

# How Angry Are You About Societal Inequity? People Underestimate Minority Groups' and Overestimate Majority Groups' Anger Toward Inequity

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## Background



- Privilege is an illegitimate and unearned advantage based on one's group membership.
- People don't like such inequities.
- Literature suggests that people may not be accurate in understanding how others react to privilege (e.g., stereotypes, skewed information exposure).
- Current focus on one type of social inequity: *white privilege*

### Hypotheses:

People may exaggerate the outgroup's actual reactions towards inequity

1. White people will overestimate Black people's negative emotions
2. Black people will underestimate White people's negative emotions

## Current Research



**Study 1:** Actual vs. predicted negative emotions toward inequity

**Study 2:** Perceptions of hierarchy maintenance motives

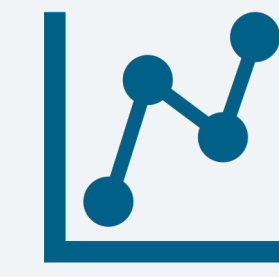
**Study 3:** Manipulating hierarchy maintenance motives

**Study 4:** Consequences (social justice engagement)

### Typical Study Design

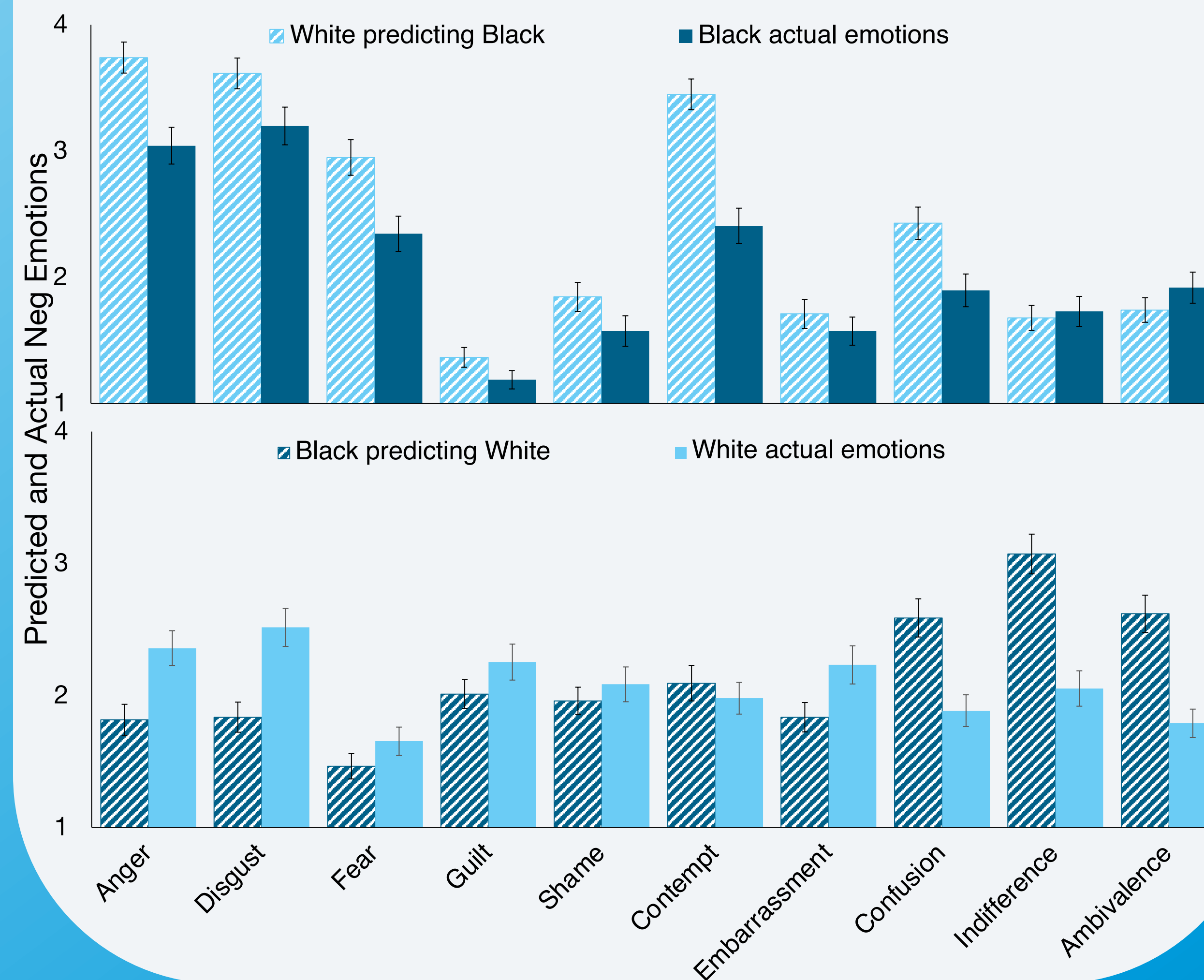
|   | Black participants   | White participants   |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| How do <b>you</b> feel about white privilege?   | Black self ratings   | White self ratings   |
| On average, how do you think the <b>[White/Black] people</b> taking this survey feel about white privilege? | Black predicts White | White predicts Black |

## Study 1



### Results

White ptps. overestimated how negatively Black people felt about white privilege ( $b = -0.58, t(195.8) = 3.45, p < .001$ ), and Black ptps. underestimated how negatively White people felt ( $b = 0.47, t(195) = 3.34, p = .001$ )



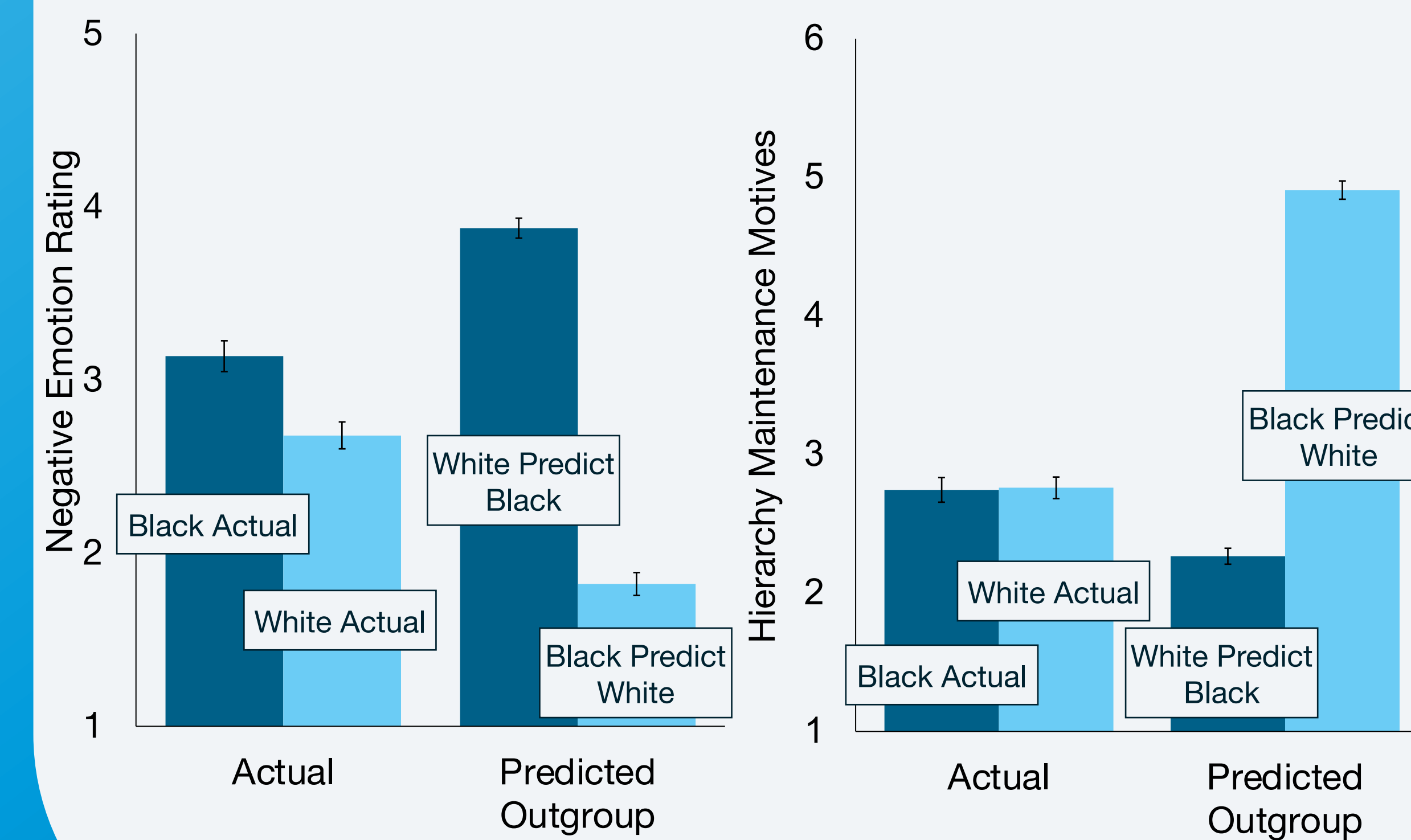
## Study 2



### Results

Replicates exaggerated misprediction effect.

Black participants ( $n=230$ ) overestimated White participants' HMM ( $b = 2.15, t(505.62) = 23.43, p < .001$ ), whereas White participants ( $n=295$ ) underestimated Black participants' HMM ( $b = 0.48, t(447.19) = 6.09, p < .001$ )



## Key Takeaways



- People are miscalibrated in recognizing the outgroup's reaction to societal inequity
- White people believe that Black people feel more negatively, and Black people believe that White people feel less negatively than each group actually does
- Effect replicates for gender and class privilege too
- May stem from misperceptions of the outgroup's motives to maintain societal hierarchies
- This misperception may also affect inequity reducing behaviors such as engagement in social justice
- Recognizing and rectifying systematic distortions in perceptions about inequity may be valuable for creating a more equitable society

## Study 3

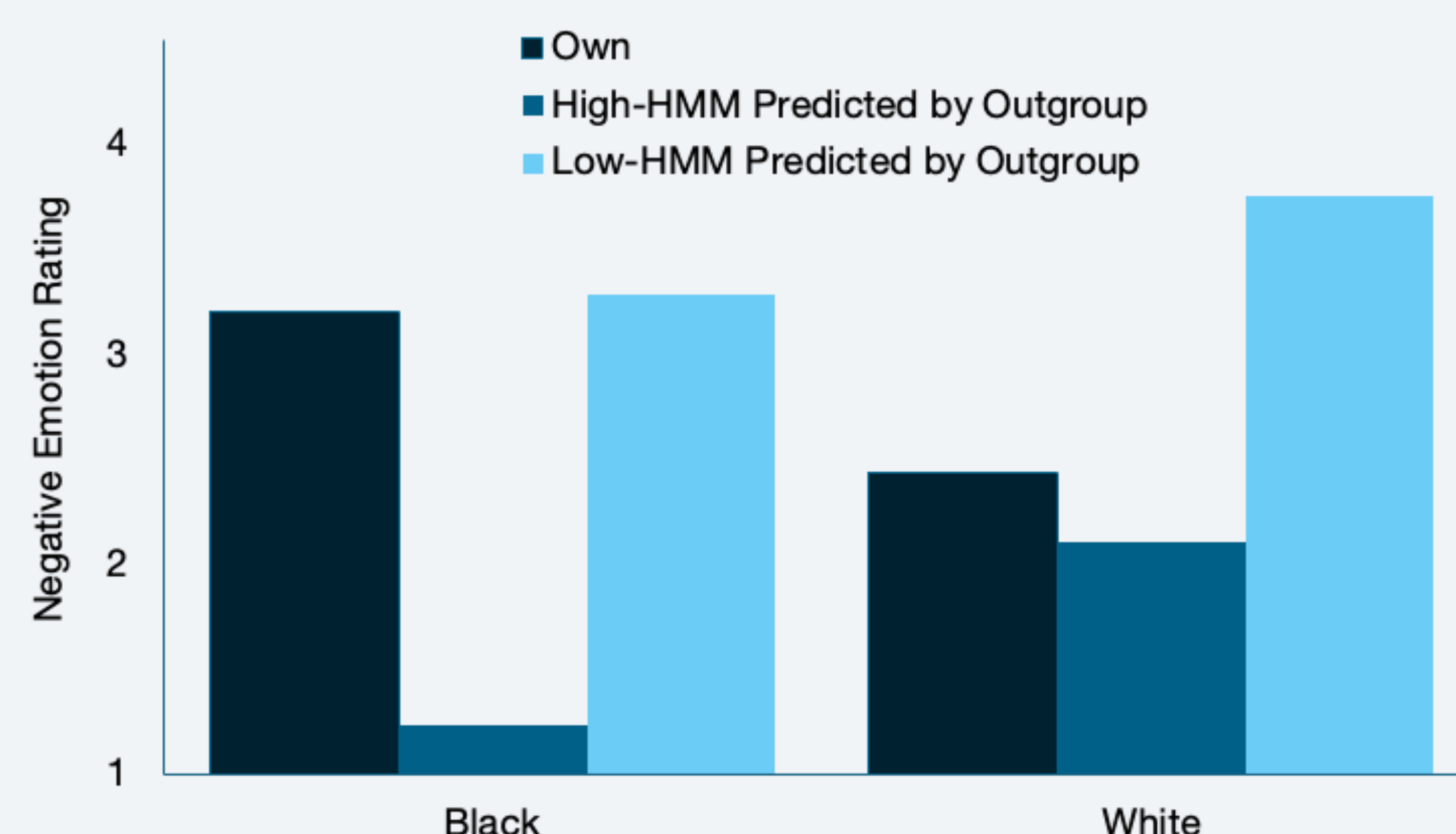


### Method

Black & White participants ( $N = 394$ ) predicted the emotions of outgroup members who were 1) high and 2) low on HMM

### Results

When thinking about the average outgroup member's reactions, White participants may be imagining a Black individual low in HMM whereas Black participants may imagine a White individual high in HMM



## Study 4

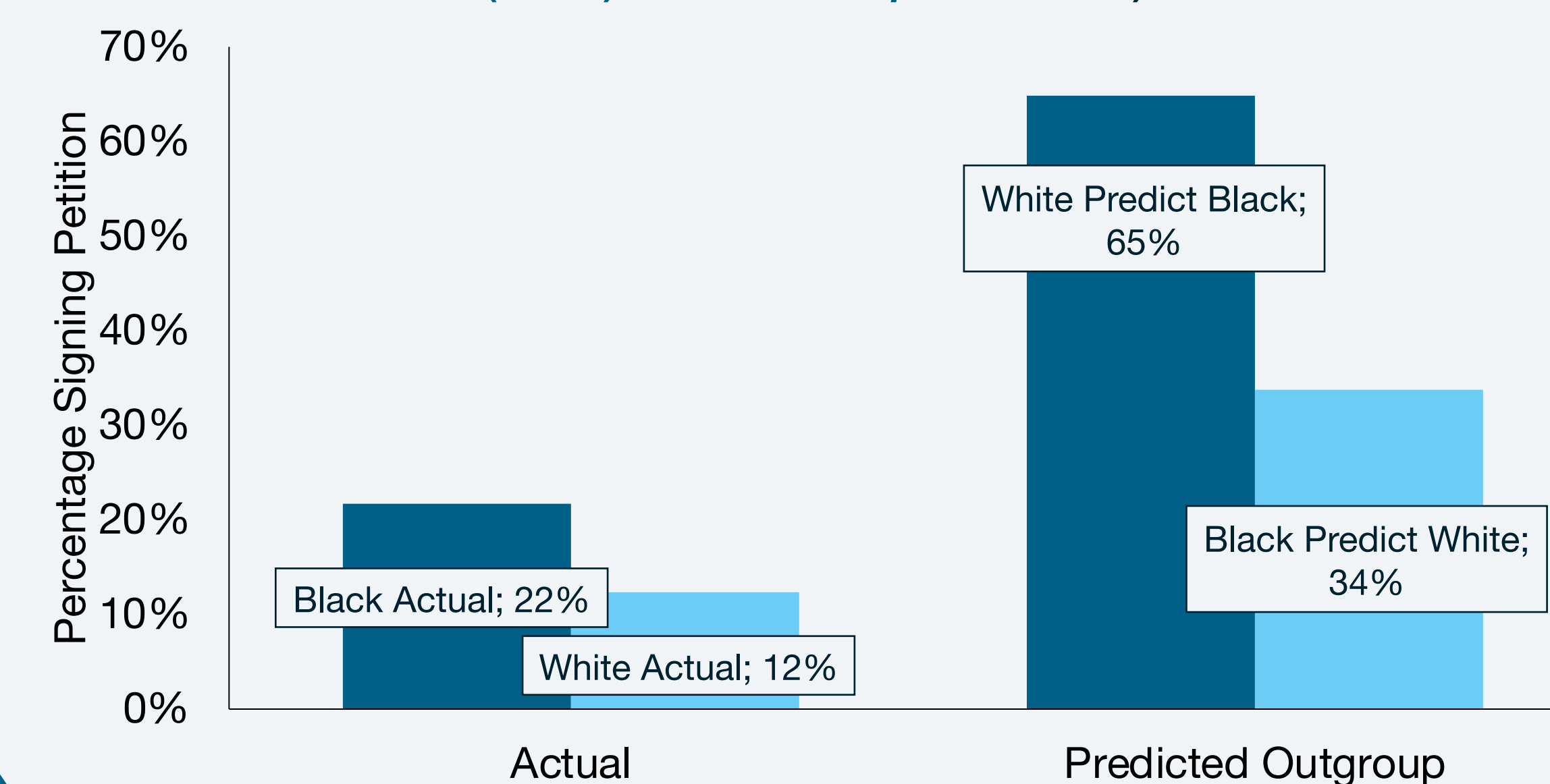


### Method

Black & White participants ( $N = 394$ ) could sign a petition aimed at supporting racial equity, and predicted outgroup members' likelihood of signing the same petition

### Results

Both groups overestimated outgroup petition signing likelihood, but this was greater among White participants (pred. = 64.86%, act. = 21.57%,  $t(193) = 24.39, p < .001$ ) than Black participants (pred. = 33.72%, act. = 12.37%,  $t(199) = 11.07, p < .001$ ).



## Next Steps



- Intervention: Can we educate people about actual feelings, and can that affect behaviors?
- Explore other consequences on:
  - Intergroup interactions
  - Willingness to dismantle privilege and engage in collective action and

## Contact

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Questions/suggestions welcome :)