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The ties that mobilize us: Networks, intergroup contact, and participation in the Black Lives Matter movement

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Abstract

Scholarship on peoples' involvement in social movements shows that social networks predict movement participation. Research in this area has traditionally focused on connections to activists—but other kinds of social relationships, such as intergroup contact, may matter as well. In this study, unique data were collected from both a student sample and a general sample of the population to examine how intergroup contact—namely, social ties with African Americans—affects whites' participation in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. In both samples, intergroup contact is a significant predictor of participation in BLM, net of other factors. The study's findings suggest that social ties outside of activist networks can matter greatly for movement participation; they also suggest that intergroup contact can affect more than just attitudes—it can spur collective action.

Dating back to the 1960s, scholars have argued that social psychology offers a unique structural lens through which to study social movements (e.g., Gamson, 1992; Katz, 1967). One way it does so is through its focus on groups and networks. A growing body of work examines whether social networks matter for movement participation. Numerous studies show that social networks predict participation in social movements (e.g., Bolton, 1972; Gould, 1991; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; McAdam, 1986; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; Opp & Gern, 1993; Snow et al., 1980). More recent work has turned to the question of what kind of networks matter.

Although network ties to activists have been the primary kind of relationship examined in the literature (e.g., McAdam, 1986), recent work suggests that ties with other groups also matter for movement participation. For instance, Lim (2008) finds that neighborhood ties predict participation in community activism. Could other kinds of ties be important as well? Intergroup ties/contact may offer a promising new avenue.

The intergroup contact literature shows that ties across groups (e.g., racial groups) can matter for attitudes. Using the foundations established by Williams (1947) as well as Allport's (1954) well-known "contact hypothesis" as a starting point, studies have shown that intergroup contact can improve attitudes toward racial outgroups and reduce prejudice (e.g., Powers & Ellison, 1995; Sigelman & Welch, 1993; Ellison et al., 2011). Meta-analyses reveal that this relationship is consistent and robust (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). What is less known, however, is whether intergroup contact affects social action. This study examines how intergroup contact—social ties with African Americans—affects participation in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement among whites.

The BLM movement is an important new chapter in the continuing struggle for black liberation in the United States (Clayton, 2018; Harris, 2015). The BLM movement has connections to both the Civil Rights movement (ibid) and the groundbreaking scholar-activism of W. E. B. Du Bois (Morris, 2017). Recent work suggests that intergroup contact can affect support for the BLM movement among whites (Selvanathan et al., 2018). What is not known, however, is whether intergroup contact can lead to actual participation in the BLM movement.

In this study, unique data were collected on both a student sample and a general sample of the population to examine how intergroup contact impacts whites' participation in the BLM movement. Findings show that intergroup contact is a significant predictor of participation in the BLM movement among whites, controlling for other factors. These findings carry implications for both social movement scholarship and research on intergroup contact. For the movements literature, the findings suggest that it is not just ties with activists that influence movement participation—other types of ties matter as well. For the intergroup contact literature, the findings suggest that intergroup contact can predict social action; intergroup contact therefore has applicability to social movements and other forms of mobilization.

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MOVEMENT RECRUITMENT

Research on social movements illustrates that social networks are one of the most salient influences on movement participation. This is not surprising—studies show that social networks are important for a variety of forms of political participation (Knoke, 1990)—from engagement in voluntary associations (Knoke & Wood, 1981) to community politics (Hunter, 1953; Laumann & Pappi, 1976). Social movements are no different.

Research on differential recruitment to social movements demonstrates that social networks significantly influence participation in a wide array of movements: peace activism (Bolton, 1972), religious movements (Snow et al., 1980), animal rights (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995), environmentalism (Van Laer, 2017), and revolutions (Brym et al., 2014; Opp & Gern, 1993). Importantly, research shows that networks were the most significant factor predicting involvement in the Freedom Summer campaign of the Civil Rights movement (McAdam, 1986).

Not surprisingly, the literature has moved toward questions about the nuances of the relationship between social ties and activism (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993). Studies in this newer literature examine *how* networks matter, and, importantly, *what kind of relationships* matter.

With respect to *how* networks matter, research demonstrates a number of things: Although social ties are certainly important, network structure can be consequential as well (Gould, 1991; Gould, 1993). Social networks are especially influential at key moments in the steps toward involvement (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Moreover, at these critical junctures, social networks serve play a key role in movement socialization and decision-making, among others (Passy, 2001; Passy, 2003; Passy & Guigni, 2001).

In terms of *what kind of relationships* matter, much of the research in the field has emphasized ties to activists. But a recent study by Lim (2008) suggests that other kinds of ties (e.g., neighborhood ties) can be important in community activism. The Lim study suggests that it may be that ties with a variety of people—not just activists—help determine whether someone participates in a movement. Additionally, although the Lim study referenced political identity, other forms of identity—for instance, racial identity—should be salient as well. The intergroup contact literature addresses this explicitly.

INTERGROUP CONTACT

Intergroup contact had its beginnings in work by Robin Williams (1947) that suggested the potential for intergroup contact—particularly across race—to reduce intergroup prejudice. Just a few years later, Gordon Allport (1954) forwarded the now-famous "contact hypothesis," which more formally articulated these ideas. In the decades after Allport introduced this hypothesis, hundreds of studies in psychology examined the connection between positive intergroup contact and prejudice reduction. An extensive meta-analysis of the literature finds that intergroup contact does, indeed, reduce intergroup prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Outside of psychology (e.g., in sociology), research on the contact hypothesis has shown a similar pattern. For instance, research shows that intergroup contact between whites and blacks reduces prejudice and has a positive impact on attitudes (e.g., Sigelman & Welch, 1993)—a relationship that holds even when controlling for selection bias (Powers & Ellison, 1995).

Findings from the aforementioned literature show clearly that intergroup contact can foster positive racial attitudes. But very little research on intergroup contact has examined potential consequences for social movements (see McVeigh, 2004, for an exception). As noted at the beginning of this paper, a recent study illustrates that intergroup contact can increase whites' *support* for the BLM movement (Selvanathan et al., 2018)—but no studies have examined how intergroup contact may influence *participation*. This paper fills that gap by examining how intergroup contact with blacks affects whites' participation in the BLM movement.

THE BLM MOVEMENT

The BLM movement emerged after the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's killer, George Zimmerman (Black Lives Matter: Herstory, 2013). Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi spearheaded the creation of the BLM movement (Black Lives Matter: Herstory, 2013; Clare, 2016). Its primary aim is to bring awareness to the unfair treatment that African Americans experience in their communities and the justice system, much of which is linked with systemic racism (Black Lives Matter: Herstory, 2013).

Once it began, the BLM movement spread quickly. As of 2016, BLM had more than 20 chapters throughout the United States (Clare, 2016, p. 123). Although it started in the African American community, the BLM movement has since seen widespread support from a variety of people (Black Lives Matter: What We Believe, 2013). The BLM movement today includes a diverse array of participants spanning class, gender, and racial boundaries.

From a historical perspective, there is an inextricable link between the BLM movement and the Civil Rights movement. Both movements were influenced by the scholar-activism pioneered by W. E. B. Du Bois (Morris, 2017), and both movements represent instances of mobilization around the continuing struggle for black liberation in the United States (Clayton, 2018; Harris, 2015). There are, however, some differences between them—differences facilitated by the significant role of social media in BLM (Harris, 2015).

Social media provides useful information about the BLM movement for both activists and scholars alike (Byrd et al., 2017; Cox, 2017, which can have implications for protests. Research shows that "#BlackLivesMatter evolved in concert with protests opposing police brutality occurring on the ground" (Ray et al., 2017, p. 1797), and various attributes of social media messaging help predict protest participation (De Choudhury et al., 2016).

BLM is clearly an important contemporary social movement in the United States—yet little scholarship on social movements has examined the BLM movement. This study helps fill that void by examining how intergroup contact affects whites' participation in the BLM movement. But is the participation of whites—advantaged group allies—helpful to BLM?

ADVANTAGED GROUP ALLIES

Dating back to the resource mobilization perspective that emerged in the 1970s (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), scholars have discussed the importance of allies/supporters for social movement success. Sometimes activists themselves actively seek the support of allies. For instance, Martin Luther King, Jr. "advocated for psychologists to educate White Americans about the reality of racism and racist violence in the United States in order to enlist White Americans to protest in support of the Civil Rights Movement" (Stewart & Tran, 2018, p. 299). But there is some debate about the degree to which advantaged allies help social movements.

Marx and Useem (1971) argue that the involvement of majority-group allies in race-based movements (e.g., the Civil Rights Movement) can create conflict. But more recent research argues that advantaged group allies (AGAs) "likely make meaningful contributions to the movements they support" (Droogendyk et al., 2016, p. 315) as long as said contact is *supportive*—in other words, self-aware concerning (white) privilege, recognizes minority-group autonomy, avoids cooptation of marginalized identities, and vocalizes support for social change.

Drawing on the insights of Droogendyk et al. (2016), it is clear that white participation in BLM has the potential to have a positive impact. This certainly does not diminish the core role that African Americans can—and should—play in BLM; instead, it simply acknowledges that white support could be helpful. Accordingly, the key question addressed in this paper is whether intergroup contact increases whites' participation in the BLM movement.

METHOD

Data/sample

In this study, data[1] were drawn from surveys[2] given to two samples: a college student sample and a more general sample of the population. A student sample is appropriate given that students are actively involved in the BLM movement (Hope et al., 2016; Ince et al., 2018). But student samples are not representative of the general population. As such, data were also collected from a general sample of the population to see if the patterns found with the student sample apply more broadly. With both groups, a survey was administered (formatted on Qualtrics) that asked respondents questions about their participation in the BLM, their intergroup contact, their attitudes, and demographics. The only eligibility requirement for participants was that they had to have heard of the BLM movement prior to taking the survey.

Student sample

For the college student sample, students were recruited via a typical research subject system housed at a university. Following IRB approval, the survey was posted in late October and closed in late February. In all, 442 students took the survey, 234 of whom identified as white—the target group of this study. There was one incomplete case, and listwise deletion was applied. Another nineteen respondents failed a simple attention check asking, "What movement is this survey focusing on?" and were therefore excluded. After limiting the initial sample to white respondents ($N = 234$) and excluding the one respondent who did not complete the entirety of the survey—as well as the nineteen who failed the attention check—the final sample landed at 214 student respondents.[3] As a whole, while the 214 respondents were supportive of BLM (78% expressed support), they reported modest amounts of participation in BLM. Around 8% of their overall contacts were with African Americans. They were close to the middle on attitudinal measures such as collectivism and legal authoritarianism. Around 3/4 of respondents were female. More information can be found in Table 1.

General sample

A small grant in the amount of $1050 was used to collect data from a general sample of the population via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Although MTurk samples may not be wholly representative of the population, research examining the demographics of MTurk's workers have shown that participants are more diverse than a typical college student sample (Casler et al., 2013; Sheehan, 2018; Paolacci & Chandler, 2014). Following IRB approval, the survey was posted on MTurk.com on February 16. After 142 participants completed the survey—the maximum

[1] The authors report all measures, conditions, and data exclusions in this paper. Sample sizes were determined based on a combination of general knowledge of power requirements (both samples), convenience (student sample), and available monetary resources (MTurk sample).

[2] See Appendix at https://osf.io/ekudq/ for a full copy of the survey.

[3] Sensitivity analysis shows that a sample size of 214 provides power of 80% to detect effects of size .192, 90% to detect effects of size .222, and 95% to detect effects of size .248.

TABLE 1 Sample of SONA participants and variables

Variables	Scale	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*
Dependent variable				
BLM participation	1 = *Not at all*; 5 = *All the time*	214	1.40	0.53
Outcome variable				
Intergroup contact	Aggregate proportion of African American contact over total contact (rescaled from 1 to 5)	214	2.17	0.79
Control variables				
Support for BLM	0 = *No*; 1 = *Yes*	214	0.78	0.41
Collectivism	1 = *Definitely not me*; 9 = *Definitely like me*			
Vertical collectivism	(See above)	214	6.59	1.47
Horizontal collectivism	(See above)	214	7.23	1.20
Legal authoritarianism	1 = *Strongly disagree*; 6 = *Strongly agree*	214	3.38	0.51
Political ideology	1 = *Very liberal*; 6 = *Very conservative*	214	3.06	1.21
Female	0 = *Not female*; 1 = *Female*	214	0.76	0.43
Age	Minimum age = 18	214	20	2.48
Social class	1 = *Lower class*; 5 = *Upper class*	214	3.25	0.76

number possible given the overall budget of $1050, payment of $5 to each participant, and fees owed to MTurk—the survey closed on February 17. (Six participants failed the attention check, and were therefore excluded from the study entirely and are not counted in the 142.) Restricting the sample to only self-reported white respondents, there was an initial sample of 110 participants. Listwise deletion was used to exclude two incomplete cases. After limiting the sample to white respondents ($N = 110$) and excluding the two who did not complete the survey, the MTurk sample totaled 108 individuals.[4] Like the student sample, people in the MTurk sample expressed support for BLM (69%) yet reported only modest involvement. Around 11% of their contacts were with African Americans. They were a bit lower than the student sample on measures of collectivism and legal authoritarianism. The MTurk sample had more males than females (65% to 35%). More information is in Table 2, and correlations for all variables can be found in Table 3.

Survey variables

Dependent variable: BLM participation

The dependent variable is a measure of participation in the BLM movement. A total of 12 questions were used to query respondents about a wide variety of forms of participation, from low-risk/social media activism to high-risk activism (see McAdam, 1986, for more detail on the

[4] Sensitivity analysis shows that a sample size of 108 provides power of 80% to detect effects of size .272, 90% to detect effects of size .315, and 95% to detect effects of size .350.

TABLE 2 Sample of MTurk participants and variables

Variables	Scale	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*
Dependent variable				
BLM participation	BLM participation	108	1.47	0.63
Outcome variable				
Intergroup contact	Aggregate proportion of African American contact over total contact (rescaled from 1 to 5)	108	2.23	0.89
Control variables				
Support for BLM	0 = *No*; 1 = *Yes*	108	0.69	0.47
Collectivism	1 = *Definitely not me*; 9 = *Definitely like me*			
Vertical collectivism	(See above)	108	6.11	1.99
Horizontal collectivism	(See above)	108	6.65	1.41
Legal authoritarianism	1 = *Strongly disagree*; 6 = *Strongly agree*	108	3.02	0.69
Political ideology	1 = *Very liberal*; 6 = *Very conservative*	108	2.88	1.48
Age	Minimum age = 20; Maximum age = 68	108	34	9.74
Female	0 = *Not female*; 1 = *Female*	108	0.36	0.48
Social class	1 = *Lower class*; 5 = *Upper class*	108	2.52	0.81

TABLE 3 Full correlation matrix for predictor, outcome, and attitudinal variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. BLM participation	–	.251	.393	.039	.161	−.180	−.137
2. Intergroup contact	.238	–	.002	.166	.058	.076	.020
3. Support for BLM	.292	.029	–	−.102	.056	−.449	−.525
4. Vertical collectivism	−.058	.105	−.010	–	.494	.276	.350
5. Horizontal collectivism	.067	−.066	.148	.427	–	.167	.006
6. Legal authoritarianism	−.314	−.197	−.390	.093	−.076	–	.479
7. Political ideology	−.307	.015	−.498	.126	−.098	.491	–

Note. Lower diagonal correlations reference the SONA sample; upper diagonal correlations reference the MTurk sample.

distinction between low-risk and high-risk activism). Items assessing social media activism are included for three reasons: (1) Studies show that social media activism—though derided by some—can contribute greatly to movements (Brym et al., 2014; Cabrera et al., 2017; Earl & Kimport, 2011; Kidd & McIntosh, 2016; Van Laer, 2010). (2) Specific to BLM, social media has been a critical part of the movement since its inception (Byrd et al., 2017; Cox, 2017; De Choudhury et al., 2016; Ray et al., 2017). (3) Many studies on networks and movements inadvertently select on the dependent variable by surveying only "on the ground" activists (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; Van Laer, 2017)—but looking at a general sample and including social media participation in the dependent measure helps avoid this pitfall.

Answer options to each of the 12 participation questions were provided on a 5-point Likert-type scale: 1 = *not at all*, 2 = *rarely*, 3 = *sometimes*, 4 = *often*, 5 = *all the time*. To create the participation variable, each respondent's answers were averaged into a single scaled variable. The reliability of this scale was very high: Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .93 to .95.

Independent variable: intergroup contact

In constructing the main independent variable—intergroup contact—a wide array of possible relationships were included. This is important, as research shows that intergroup contact with a variety of individuals can be more effective in improving cross-group attitudes than a single close relationship (Jackman & Crane, 1986). As described below, the variable follows a sociological perspective on intergroup ties/contact. One disadvantage of this approach is that it does not assess the nature of the contact (e.g., positive versus negative); but the advantage is that it is consistent with the literature on social ties and movements (e.g., McAdam, 1986). Given the focus on social movements in this paper, a sociological metric is used.

In total, eight intergroup contact questions were included. These questions asked respondents to provide the number of people of a particular ethnic category that they come into contact with. They asked about friends (both personal friends and "family friends"), relatives, coworkers, mentors, and people they interact with in the community, among others. Each question included the following five racial/ethnic categories, asking, "How many of [relationship type] are…" "African American," "Asian/Pacific Islander," "Hispanic/Latino," "Caucasian/White," and "Native American or American Indian."

To create the intergroup contact variable, a proportion score was calculated using the number of reported African American contacts over the amount of overall contact in all five ethnic categories. For example, if for a given question a participant reported "4" for African American, and "1" for the each of the remaining categories, their score for intergroup contact would be 0.5 (4/(4+1+1+1+1) = 0.5). Then, the eight intergroup contact items were averaged for each participant into a single aggregated proportion score, ranging from 0 to 1. Finally, this aggregate proportion was rescaled to a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5—while retaining the relative distance/variance between cases—for consistency with other variables in the analyses.

Attitudinal control variables

Support for BLM

Many studies in the literature on networks and movements show that networks matter net of ideological commitment to a movement (e.g., McAdam, 1986). As such, it is important to include a variable measuring ideological support for the BLM. A simple dichotomous metric of support was used, asking, "Do you support the Black Lives Matter movement?" with answer options of 1 (*yes*) and 0 (*no*).

Collectivism

Research shows that collectivism can prompt organizing to benefit others—for instance, volunteering, organizing in the workplace, etc. (Rosenhan, 1970; Clary & Orenstein, 1991; Finkelstein & Penner, 2004; Finkelstein, 2011). Variables measuring different dimensions of collectivism are therefore included in this study. To construct these variables, a 16-item scale from Triandis and

Gelfand (1998) was utilized—itself a shortened version of an earlier 27-item scale (Singelis et al., 1995). The scale makes a distinction between four possibilities: vertical collectivism (VC) and its opposite (vertical individualism, or VI), and horizontal collectivism (HC) and its opposite (horizontal individualism, or HI). Vertical denotes a hierarchical trend while horizontal denotes a theme of equality; therefore, vertical collectivism elicits strong identification with a group's desire to be more distinguished than other groups, while horizontal collectivism elicits the idea that all groups have common goals for one another's benefits (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998).

Following Triandis and Gelfand (1998), this study asked respondents to answer each of the 16 questions on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*definitely not me*) to 9 (*definitely like me*). There were four questions asked for each type of characteristic (VI, HI, VC, and HC); participants were given four averaged scores: two for individualism (VI and HI) and two for collectivism (VC and HC). Because collectivism was the personality factor pursued here, only the scores for vertical collectivism and horizontal collectivism were analyzed for this study.

Legal authoritarianism

Heberle (1951) posited that belief in the message of a social movement can influence participation. Injustice elicits action from those who personally believe that action against the particular problem must be taken (McAdam, 1999; Oberschall, 1973). Because the BLM movement emphasizes the prevalence of police brutality and unfair treatment of African Americans in our justice system, critical attitudes toward legal authority could motivate participation; conversely, favor for legal authority should decrease participation.

The Legal Attitudes Questionnaire (LAQ), originally formulated by Boehm (1968), is a 30-item scale that measures an individual's attitudes toward legal authority. The Revised Legal Attitudes Questionnaire (RLAQ23), used in this study, stems from the work of Kravitz et al. (1993) and is comprised of 23 statements (from the original 30) that participants score on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Sample statements in the scale are "Unfair treatment of underprivileged groups and classes is the chief cause of crime"; "Citizens need to be protected against excess police power as well as against criminals"; and "Upstanding citizens have nothing to fear from police" (Kravitz et al., 1993, p. 666). Exactly 16 items on the questionnaire are reverse coded in the RLAQ23. The RLAQ23 has been tested for reliability, and produces Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .71 to .83 (Kravitz et al., 1993). In this study, the 23 items from the RLAQ23 were averaged—after adjusting for reverse coding—to create a legal authoritarianism score.

Political ideology

Political ideology can influence peoples' views on a host of social and political issues. To measure political ideology, a scale of 1 (*very liberal*) to 6 (*very conservative*) was used.

Demographic control variables

Demographics

General demographic questions were asked at the beginning of the survey. These questions included age, gender, ethnicity, major in college (if applicable), level of education/year in college, political affiliation, political ideology, social class, and employment status. All of the variables were tested in preliminary analyses. Many of them were nonsignificant and did not add substantially to the overall explanatory power of the models. As a result, the final analyses were limited

to just a subset of factors considered important in social–psychological analyses: age, gender, and social class (note: race is already "controlled" in analysis given that the respondent pool is limited to one race/ethnicity). Age was measured as a simple numeric value. Gender was dummy coded such that 1 = *female* and 0 = *not female*. Finally, social class was placed on a gradational scale, expanded from the lower-middle-upper trichotomy, ranging from 1 (*lower class*) to 5 (*upper class*).

Statistical models

Linear regression models were used to regress the dependent variable on the independent variable and "statistical controls." Specifically, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was employed. Because the dependent variable is a scale, OLS regression is the most appropriate. It is important to note that linear regression has a number of assumptions that, if violated, can skew results. Tests for the major assumptions (e.g., linearity, normal distributions, homoscedasticity, etc.) were therefore run (see Appendixes at https://osf.io/ekudq/ for more detail). These resulting tests failed to uncover any significant violations of assumptions; Breusch-Pagan tests, however, revealed signs of slight heteroscedasticity. Consequently, robust standard errors were used in all models as a precaution.

RESULTS

The student sample

Table 4 provides results from the OLS regression models using the student sample, controlling for attitudinal and demographic factors. Students reported significantly greater involvement in the BLM movement the more intergroup contact they had with African Americans ($p < .001$), controlling for support, collectivism, legal attitudes, and demographic factors in the relationship between whites' contact with African Americans and BLM participation. In particular, a one standard deviation increase (about .790) in intergroup contact leads to a .231 standard deviation increase BLM participation among the college student sample, net of other factors. In terms of effect size estimates, intergroup contact has a .047 squared semipartial correlation. The partial eta^2 for the intergroup contact variable is .056.

With respect to control variables, age is also a significant factor related to participation in the BLM for the student sample. Age had a negative correlation with participation in BLM among this group. The older a student is, the less likely they are to participate in the BLM movement; the younger the student is, the more likely they are to participate in BLM ($p < .01$). Support for BLM is also significantly related to participation—unsurprisingly, those who support the movement report higher levels of participation ($p < .05$).

The MTurk sample

Table 5 provides results from the OLS regression models using the MTurk sample. Much like with the student sample, intergroup contact is significantly related to participation in BLM among MTurk respondents. Net of other attitudinal and demographic factors, intergroup contact has a positive, statistically significant relationship with participation in the BLM movement ($p < .01$).

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TABLE 4 OLS regression of total participation predicted by intergroup contact in the student (SONA) sample, controlling for attitudes and demographics

	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	sr^2
Intergroup contact	.155***	.231***	.047***
	(.042)		
Support for BLM	.182*	–	.013*
	(.073)		
Collectivism			
Vertical collectivism	–.035	–.098	.007
	(.031)		
Horizontal collectivism	.030	.067	.003
	(.027)		
Legal authoritarianism	–.137	–.130	.011
	(.101)		
Political ideology	–.060	–.137	.011
	(.039)		
Age	–.029**	–.135**	.017**
	(.009)		
Female	.023	–	.000
	(.085)		
Social class	.025	.035	.001
	(.052)		

Note. $N = 214$. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, and fully standardized regression coefficients reported in third column. Adjusted $R^2 = 0.21$. The symbol **s** r^2 stands for squared semipartial correlation coefficient.
$^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$ (two-tailed tests).

Among MTurk respondents, a one standard deviation increase (around .890) in intergroup contact with African Americans leads to a .249 increase in involvement in the BLM movement. The effect size estimate for this variable—the squared semipartial correlation—is around .059. The partial eta^2 of the intergroup contact variable is .074.

With respect to control variables, support for BLM is also a significant predictor of participation in the movement among the sample of MTurk respondents ($p < .001$), which makes sense as one would assume that a person would be supportive of a cause if they decide to participate in social activism around that cause. Importantly, though, its significant correlation with BLM participation does not diminish the effect of intergroup contact.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

Before diving into discussion of the study findings, it is worth acknowledging a few limitations of the study. The first limitation is related to the dependent variable, movement participation. Although good arguments can be made for including low-risk forms of participation in the models (see discussion in variable description for these arguments), one could contend that the variable includes too wide an array of activism. Consequently, supplemental analyses were run for both

TABLE 5 OLS regression of total participation predicted by intergroup contact in the nonstudent (MTurk) sample, controlling for attitudes and demographics

	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	sr^2
Intergroup contact	.177**	.249**	.059**
	(.066)		
Support for BLM	.533***	–	.099***
	(.143)		
Collectivism			
Vertical collectivism	–.011	–.033	.001
	(.034)		
Horizontal collectivism	.061	.135	.013
	(.059)		
Legal authoritarianism	–.072	–.079	.004
	(.081)		
Political ideology	.067	.157	.014
	(.064)		
Age	.003	–.053	.003
	(.006)		
Female	.213	–	.022
	(.152)		
Social class	.041	.053	.003
	(.069)		

Note. $N = 108$. Robust standard errors are in parentheses, and fully standardized regression coefficients reported in third column. Adjusted $R^2 = 0.27$. The symbol **s** r^2 stands for squared semipartial correlation coefficient.
$^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$ (two-tailed tests).

samples using low-risk and high-risk activism (plus low-cost and high-cost activism) as dependent variables. Although intergroup contact was in the expected (positive) direction in all four models for each sample, it was statistically significant in just half of the models (low-risk, low-cost); other variables did not change substantially in their relationship with participation (with the exception of political ideology, which achieved significance in two of the student models). Interpretation of these findings warrants some caution given that certain types of activism (e.g., high-risk) were very uncommon among the study participants. Given this—and the fact that activism types are not the focus of this paper—these supplemental findings are relegated to online appendixes (https://osf.io/ekudq/).

The second limitation is connected to causality. Because the data are from a single cross-sectional survey, they do not allow for a definitive determination concerning the causal direction of the relationship between intergroup contact and participation in the BLM movement. Consequently, it could be that participation in BLM led to greater intergroup contact—something implied about AGAs in the work of Droogendyk et al. (2016). But the types of contact/ties included in the intergroup contact variable help reduce the risk of reverse causality. Certain contacts (e.g., friends) are likely chosen—and potentially recent. Contacts such as neighbors, coworkers, and teachers are probably *not* chosen—and are likely longer term in nature. Because the latter

contacts—neighbors, coworkers, teachers, etc.—were included in the measure, it is unlikely the measure is dominated by ties that came about due to participation in BLM.

The third limitation concerns the possibility that social desirability bias may have influenced participants' answers to questions about contacts and/or participation in BLM. Social desirability bias has been a concern of survey researchers since at least the early 1970s (Phillips & Clancy, 1972)—particularly when survey items ask about sensitive issues such as race. Specific to this study, social desirability bias may have led respondents to overestimate their contacts with minorities or their involvement in BLM. It might even be that being asked about contacts led to cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), which, in turn, may have effected reports of BLM participation. The variety of items in the survey related to both contact and participation, though, likely lessened the risk that social desirability bias played a significant role in the findings. But social desirability bias is nonetheless a possibility that should be acknowledged.

The above limitations likely do not negate the finding that intergroup contact is a significant predictor of participation in the BLM movement for both college students and the MTurk sample. Importantly, this significant relationship holds when controlling for support for BLM, various other attitudes, and demographics. These results carry significant implications for numerous areas of scholarship. The findings certainly have consequences for the literature on social ties/networks and movement participation. Additionally, the results have repercussions for our understanding of intergroup contact and its impact. Last but not least, the findings carry implications for research on social movements, more generally.

This study adds to the case for using a sample of both movement participants and nonparticipants in analysis of movement participation. One way of accomplishing this is to include various forms of activism in analysis—including social media activism. Granted, some might claim that social media activism is not "real" activism, but there is ample evidence to suggest that social media activism affects participation on the ground (e.g., Brym et al., 2014; De Choudhury et al., 2016; Kidd & McIntosh, 2016; Ray et al., 2017). Regardless of how it is done, though, it is important to include both participants and nonparticipants to reduce the risk of selecting on the dependent variable (e.g., McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; Van Laer, 2017).

This study contributes to the burgeoning literature suggesting that it is not just ties to activists that matter for movement participation, but, also, ties to other individuals (e.g., Lim, 2008). The findings suggest that intergroup contact across a variety of relationship types (e.g., family, friends, and others) can affect mobilization. Although it may be that this is a unique case given the salience of racial identity in the BLM movement, it nonetheless provides a new direction for future research.

With respect to intergroup contact, the study demonstrates that intergroup contact still matters in ways that are consistent with the extant literature on the topic—but it also matters for social action. Much of the scholarship on intergroup contact has been, at least implicitly, applied to attitudes (e.g., Ellison et al., 2011; Powers & Ellison, 1995; Selvanathan et al., 2018; Sigelman & Welch, 1993). While attitudes are important, actions may matter more. Attitudes do nothing to change the status quo unless put into action. This study shows that intergroup contact can, indeed, result in social action—in this case, participation in a social movement.

When thinking about the implications of this study for the social movements literature, more broadly, it is worth returning to the insights of Katz (1967) and Gamson (1992) concerning the potential of social psychology to contribute to the study—and advancement—of social movements. This study illustrates that intergroup contact influences whites' participation in BLM, which, in turn, could have a positive impact on the movement (Droogendyk et al., 2016). The findings show that social ties have a significant impact on participation in the BLM—much

like with its predecessor, the Civil Rights movement (McAdam, 1986). But more work should be done. Future research should further explore the value of social psychology in the study of social movements. Further work should also examine the BLM movement to better articulate its place in history and its influence on the trajectory of other contemporary movements.

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OPEN RESEARCH BADGES

This article has earned Open Data and Open Materials badges. The research in this paper is not preregistered, but the authors have made available all data, analytic methods (e.g., code), and study materials at the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/ekudq/).

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