Asian American Solidarity with Black Lives Matter: Predictors of Own-group and Out-group Activism Among Asian Americans

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Abstract

**Objectives:** Research on Asian American activist literature is a limited and neglected area of study. This study examined the predictive effects of perceived discrimination, politicized racial identity, model minority myth (MMM), and belief in meritocracy on Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI; own-group) activism and support for Black Lives Matter (BLM; out-group activism). **Method:** Participants completed a survey on their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors concerning AAPI activism and cross-racial support with Black Americans. All participants identified as Asian American or Pacific Islander (N = 117, M_age = 29.6, 52.1% women), were generally well-educated (68.3% had a bachelor’s degree or higher), and mostly identified as politically left-leaning (87.9%). **Results:** Controlling for age, gender, and political orientation, the results of the linear regression models showed that perceived discrimination positively predicted own-group activism and politicized racial identity positively predicted out-group activism. Additionally, the hierarchical multiple regression models revealed that internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs moderated the relationship between perceived discrimination and own-group activism, while own-group activism moderated the relationship between politicized racial identity and out-group activism. **Conclusions:** This research presents contrasting results from previous literature on Asian American activism and solidarity with BLM, highlighting the importance of continued research on the model minority myth for understanding and strengthening cross-racial solidarity between Asian Americans and Black Americans.

**Keywords:** model minority myth, meritocracy, discrimination, group consciousness, activism, BLM, Asian Americans.
Introduction

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, there has been a rise in anti-Asian sentiment in the United States and across the world. Stop AAPI Hate, a nonprofit organization that tracks incidents of hate and discrimination against Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI)\(^1\) persons in the United States, reported a total of 10,370 hate incidents against Asian Americans from March 19, 2020 to September 30, 2021 (Stop AAPI Hate, National Report). 58% of Asian Americans in a recent Pew Research study believed that the number of people expressing racist or racially insensitive views had increased towards them compared to before the pandemic (Ruiz et al., 2020). Following the Atlanta spa shootings on March 16, 2021 during which eight people were killed, six of whom were Asian women, mass protests against anti-Asian violence occurred in cities nationwide and across the globe. From Los Angeles to New York to Taipei, tens of thousands of people gathered to protest the xenophobia and racism experienced by Asian Americans. Prominent Asian American celebrities such as Daniel Dae Kim, Gemma Chan, and Chrissy Teigen spoke out on social media against the anti-Asian violence. The slogan and hashtag #StopAsianHate and #StopAAPIHate has been used to show solidarity with the Asian community. Asian American activism is an understudied topic that is often overlooked in the collective action literature; thus, it is an important topic to study during this moment of racial reckoning.

In the summer of 2020, waves of protests erupted across the country and internationally after George Floyd was murdered by a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25, 2020. Millions of people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds flooded the streets in hundreds

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\(^1\) Although the terms “AAPI” and “Asian Americans” are used to refer to distinct populations (AAPI specifically including Pacific Islanders), for the purposes of this paper, they will be used interchangeably to refer to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.
of cities in solidarity with Black communities to protest police brutality and anti-Black racism (Taylor, 2020). Half a million people protested in nearly 550 places across the U.S. on June 6, 2020 alone (Buchanan et al., 2020). Unlike with past Black Lives Matter (BLM)\(^2\) protests, nearly 95% of U.S. counties that had a protest recently are majority white, and nearly three-quarters of the counties are more than 75% white (Buchanan et al., 2020). Fueled by the parallel pandemics of COVID-19 and the ongoing police violence and murder of Black people, conversations around historically embedded racism have resurfaced in public dialogues about systematic injustices experienced by racial minorities in the U.S. Not only that, the protests sparked conversations about race relations and solidarity among different minority racial groups.

Interracial solidarity and conflict between Asian Americans and Blacks have been historically complex. There is a long history of Asian and Black solidarity and support, but the recent narratives surrounding the 2020 BLM protests have raised questions about Asian support for BLM (Yellow Horse et al., 2021). Asian Americans have more recently been accused of “not supporting mass movements for racial equality” and “trafficking in anti-Black racism” (Yellow Horse et al., 2021). A critical examination of Asian Americans’ support of and opposition to the BLM movement has important implications for studies of racial relations and solidarity, especially within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent waves of BLM and Stop Asian Hate protests (Yellow Horse et al., 2021). Recent studies that have examined Asian American support for mass movements for racial equality—especially in the context of the BLM movement—highlight the complexity of race relations and solidarity between Asian Americans and Blacks (e.g., Merseth, 2018; Yellow Horse et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2018; Park, 2021).

\(^2\) I use “Black Lives Matter movement” to refer to the entire movement. This includes, but is not limited to, actions associated with the Black Lives Matter Foundation, Inc.
The current study examined the predictors of activism among Asian Americans. Activism can be defined as the practice of taking committed action to achieve an end, particularly as it relates to a political or social goal (American Psychological Association). It includes, but is not limited to, signing petitions, attending protests, lobbying congress, and posting resources on social media. The main research questions of the current study were 1) what predicts own-group activism among Asian Americans, and 2) what predicts out-group (i.e., interracial solidarity with Black communities) activism among Asian Americans?

**Racial Discrimination Experienced by Asian Americans**

Despite the prominent stereotype that Asian Americans are the “model minority” who are highly successful in U.S. society, Asian Americans experience racism in a myriad of ways. Defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, racism is “prejudice, antagonism, or discrimination by an individual, institution, or society, against a person or people on the basis of their nationality or (now usually) their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized” (“racism,” OED Online, 2021). Discrimination is the component of racism that focuses on behaviors. Overt racial discrimination includes poor treatment and hate crimes (Gee & Ro, 2009). Although there is limited research on discrimination against Asian Americans, it has been consistently found that discrimination is associated with poorer physical and psychological health outcomes in Asian American populations. In a study by Gee et al. (2009), researchers reviewed 62 empirical articles that assessed the relation between discrimination and health among Asian Americans. The analysis provides support for the hypothesis that discrimination is associated with diminished health outcomes among Asian Americans. The study found that of the 40 studies that specifically examined mental health problems caused by experiences of discrimination, 37 of them contained
evidence supporting the association between discrimination and poor mental health outcomes (Gee et al., 2009).

Beyond major discriminatory events, such as hate crimes, research has been increasingly directed towards the study of everyday race-related stressors and their relation to psychological well-being (e.g., Ong et al., 2013; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008). Racial microaggressions are subtle forms of racial bias and discrimination experienced by members of marginalized groups (Ong et al., 2013). More specifically, they refer to “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group” (Sue et al., 2008). Some examples of racial microaggressions that are specific to the Asian American experience include denial of racial reality, exoticization of Asian American women, invisibility, and being perceived as a perpetual foreigner (Sue et al., 2007). Ong et al. (2013) examined the prevalence and psychological correlates of everyday racial microaggressions that reflect the Asian American experience. They found that among their sample of 152 Asian American college freshmen, 78% of participants in their sample reported some form of microaggression within a two-week timeframe. These participants also reported higher levels of negative affect, lower levels of positive affect, and more somatic symptoms (Ong et al., 2013). In a qualitative study done by Sue et al. (2007), most participants described strong and lasting negative reactions to the constant racial microaggressions they experienced, which included feelings of belittlement, anger, rage, frustration, alienation, and of constantly being invalidated. The question remains, do personal experiences of discrimination motivate people to advocate for change?
Research on the relationship between discrimination and activism suggests that experiences of discrimination positively predicts activism within the ingroup (i.e., own-group activism; Duncan, 1999; Tran & Curtin, 2017). Duncan’s activism model proposed in her study on motivation for collective action hypothesized that intrapersonal variables, such as life experiences and personality, positively predicted participation in activism (Duncan, 1999). A study done by Tran & Curtin (2017) provided empirical evidence for Duncan’s hypothesis and found that experiences of discrimination positively predicted own-group activism. Tran and Curtin (2017) theorized that because experiencing discrimination facilitates the development of a critical perspective on inequality (i.e., structural awareness), one would be more likely to engage in activism because it provides an ideological reason for individuals to challenge institutional oppression (Tran & Curtin, 2017; Duncan, 2012).

Structural racism can be defined as “discrimination or unequal treatment on the basis of membership of a particular racial or ethnic group (typically one that is a minority or marginalized), arising from systems, structures, or expectations that have become established within society or an institution” (“structural racism,” OED Online, 2021). Structural racism is often difficult to observe because it involves covert actions and policies undertaken by institutional structures that originate from historic and systemic racism (Gee & Ro, 2009). These actions include segregation, racial ideology, institutional policies, and immigration policies (Gee & Ro, 2009). Previous research has found structural awareness to be a positive predictor of own-group activism. Past studies that have examined variations of structural awareness, such as system justification beliefs, just world beliefs, and meritocracy beliefs, have consistently found associations between them and own-group activism (Tran & Curtin, 2017). Having an awareness that society inherently favors certain groups over others can be an important motivator for
supporting socio-political movements that advocate for structural change. Reversely, believing that the world is just and meritocratic could impede support for structural change. The current study hypothesized that experiences of discrimination positively predicts own-group activism and that meritocracy beliefs would weaken that relationship.

Consequences of the Model Minority Myth

The model minority myth (MMM) is a stereotype characterizing Asian Americans as a monolithically hardworking, high-achieving, and more successful racial group compared to other minority racial groups. Although the model minority label may come across as positive and harmless, previous research has demonstrated that greater internalization (i.e., adoption of the attitudes and messages from the dominant white society) of the MMM is linked to worse psychological outcomes (e.g., Atkin et al., 2018; Yoo et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2011; Ong et al., 2013). Moreover, higher internalization of the MMM has been found to be negatively associated with own-group activism (Tran & Curtin, 2017). The MMM distorts and minimizes actual experiences of racism that Asian Americans face on a daily basis (Yoo et al., 2010). Internalization of the MMM may cause Asian Americans to discount and underreport their experiences of racism, which may lead to less endorsement of social justice movements for the AAPI community (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2007; Yoo et al., 2010).

Tran & Curtin (2017) found that Asian American participants who scored higher on model minority beliefs were less likely to engage in own-group activism. The MMM impedes own-group activism in three important ways. First, it promotes beliefs in meritocracy and individual mobility (Tran & Curtin, 2017). Second, it encourages comparisons between Asian Americans as an aggregated group and other marginalized groups, making Asian Americans appear more successful than they are (Tran & Curtin, 2017). Third, it upholds the view that status
differences between groups are legitimate (Tran & Curtin, 2017). The current study theorized
that the MMM will impede out-group activism for the same reasons.

The MMM’s promotion of beliefs in meritocracy complicates the relationship between
Asian Americans and Blacks in the U.S. Belief in meritocracy denotes holding a belief that
society provides equal opportunity, allowing for upward social mobility (McCoy et al., 2013).
Those who hold these beliefs also attribute economic and social success to internal factors, such
as hard work, ability, and individual responsibility. They deny the existence of structural
inequality and privileged social relationships, and they believe that good things come to people
who work hard and that successful people deserve the life they have (McCoy et al., 2013). The
MMM justifies the assertion that anyone can make significant achievements as long as they work
hard and those who don’t have only themselves to blame (Yoo et al., 2010).

Empirical research has shown that internalization of the MMM and meritocracy beliefs
are positively associated with more negative attitudes towards out-groups (Yi & Todd, 2021). In
Yi & Todd (2021), greater internalized MMM achievement orientation (a subscale of the
Internalization of the Model Minority Myth Measure referring to the perception that Asian
Americans are high-achieving and successful because they value hard work and determination)
predicted greater anti-Black attitudes (Yoo et al., 2010). Research on just world beliefs suggests
that people who hold stronger just world beliefs attribute poverty to people’s character and
behavior and hold more negative attitudes toward Black Americans (Furnham, 2003; Neville et
al., 2013; Yi & Todd, 2021). Correlational research has also shown that meritocracy beliefs are
associated with intolerance and dislike of members of low-status groups (e.g., Blacks, Latinx;
Madeira et al., 2019). Furthermore, past studies have shown that a rejection of meritocracy
beliefs is associated with positive psychological outcomes and intergroup relations. In a study
done by Foster, Sloto, & Ruby (2006), it was found that those who experienced discrimination and do not believe that meritocracy exists reported increased self-esteem and collective action (i.e., engagement in activism) and decreased intergroup anxiety, that is, better intergroup relations.

These results indicate a challenge for Asian Americans who internalize the MMM and meritocracy beliefs to participate in social activism that promotes racial justice and equality for both their own-group and out-groups. The current study examined how internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs were associated with own-group and out-group activism.

**Group Consciousness and Solidarity with BLM**

Asian Americans occupy a unique position with regard to race relations. In recent scholarship on racialization, or the creation and characterization of racial categories, Asian Americans are said to have become a type of “middleman minority” (Yoo et al., 2010; Poon et al., 2016). The middleman minority is said to serve as a buffer group in the power struggle between two major classes (Blalock, 1967, Poon et al., 2016). In the case of Asian Americans, the middleman minority status serves as a buffer between whites and Blacks. The MMM was first employed by white politicians to uphold white supremacy and a color-blind racial ideology to maintain the systemic oppression of racial minorities, particularly Black people. As described by Poon et al. (2016) and Bonilla-Silva (2006), the MMM is a tool of racial wedge politics that discredits Black activists by reinforcing the belief that the U.S. is a meritocracy, minimizing the existence of racial inequality (Suzuki, 1989). Kim (1999) introduced the concept of racial triangulation, a theory that argues Asian Americans are simultaneously presented as an example of success, despite being racially minoritized, in order to preserve white supremacy. The example of success that is perpetuated by the MMM is used to further oppress other minority groups that
are seen as less successful (i.e., Black, Latinx, and Native American communities) and discredit activists’ attempts to enact social change. The theory of racial triangulation expands the previous Black-white binary theory of racial stratification by illustrating how white supremacy simultaneously exploits Asian American success to discount the role of systemic racism in the racial subordination of Black people while ostracizing Asian Americans as outsiders (Yellow Horse et al., 2021).

There is little empirical research on Asian Americans’ support for mass movements for racial equality (Yellow Horse et al., 2021). Some recent scholarly efforts have been made to examine the factors that shape the interracial attitudes of Asian Americans towards Blacks, though the scope of the literature is still limited (e.g., Yellow Horse et al., 2021; Merseth, 2018; Nicholson et al., 2020; Park, 2021). The current study attempts to fill this gap by assessing Asian American support for BLM.

Cortland et al. (2017) found that shared experiences of discrimination improved intergroup relations between stigmatized groups. It has been theorized that experiences associated with being a member of a marginalized group can lead to positive relations between members of different negatively stereotyped groups (Cortland et al., 2017). Recategorizing one’s cultural or ethnic identity as a socio-politicized identity that is based on one’s experiences of prejudice and discrimination could invoke a common identity with other groups who experience similar prejudice and discrimination.

Group consciousness is a critical concept that examines interracial attitudes and beliefs. It is a form of “in-group identification that is politicized by a set of ideological beliefs about one’s group’s social standing, as well as a view that collective action is the best means by which the group can improve its status and realize its interests,” and it should be distinguished from group awareness.
identification, which is a psychological sense of belonging or attachment to a social group (McClain et al., 2009; Gurin et al., 1980). Members of marginalized groups based on, for example, race, gender, or class may develop a sense of group consciousness (McClain et al., 2009). In other words, higher group consciousness could lead to collective action (own-group and out-group activism) that promotes social and structural change. Linked fate—an individual’s belief that his or her personal fate and life chances are tied to his or her racial or ethnic group as a collective—is another important concept that is related to group consciousness (Nicholson et al., 2020; Simien, 2005; Sanchez & Vargas, 2016). A few studies have found that group consciousness and linked fate are positively associated with feelings of closeness with Blacks and support for BLM among Asian Americans (Nicholson et al., 2020; Merseth, 2018).

It is important to note that group consciousness has been operationalized and measured inconsistently throughout the literature, but the measurement of group consciousness contains common elements, such as “having a sense of belonging to the group,” “an expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the group’s current status, power, or material resource in relation to those of an out-group,” and “the belief that a group’s social status is attributable to individual failings or to structural inequalities” (Herrick and Mendez, 2019; Park, 2021).

To study group consciousness and linked fate and its effects on own-group and out-group solidarity, this study examined politicized racial identity that measures solidarity amongst racially marginalized communities, specifically Asians and Blacks in this study, through the acknowledgment of shared (albeit, not identical) experiences of racialization and oppression in the context of living in the U.S. This measure examined the degree to which someone identifies as a person of color as a collective identity, not just Asian or Chinese, for example, and how that affects solidarity with Black Americans and BLM. It was hypothesized that stronger politicized
racial identity in Asian Americans is associated with increased levels of participation in out-group activism and solidarity with Black Americans. As an exploratory measure, the current study also examined whether participation in own-group activism affects the relationship between politicized racial identity and out-group activism. I wanted to explore whether existing engagement in AAPI-centered activism would affect engagement in activism centered around another racially marginalized group (i.e., Black Americans).

**Exploratory Variables: Collectivism and Asian Cultural Values**

While an in-depth analysis of Asian cultural values is outside the scope of the current study, some cultural values are important to evaluate. To study Asian American psychology, it is critical to examine aspects of identity and culture that influence attitudes, motivations, and behaviors among Asian Americans. According to Hofstede (1980), collectivism describes a model in which people are interdependent and inherently embedded within their social contexts, resulting in a sacrifice of self-interest for the sake of the collective. Collectivistic cultures often emphasize group harmony and interdependent relationships. While the Asian diaspora is diverse, empirical evidence supports the argument that most Asian cultures can be described as collectivistic (e.g., Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001; Hofstede, 2001).

Cultural patterns underlying collectivistic motives in Asian cultures have included the importance of presenting a positive image of the family and self, upholding one’s and others’ face, and maintaining relational harmony (Lui & Rollock, 2018). In a study done by Lui & Rollock (2018), these cultural patterns were categorized into three specific factors within collectivism: prosocial motivations, maintaining harmony, and concern for face. Prosocial motivations refer to having a “deference to others, showing empathy, an inclination to cooperate in groups, and presenting a positive image of self and the family” (Lui & Rollock, 2018).
Maintaining harmony refers to social integrity that is preserved by individuals maintaining their own public images and demonstrating regard for others, and it covers “conflict-avoidance and masking true personal feelings in order to get along with the rest of an in-group” (Lui & Rollock, 2017). Concern for face refers to the need to protect oneself from humiliation and losing face (Lui & Rollock, 2018). Loss of face refers to a “diminution of status following a social transgression or shortcoming” (Lui & Rollock, 2018; Bond, 1991). These cultural patterns are theorized to hinder own-group and out-group activism because of the need to maintain harmony with others, avoid conflict, save face, and present a positive self-image to family and peers. Participation in activism inherently goes against the grain, as activism means supporting a cause that will result in social change. Thus, Asian Americans who hold strong collectivistic values are thought to be less likely to engage in activism.

The current study examined the degree to which collectivistic values and beliefs affect participation in activism among Asian Americans, though this measure was more exploratory in nature.

**Current Study**

The current study examined how perceived discrimination predicts own-group activism and how politicized racial identity predicts out-group activism among Asian Americans. While previous studies have documented some predictive associations between discrimination, both individual and shared, and activism, the current study looked at moderating factors that strengthen and weaken those associations, including internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs. My focus on predictors of solidarity with another group, specifically the Black community, is a novel contribution of the proposed research. In addition, the current study examined whether
there is a predictive association between own-group activism and out-group activism. Overall, the study addressed the gaps in the literature by investigating how experiences of discrimination and shared politicized identity with other marginalized groups, along with other moderating variables, motivate or hinder engagement in social and political activism among Asian Americans.

**Summary of Hypotheses**

**Model 1**

*H1*. Perceived Discrimination will positively predict own-group activism. This relationship will be moderated by internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs.

A. Internalized MMM will weaken this relationship.

B. Meritocracy beliefs will weaken this relationship.

**Model 2**

*H2*. Shared experiences of discrimination will positively predict out-group activism. This relationship will be moderated by own-group activism, internalized MMM, and meritocracy beliefs.

A. Internalized MMM will weaken this relationship.

B. Meritocracy beliefs will weaken this relationship.

C. Own-group activism will strengthen this relationship.
Figure 1.1. Proposed moderation model (Model 1) for hypothesis 1 (H1).

Figure 1.2. Proposed moderation model (Model 2) for hypothesis 2 (H2).
Method

Participants and Procedures

Participants were recruited through Prolific. Of the 127 participants who passed the initial screening survey, 10 participants were excluded from the final data set. Asian-Black biracial individuals and any individuals with Black ancestry were excluded because the study focused on own-group (Asian) and out-group (Black) activism, and these populations may conceivably consider both groups to be ingroups and likely have different perspectives on identity, perceived discrimination, and interracial solidarity, which will create a confounding variable. 6 participants were excluded from the data for not completing the survey with due diligence (i.e., failing the attention tests and selecting the same answer for every question on every scale). 4 participants were excluded for not passing the validation tests of due diligence, resulting in a final total of 117 participants (N = 117).

All participants self-identified as Asian American and 18 years old or older (52.1% women, n = 61; 46.2% men, n = 54; 0.9% non-binary; n = 1). The mean age of the sample was 29.6 (SD = 8.58). The ethnic breakdown is as follows: 45.3% Chinese, 2.6% Japanese, 6.8% Korean, 6.8% Taiwanese, 11.1% Vietnamese, 0.9% Thai, 7.7% Filipino, 0.9% Cambodian, 0.9% Laotian, 8.5% Indian, 1.7% Pakistani, 3.4% Bangladeshi, 3.6% multiethnic. 34.2% identified as first-generation immigrants (n = 40), 60.7% were second-generation (n = 71), and the remaining 5.1% had been in the U.S. for three generations or more (n = 6).

The sample was well-educated: 17.9% had earned a graduate or professional degree (n = 21), 50.4% had completed a bachelor's degree (n = 59), 26.5% had completed some college or associate's program (n = 31), and 5.1% had a high school degree (n = 6). In terms of finances and socioeconomic status, most of the sample was well-off or doing ok, with 24.8% living
comfortable \((n = 29)\), 47.9% doing ok \((n = 56)\), 19.7% just getting by \((n = 23)\), 4.3% finding it difficult to get by \((n = 5)\). Participants identified mostly as politically left-leaning: 87.9% left-leaning, 12.1% right-leaning. The specific political orientation is broken down as follows: 19.7% very left \((n = 23)\), 29.9% moderately left \((n = 35)\), 30.8% center left \((n = 36)\), 4.3% center right \((n = 5)\), 6.0% moderately right \((n = 7)\), 0.9% very right \((n = 1)\).

Measures

**Predictor Variables**

**Perceived Discrimination**

Perceived discrimination was measured using 10 items from the Experiences of Discrimination scale used in Versey & Curtin (2016). Participants were asked to indicate how often they experience discrimination \((1 = \text{never}, 4 = \text{often})\). A sample question was “You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.” Mean scores were calculated, with higher scores indicating more perceived discrimination \((\alpha = 0.90)\).

**Politicized Racial Identity**

Politicized racial identity was measured using the 10-item Politicized Person of Color Identity Scale developed by Langner (2005). This scale measures the group consciousness and solidarity between AAPI and other racially marginalized communities. Participants rated on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they agree with each statement \((1 = \text{strongly disagree}, 5 = \text{strongly agree})\). A mean score was calculated, with higher scores indicating stronger politicized racial identities \((\alpha = 0.92)\).
Model Minority Myth

Internalized model minority myth will be measured using the 15-item Internalization of the Model Minority Myth Measure (IM-4) developed by Yoo et al., (2010). There are two subscales, a) Achievement Orientation, the perception that Asian Americans are high-achieving because they value hard work and determination; and b) Unrestricted Mobility, the perception that Asian Americans are less likely to experience racial prejudice and discrimination. A sample item is “In comparison to other racial minorities (e.g., African Americans, Latinx, etc.), Asian Americans have stronger work ethics.” The items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Mean scores were calculated for each participant, with higher scores indicating stronger endorsement and internalization of the MMM (α = 0.92).

Meritocracy Beliefs

Meritocracy beliefs were measured using a combination of three scales: the 8-item Belief in a Just World scale (BJW; e.g., “I feel that people earn the punishments and rewards they get.”), the 4-item Protestant Work Ethic scale (PWE; e.g., “If people work hard they almost always get what they want.”), and the 4-item Belief in Status Permeability scale (PERM; e.g., “America is an open society where all individuals can achieve higher status.”). The items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). As done in McCoy et al. (2013), these scales were combined for a composite average score to measure overall meritocracy beliefs, with higher scores indicating stronger endorsement of meritocracy beliefs (αBJW = 0.94; αPWE = 0.79; αPERM = 0.82; αComposite = 0.94).

Outcome Variables
Own-group Activism and Out-group Activism

Own-group and Out-group Activism were measured using a modified version of the Activism Orientation scale (AOS; Corning & Myers, 2002) and two questions from the Resistance and Empowerment Against Racism (REAR) scale (Suyemoto et al., 2022). The present study used the 12-item Conventional Activism factor of the Activism Orientation Scale. This subscale describes relatively low-risk actions that fall within societal norms and do not pose much physical or emotional risk (e.g., signing a petition or disseminating information through social media). To assess the two target groups—Asian Americans and African Americans—the phrases “Asian American/AAPI advocacy-related” or “African American/Black advocacy-related” (or a variant) were added to the items. Example items include, “Signed a petition for an [Asian American/Black] advocacy-related cause?” and “Donated money to an [Asian American/Black] advocacy-related organization or fund?” The two additional questions from the REAR scale assessed acts of leadership in movements for social change. Example items include “Created or led activities or organizations that aimed to reduce or resist racial discrimination against [Asian American/Black]” and “organized petitions, letter writing, or phone drives that aimed to reduce or resist racial discrimination against [Asian Americans/Blacks].” Participants rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = some, 4 = a lot). A mean score was calculated, with higher scores indicating higher levels of engagement in activist behaviors (αAAPI = 0.92; αBlack = 0.92).

Exploratory Variables

Brief Collectivism Questionnaire
Collectivism was measured using the 21-item Brief Collectivism Questionnaire (Lui & Rollock, 2018). The questionnaire measures three specific factors that contribute to collectivism: Prosocial Motivations, Maintaining Harmony, and Concern for Face. An example item is “Having collaborative relationships is beneficial to the welfare of a group.” Participants rated on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which each of the items describes them (1 = not at all, 5 = very much). A mean score was calculated for each participant, with higher scores indicating a higher level of collectivistic values (α = 0.927).

Vancouver Index of Acculturation

The degree of acculturation the participants have undergone was measured using the 20-item Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder et al., 2000). The scale distinguishes the acquisition of the new (host) cultural tendencies from the loss of old (heritage) cultural tendencies. An example item includes “I enjoy social activities with people from the same heritage culture as myself.” Responses range from 1-9 (1 = disagree, 9 = agree). A mean score was calculated, with lower scores indicating higher level of acculturation to the host culture, or in this case, American culture (α = 0.86).

Demographics

Demographic information was also collected from the participants. These variables were descriptive and exploratory in nature, but some of them were controlled for in the final model. Participants were asked what gender they best identify with, and they chose between “man,” “woman,” “nonbinary,” “other” (with a space write in answer), and “prefer not to say.” They also reported generational status, which were categorized as first- (born in a country outside the U.S.),
second- (born in the U.S. with at least one parent born outside of the U.S.), and third-generation (born in the U.S. with both parents born in the U.S.). Participants were also asked their age, ethnicity, education level, socioeconomic status, political orientation, religion, and sexual orientation.
### Table 1: Correlation Matrix, Means, Standard Deviations, and Chronbach’s Alphas for All Variables (N = 117)

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<td>1.85</td>
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<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. PRI</td>
<td>0.304**</td>
<td>0.370***</td>
<td>0.277**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. IMM</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>-0.183*</td>
<td>-0.103</td>
<td>-0.270**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. MB</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>-0.106</td>
<td>-0.198</td>
<td>-0.296**</td>
<td>0.590***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.989</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Age</td>
<td>0.201*</td>
<td>-0.199*</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>8.58</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *α* = Chronbach’s alphas; AOSa = Own-group Activism; AOSb = Out-group Activism; PD = Perceived Discrimination; PRI = Politicized Racial Identity; IMM = Internalized Model Minority Myth; MB = Meritocracy Beliefs.

* *p < .05; ** *p < .01; *** *p < .001.
Results

Preliminary Analysis

Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 display all sample descriptive statistics and group difference tests on major study variables. There were significant group differences on most major study variables based on gender, age, and political orientation, statistically justifying the inclusion of these variables in the regression models as covariates. Women scored significantly higher than men on out-group activism, internalized model minority myth, and politicized racial identity and lower on all three meritocracy belief subscales (belief in a just world, protestant work ethic, and belief in status permeability). Age was also a significant covariate, with younger people scoring higher than older people on both own-group and out-group activism. Finally, political orientation was a significant covariate, with those identifying as politically right-leaning scoring significantly higher than left-leaning (very, moderately, and center left) people on internalized model minority myth and all three meritocracy subscales. Left-leaning people scored significantly higher on politicized racial identity than right-leaning people, which means they have a stronger sense of group consciousness and solidarity amongst other racially marginalized groups.

Linear regression models were used to test the direct predictive association of perceived discrimination on own-group activism, as well as politicized racial identity and out-group activism. The regression model for the effects of perceived discrimination on own-group activism was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.350$, $F(6) = 8.81$, $p < 0.001$), and there was a significant main effect ($\beta = 0.4783$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model for the effects of politicized racial identity on out-group activism was also significant ($R^2 = 0.266$, $F(6) = 5.68$, $p < 0.001$), and there was a significant main effect ($\beta = 0.434$, $p < 0.001$).
Table 2.1 Gender differences on study variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variables</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Post-hoc:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out-group Activism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M&lt;W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>1.24 (0.373)</td>
<td>1.46 (0.545)</td>
<td>-2.569</td>
<td>0.012*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main Effect Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Post-hoc:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>1.75 (0.579)</td>
<td>1.94 (0.561)</td>
<td>-1.760</td>
<td>0.081†</td>
<td>M&lt;W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>4.45 (0.809)</td>
<td>4.82 (0.847)</td>
<td>-2.385</td>
<td>0.019*</td>
<td>M&lt;W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMM</td>
<td>4.87 (1.111)</td>
<td>4.28 (1.192)</td>
<td>2.756</td>
<td>0.007**</td>
<td>M&gt;W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJW</td>
<td>3.87 (1.291)</td>
<td>3.21 (0.1353)</td>
<td>2.984</td>
<td>0.004**</td>
<td>M&gt;W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWE</td>
<td>3.00 (1.027)</td>
<td>2.52 (1.022)</td>
<td>2.483</td>
<td>0.015*</td>
<td>M&gt;W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERM</td>
<td>3.62 (1.065)</td>
<td>3.11 (1.246)</td>
<td>2.343</td>
<td>0.021*</td>
<td>M&gt;W</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: PD = Perceived Discrimination; PRI = Politicized Racial Identity; IMM = Internalized Model Minority Myth; BJW = Belief in a Just World; PWE = Protestant Work Ethic; PERM = Belief in Status Permeability. 
† p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.
Table 2.2 Political orientation differences on study variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Very left (Mean, SD)</th>
<th>Moderately left (Mean, SD)</th>
<th>Center left (Mean, SD)</th>
<th>Right (Mean, SD)</th>
<th>F-test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Post-hoc:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>5.19(0.745)</td>
<td>4.81(0.825)</td>
<td>4.42(0.825)</td>
<td>4.22(0.761)</td>
<td>6.174</td>
<td>0.001**</td>
<td>VL&lt;CL; VL&lt;R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMM</td>
<td>3.85(1.43)</td>
<td>4.35(1.078)</td>
<td>4.74(0.962)</td>
<td>5.38(0.860)</td>
<td>6.305</td>
<td>0.001**</td>
<td>VL&lt;CL; VL&lt;R; ML&lt;R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJW</td>
<td>2.74(1.077)</td>
<td>3.40(1.132)</td>
<td>3.82(1.054)</td>
<td>3.98(1.153)</td>
<td>5.542</td>
<td>0.003**</td>
<td>VL&lt;CL; VL&lt;R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWE</td>
<td>1.92(0.693)</td>
<td>2.67(1.025)</td>
<td>2.97(0.808)</td>
<td>3.27(1.305)</td>
<td>10.653</td>
<td>&lt;.001***</td>
<td>VL&lt;ML; VL&lt;CL; VL&lt;R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERM</td>
<td>2.63(0.962)</td>
<td>3.22(1.084)</td>
<td>3.59(1.159)</td>
<td>4.21(1.388)</td>
<td>6.104</td>
<td>0.002**</td>
<td>VL&lt;R; ML&lt;R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>3.07(0.701)</td>
<td>3.23(0.744)</td>
<td>3.41(0.576)</td>
<td>3.82(0.555)</td>
<td>4.656</td>
<td>0.007**</td>
<td>VL&lt;R; ML&lt;R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>4.90(0.594)</td>
<td>5.28(0.635)</td>
<td>5.03(0.660)</td>
<td>5.47(0.816)</td>
<td>2.708</td>
<td>0.058†</td>
<td>VL&lt;R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: PRI = Politicized Racial Identity; IMM = Internalized Model Minority Myth; BJW = Belief in a Just World; PWE = Protestant Work Ethic; PERM = Belief in Status Permeability.

† p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.
Moderation Analysis

A series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses tested internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs as moderators of the association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism (i.e., AAPI activism) and the association between politicized racial identity and out-group activism (i.e., solidarity with BLM). In Step 1, three variables were entered into the model as covariates: age, gender, and political orientation. In Step 2, the moderation variables (internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs) and the predictor variable (perceived discrimination for own-group activism; politicized racial identity for out-group activism) were entered into the model. In Step 3, the interactions between the hypothesized predictor variable with each moderation variable were entered into the model to test the interaction effects. The outcome variable for each model was one of the two activism outcome variables: own-group activism and out-group activism. Post-hoc subgroup regression analyses were conducted to better understand significant moderation.

Table 3.1 shows the hierarchical multiple regression analyses testing internalized model minority myth as a moderator on the association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism, and on the association between politicized racial identity and out-group activism. The hierarchical regression was statistically significant for the effects of internalized MMM on perceived discrimination and own-group activism (R² = 0.387, F(8) = 7.58, p < 0.001). Interestingly, there was not a significant main effect of perceived discrimination on own-group activism in the hierarchical model, but there was a marginally significant main effect of internalized MMM on own-group activism (β = 0.0495, p = 0.068). In addition, internalized MMM moderated the association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism (β = 0.1784, p = 0.028). Simple slope analysis showed a significant positive association between
perceived discrimination and own-group activism at 1 standard deviation above the mean (B = 0.604, \( p < 0.001 \)), at the mean (B = 0.428, \( p < 0.001 \)), and at 1 standard deviation below the mean (B = 0.253, \( p = 0.011 \)) on internalized MMM, demonstrating that greater endorsement of MMM beliefs strengthens the association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism. The hierarchical regression model for the effects of internalized MMM on politicized racial identity and out-group activism was also statistically significant (\( R^2 = 0.269, F(8) = 4.23, p < 0.001 \)). However, it was found that internalized MMM did not predict out-group activism (\( \beta = -0.0499, p = 0.691 \)), nor did it moderate the relationship between politicized racial identity and out-group activism (\( \beta = 0.0235, p = 0.772 \)).

Table 3.2 shows the results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis testing of meritocracy beliefs (mean composite score for belief in a just world, protestant work ethic, and belief in status permeability) as a moderator in the association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism, and on the association between politicized racial identity and out-group activism. The hierarchical regression model for the effects of meritocracy beliefs on perceived discrimination and own-group activism was statistically significant (\( R^2 = 0.410, F(8) = 8.33, p < 0.001 \)). There was no significant main effect of perceived discrimination and meritocracy beliefs on own-group activism, but there was a marginally significant interaction effect in which meritocracy beliefs moderated the association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism (\( \beta = 0.133, p = 0.084 \)). Simple slope analysis showed a significant positive association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism at 1 standard deviation above the mean (B = 0.664, \( p < 0.001 \)), at the mean (B = 0.475, \( p < 0.001 \)), and at 1 standard deviation below the mean (B = 0.287, \( p = 0.002 \)) on meritocracy beliefs, demonstrating that greater
endorsement of meritocracy beliefs strengthens the association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism.

The hierarchical regression model for the effects of meritocracy beliefs on politicized racial identity and out-group activism was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.266, F(8) = 4.18, p < 0.001$). However, it was found that meritocracy beliefs did not significantly predict out-group activism ($\beta = 0.00979, p = 0.886$), nor did it moderate the relationship between politicized racial identity and out-group activism ($\beta = 0.01321, p = 0.866$).

Table 3.3 shows the results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis testing of own-group activism as a moderator in the association between politicized racial identity and out-group activism. The hierarchical regression model for the effects of own-group activism on politicized racial identity and out-group activism was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.541, F(8) = 13.53, p < 0.001$). There was no significant main effect of politicized racial identity and own-group activism on out-group activism, but there was a significant interaction effect in which own-group activism moderated the effect between politicized racial identity and out-group activism ($\beta = 0.164, p = 0.046$). Simple slope analysis showed a significant positive association between politicized racial identity and out-group activism at 1 standard deviation above the mean ($B = 0.2056, p < 0.001$) and at the mean ($B = 0.1093, p = 0.004$), but a null association at 1 standard deviation below the mean ($B = 0.0131, p = 0.812$) on own-group activism. These data demonstrate that existing participation in activist behaviors for the own-group strengthens the association between politicized racial identity and out-group activism.
Table 3.1 Hierarchical multiple regression analyses for internalized model minority myth as a moderator in Model 1 and Model 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1: Own-group Activism</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2: Out-group Activism</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>ΔR²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1: Covariates</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.0165</td>
<td>0.00586</td>
<td>-0.274**</td>
<td>0.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.0397</td>
<td>0.0931</td>
<td>0.0750</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very left-Right</td>
<td>-0.307</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>-0.581†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately left-Right</td>
<td>-0.169</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>-0.320</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center left-Right</td>
<td>-0.348</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>-0.658**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2: Main Effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>-0.156</td>
<td>0.283</td>
<td>0.505</td>
<td>0.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMM</td>
<td>-0.236</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>0.0495†</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3: Interactions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD X IMM</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>0.0621</td>
<td>0.178*</td>
<td>0.0318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: B = unstandardized estimate; SE = standard error; β = standard estimate; PD = Perceived Discrimination; IMM = Internalized Model Minority Myth; PRI = Politicized Racial Identity.

† p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.
Table 3.2 Hierarchical multiple regression analyses for meritocracy beliefs as a moderator in Model 1 and Model 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1: Own-group Activism</th>
<th>Model 2: Out-group Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>β</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ΔR²</td>
<td>ΔR²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 1: Covariates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>-0.0154</th>
<th>0.00508</th>
<th>-0.250**</th>
<th>0.113</th>
<th>3.04**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.0682</td>
<td>0.0916</td>
<td>0.129</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Political Orientation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very left-Right</th>
<th>-0.2327</th>
<th>0.167</th>
<th>-0.440</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderately left-Right</td>
<td>-0.1416</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>-0.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center left-Right</td>
<td>-0.3486</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>-0.659*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 2: Main Effects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD</th>
<th>0.119</th>
<th>0.231</th>
<th>0.554</th>
<th>0.258</th>
<th>8.80***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meritocracy</td>
<td>-0.118</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>0.213</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 3: Interactions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PD X Meritocracy</th>
<th>0.125</th>
<th>0.0714</th>
<th>0.133†</th>
<th>0.0187</th>
<th>8.33***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Step 1: Covariates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>-0.0162</th>
<th>0.00522</th>
<th>-0.282**</th>
<th>0.108</th>
<th>2.29†</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>0.0979</td>
<td>0.301</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Political Orientation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very left-Right</th>
<th>-0.285</th>
<th>0.182</th>
<th>-0.579</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderately left-Right</td>
<td>-0.178</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>-0.362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center left-Right</td>
<td>-0.158</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>-0.321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 2: Main Effects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRI</th>
<th>0.226</th>
<th>0.145</th>
<th>0.437</th>
<th>0.159</th>
<th>4.82***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meritocracy</td>
<td>-0.0308</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>0.00979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 3: Interactions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRI X Meritocracy</th>
<th>0.00760</th>
<th>0.0449</th>
<th>0.0132</th>
<th>2.28e-4</th>
<th>4.18***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Note: B = unstandardized estimate; SE = standard error; β = standard estimate; PD = Perceived Discrimination; IMM = Internalized Model Minority Myth; PRI = Politicized Racial Identity.
† p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.
Table 3.3 Hierarchical regression analysis on own-group activism as a moderator on the association between politicized racial identity and out-group activism in Model 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1: Covariates</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.00630</td>
<td>0.00434</td>
<td>-0.109</td>
<td>0.108</td>
<td>2.29†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.0709</td>
<td>0.00434</td>
<td>-0.109</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very left-Right</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>0.149</td>
<td>0.230</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately left-Right</td>
<td>0.0900</td>
<td>0.1323</td>
<td>0.183</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center left-Right</td>
<td>0.0821</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2: Main Effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRI</td>
<td>-0.153</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>0.184</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>14.40***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own-group Activism</td>
<td>-0.291</td>
<td>0.429</td>
<td>0.577</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3: Interactions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRI X Own-group Activism</td>
<td>0.176</td>
<td>0.0867</td>
<td>0.164*</td>
<td>0.0205</td>
<td>13.53***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: B = unstandardized estimate; SE = standard error; β = standard estimate; PRI = Politicized Racial Identity. † p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.
Exploratory Analysis

A hierarchical multiple regression model was conducted to examine the effects of own-group activism on perceived discrimination and out-group activism to determine if experiences of discrimination combined with existing participation in AAPI activism would affect cross-racial solidarity with Black Americans. This hierarchical multiple regression model was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.533, F(8) = 13.69, p < 0.001$), and there was a marginal main effect of own-group activism on out-group activism ($\beta = 0.594, p = 0.058$). There were no significant moderating effects.

Linear regression analysis was conducted on belief in a just world separately from the other meritocracy scales. The regression model for the effect of belief in a just world on perceived discrimination and own-group activism was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.417, F(8) = 8.59, p < 0.001$). There was no significant main effect of belief in a just world on own-group activism ($\beta = 0.229, p = 0.394$), but there was a marginal moderation effect of belief in a just world on perceived discrimination and own-group activism ($\beta = 0.144, p = 0.074$). Simple slope analysis showed a significant positive association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism at 1 standard deviation above the mean ($B = 0.696, p < 0.001$), at the mean ($B = 0.485, p < 0.001$), and at 1 standard deviation below the mean ($B = 0.274, p = 0.003$) on belief in a just world, demonstrating that greater endorsement of just world beliefs strengthens the association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism. The regression model for the effect of belief in a just world on politicized racial identity and out-group activism was also statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.273, F(8) = 4.33, p < 0.001$). However, there was no significant main effect of belief in a just world on out-group activism ($\beta = 0.0337, p = 0.469$),
nor did it moderate the relationship between politicized racial identity and out-group activism ($\beta = 0.0735, p = 0.405$).

The effects of collectivism and acculturation on activist behaviors were also analyzed using linear regression. The regression model for the effect of collectivism on own-group activism was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.177, F(6) = 3.51, p = 0.003$). There was a significant main effect of collectivism on own-group activism ($\beta = 0.222, p = 0.024$). The regression model for the effect of collectivism on out-group activism was marginally significant ($R^2 = 0.113, F(6) = 2.08, p = 0.062$), but there was no significant main effect ($\beta = 0.0517, p = 0.610$). The regression model for the effect of acculturation on own-group activism was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.143, F(6) = 2.72, p = 0.017$), however, there was no main effect for this relationship ($\beta = 0.104, p = 0.295$). The regression model acculturation on out-group activism was marginally significant ($R^2 = 0.112, F(6) = 2.06, p = 0.065$), and there was also no main effect for this relationship ($\beta = 0.0344, p = 0.732$).

Finally, the direct effects of perceived discrimination on out-group activism and the direct effects of politicized racial identity on own-group activism were measured in linear regression models. The regressions for both models were statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.306, F(6) = 7.19, p < 0.001$ for perceived discrimination on out-group activism; $R^2 = 0.321, F(6) = 7.39, p < 0.001$ for politicized racial identity on own-group activism). There was a significant main effect of perceived discrimination on out-group activism ($\beta = 0.453, p < 0.001$) and politicized racial identity on own-group activism ($\beta = 0.463, p < 0.001$).
Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of what predicts own-group activism (i.e., advocating for Asian Americans) and out-group activism (i.e., solidarity with BLM) among Asian Americans. This study comes at an important time of racial reckoning. Asian Americans have increasingly become the targets of racist or racially insensitive views due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the murder of George Floyd and countless other Black Americans calls into question the extent of cross-racial support among Asian and Black communities. Previous studies have found that a higher level of perceived discrimination is associated with increased participation in social and political activism (Tran & Curtin, 2017; Stronge et al., 2016). The current study expands on the existing literature on cross-racial solidarity between Asian Americans and Black Americans by examining stereotypes specific to AAPI (i.e., the model minority myth and meritocracy beliefs) and a politicized racial identity that measures group consciousness and their effects on activism.

There were three key findings of this research. First, the results of the present study supported the first hypothesis \((H1)\) that perceived discrimination would positively predict own-group activism, while internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs would moderate this relationship. Second, the results only partially supported the second hypothesis \((H2)\) that politicized racial identity would positively predict out-group activism and own-group activism, while internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs would moderate this relationship. And third, two out of the three moderation effects that were statistically significant were found to be in the opposite direction as hypothesized.

Model 1: Own-group Activism
Perceived discrimination was found to positively predict own-group activism in the linear regression model (H1). The stronger a participant felt they had experienced discrimination, the more the activist behaviors they engaged in, which was consistent with H1. When the moderation variables were added in the hierarchical multiple regression model, there was no longer a direct main effect for the relationship between perceived discrimination and own-group activism, but there was a significant moderation effect. Internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs each moderated the association between perceived discrimination and own-group activism, but not in the direction that was hypothesized.

It was hypothesized that internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs would weaken the relationship between perceived discrimination and own-group activism, which was consistent with the existing literature that found evidence that strong endorsement of the MMM and belief in a meritocratic world hinders support for socio-political movements that advocate for structural change (Tran & Curtin, 2017). However, the results of the present study showed that internalized MMM actually strengthened the relationship between perceived discrimination and own-group activism, in contrast to the hypothesis and Tran & Curtin’s (2017) findings. Since there is limited research on Asian American activism, it is difficult to discern what the possible causes of the present findings are. One possibility is that the participants experienced a paradigm shift in their beliefs about the world that propelled them to support social movements supporting AAPI. Merriam-Webster defines a paradigm shift as “an important change that happens when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In this case, the occurring paradigm shift is the participants’ belief in the MMM and meritocracy being violated because the values and attributes that act as a buffer to experiencing discrimination are still not enough to protect them from racism. Despite Asian
Americans being the model minority who are successful and hard-working, they still experience racism; therefore, experiences of discrimination potentially propel Asian Americans to support movements that fight against racism. The same could be said about meritocracy beliefs. Despite believing that the world is fair and Asian Americans are capable of upwards social mobility, Asian Americans still experience racism. The critical aspect of this paradigm shift was the violation of existing beliefs which potentially inspired increased participation in activist behaviors.

**Model 2: Out-group Activism**

The results of the current study only partially supported $H2$. Consistent with the hypothesis, politicized racial identity positively predicted out-group activism when analyzed in the linear regression model, indicating that a strong sense of group consciousness, identity as a person of color, and/or interracial commonality leads to more support for BLM. This finding is consistent with the previous literature that demonstrates that group consciousness and linked fate are positively associated with feelings of closeness with Blacks (Nicholson et al. 2020) and support for BLM (Merseth 2018). However, internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs were not associated with out-group activism, nor did they moderate the relationship between politicized racial identity and out-group activism.

Although politicized racial identity positively predicted out-group activism, belief in MMM and meritocracy did not further affect this relationship, in contrast to the hypothesis and previous literature. Yi & Todd (2021) found that internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs were positively associated with more negative attitudes towards out-groups. However, their study did not include a measure of group consciousness and interracial commonality, which is likely
why the results of the current study contrast with Yi & Todd’s. A possible explanation for the present findings is that politicized racial identity acted as a buffer between internalized MMM/meritocracy and negative attitudes towards other marginalized groups. The non-significant result of the moderation analyses can be interpreted as follows: the data provides little or no evidence that the null hypothesis (that there is no moderation effect) is false; however, the high probability $p$-value is not evidence that the null hypothesis is true. In other words, politicized racial identity most likely has little to no effect on the relationship between internalized MMM/meritocracy and out-group activism. The existence of a small effect cannot be ruled out, but if politicized racial identity is, indeed, a buffer for this relationship, the implications of these results would have a critical impact on future intervention development and research. Nevertheless, further research is needed to explore this possibility.

Another potential explanation for these results in relation to Model 1 is that there was likely no paradigm shift in this model. Politicized racial identity is inherently different from perceived discrimination, as there is no measure of threat to oneself or discomfort, leaving no possibility for a violation of existing beliefs. If participants already had an existing endorsement of the MMM and meritocracy beliefs, having a strong politicized racial identity might not significantly change their participation in activist behaviors because it fails to directly challenge any existing beliefs. In a way, politicized racial identity is already an existing belief, therefore, it would not cause a paradigm shift because it wouldn’t change the existing beliefs of MMM and meritocracy. While the idea that a paradigm shift causes these unexpected moderation results for internalized MMM and meritocracy beliefs is persuasive, much work remains to be done before a full understanding of these results is established.
The only significant moderator for the relationship between politicized racial identity and out-group activism was found to be own-group activism. Own-group activism moderated the relationship in a positive direction as predicted in H2. Participation in own-group activism, combined with a strong politicized racial identity, resulted in more participation in activist behaviors supporting Black Americans. These data strongly imply that those who have a strong politicized racial identity and are already engaging in AAPI activism are more likely to support BLM than those who are not. These results have strong theoretical and practical implications on activist psychology and cross-racial solidarity between Asian Americans and Black Americans. From these findings, activist and advocacy-related organizations could confront the issue of cross-racial solidarity by spreading their messages to other advocacy-related organizations and working together to disseminate information. Future directions for research should focus on these variables to further explore the effects of own-group activism as a predictor of cross-racial solidarity.

**Exploratory Results**

Additional exploratory analyses were conducted to find other variables that may be predictive of own-group and out-group activism. The Belief in Just World scale (a subscale of the composite meritocracy score) was particularly interesting. This scale is uniquely separate from what is measured in the Internalization of the MMM scale. Whereas the IMM-4 scale measures one’s belief in Asian Americans’ success and hard work, as well as the possibility for social mobility for AAPI and the belief in a lower likelihood of discrimination—which are both covered by the other two meritocracy belief subscales, Protestant Work Ethic and Belief in Status Permeability—belief in a just world measures one’s belief that the world is fair and just and that
people generally get what they deserve in life. It was found that the belief in a just world alone had a marginal moderation effect on perceived discrimination and own-group activism in a positive direction, meaning experiencing discrimination while having a strong belief that the world is fair and people get what they deserve results in more participation in activist behaviors for AAPI activism, which is consistent with the results in Model 1. The key finding from this exploratory analysis, however, is the results of just world beliefs relating to attitudes towards out-groups.

Whereas past researchers have found negative associations between just world beliefs and attitudes towards outgroups (Furnham, 2003; Neville et al., 2013; Yi & Todd, 2021; Madeira et al., 2019), the present study found that belief in a just world had no effect on the relationship between politicized racial identity and out-group activism. Future research could extend the current findings by examining the effect of group consciousness in the relationship between just world beliefs and intergroup solidarity.

The effect of cultural values specific to the AAPI experience on activist behaviors was also examined. It was found that collectivism positively predicted own-group activism, but had no effect on out-group activism. These results suggest that those who possess more collectivistic values engage in more activist behaviors for AAPI activism, but they don’t have any significant effect on cross-racial solidarity. Level of acculturation was also analyzed as a direct predictor for own-group and out-group activism, but no significant result was found for either model.

Finally, I explored the effects of the predictor values on the opposite outcome variable corresponding to the research questions—that is, the effects of perceived discrimination on out-group activism and the effect of politicized racial identity on own-group activism. There were significant effects for both models, with both being positive predictors of their respective
outcome variables in these models. Those who had strong politicized racial identities and group consciousness were more likely to participate in AAPI activism. Interestingly, the finding that those who experienced discrimination were more likely to engage in activism for BLM were inconsistent with existing literature. Merseth’s (2018) study on Asian Americans’ support for BLM found that perceptions of discrimination against one’s own group were not found to be significantly effect Asian American support for BLM, rather, it was perceived discrimination against Black communities that had a significant effect. These results should motivate a deeper investigation of broader beliefs about racial inequality in the U.S.

Study Limitations and Future Directions

This research is subject to several limitations. The participants in the sample were predominantly politically left-leaning, with 87.9% (N=94) identifying as left-leaning and only 12.1% (N=13) identifying as right-leaning. Although this demographic outcome was expected and political orientation was controlled for accordingly, future studies should include a more intentional, in-depth analysis on political orientation and its effects on activism. This way, more specific aspects of political orientation, such as beliefs about race, social mobility, meritocracy, and the model minority myth, can be attributed to one’s engagement in activist behaviors.

Another limitation to the study was using an unpublished scale to measure politicized racial identity. The scale for politicized racial identity was developed in Carrie Langner’s 2005 dissertation on politicized collective identity, which was then used and modified in Adam Kim’s 2020 dissertation on interracial discourse on AAPI and Black communities. Although the scale had very strong Chronbach’s alphas in both dissertations ($\alpha = 0.9$ in Langner, 2005; $\alpha = 0.82$ in Kim, 2020), the scale has not been published, peer reviewed, or validated. For this reason, it is
impossible at this point in time to determine the reliability and validity of the results of the $H2$ of the present study. In future research, it would be best to use a previously validated, peer-reviewed measure.

Despite these limitations, the present study has highlighted very important findings that have broadened my understanding of the relationship between perceived discrimination, the MMM, meritocracy beliefs, and engagement in activism. The results of the study were not as expected, thus I hope that the current research will stimulate further investigation of this critical area in AAPI activist literature. To our knowledge, this study is the first to examine internalized model minority myth and meritocracy beliefs as it relates to both own-group activism and out-group activism. Other studies have only focused on either own-group activism or out-group activism, but literature examining the comparison between the two are sparse at best. Future research should look more closely at this relationship.

Conclusion

The study contributes to the AAPI activism literature in three important ways. First, it examined predictors of own-group activism among AAPI, an understudied group, and expanded on the sparse literature on cross-racial solidarity between AAPI and Black Americans. Second, it contributes to a growing body of evidence that greater experiences of discrimination predicts greater own-group activism. Third, and most importantly, it examined the model minority myth in the context of solidarity with Black Americans. The model of Asian American success is one way that the notion of white supremacy is maintained. With cross-racial solidarity becoming increasingly important to enact real societal change, the model minority myth continues to be an obstacle to that goal. It is my hope that continued research in this area can provide some insight
on ways to improve inter-group dynamics and attitudes to challenge white supremacy and stand in solidarity.
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