their attitudes towards other racial groups and their various identities. There are three main findings of this study. First, there is a high positive correlation between the perception of white disadvantage and feeling of racial resentment among white respondents. The more they think that the white group is having disadvantages compared to other races, the more resentment they feel.

Second, the relationship between group deprivation and different types of identity found in this study suggests that identity is an important and yet complex factor shaping such judgment and attitude. When people consider their white identity as very important to them, the perception of a disadvantaged white group status decreases. In other words, white identity has a negative independent effect on both perception of and feeling about white racial deprivation. However, the significant mediating effect of politicized identity in this relationship suggests that white identity *only* increases group deprivation perceptions when such identity is considered in light of its political implications. That is, being asked whether being white is important is not enough to trigger the evaluation that white group is being disadvantaged and the resentment associated with it; but being asked about the probability of reducing jobs or unfair laws against whites leads white respondents to form judgment and attitude about their group deprived status. The more

important white identity, the more likely that a white racial consciousness is formed, and the more prominent perception of group deprivation becomes.

Turning to how national identity plays a role in this, the statistical significance of the coefficient of the interaction term between white identity and American identity indicates that one kind of identity moderates the relationship of the other kind with group deprivation, although the effect size is marginal ($\beta = -.06$ for cognitive RD, and $-.01$ for affective RD). This can be interpreted as when there is high importance ascribed to both aspects of one's identity (racial and national), it lessens the perception of deprivation and feeling of resentment among white respondents.

The implications of such findings are that people can embrace several different sets of identity at the same time and how they ascribe varying degree of significance to such identities might depend on the context. In this sample, respondents do not consider racial identity and national identity similarly important, as only 5% out of 441 respondents say that being American is extremely important to them, whereas 26.3% say the same about being white. The correlation between the two identities is also moderately low ($r = .376$, $p < .001$). These could be why national identity and racial identity influence perception of group deprivation in opposite direction.

There are a number of limitations of this study. First of all, the fact that it is making use of a raw pilot dataset, which purpose is to test different version of question wordings and measuring scales, creates numerous challenges to the process of data cleaning and analysis. The original attempt was to optimize the operationalization of the main constructs using different question items, but randomized question items and differing measurement scales employed in the dataset resulted in the issue that the questions which are usable and applied identically to a set of

respondents are only a few. Not being able to include more items in the scale decreases the reliability of such constructs as well as reducing their internal validity.

Second, the fact that the study was conducted recently, when there has been a particularly high tension in the national discussion of racial relations and social justice might have some influence on how respondents view and perceive the questions. In current racial climate, a white respondent is likely to get offended or not feeling comfortable answering questions about differing status of different racial groups. Though the number of people who ‘skipped’ these questions is only negligible, such avoidance suggests that this is indeed a point of concern.

Third, it is important to keep in mind that the findings of this study are not generalizable to the white population in the US. The researcher was only able to look into the data of half of the white respondents included in the study (441 out of 875 total white respondents). This, again, is due to the randomization of the questions. A more systematic study needs to be able to investigate from a larger sample size with more reliable testing measures.

Fourth, this study was not able to look at the implications of such perception of group deprivation on political outcomes such as political attitudes or behaviors. The next useful step would be to investigate the predicting influence of the two components of group deprivation on outgroup-related attitudes such as affirmative action or immigration.

All in all, the study provides some insights into how perception of group position among whites in contemporary American society is contingent on their views about citizenship, racial identity and awareness of white disadvantage. The findings, though should be taken with caution, suggest that this is indeed an important issue that is worth further examination.

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