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What do racial minorities think of White allies?

INTRODUCTION

Background

- The current work investigates racial minorities' suspicions about White people's antiracist motives.
- Believing White nonracism (i.e., refraining from racist behavior) is externally motivated by social pressures (vs. internally motivated by egalitarian values)[1] affects how racial minorities perceive Whites' positive interracial behaviors.
  ➡ Latina women reported greater uncertainty, threat, and worsened self-esteem after receiving positive feedback from a White person when they believed White people's non-racist motives were more external than internal[2]
- Perhaps perceiving White people's antiracism[3] (i.e., promotion of racial equality) as increasingly externally motivated produces negative perceptions of White allies.
- We asked racial minority participants to report perceptions of White people's *antiracist* motives, the perceived source of those motives (internal vs. external), and their impressions of White allies, amongst other measures.
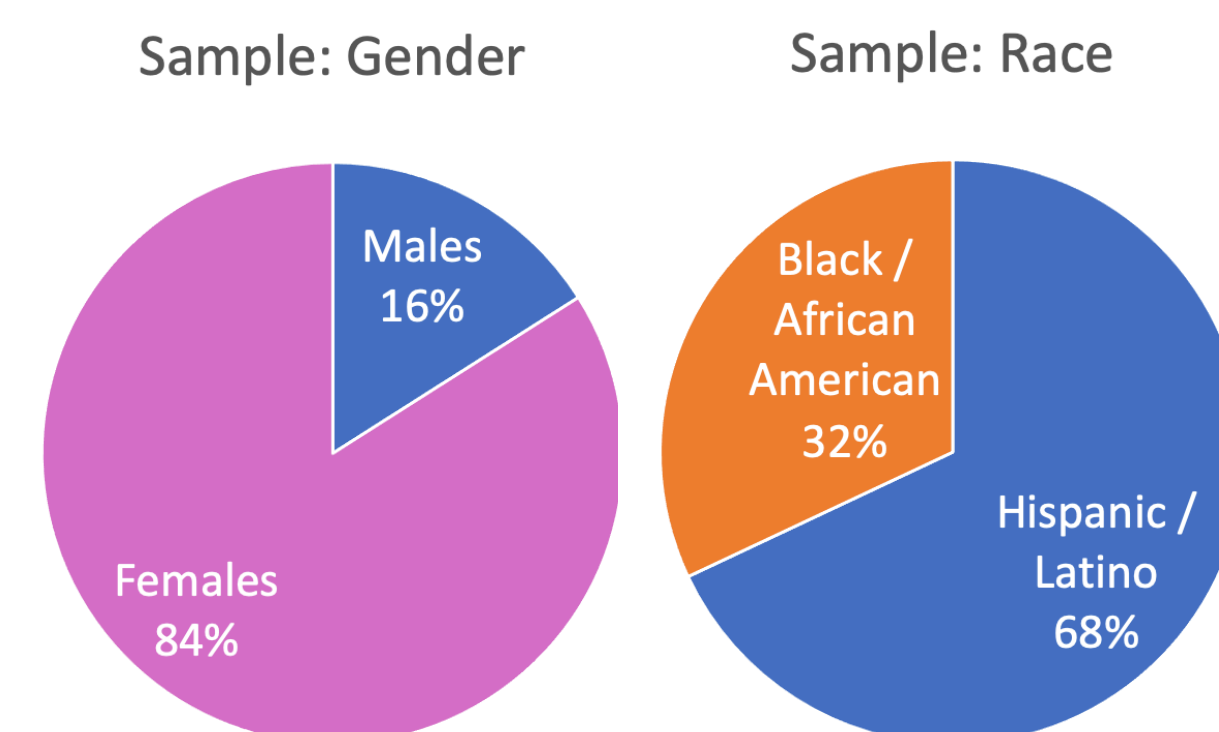
Hypotheses

Amongst racial minority respondents…
1. Perceiving White allies as **internally** motivated should predict positive impressions of White allies, people.
2. Perceiving White allies as **externally** motivated should predict negative impressions of White allies, people.
3. We also explored effects of these perceptions on positive contact with White people and anti-White prejudice.

Sample: Gender — Males 16%, Females 84%

Sample: Race — Black / African American 32%, Hispanic / Latino 68%

METHODS

Sample: N = 50 FSU Students, 18-25 years old (*M* = 19.30, *SD* = 1.40)

Measures

- **Perceptions of White Antiracists' Motives**[4] (1, "strongly disagree" to 7, "strongly agree")
  - **External subscale:** 12 items (e.g., "White people proactively (i.e., with words and actions) show they are against discrimination toward [*participant's race*] people in order to get positive reactions from others.")
  - **Internal subscale**: 6 items (e.g., "White people promote equal treatment of [*participant's race*] people because it is personally important to them.")
- **Impressions of White allies:** 4 measures
  - **Perceptions of White people's antiracism**[5]: 4 items (e.g., "White people believe they need to speak out against discrimination toward [*participant's race*] people." From 1, "Strongly disagree" to 7, "Strongly agree")
  - **Positivity toward White allies**: 5 items ("How [likeable; trustworthy; genuine; sincere; authentic] are White allies?" From 1, "not at all ___ " to 9 "extremely ___ ")
  - **White allies' commitment to racial/ethnic justice**: "How committed are White allies to racial/ethnic justice?" From 1, "Not at all committed" to 9, "Extremely committed"
  - **Perceptions of White people's likelihood of engaging in collective action:** 11 items (e.g., "How likely is it that White people in general would participate in a protest against discrimination toward [*participant's race*] people?" From 1, "Extremely unlikely" to 7, "Extremely likely")
- **Contact:** 3 measures
  - **Frequency:** "How frequently do you interact with White people?" From 1, "extremely infrequently" to 7, "extremely frequently"
  - **Quality:** "On average, how positive or negative have your interactions with White people been?" From 1, "extremely negative" to 7, "extremely positive"
  - **Friendships**[5]: 8 items (e.g., "Many of my friends are White." From 1, "Strongly disagree" to 7, "Strongly agree")
- **Anti-White prejudice**[6]: 0, "I feel very coldly (negatively) toward White people" to 100, "I feel very warmly (positively) toward White people"

RESULTS

- **Internal motives:** Perceiving White people as more internally motivated was significantly positively associated with all outcome measures.
- **External motives:** Perceiving White people as more externally motivated was negatively associated with positivity toward allies, friendships with White people, and warmth toward Whites (i.e., associated with more anti-White prejudice) but not the other measures.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations.*

Measure	Descriptive statistics		Perceptions of White antiracists' motives	
	M	SD	Internal	External
Perceptions of White antiracists' motives: Internal	3.73	.96	1	-.03
Perceptions of White antiracists' motives: External	4.63	1.03	-.03	1
Perceived antiracism of White people	3.69	1.31	.56***	-.03
Positivity toward White allies	5.36	1.47	.38**	-.49***
White ally commitment to cause	5.32	1.86	.36*	-.25
Collective action interest of Whites	3.46	.96	.46***	-.15
Positive contact with Whites (friendships)	4.55	1.66	.41**	-.41**
Positive contact with Whites (quality)	5.14	1.14	.47***	-.26
Positive contact with Whites (frequency)	5.88	1.59	.43**	-.10
Warmth toward Whites (prejudice)	69.34	23.70	.43**	-.46***

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

DISCUSSION

- Overall, our hypotheses were somewhat supported.
- Perceiving White antiracism as *internally* motivated was indeed associated with racial minority participants rating White allies and people more positively.
- However, perceiving White antiracism as *externally* motivated was associated with less positivity toward White allies, fewer friendships with Whites, and more anti-White prejudice.
- Interestingly, external motivation perceptions did not influence perceptions of White people's antiracism generally, their commitment to the cause, or beliefs about whether White people will get involved in collective action. However, trends were also negative.
- <u>**Limitations**</u>: Small sample size. Data is correlational so causal claims should be avoided.
- <u>**Ongoing and future research**</u>: Further data collection is ongoing. We are also interested in discovering factors that influence *why and when* White people are seen as internally vs. externally motivated.
- <u>**Broader implications**</u>: White allies may be detrimental to social justice movements for racial equality when they are thought to be participating for the wrong reasons. This research opens avenues to discover limitations of White allyship and directions for improving allyship effectiveness.

CITATIONS

[1]Plant, E. A., & Devine, P. G. (1998). Internal and external motivation to respond without prejudice. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75, 811-832.

[2]Major, B., Kunstman, J. W., Malta, B. D., Sawyer, P. J., Townsend, S. S. M., & Mendes, W. B. (2016). Suspicion of motives predicts minorities' responses to positive feedback in interracial interactions. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 62, 75-88.

[3]LaCosse, J., Krusemark, D., Foltz, J., & Plant, E. A. (2023). Antiracism: Development and validation of a measure designed to identify White Americans who proactively fight to end discrimination toward Black Americans. Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 26, 180-202.

[4]Chamberlin, K. G., Krusemark, D. K., & Plant, E. A. (2023, in progress). The influence of internal and external motivations to be antiracist on willingness to engage in different forms of collective action.

[5]Chamberlin, K. G., & Plant, E. A. (2023). Positive contact with White people and White friends' antiracism differentially predict marginalized group members' collective action for ingroup rights. [Doctoral dissertation, Florida State University].

[6]Nelson, S. C. (2008). Feeling thermometer. In P. J. Lavrakas (Ed.)., Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods: A-M. Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods (pp. 275-277). SAGE Publications.