

Liberating and Empowering Effects of Critical Consciousness on Collective Action for Gender Equality

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Critical consciousness represents the transformation from a passive object of oppression to an active actor with an increased capacity to analyze and negotiate conditions of oppression. It is considered as an antidote for oppression that can liberate people from oppressive ideologies, and empower them to challenge social injustice. This study examined the mechanism underlying critical consciousness and collective action towards gender equality among a sample of 178 cisgender women in Hong Kong. They completed a cross-sectional survey on critical consciousness, sexism, efficacy, and collective action towards gender equality. Results of structural equation modeling showed that critical consciousness was associated with lower endorsement of sexism and heightened level of efficacious beliefs, which in turn were associated with greater intention to participate in collective action against gender-based oppression. The findings supported the liberating and empowering effects of critical consciousness on collective action mobilization, and offered leads for future research and praxis on how to orient different sectors of society to work towards equity and social justice.