

The Missing Middle: Asian Employees' Experience of Workplace Discrimination and Pro-Black Allyship

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Asian employees occupy an intermediate status in the U.S. racial hierarchy between White and Black employees. Given this intermediate position, it is unclear whether and how Asian employees' own racial experience at work will affect their willingness to take action against racism toward other groups. In the current research, we examine how Asian employees' experiences of racism impact their propensity to combat racism against Black coworkers. Across four studies including a qualitative survey (Pilot), a time-lagged quantitative survey (Study 1), a preregistered experiment (Study 2), and a conceptual replication experiment (Study 3), we find that Asian employees who experience more racial discrimination at work feel more similar to Black individuals, which is subsequently associated with greater allyship toward Black coworkers. We find that this relationship is heightened among Asian employees who have stronger zero-sum beliefs (Study 1). Importantly, we further find that processes that lead to allyship among Asian employees differ among White employees (Studies 2–3): In contrast to Asian employees, White employees who perceive more anti-in-group workplace discrimination feel *less* similar to Black individuals, which is associated with diminished pro-Black allyship. By examining the poorly understood racial experiences of Asian employees, and uncovering mechanisms that propel Asian employees to engage in intergroup allyship, we provide a more complete picture of racism in the workplace.

Keywords: racism, Asian Americans, allyship, racial discrimination, common in-group identity model

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Asians are the fastest growing racial group in the United States (Lopez et al., 2017), and constitute a notable portion of the American workforce (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019).¹ Yet, relatively little is known about Asian employees' racial experiences at work (Lai & Babcock, 2013). Even less is known about how Asian employees experience the existing racial hierarchy in organizations, which benefits White and marginalizes Black employees (Bell et al., 2014; Nkomo & Ariss, 2014; Ray, 2019). There are reasons to believe that Asian employees may either support, challenge, or remain indifferent to the existing hierarchy, given their intermediate status in the racial hierarchy (O'Brien, 2008; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Asian individuals both suffer from negative racial stereotypes (e.g., being perceived as foreign, submissive, and lacking social skills; Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Gündemir et al., 2019; Kim, 1999; Lin et al., 2005; Shih, 2004; Sy et al., 2010; Zou & Cheryan, 2017) and simultaneously benefit from positive ones (e.g., being perceived as competent and intelligent; Lin et al., 2005; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997; Rosette et al., 2018; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). At the same time,

even these positive stereotypes can present a double-edged sword, inducing envy and negative attitudes toward Asian Americans (e.g., Lin et al., 2005; Maddux et al., 2008). Nevertheless, because Asian Americans simultaneously experience both racial advantages and disadvantages, their interests may both align with *and* misalign with the workplace racial hierarchy. These facts raise important challenges about how scholars understand racism—and antiracism—in the workplace. Specifically, it is unclear whether Asian employees will engage in behaviors that ultimately uphold or dismantle the racial hierarchy.

Given the possibility that Asian employees may engage in behaviors in favor of or against the racial status quo, the current work examines how Asian employees' experiences of workplace racism against their in-group (i.e., Asians) may shape their willingness to combat workplace racism against other groups. In particular, we examine how Asian employees' personal experience of workplace racial discrimination—defined as “unequal job treatment or lack of positive opportunities because of one's race” (Schneider et al., 2000, p. 3)—impacts their allyship—defined as employees' actions to support other employees who are members of a disadvantaged out-group (Brown & Ostrove, 2013; Radke et al., 2020)—toward Black coworkers. We examine allyship as a key dependent

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¹ We use the terms, “Asians,” “Asian Americans,” and “Asian employees” to refer to those who identify as Asian and reside in the United States. Although we recognize the rich ethnic diversity within the racial group of Asians, we focus on Asians as a broad racial group, given past research showing that the stereotypical treatments Asian Americans across different ethnic subgroups are similar, especially in the context of the larger U.S. racial status hierarchy (e.g., Zou & Cheryan, 2017).

variable, because scholars have theorized allyship to be an effective tool in reducing racism and creating more equitable systems (Ashburn-Nardo, 2018; Sabat et al., 2013).

Building upon the common in-group identity model (CIIM; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009, 2012; Gaertner et al., 1993), we theorize that Asian employees' experiences of workplace discrimination increase their perceived group similarity with Black individuals and ultimately result in greater allyship toward Black coworkers. Further, based on realistic group conflict theory (RGCT; Bobo, 1983; Campbell, 1965), we predict that this indirect relationship is moderated by Asian employees' zero-sum beliefs (i.e., "perception that gains for one group necessarily involve losses for other groups and vice versa"; Wilkins et al., 2015, p. 1).

The current work contributes to understandings of racism at work in four ways. First, we emphasize race at work as a dynamic between *multiple* distinct groups, challenging the usual conceptualization of race as a dichotomy. Prior work on race across a wide variety of academic disciplines has tended to examine race relations as dichotomies (Cheng & Thatchenkery, 1997; Landau, 1995; Sy et al., 2010), either contrasting the experience of White employees versus "racial minority employees" as a monolith, or focusing on the dynamics between White individuals and a single minority group—usually Black individuals (see McCord et al., 2018; for exceptions, see Hall et al., 2019; Rosette et al., 2008). By conceptually distinguishing between marginalized racial groups, our work challenges assumptions that members of all racial minority groups will necessarily support each other in the fight for greater racial equity. We highlight that Asian employees' support for reducing anti-Black racism cannot be assumed simply due to their non-White status by identifying unique processes that shape Asian employees' pro-Black allyship at work.

Second, we contribute to the budding literature on allyship. Extant allyship research focuses especially on contexts outside of work organizations (Craig et al., 2020; Radke et al., 2020; Selvanathan et al., 2020). Yet, organizations are major sites of the production and reproduction of racism (Nkomo, 1992; Ray, 2019; see also Amis et al., 2020; Chrobot-Mason et al., 2020; Hekman et al., 2017)—as such, allyship within organizations may be an especially effective means for mitigating societal racial inequity. To add, allyship research has overwhelmingly examined antecedents to allyship among the most dominant group members (e.g., White individuals, men; see also Craig & Richeson, 2016). This assumption that allies are at the very top of the hierarchy, and thus do not share experiences of systemic discrimination, leads existing frameworks to emphasize self-transcending motives, such as moral conviction and egalitarian values, as antecedents to allyship (Craig et al., 2020). In contrast, we expand to include *relatively* dominant group members as potential allies. In doing so, we identify additional antecedents such as perceived similarity and zero-sum beliefs, that motivate members of an intermediate status racial group (i.e., Asian individuals; O'Brien, 2008) to engage in allyship in the workplace.

Third, we expand and diversify the study of racism in the workplace by shedding light on the racial experience of Asian employees, who have been largely neglected in the study of racism at work (Cheng & Thatchenkery, 1997; Lai & Babcock, 2013). Emerging research in sociology and social psychology (Shih, 2004; Zou & Cheryan, 2017), alongside rapidly growing and evolving expressions of anti-Asian racism in the workplace (e.g., Jun & Wu,

2021) suggest that more research on Asian employees' racial experiences is necessary for a fuller understanding of workplace racism. We respond to the call to broaden the study of race at work to include understudied racial groups, such as Asian Americans (Colella et al., 2017).

Finally, by considering the dynamics of more than two racial groups through the lens of CIIM and RGCT, our work also begins to integrate the two theories, providing new insights into both. Specifically, we demonstrate how zero-sum intergroup conflict (and cooperation) theorized by RGCT can emerge in the context of *more* than two groups (e.g., Asians, Blacks, and Whites), as the result of CIIM processes fostering a dual identity among some groups (e.g., Asians and Blacks; "people of color"). Thus, we also contribute to RGCT by suggesting that subjective perceptions of boundaries between groups may be fluid and multi-layered. Whereas much research on RGCT assumes stable group boundaries, we suggest that intergroup cooperation and competition operate amid dynamic perceptions of group boundaries, shaped by members' malleable and simultaneous identification with distinct groups and shared superordinate groups.

Theoretical Background: The Unique Racial Experiences of Asian Employees

While prior research on the racial experience of Asian employees is limited, the little work that does exist suggests that Asian employees' experience of racism cannot readily be extrapolated from research on White, Black, or Latino employees' racial experiences (see Avery et al., 2018). A critical difference is that Asian individuals simultaneously suffer *and* benefit from their racial group membership (Hall et al., 2015, 2019; Kim, 1999; Rosette et al., 2008, 2018; Zou & Cheryan, 2017).

On the one hand, research demonstrates that Asian Americans chronically suffer from a "foreignness bias" compared to White Americans and are perpetually seen as being exotic, foreign, and deviant to the American prototype (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Dovidio et al., 2010; Huynh et al., 2011; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Such stereotypes of foreignness have also been theorized as contributing to the growing racial harassment (Jun & Wu, 2021) and hate crimes against Asian Americans relating to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Hong & Bromwich, 2021; Hsu, 2021; Kraus, 2021). Asian individuals are also dehumanized as lacking social skills, leading to lower rates of selection for leadership positions and jobs involving social skills compared to White candidates (Gündemir et al., 2019; Kawahara et al., 2013; Lai & Babcock, 2013; Landau, 1995; Sy et al., 2010; Yammarino & Jung, 1998), despite having the highest median educational attainment among all racial groups in the United States. (Ryan & Bauman, 2016). Indeed, and unsurprisingly, in a national survey of Asian employees, 40% reported experiencing ethnic discrimination in getting a job or a promotion at work (Lien, 2004).

On the other hand, Asian individuals also benefit from advantages not afforded to Black, Latino, and Indigenous individuals that may be particularly relevant in the workplace. While diversity exists within each racial group (Kuo et al., 2020; Lu et al., 2020), Asian Americans on average have greater wealth than Black and Latino Americans (Xu & Lee, 2013), and have higher income than White Americans (Kochhar & Cilluffo, 2018). Accordingly, Asian Americans are often treated as the "model minority," stereotyped as having advanced in U.S. society through hard work and education

(Kawai, 2005). Consistent with this notion, Asian individuals are perceived to be intelligent, competent, hard-working, and academically and economically successful (Fiske et al., 2002; Karlins et al., 1969; Katz & Braly, 1933; King et al., 2006; Lin et al., 2005; Osajima, 1988; Rosette et al., 2016; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Asian employees are even perceived to be more technically competent than White employees (Sy et al., 2010), so much so that localized evidence suggests that White families move residential areas to avoid academic competition with Asian children (Hwang, 2005). Research even suggests that such positive stereotyping of Asians can be so extreme as to be associated with negative outcomes, such as feelings of envy (Lin et al., 2005), realistic threat (Maddux et al., 2008), and anti-Asian prejudice (Butz & Yogeeswaran, 2011). Notwithstanding these potential negative outcomes associated with extreme positive stereotyping, many advantages Asian individuals experience parallel White privilege, that is, the racial hierarchy in the United States offers Asian individuals some advantages based on race alone (e.g., McIntosh, 1989).

Such ambivalence in Asian individuals' racial status and experience suggests that dominant dichotomous models of racial dynamics—which draw a single colorline between White versus non-White individuals, or between Black versus non-Black individuals—are insufficient for understanding Asian employees' experiences of race (Cox & Nkomo, 1990; Kim, 1999; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Perhaps more importantly, their intermediate status also suggests that Asian employees may have the potential to both engage in behaviors that bolster and challenge racial inequities at work. In the current research, we specifically examine processes that impact Asian employees' willingness to take action against anti-Black racism.

Theory Development: Asian Employees as Allies at Work

We suggest that Asian employees' experience of anti-Asian racism at work will increase their perceptions of similarity with Black individuals. In turn, based on the CIIM (Gaertner et al., 1993), we predict that Asian employees who perceive Asians to be similar to Blacks (i.e., perceived group similarity) will subsequently engage in more allyship toward Black employees.

Specifically, we contend that Asian employees who experience greater anti-Asian discrimination are more likely to feel a sense of group similarity and common fate with Black individuals, even if the exact nature of anti-Asian and anti-Black discrimination differs. In the United States, the racial hierarchy disadvantages Black individuals across a variety of important contexts (Cuddy et al., 2008; Sears, 2008; Sears & Savalei, 2006). Moreover, a recent survey shows that the majority of the U.S. population recognizes that Black employees experience racial discrimination at work, ranging from reduced access to leadership roles and workplace harassment (Horowitz et al., 2019). This evidence is important because it suggests that Asian employees are likely aware of the prevalence of anti-Black discrimination in the workplace.

As reviewed above, Asian individuals are also likely to suffer from race-based discrimination and harassment at work, even if the specific negative stereotypes differ compared to Black individuals. Overall, this shared experience of workplace discrimination may make Asian employees feel a sense of group similarity with Black individuals.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Asian employees' experience of discrimination is positively related to their perceptions of group similarity with Black individuals.

Derived from social categorization theory (Brewer, 1979; Brown & Turner, 1979; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the CIIM suggests that intergroup conflict can be reduced—and intergroup cooperation achieved—by changing members' cognitive representation of their group and out-groups (Gaertner et al., 1993). Specifically, the theory proposes this recategorization can happen in one of two ways: (a) through the construction of a “common identity” in which individuals recategorize the in-group and an out-group into a superordinate group that subsumes and erases the original group boundary (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009; Gaertner et al., 1993, 2012), or (b) through the construction of a “dual identity” in which individuals conceive of their in-group and an out-group as distinct groups within the context of a shared superordinate identity (see Dovidio et al., 2007; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2012, for review). These two forms of recategorization are similar in that a superordinate identity that includes two or more original out-groups is created. However, they are different in that individuals forsake their original group membership when identifying with a “common identity,” but maintain their identification with both their original group and a superordinate group when a “dual identity” is activated. Dovidio et al. (2007) have theorized that when individuals' original group identities are associated with highly visible cues or associated with values that are critical for members' function, they are less likely to renounce their original group membership when a superordinate group identity is conceived. Therefore, in the context of a highly visible and important identity like race, it is likely that superordinate group identities (e.g., among Asians and Blacks) will emerge as dual identities (e.g., “racial minorities” or “people of color”).

The CIIM theorizes that a dual identity may emerge due to a variety of causes, including perceived similarity, group entitativity, perceived common fate, and egalitarian norms (Dovidio et al., 2007; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2012). For example, researchers have found that making salient the shared experience of discrimination between differently disadvantaged groups (e.g., straight Black Americans and non-Black gay Americans) can increase group members' support for policies designed to benefit the out-group, despite representing an entirely different demographic (Cortland et al., 2017; see also Chaney et al., 2018; Craig & Richeson, 2016). In turn, once a dual identity is made salient, focal actors are more likely to help and support out-group members who share the dual identity (e.g., Blader, 2007) because they perceive these members' interests to be more aligned with the focal actor's in-group.

Applying the core tenets of the CIIM to our research, we theorize that Asian employees' increased perceptions of similarity with Black individuals (resulting from heightened experience of racial discrimination in the workplace) will increase their support toward their Black coworkers. One such manifestation of support toward a racial out-group member is workplace allyship. Allyship typically includes behaviors like seeking to learn about other group members' experiences, confronting prejudice and injustice toward disadvantaged group members, and engaging in advocacy for causes that benefit disadvantaged group members (Ashburn-Nardo, 2018; Salter & Migliaccio, 2019; Thoroughgood et al., 2021). Unlike organizational citizenship behavior, voice, and other forms of

prosocial behavior in the workplace, which are oriented toward supporting organizational functionality and performance (Lee & Allen, 2002; Triana et al., 2011), allyship involves employees working to support members of disadvantaged demographic groups that they are not a part of (Brown & Ostrove, 2013). In this way, allyship is a specific set of prosocial behaviors enacted against the backdrop of historic and current demographic group inequities. Although to date, allyship has rarely been studied in organizational contexts (Sabat et al., 2013; Salter & Migliaccio, 2019), many behaviors that constitute allyship are available in organizations such as confronting injustice toward coworkers of stigmatized groups, and may be effective in reducing workplace racism.

Building on our prior hypothesis and the main premise of the CIIM, we predict that Asian employees who perceive greater group similarity with Black individuals in response to perceiving greater anti-Asian discrimination (Hypothesis 1) will subsequently engage in more pro-Black allyship in the workplace. Supporting this prediction, research has found that greater perceptions of similarity with Black individuals reduce Asian individuals' prejudicial attitudes toward Black individuals (Craig & Richeson, 2012). We predict that Asian employees' increased perception of similarity with Black individuals go beyond reducing negative attitudes, and lead to supportive behaviors.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Asian employees' experience of discrimination is positively related to their pro-Black allyship at work via increased perceptions of group similarity with Black individuals.

The Moderating Role of Zero-Sum Beliefs

Thus far, we have argued that Asian employees' experience of discrimination will increase their perceived similarity with Black individuals and subsequently lead to greater pro-Black allyship at work. Drawing on RGCT, we further theorize that Asian employees' zero-sum beliefs will moderate the relationship between their perceived similarity with Black individuals and their pro-Black allyship. That is, we propose a second-stage moderated mediation, in which Asian employees' zero-sum beliefs *positively* moderate the indirect effect of employees' experience of discrimination on pro-Black allyship via perceived group similarity.

RGCT suggests that when an individual perceives out-group members as posing a threat to valued material or symbolic resources, they engage in greater efforts to enhance and protect their in-group, as well as harm the out-group (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 2000; Esses et al., 1998, 2001; Jackman, 1994; Jackson, 1993; Sherif, 1966; Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2010). Zero-sum beliefs—which can be chronic or situationally induced—refer to perceptions that one group's gain is another group's loss and vice versa, and lead to heightened perceptions of intergroup competition (Esses et al., 2001). Therefore, RGCT suggests that those with stronger zero-sum beliefs will be more likely to engage in behaviors that protect and enhance their in-group (Esses et al., 2001; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Sherif, 1966; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Past research examining the effects of zero-sum beliefs has primarily investigated contexts involving only two groups, precluding the possibility of the formation of coalitions among multiple groups. Because of this, prior work largely finds that zero-sum beliefs are associated with pro-in-group and antioutgroup attitudes and behaviors (Esses et al., 1998, 2001; Wellman et al., 2016).

For example, research suggests that White individuals with stronger zero-sum beliefs are less supportive of affirmative action aimed to address disadvantages of "racial minorities" and are more supportive of pro-White policies (Wilkins et al., 2015).

Here, we suggest that zero-sum beliefs can lead to *pro*-out-group behaviors, if (a) members of the out-group are perceived to simultaneously belong to a common superordinate group (e.g., dual identity), and (b) another out-group outside that superordinate group exists. Based on the CIIM (Dovidio et al., 2007), we expect that Asian employees who perceive themselves as highly similar to Black individuals will reconstrue Asians and Blacks as not only separate out-groups but also as simultaneously belonging to a common superordinate group (i.e., dual identity). Given this cognitive recategorization of racial groups, those with stronger zero-sum beliefs are likely to construe greater intergroup competition pitted between White employees versus "racial minority" employees (which includes Asian and Black employees). In other words, among Asian employees who see Asian and Black Americans as being similar, those with stronger zero-sum beliefs are more likely to perceive the advancement of Black employees as also advancing racial minorities' interests, including Asian employees'. As such, to the extent that Asian employees see Asians and Blacks as similar, we predict that those with stronger (as opposed to weaker) zero-sum beliefs will engage in more pro-Black allyship at work.

By contrast, as zero-sum beliefs represent the degree of intergroup competition individuals perceive, Asian employees with weaker zero-sum beliefs are less likely to engage in any behavior that either benefits the in-group or harms the out-group, regardless of their cognitive representation of racial group boundaries. This is because those with weaker zero-sum beliefs are not as concerned with intergroup competition in general.

Building on our prior hypotheses, we predict the following second-stage moderated mediation.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The positive indirect effect of Asian employees' perceived discrimination on their pro-Black allyship at work via perceptions of group similarity is moderated by zero-sum beliefs (as a second-stage moderator), such that it is stronger among Asian employees who have stronger zero-sum beliefs.

Overview of Studies

We conducted four studies to examine Asian employees' pro-Black allyship at work. In a Pilot Study, we asked Asian employees about their motivations behind their allyship in an open-ended question. We then formally tested our hypotheses across three studies. First, to establish external validity, we examined our hypotheses using a time-lagged survey of Asian employees (Study 1). Then, to establish causality, we conducted a preregistered experiment manipulating participants' experience of workplace discrimination (Study 2). Study 2 also examined how our proposed processes differentially shape Asian versus White employees' pro-Black allyship. Finally, we conducted another experiment (Study 3) to both replicate results with different experimental stimuli, and to include a measure of dual identity. All studies were approved by the University of Texas at Dallas's institutional review board (protocol title and number: experience of race and work, IRB-21-56).

Transparency and Openness

For each study, we describe our sampling plan, all data exclusions, all manipulations (if any), and all primary measures. Research materials for all studies including question stems and items for measures are reported in the article. Data for all studies and the full text of manipulations for Studies 2 and 3 are uploaded in an online repository at https://osf.io/wpzm2/?view_only=df0ae9ed08c34ecb9afc9886c115632b. Data were analyzed using R, Version 1.4.1717 (R Core Team, 2021) and SPSS, Version 28.0 (International Business Machines Corporation, 2021). The study design, hypotheses, and analyses for Study 2 were preregistered (<https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=v2re6a>). Other studies were not preregistered. All analyses conducted across studies used two-tailed tests to estimate *p* values.

Pilot Study

We sought to examine motivations behind Asian employees' allyship toward Black colleagues at work in an open-ended survey. The goal of the pilot study was to examine whether perceived similarity and dual identity naturally emerge as motives behind Asians' pro-Black allyship, even when unprompted. That is, although numerous motives for pro-Black allyship at work are possible, we expected that perceived similarity and dual identity would be among the motives expressed by Asian employees.

Method

Sample

We aimed to collect data from 100 Asian working adults in the United States, via Cloud Research's Prime Panels, which allow researchers to recruit participants from specific demographic backgrounds, and collected data from 105 participants in September 2021. We removed those who did not identify as Asian leaving us a final $N = 80$ participants (33 East Asian, 17 Southeast Asian, 15 South Asian, 1 East and South Asian, 2 South and Southeast Asian, 2 East Asian and "other" Asian, 5 Other Asian, and 5 Pacific Islander; 19 male, 60 female, 1 non-binary; $M_{\text{Age}} = 38.24$, $SD_{\text{Age}} = 12.61$). In terms of current occupation, 27.5% worked in management and professional occupations, 12.5% worked in service, 13.75% worked in sales, 15% worked in other occupations, 5% indicated that they had retired, and 26.25% indicated that were currently unemployed. The mean work experience of participants was 132.68 months ($SD = 142.3$).

Procedure

Participants read the following description:

Over the past few years, there has been a significant rise in attention to racism against Black Americans both inside and outside of organizations. In response to this, non-Black Americans can engage in various actions that support the Black community in their workplace.

We provided a definition of allyship, but purposely did not provide specific examples, nor use the term "allyship," in order to avoid restricting participants' conceptions of allyship.

Next, participants were asked, "Have you ever participated in activities in support of the Black community in your workplace?" with the answer choices, "yes" and "no." The 18 participants

(22.5%) responded, "yes" were further asked, "Why did you participate in activities that support the Black community at work? That is, what are your motivations or reasons?"

The 62 participants who responded with "no" to the earlier question were asked, "If given the opportunity, would you participate in activities to support the Black community in the workplace?" with the answer choices, "yes" and "no." Of the 62 participants who were asked this question, 37 (59.68%) responded, "yes," and were further asked, "Why would you be willing to participate in activities that support the Black community at work? That is what are your motivations or reasons?" We focused our analyses on the 55 participants who reported that they either had or would engage in pro-Black allyship at work.

Two independent raters, naïve to the purpose of the study, then coded the responses. As we had two raters coding dichotomous categorical variables, we calculated the Cohen's kappa to assess interrater reliabilities for all variables (Hallgren, 2012). The raters first determined whether participants' responses were nonsensical (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.854$). Then, raters independently coded participants' responses to indicate whether several mutually inclusive motivation themes were present or not.

Because we had hypotheses guiding the pilot study (Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2), we started with seven a priori themes rather than looking at themes that naturally emerged. First, based on our theorizing on perceived similarity, dual identity, and the possibility of structural change Asians may be motivated to engage in, raters coded whether participants' open-ended responses included themes of (a) perceived similarity with Blacks (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.650$), (b) dual identity with a superordinate category including Asians and Blacks (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.641$), and (c) structural thinking (whether participants explicitly discuss systemic or institutional change; Cohen's $\kappa = -0.058$). Additionally, based on Radke et al.'s (2020) theory on dominant group members' (e.g., Whites Americans') four primary allyship motivations, we explored whether Asian employees also discussed the same four motivations. Thus, raters also coded for participants' responses indicating (d) a focus on benefitting Blacks (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.362$), (e) a focus on benefitting Asians (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.481$), (f) a focus on personal benefits (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.486$), and (g) general morality (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.636$). The first author reconciled any disagreements in raters' codes.² We focused our analyses on responses that mentioned the six a priori themes in which there was moderate or stronger interrater reliability (i.e., Cohen's κ greater than 0.21 or fair or better).

Results

Overall, the majority of Asians in our sample (68.75%) reported that they had (22.5%) or would (46.25%) engage in pro-Black allyship at work if given the opportunity.

When asked about their motivations for doing so, 7.27% of responses referred to perceived similarity (e.g., "I know how it feels to be treated different because of your race"; "I'm Asian and I know how it is to be a colored person in this country"), 9.09% to dual identity (e.g., "Some of my best friends are Black. As a member

² After the coding process, there were three open-ended responses that did not fall into at least one of the seven a priori themes: one was vague ("I support everyone"), and the other two mentioned new motivations ("to experience something new"; "religious beliefs").

of a racial minority, I can empathize with them to an extent.”; “The black community is underserved in many aspects of society and as a Native Hawaiian, which is also an underserved community, my motivation to help is for solidarity. All people must be equally represented in all things.”), 38.18% to a focus on benefitting Blacks (e.g., “Because discrimination against the black community is still a big issue.”), 1.82% to a focus on benefitting Asians (e.g., “Our family is non-White. Anything [that] helps our family is always good.”), 1.82% to personal benefits (e.g., “Not to get fired”), and 61.70% referred to reasons relating to generalized morality or justice (e.g., “It was the right thing to do”).

Discussion

Together, Asian employees expressed a range of motivations for engaging in pro-Black allyship at work. Importantly, we found that perceived similarity and dual identity were among the motivations spontaneously mentioned in Asian employees’ allyship. Thus, our Pilot Study suggests that, even without prompting, Asian employees do indeed describe perceived similarity and/or dual identity with Blacks (10.91%) as motivations to engage in pro-Black allyship at work, in line with our theorizing. Although the most frequently mentioned motivation for allyship was generalized morality, we focus on the motives of similarity and dual identity in subsequent studies for two reasons. First, we ground our theory in the unique racial position of Asians and the common in-group identity model, which suggests perceived similarity as a potential antecedent to allyship. Second, given that past work on allyship has already focused on morality as *dominant* group members’ motivation for allyship (Edwards, 2006; Gonzalez et al., 2015), we aimed to examine similarity and dual identity as novel antecedents to allyship from different levels of the group status hierarchy.

Study 1

Next, we aimed to formally test our hypotheses quantitatively, using a time-lagged survey design to reduce common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Method

Sample and Procedure

Without knowing the size of our predicted effects a priori, we aimed for a final sample size of 150, which would allow us to have 80% power to detect effects as small as $r = 0.23$ (small to medium effect). Study 1 data were collected in October 2020.

In the Time 1 survey, we aimed to recruit 200 Asian working adults who reside in the United States via Prolific.co using the custom panel function. Among the 200 responses we collected, three were from duplicate IP addresses and were excluded from analysis. Thus, we ended up with 197 unique participants at Time 1 ($M_{Age} = 29.71$, $SD_{Age} = 9.61$; 109 men, 87 women, 1 nonbinary). The Time 1 survey measured participants’ experiences of racial discrimination at work and participants’ demographics.

Two weeks later, we invited the same 197 participants to complete a Time 2 survey, which measured our dependent variables. In total, 182 participants responded to the Time 2 survey. We excluded one response due to duplicated IP address, and 26 responses because the

individuals indicated in our final demographic confirmation that they were retired or unemployed. This gave us a final sample size $N = 155$ ($M_{Age} = 28.88$, $SD_{Age} = 8.71$; 85 men, 69 women, 1 nonbinary).

Participants had a mean work experience of 89.15 months ($SD = 91.34$) and reported that they had worked for their current organization for an average of 43.59 months ($SD = 54.30$). Participants worked an average of 33.73 hr per week ($SD = 13.64$), and 52.90% worked in management and professional occupations, 28.39% worked in service, 16.77% worked in sales, and 2% worked in other occupations.

Measures

Please see Appendix, for question stems and full scale items for each measure. All measures used a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly agree* to 7 = *strongly disagree* unless noted otherwise.

At Time 1, we measured participants’ *experience of workplace discrimination* using Sanchez and Brock’s (1996) 10-item measure (e.g., “I sometimes feel that my race is a limitation”; $\alpha = .90$).

At Time 2, we measured participants’ *perceived group similarity with Blacks* by adapting Cortland et al.’s (2017) two-item measure (e.g., “Asian Americans and Black Americans have a lot in common”; $r = 0.88$, $p < .001$); *zero-sum beliefs* using Wilkins et al.’s (2015) four-item measure (e.g., “When one group gets ahead, the others are held back”; $\alpha = .80$); and *workplace allyship toward Black coworkers*, using eight items adapted from Hope et al.’s (2019) measure, on a scale ranging from 1 = *never* to 7 = *always* (e.g., “Confronted jokes, statements, or innuendos that oppose the Black community”; $\alpha = .91$).³

We conducted confirmatory factor analyses to confirm our measures were unique from one another. Analyses revealed that the four-factor model had significantly better fit than nested three-factor models or the one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 226.61-1080.64$), supporting the distinctiveness of the four measures (see Supplemental Materials, for details).

Results

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and correlations between variables. Across all analyses, missing data were excluded from analyses.

To test Hypothesis 1, we conducted a linear regression predicting participants’ perceived similarity with Blacks from participants’ experiences of workplace discrimination. Consistent with our predictions, Asian employees’ experience of workplace discrimination was positively associated with their perceptions that Asian and Black individuals are similar to one another, $b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(151) = 2.46$, $p = .015$.

To test Hypothesis 2, we conducted a bias-corrected mediation analysis (5,000 bootstrapped intervals) with workplace discrimination

³ We did not measure or control for opportunities to engage in allyship in Study 1, which may impact whether employees might engage in some allyship behaviors at all (e.g., not having the chance to confront offensive jokes if no one has made any). To address this, supplementary analyses only including allyship items irrelevant to opportunity (e.g., going out of one’s way to collect information), revealed identical results to those that use the full scale of allyship.

Table 1
Study 1 Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Workplace discrimination (T1)	3.12	1.23	—		
2. Perceived similarity with Blacks (T2)	4.11	1.41	.20*	—	
3. Zero-sum beliefs (T2)	2.98	1.20	.26**	-.06	—
4. Allyship toward Black coworkers (T2)	2.27	1.27	.25**	.31***	.16†

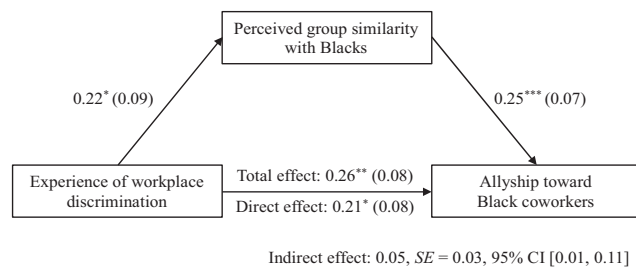
Note. N = 153–155 due to missingness.
† p < .10. * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001 (two-tailed).

as the independent variable, perceived group similarity with Blacks as the mediator, and workplace allyship toward Black coworkers as the dependent variable (Supplemental Table S1, Figure 1). Supporting Hypothesis 2, this analysis showed a significant and positive indirect effect of Asian employees' experience of workplace discrimination on allyship toward Black coworkers via increased perceived similarity, supporting Hypothesis 2 (indirect effect = 0.05, SE = 0.03, 95% CI [0.01, 0.11]). Additionally, we found a significant total effect of workplace discrimination on allyship toward Black coworkers, $b = 0.26$, $SE = 0.08$, $t(152) = 3.18$, $p = .002$.

Finally, we tested Hypothesis 3 by fitting a second-stage moderated mediation model with zero-sum beliefs as the moderator, using 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrapped intervals (Supplemental Table S2, Figure 2). We found that participants' zero-sum beliefs moderated the indirect effect as hypothesized. Specifically, the indirect effect of experienced workplace discrimination on pro-Black allyship via perceived group similarity was stronger among participants with higher zero-sum beliefs (+1SD; indirect effect: 0.10, SE = 0.05, 95% CI [0.01, 0.19]) than among participants with lower zero-sum beliefs (-1SD; indirect effect: 0.02, SE = 0.02, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.07]; difference in indirect effects: 0.03, SE = 0.02, 95% CI [0.002, 0.07]), supporting Hypothesis 3.

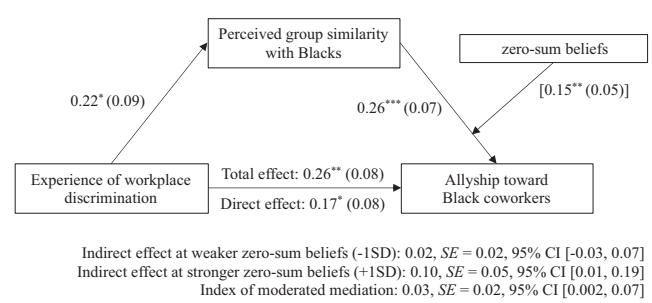
We probed the Perceived Similarity × Zero-Sum Beliefs interaction effect on allyship further (within the moderated mediation model, thus controlling for workplace discrimination) in two different ways. First, we decomposed the interaction term at one standard deviation below and above variable means (Aiken et al., 1991;

Figure 1
Test of Hypothesis 2 in Study 1



Note. N = 153 (after accounting for missing data). Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Regression results are reported in Supplemental Table S1.
* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001 (two-tailed).

Figure 2
Test of Hypothesis 3 in Study 1



Note. SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval. N = 153 (after accounting for missing data). Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Perceived group similarity with Black employees and zero-sum beliefs were mean-centered. Numbers reported in square brackets show the coefficient for the interaction term. Regression results are reported in Supplemental Table S2.
* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001 (two-tailed).

Figure 3 upper panel). This analysis showed that among participants with stronger zero-sum beliefs (+1SD), perceived similarity was significantly and positively related to their pro-Black allyship at work, $b = 0.44$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(148) = 4.78$, $p < .001$. By contrast, among participants with weaker zero-sum beliefs (-1SD), perceived similarity did not predict pro-Black allyship at work, $b = 0.08$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(148) = 0.92$, $p = .361$. Decomposing the same interaction term differently, we found that among participants who perceived Asians to be more similar to Blacks (+1SD), zero-sum beliefs were positively associated with pro-Black allyship, $b = 0.34$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(148) = 3.23$, $p = .002$. By contrast, among participants who perceived Asians to be less similar to Blacks (-1SD), zero-sum beliefs did not significantly predict pro-Black allyship, $b = -0.07$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(148) = -0.69$, $p = .492$.

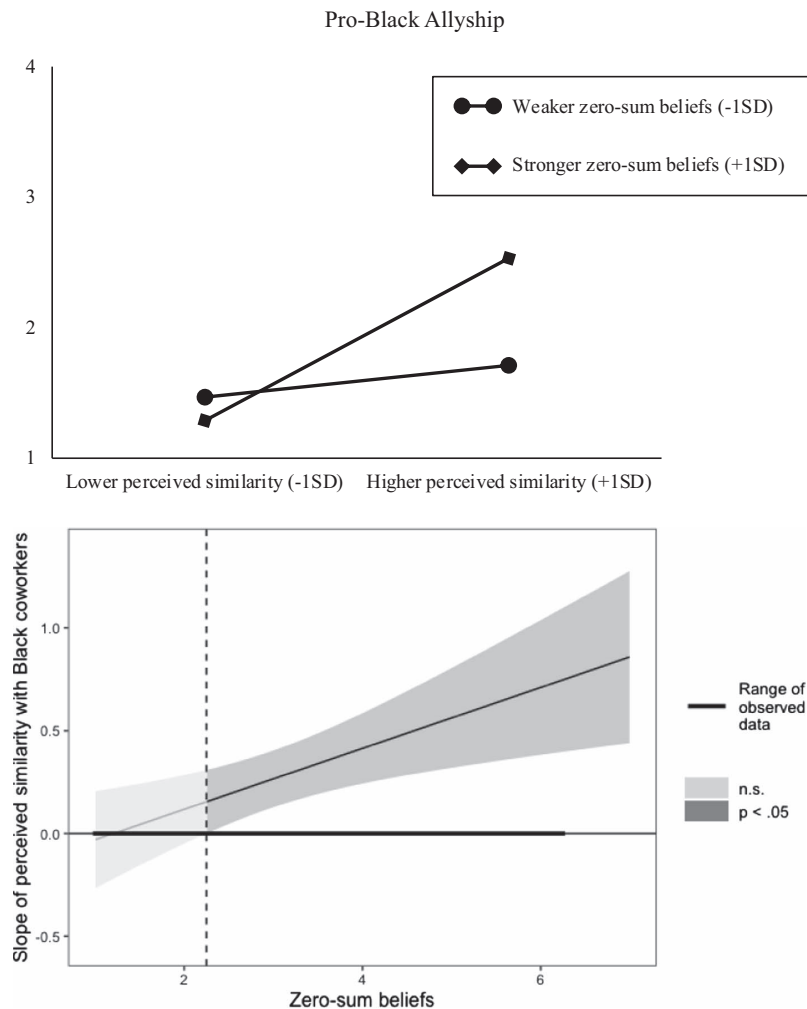
Second, we probed the same Perceived Similarity × Zero-Sum Beliefs interaction effect using the Johnson–Neyman technique (Bauer & Curran, 2005; Figure 3 lower panel). This analysis indicated that among employees who reported zero-sum beliefs above 2.25 (71.43% of participants), perceived similarity with Blacks was significantly and positively related to employees' pro-Black allyship at work. For those who reported zero-sum beliefs below 2.25 (28.57% of participants), perceived similarity was not related to employees' pro-Black allyship at work.

Finally, to test for the robustness of our findings, we conducted supplementary tests repeating all analyses reported for Study 1 controlling for participants' gender, organizational tenure, and work hours per week; we found that the patterns of significance did not change.

Discussion

We found initial support for our hypotheses in a time-lagged survey of Asian employees. Asian employees who reported experiencing greater racial discrimination at work were more likely to perceive themselves as similar to Black individuals, and in turn were more likely to engage in pro-Black allyship at work. Further, we found that this effect was moderated by zero-sum beliefs: to the extent that Asian employees perceived Asians and Blacks to be

Figure 3
Perceived Similarity × Zero-Sum Beliefs Interaction Effect on Allyship in Study 1



Note. $N = 152$. This interaction effect controls for participants' experienced discrimination as it is an interaction effect within a moderated mediation model (see Figure 2).

similar, those with stronger zero-sum beliefs were more likely to report engaging in pro-Black allyship at work.

Study 2

Study 2 extended Study 1 in two ways. First, we aimed to replicate Study 1 findings in a preregistered experiment to establish the causality of our hypothesized effects. Second, we aimed to expand our theoretical model to consider how Asian employees' experiences of racism and allyship in the workplace may be different from White employees. Given Asian individuals' distinctive experience as a racial group that both benefits from and suffers due to the U.S. racial hierarchy, we expected that our proposed processes for Asian employees would not readily apply to White employees, who may at times perceive themselves as discriminated against but nevertheless remain dominant in the racial hierarchy (Earle & Hodson, 2020; Kang et al., 2016; Knowles et al., 2014).

Research has found that White individuals experience the least racial discrimination compared other racial groups in the United States. (Bell et al., 1997; Earle & Hodson, 2020; Kang et al., 2016). Yet, diverging from this objective reality, White employees may *perceive* racial discrimination against their in-group. For example, White individuals perceive anti-White discrimination as having increased over time (Norton & Sommers, 2011; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Indeed, beliefs in such "reverse discrimination" have been the subject of Supreme Court cases (e.g., *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, 2012; *Ricci v. DeStefano*, 2009), and have spurred the rise of political movements centering on racial grievances of White Americans (Baker, 2020). Thus, evidence suggests White employees' perceptions of anti-White discrimination may vary (Mayrl & Saperstein, 2013), despite objective reality.

Past research finds that dominant group members tend to react especially defensively to violations of their entitlements, in part because they feel entitled to more and/or better treatment in the first place (e.g., Major, 1994; Pelham & Hetts, 2001). In this way, when

Whites perceive discrimination against their own group, this can be experienced as violating of norms and expectations, in which the dominant group is left unmarked and unfettered by discrimination (e.g., Devos & Banaji, 2005; Frankenberg, 1993). In turn, Whites may react defensively to this violation of their advantaged position and deny that they are similar to Blacks (a nondominant group), in part to reassert their own sense of dominance (e.g., Craig & Richeson, 2014; Danbold & Huo, 2015). We do not expect this pattern among Asians, for whom the potential of discrimination is more normative and expected (e.g., Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Huynh et al., 2011).

Indeed, research suggests that White employees' perceptions of anti-White discrimination may lead to greater perceptions of unfairness (Shteynberg et al., 2011) and opposition to policies designed to correct for racial inequities (Wellman et al., 2016). Thus, to the extent White employees perceive discrimination against their in-group, they are likely to perceive *less* similarity to Black individuals. In contrast, as hypothesized and shown in Study 1, to the extent Asian employees perceive discrimination against their in-group, they are likely to perceive more similarity to Black individuals (*Hypothesis 1*). As such, we predict perceptions of racial discrimination to impact Asian and White employees' perceived similarity with Black individuals in different ways.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): The effect of perceived racial discrimination against the in-group on perceived in-group similarity to Black individuals is moderated by employee race, such that among Asian employees, perceived racial discrimination is positively related to perceived similarity with Black individuals (consistent with Hypothesis 1); Among White employees, perceived racial discrimination is negatively related to perceived similarity with Black individuals.

We also predicted, and found in Study 1, that employees' perceived similarity with Black individuals positively predicts their pro-Black allyship at work (*Hypothesis 2*). Taking *Hypothesis 4* and our prior hypotheses together, we predict the following first-stage moderated mediation:

Hypothesis 5 (H5): The indirect effect of workplace discrimination on pro-Black workplace allyship via perceived similarity to Black individuals is moderated by employee race: Among Asian employees, perceived racial discrimination is positively related to their pro-Black allyship at work via increased perceptions of group similarity with Black individuals; Among White employees, perceived racial discrimination is negatively related to their pro-Black allyship at work via decreased perceptions of group similarity with Black individuals.

Study 2 employed a preregistered two (participant race: Asian vs. White) by two (discrimination: discrimination vs. control) between-subjects experimental design (<https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=v2re6a>), and tested *Hypotheses 1–5*.

Method

Sample

Study 2 data were collected in February of 2021. Without knowing the effect size of our manipulation a priori, we aimed

for a sample size of 600, which would allow us to have 80% power to detect effects as small as Cohen's $f = 0.11$ (a small effect). We recruited 300 participants who identified as Asian and 300 who identified as White using Prolific's custom panel function, and collected data from 603 participants. Based on our preregistered exclusion criteria, we removed six responses due to duplicate IP addresses, another 10 responses from participants who later indicated that they were not exclusively Asian or exclusively White, and for responses from participants who failed an attention check question. This left our final sample size as 583 (291 Asian, 292 White; 229 men, 279 women, 9 nonbinary gender; $M_{\text{Age}} = 30.96$, $SD_{\text{Age}} = 11.90$). Among the 291 Asian participants, we collected data from 153 further identified as East Asian, 67 as Southeast Asian, 56 as South Asian, one as Middle Eastern, eight as both East and Southeast Asian, four as South and Southeast Asian, one as both Middle Eastern and South Asian, and one identified as "other."⁴

Procedure

Upon consenting to participate and completing a short demographic questionnaire, participants were asked to read a scenario about working at a large manufacturing company, which contained our manipulation of discrimination. Participants then responded to our dependent measures, responded to an attention check question ("Please select 'six' on the scale below"), were debriefed, and exited the study.

Manipulation

We manipulated participants' experience of discrimination by asking them to imagine being denied a promotion in an organizational scenario. Participants were randomly assigned to either a control condition ($n = 287$) or a discrimination condition ($n = 296$; for full text of stimuli, please see OSF folder at https://osf.io/wpzm2/?view_only=df0ae9ed08c34ecb9afc9886c115632b). In the control condition, the scenario suggested that the denial of the promotion was likely due to poor performance to ensure that any effects observed with the discrimination would not be driven by negative affect or an experience of negative work outcomes more generally. In the discrimination condition, the scenario suggested that the denial of the promotion was likely due to racial discrimination against the participant's racial group.

To account for Asian and White employees' qualitatively different experiences of in-group discrimination, we tailored the discrimination prompts to participants' racial groups. Specifically, Asian participants read that their manager questioned their ability to understand the demands of "mainstream America," while White participants read that their manager questioned their ability to understand the demands of "diversifying America." Participants also read that, "several reports have been filed about certain employees using racial slurs" (with some examples of slurs) and that, "[Asian/White] employees' promotion rates were found to be extremely low, especially taking into consideration [Asian/White]

⁴ As our manipulation of discrimination included a racial slur that is used particularly more against East Asians, we thought participants' Asian subgroup membership might impact our results. We repeated all analyses in Study 2 controlling for Asian subgroup and found that the levels of significance did not change.

employees' performance reviews." While we recognize that our stimuli contained strong language, given the prevalence of slurs in the workplace (e.g., Hong, 2020; Rosette et al., 2013), we found it important to include these terms in our stimuli. To note, because Asian and White employees' experience of racism are likely to fundamentally differ in many ways, our hypotheses and empirical tests focus primarily on the effects of perceiving greater discrimination, and how such effects diverge directionally for Asian versus White employees.

Measures

Please see Appendix for question stems and full-scale items of each measure. To evaluate the effectiveness of our manipulation, we measured perceptions of *workplace discrimination* adapting Sanchez and Brock's (1996) 10-item measure, as in Study 1. However, because not all items were applicable to White participants, as per our preregistered analysis plan, we used the four items that were relevant to all racial groups in our manipulation check ($\alpha = .83$; see Appendix for exact items). These four items were selected based on a pretest conducted on a separate sample of 193 White employees.⁵

As in Study 1, we measured participants' *perceived group similarity with Blacks* by adapting Cortland et al.'s (2017) two-item measure ($r = .80, p < .001$); *zero-sum beliefs* using Wilkins et al.'s (2015) four-item measure ($\alpha = .76$); and *workplace allyship toward Black coworkers*, adapting eight-items from Hope et al.'s (2019) measure for the scenario context ($\alpha = .91$).

Results

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and correlations between variables. Preregistered supplementary and exploratory analyses can be found in online Supplemental Materials.

Manipulation Check

To confirm that our manipulation worked, we conducted a *t* test comparing participants' perceived workplace discrimination between the two conditions. Participants in the discrimination condition reported greater discrimination ($M = 5.34, SD = 1.18$) compared to those in the control condition ($M = 4.09, SD = 1.36$), $t(581) = 11.82, p < .001$, suggesting that the manipulation was successful.⁶

Replicating Study 1 With Asian Participants

To test Hypotheses 1–3, we focused exclusively on Asian participants ($n = 291$). To test Hypothesis 1, we conducted a *t* test comparing perceived group similarity with Black individuals between conditions. This analysis showed that Asian participants in the discrimination condition ($M = 4.17, SD = 1.48$) were significantly more likely to perceive their in-group to be similar to Black individuals, compared to Asian participants in the control condition ($M = 3.76, SD = 1.32$), $t(289) = 2.48, p = .014$, replicating Study 1 and supporting Hypothesis 1.

To test Hypothesis 2, we fit a bias-corrected mediation analysis (5,000 bootstrapped intervals), with condition as the independent variable, perceived group similarity as the mediator, and allyship

toward Black coworkers as the dependent variable (Supplemental Table S3; Figure 4). This analysis showed a significant indirect effect of discrimination condition on allyship via perceived similarity (indirect effect: 0.15, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.28]), replicating Study 1 results and supporting Hypothesis 2. However, unlike Study 1, the total effect predicting allyship with condition was not significant, $b = 0.11, SE = 0.16, t(289) = 0.68, p = .500$.

Next, we tested Hypothesis 3 in a second-stage moderated mediation model with zero-sum beliefs as a moderator, using 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrapped intervals (Supplemental Table S4; Figure 5). This analysis showed that, among Asian participants, zero-sum beliefs did not significantly moderate the indirect effect of discrimination condition on Asian participants' allyship toward Black coworkers via perceived group similarity. Therefore, unlike Study 1, we did not find support for Hypothesis 3 in Study 2.

Moderation by Race

To test Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5, we conducted a series of analyses assessing how participant race moderated our hypotheses of perceived discrimination.

We conducted a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test Hypothesis 4, predicting perceived similarity with Black individuals from condition (*control* = -1, *discrimination* = 1), participant race (*White* = -1, *Asian* = 1), and their interaction term. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of condition, $F(1, 579) = 5.35, p = .021$, a significant main effect of race, $F(1, 579) = 8.13, p = .005$, and as predicted, a Significant Condition \times Participant Race interaction effect on perceived similarity with Black individuals, $F(1, 579) = 30.81, p < .001$.

We first decomposed this interaction effect by assessing the simple effects of condition by participant race. Again, consistent with Hypothesis 1, Asian participants in the discrimination condition were more likely to report being similar to Black individuals ($M = 4.17, SD = 1.48$) compared to Asian participants in the control condition ($M = 3.76, SD = 1.32$), $F(1, 579) = 5.23, p = .023$. By contrast, White

⁵ In this separate pretest, 193 White participants responded to all 10 items of the original measure. We conducted an exploratory factor analysis with maximum likelihood and promax rotation. Two factors emerged. We determined that the factor containing four items was the more appropriate measure to use to assess both White and Asian participants' perceptions of racial discrimination, because the items appeared more relevant to members of all racial groups (see Supplemental Materials, for detail).

⁶ We found a Significant Condition \times Participant Race interaction effect predicting the manipulation check, $F(1, 579) = 5.78, p = .017$. Among Asian participants, those in the discrimination condition ($M = 5.64, SD = 0.96$) reported significantly greater discrimination than those in the control condition ($M = 4.62, SD = 1.04$), $F(1, 579) = 52.35, p < .001$. Among White participants, those in the discrimination condition ($M = 5.04, SD = 1.29$) also reported significantly greater discrimination than those in the control condition ($M = 3.55, SD = 1.44$), $F(1, 579) = 113.33, p < .001$. Thus, our manipulation was successful among both Asian and White participants. We also found a main effect of participant race, $F(1, 579) = 70.41, p < .001$, and found that Asian participants reported significantly greater discrimination than White participants in both the discrimination condition, $F(1, 579) = 18.21, p < .001$, and control condition, $F(1, 579) = 57.37, p < .001$. Similar interaction effects predicting the manipulation check were found in Study 3 and are reported in Supplemental Materials.

Table 2
Study 2 Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Participant race (<i>Asian</i> = 0, <i>White</i> = 1)	0.50	0.50	—				
2. Condition (<i>control</i> = 0, <i>discrimination</i> = 1)	0.51	0.50	.01	—			
3. Perceived discrimination	4.72	1.42	-.29***	.44***	—		
4. Perceived group similarity with Blacks	4.14	1.58	.11**	-.09*	-.11**	—	
5. Zero-sum beliefs	3.02	1.17	-.15***	.03	.16***	-.09*	—
6. Allyship toward Black coworkers	4.41	1.47	-.12**	.02	.07 [†]	.29***	-.03

Note. *N* = 583. The perceived discrimination scale contained four items.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

participants in the discrimination condition were less likely to report being similar to Black individuals ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.82$) compared to White participants in the control condition ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.41$), $F(1, 579) = 30.96$, $p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 4.⁷

Next, we assessed how the indirect effect of perceived workplace discrimination on allyship at work via perceived similarity with Blacks is moderated by participant race, in a first-stage moderated mediation analysis using 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrapped intervals (Supplemental Table S5; Figure 6). We found a significant moderated mediation effect, such that among Asian participants, workplace discrimination increased pro-Black allyship at work via increased perceived group similarity with Black individuals (indirect effect: 0.11, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.21]), while among White participants, workplace discrimination decreased pro-Black allyship via reduced perceived group similarity with Black individuals (indirect effect: -0.28 , $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI $[-0.42, -0.15]$). The indirect effects among Asian and White participants were significantly different from one another (difference in indirect effect: 0.39, $SE = 0.09$, 95% CI [0.23, 0.58]). Thus, we found support for Hypothesis 5.

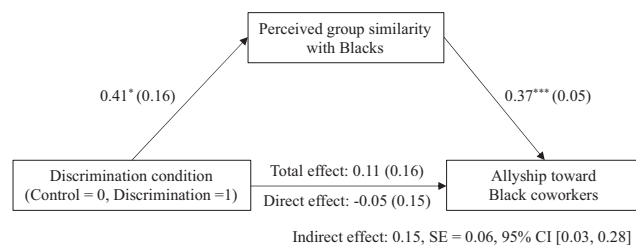
Finally, for completeness, we conducted a path analysis testing all of our hypotheses (Hypotheses 1–5) in one model, with workplace discrimination as the independent variable, group similarity with Black employees as the mediator, pro-Black allyship as the outcome variable, employee race as a first-stage moderator, and zero-sum beliefs as a second-stage moderator (Model 21 in process macro using SPSS; Hayes, 2017). This path analysis was not significant at the $p = .05$ level (index of moderated moderated mediation: 0.08,

$SE = 0.04$, 95% CI $[-0.01, 0.17]$, 90% CI [0.01, 0.15]; Figure 7), and the Similarity \times Zero-Sum Beliefs interaction effect predicting pro-Black allyship was not significant at the $p = .05$ level ($b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI $[-0.003, 0.11]$). However, given that the Similarity \times Zero-Sum Beliefs interaction effect predicting pro-Black allyship was trending in our predicted direction (90% CI [0.01, 0.10]), we probed it further. We found that, though not significant at the $p = .05$ level, among (both Asian and White) participants with stronger zero-sum beliefs ($+1SD$), perceived similarity with Blacks more strongly predicted participants' pro-Black allyship ($b = 0.34$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.24, 0.44]) compared to participants with weaker zero-sum beliefs ($-1SD$; $b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [0.12, 0.31]), consistent with our theorizing behind Hypothesis 3.⁸

Discussion

Study 2 largely replicated the results of Study 1 and extended the model, using a preregistered experimental paradigm that recruited both Asian and White participants. We find causal support for our hypotheses: manipulating Asian employees' perceptions of workplace discrimination increased their perceptions of similarity with Black individuals, which in turn was associated with greater pro-Black allyship at work (Hypotheses 1–2). By contrast, we find that leading White employees to perceive more workplace discrimination decreased their perceptions of similarity with Black individuals, and in turn reduced their pro-Black allyship (Hypotheses 4–5). Furthermore, while we did not find direct support for Hypothesis 3 among Asian participants only, we found that zero-sum beliefs marginally moderated the relationship between perceived group similarity with Black individuals and pro-Black allyship intentions in a combined

Figure 4
Mediation Among Asian Participants in Study 2



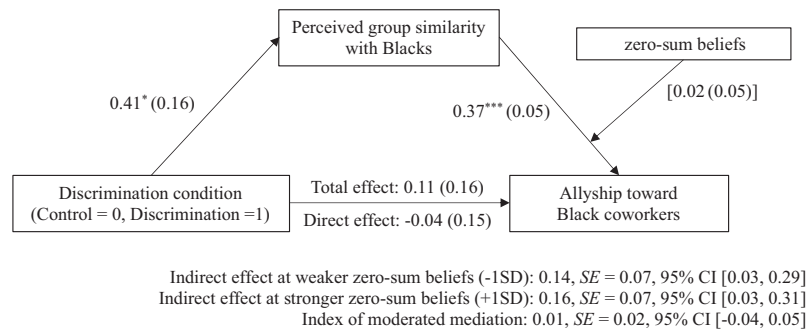
Note. $n = 291$. Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Regression results are reported in Supplemental Table S3.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

⁷ For completeness, we also decomposed the same interaction differently. We found that Asian participants in the discrimination condition were marginally more likely to perceive their group as similar to Black Americans than White participants in the discrimination condition, $F(1, 579) = 3.70$, $p = .055$. Asian participants in the control condition were significantly less likely to perceive their group as similar to Black Americans than White participants in the control condition, $F(1, 579) = 34.75$, $p < .001$.

⁸ We also examined our full set of hypotheses in a multigroup analysis (Lomax, 1983). This analysis showed that the structural equation model constraining all paths to equality for Asian and White participants significantly deteriorated fit compared to an unconstrained model (Change in $\chi^2 = 59.57$, $p < .001$). We report more details on this analysis in Supplemental Materials.

Figure 5
Moderated Mediation Among Asian Participants in Study 2



Note. SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval. $N = 291$. Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Perceived similarity and zero-sum beliefs were mean centered. Numbers reported in square brackets show the coefficient for the interaction term. Regression results are reported in Supplemental Table S4.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

sample of Asian and White participants, consistent with our logic behind Hypothesis 3.

Study 3

Study 3 had two goals. First, we measured participants' perceptions of dual identity with a superordinate group encompassing Black Americans to test an additional step in our theorized mediational process outlined in the CIIM (Dovidio et al., 2007). Second, we aimed to complement the findings of Study 2, which used a more immersive manipulation of discrimination (e.g., both a personal experience of discrimination and a broader climate of discrimination), by using a more conservative manipulation in Study 3 (e.g., only a personal experience of discrimination). Additionally, the control condition in Study 2 emphasized a negative, nondiscrimination experience (e.g., lack of promotion) to ensure that our effects were not driven by a negative experience at work generally. However, in Study 3, we aimed to compare the discrimination condition to employee's baseline experiences, and thus used a

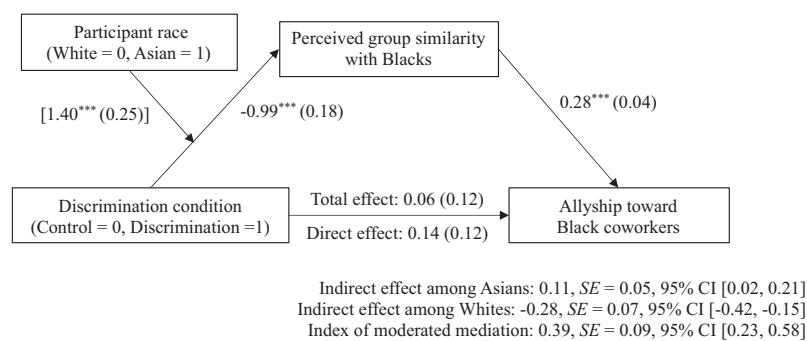
neutral control condition. Study 3 therefore presents a more conservative test of predictions.

Method

Sample

Study 3 data were collected in August of 2021. Given the results of Study 2, and the marginally significant overall Perceived Similarity \times Zero-Sum Belief interaction effect on allyship, we increased the sample size in Study 3. We recruited 800 participants, 400 participants who identified as Asian and 400 who identified as White using Cloud Research's MTurk Toolkit function. Consistent with the exclusion criteria in Study 2, we removed five responses due to duplicate IP addresses, 42 responses from participants who later indicated that they were not exclusively Asian or exclusively White, and two responses from participants who failed an attention check question. This left our final sample size as 751 (376 Asian, 375 White; 405 men, 338 women, 8 nonbinary gender; $M_{Age} = 37.24$, $SD_{Age} = 12.14$). Among those

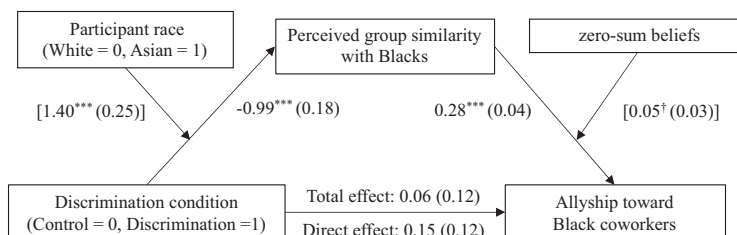
Figure 6
Moderated Mediation in Study 2



Notes. SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval. $N = 583$. Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Numbers reported in square brackets show the coefficient for the interaction term. Regression results are reported in Supplemental Table S5.

*** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Figure 7
Path Analysis in Study 2 Examining All Hypotheses in One Model



Indirect effect among Asians with weaker zero-sum beliefs (-1SD): 0.09, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.18]
 Indirect effect among Asians with stronger zero-sum beliefs (+1SD): 0.14, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.26]
 Indirect effect among Whites with weaker zero-sum beliefs (-1SD): -0.21, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI [-0.36, -0.09]
 Indirect effect among Whites with stronger zero-sum beliefs (+1SD): -0.34, $SE = 0.09$, 95% CI [-0.52, -0.18]
 Index of moderated moderated mediation: 0.08, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [-0.007, 0.17], 90% CI [0.005, 0.15]

Note. $SE =$ standard error; $CI =$ confidence interval. $N = 583$. Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Numbers reported in square brackets show the coefficient for the interaction term. Perceived similarity and zero-sum beliefs were mean centered.

† $p < .10$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

who identified as Asians, 202 further identified as East Asian, 91 as South Asian, 77 as Southeast Asian, three as Middle Eastern, two as both East and Southeast Asian, and one as “other.”

Procedure and Manipulation

The procedure of Study 3 was identical to that of Study 2, with two changes. First, the participants randomly assigned to the control condition ($n = 376$) were not given any information other than that they worked at an organization for 4 years, whereas those in the discrimination condition ($n = 375$) read the description of discrimination from Study 2 that pertained only to the personal experience of discrimination (see OSF folder, for full text of stimuli). As with Study 2, the critical goal of the experimental manipulation was to increase perceptions of discrimination for both Asian and White participants, and to examine how such an increase differentially impacts perceived similarity with Blacks and allyship, among Asian versus White participants. Second, we measured participants' perceptions of their dual identity with the superordinate group including Black Americans.

Measures

Our measures of *workplace discrimination* (four-item; $\alpha = .86$), *perceived group similarity with Blacks* ($r = 0.85$, $p < .001$); *zero-sum beliefs* ($\alpha = .82$); and *workplace allyship toward Black coworkers* ($\alpha = .92$) were identical to Study 2. We also measured participants' *perceptions of dual identity* with four items adapted from Eller and Abrams (2004), Hornsey and Hogg (2002), Riek et al. (2010), and Ufkes et al. (2016), using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree* (e.g., “I view Asians/Whites and Blacks as two groups also having one common identity”); $\alpha = .84$; Please see Appendix, for full list of items).

Results

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics and correlations between variables.

Manipulation Check

A t test comparing participants' perceived workplace discrimination between the two conditions showed that participants in the discrimination condition reported greater discrimination ($M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.21$) compared to those in the control condition ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.31$), $t(748) = 19.26$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the manipulation was successful. Supplementary analyses showed that the manipulation was successful for both Asian and White participants.

Replicating Study 1 With Asian Participants

To test Hypotheses 1–3, we focused our analyses exclusively on Asian participants ($n = 376$). Testing Hypothesis 1, a t -test revealed that those in the discrimination condition ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.44$) were more likely to report being similar to Blacks than those in the control condition ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.35$) in line with the results of Study 2, but this difference was not significant at the $p = .05$ level, $t(374) = 1.81$, $p = 0.071$.⁹

To test Hypothesis 2, we fit a bias-corrected mediation analysis (5,000 bootstrapped intervals), with condition as the independent variable, perceived group similarity as the mediator, and allyship toward Black coworkers as the dependent variable (Supplemental Table S6; Figure 8). This analysis showed an indirect effect of discrimination condition on allyship via perceived similarity, in line with our expectations (indirect effect: 0.11, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.23], 90% CI [0.01, 0.21]), but again was not significant at the $p = .05$ level. That is, although the patterns of our findings in Study 3 were consistent with Studies 1 and 2 results and Hypothesis 2, the strength of these findings were weaker. The total effect

⁹ As with Study 2, we conducted supplementary analyses repeating all subsequent Study 3 analyses from the main text, controlling for Asian subgroup (reported in Supplemental Materials). These analyses showed that the effect of the discrimination manipulation on perceived similarity was stronger in all models (significant differences at the $p < .05$ level); for all other effects, the levels of significance were unchanged.

Table 3
Study 3 Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Participant race (<i>Asian</i> = 0, <i>White</i> = 1)	0.50	0.50	—					
2. Condition (<i>control</i> = 0, <i>discrimination</i> = 1)	0.50	0.50	-.01	—				
3. Perceived discrimination	4.55	1.54	-.31***	.58***	—			
4. Perceived group similarity with Blacks	4.14	1.58	.23***	-.11**	-.18**	—		
5. Dual identity	4.49	1.27	-.17***	-.05	-.09*	.40***	—	
6. Zero-sum beliefs	2.91	1.21	-.16***	.08*	.19***	-.08*	-.13***	—
7. Allyship toward Black coworkers	3.93	1.53	-.03	-.01	.03	.31***	.35***	-.05

Note. *N* = 750–751 due to missingness. The perceived discrimination scale contained four items.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

predicting allyship with condition was not significant, $b = 0.08$, $SE = 0.15$, $t(374) = 0.50$, $p = .619$.

Next, we tested Hypothesis 3 in a second-stage moderated mediation model with zero-sum beliefs as a moderator, using 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrapped intervals (Supplemental Table S7; Figure 9). This analysis showed that, among Asian participants, zero-sum beliefs did not significantly moderate the indirect effect of discrimination condition on Asian participants' allyship toward Black coworkers via perceived group similarity. Therefore, we did not find support for Hypothesis 3 in Study 3.

Moderation by Race

To test Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5, we conducted a series of analyses assessing how participant race moderates our hypotheses of perceived discrimination on perceived similarity.

We conducted a two-way ANOVA to test Hypothesis 4, predicting perceived similarity with Black individuals from condition (*control* = -1, *discrimination* = 1), participant race (*White* = -1, *Asian* = 1), and their interaction term. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of condition, $F(1, 746) = 8.97$, $p = .003$, a significant main effect of race, $F(1, 746) = 44.56$, $p < .001$, and importantly, a Significant Condition \times Participant Race interaction effect on perceived similarity with Black individuals, $F(1, 746) = 28.81$, $p < .001$, replicating Study 2 and supporting Hypothesis 4.

We first decomposed this interaction effect by assessing the simple effects of condition by participant race. Again, consistent with Hypothesis 1, Asian participants in the discrimination

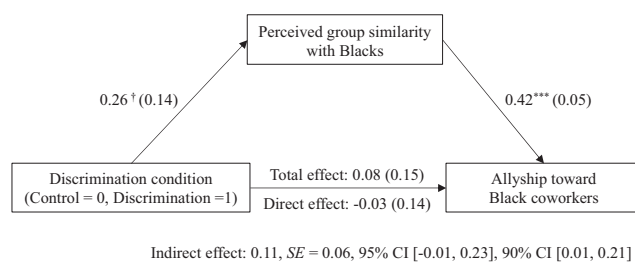
condition ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 1.44$) were more likely to report being similar to Black individuals compared to Asian participants in the control condition ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.35$), but this difference was not significant at the $p = .05$ level, $F(1, 746) = 2.82$, $p = .093$. By contrast, White participants in the discrimination condition ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.82$) were less likely to report being similar to Black individuals compared to White participants in the control condition ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.35$), $F(1, 746) = 34.89$, $p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 4.¹⁰

Next, we assessed how the indirect effect of perceived workplace discrimination on allyship at work via perceived similarity with Blacks is moderated by participant race, in a first-stage moderated mediation analysis using 5,000 bias-corrected bootstrapped intervals (Supplemental Table S8; Figure 10). We found a significant moderated mediation effect, such that among Asian participants, workplace discrimination marginally increased pro-Black allyship at work via increased perceived group similarity with Black individuals (indirect effect: 0.08, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.17], 90% CI [0.01, 0.15]), while among White participants, workplace discrimination decreased pro-Black allyship via reduced perceived group similarity with Black individuals (indirect effect: -0.28, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI [-0.40, -0.17]). The indirect effects among Asian and White participants were significantly different from one another (difference in indirect effects: 0.38, $SE = 0.08$, 95% CI [0.21, 0.52]). Thus, replicating Study 2, we found support for Hypothesis 5.

Supplementary Analyses: The Role of Dual Identity

Dual Identity of Asian Participants. Although we did not formally hypothesize about the role of Asians' dual identity, we drew Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 from the CIIM, and argued that perceived similarity increases group members' perceptions of *dual* identity with a superordinate group encompassing the original subgroups. Given our Hypothesis 1 theorizes that Asian participants' experience of racial discrimination will lead to increased perceived similarity with Blacks, we expect that this should in turn

Figure 8
Test of Hypothesis 2 in Study 3

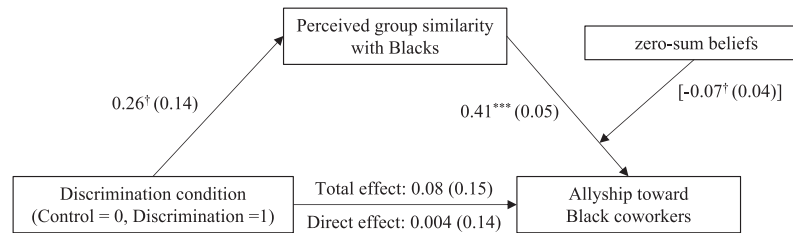


Note. *SE* = standard error; *CI* = confidence interval. *N* = 376. Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Regression results are reported in Supplemental Table S6.

† $p < .10$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

¹⁰ We also decomposed the same interaction differently. We found that Asian and White participants in the discrimination condition did not differ in their perceived similarity to Black Americans, $F(1, 746) = 0.85$, $p = .356$. Compared to White participants in the control condition, Asian participants in the control condition were significantly less likely to perceive their group as similar to Black Americans, $F(1, 746) = 72.72$, $p < .001$. These baseline differences suggest that perceived discrimination may be an especially powerful precursor to perceived similarity with Black Americans among Asian participants.

Figure 9
Test of Hypothesis 3 in Study 3



Indirect effect at weaker zero-sum beliefs (-1SD): 0.13, *SE* = 0.07, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.28], 90% CI [0.01, 0.26]
 Indirect effect at stronger zero-sum beliefs (+1SD): 0.09, *SE* = 0.05, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.20], 90% CI [0.01, 0.18]
 Index of moderated mediation: -0.02, *SE* = 0.02, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.01], 90% CI [-0.05, 0.002]

Note. *SE* = standard error; CI = confidence interval. *N* = 376. Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Regression results are reported in Supplemental Table S7.

† *p* < .10. *** *p* < .001 (two-tailed).

lead to increased dual identity with Blacks, resulting in increased allyship intentions. We tested this serial mediation model in Study 3 (Supplemental Table S9; Figure 11). This analysis revealed an indirect effect of condition on allyship intentions via perceived similarity and dual identity that was not significant at the *p* = .05 level, but was consistent with our expectations (indirect effect: 0.05, *SE* = 0.03, 95% CI [-0.003, 0.11], 90% CI [0.005, 0.09]).

Dual Identity of Asian and White Participants. We expected that dual identity would mediate the relationship between perceived similarity and allyship intentions for both Asian and White participants. To examine this possibility, we conducted a moderated serial mediation analysis with condition as the independent variable, perceived similarity as the first-stage mediator, dual identity as the second-stage mediator, allyship as the outcome variable, and participant race as a first-stage moderator (Supplemental Tables S10; Figure 12). We found a positive indirect effect of condition on allyship via similarity and dual identity among Asian participants consistent with our expectations (indirect effect: 0.03, *SE* = 0.02, 95% CI [-0.003, 0.06], 90% CI [0.002, 0.05]) but not significant at the *p* = .05 level. We also found a significant negative indirect effect of condition on allyship via similarity and dual identity among White

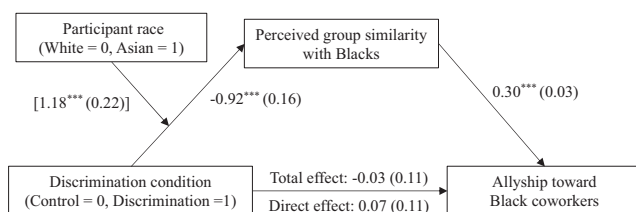
participants (indirect effect: -0.18, *SE* = 0.03, 95% CI [-0.15, -0.05]; difference in indirect effects: 0.12, *SE* = 0.03, 95% CI [0.07, 0.19]).

Finally, for completeness, we conducted a path analysis testing Hypotheses 1–5 along with our expectations regarding dual identity in one model. This model included workplace discrimination as the independent variable, group similarity with Black employees as the first mediator, dual identity with Blacks as the second mediator, pro-Black allyship as the outcome variable, employee race as a first-stage moderator, and zero-sum beliefs as a third-stage moderator (Supplemental Table S11; Figure 13). This path analysis revealed a Significant Positivedual Identity × Zero-Sum Beliefs interaction effect predicting pro-Black allyship (*b* = 0.06, *SE* = 0.03, *p* = 0.041), providing support for our moderation hypothesis of zero-sum beliefs. That is, to the extent that (both Asian and White) participants perceived greater dual identity with Black individuals, participants' zero-sum beliefs positively predicted participants' pro-Black allyship, consistent with arguments behind Hypothesis 3.¹¹

Discussion

Study 3 replicates and extends Studies 1 and 2 results, using a more conservative experimental paradigm and incorporating dual identity into the model. Replicating Study 2, we find causal support for our hypotheses: manipulating Asian employees' perceptions of workplace discrimination marginally increases their perceptions of similarity with Black individuals, which in turn is associated with greater pro-Black allyship at work (Hypotheses 1–2). By contrast, but also replicating Study 2, we find that leading White employees to perceive more workplace discrimination decreases their perceptions of similarity with Black individuals, and in turn reduces their pro-Black allyship (Hypotheses 4–5). While we did not find direct support for Hypothesis 3, we found that zero-sum beliefs significantly moderated the relationship between perceived dual identity

Figure 10
Test of Hypothesis 5 in Study 3



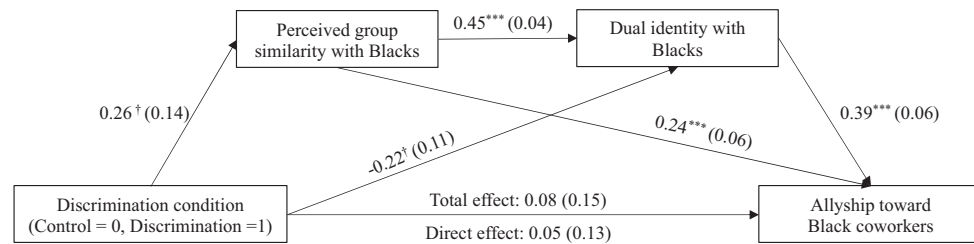
Indirect effect among Asians: 0.08, *SE* = 0.04, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.17], 90% CI [0.01, 0.15]
 Indirect effect among Whites: -0.28, *SE* = 0.06, 95% CI [-0.40, -0.17]
 Index of moderated mediation: 0.38, *SE* = 0.08, 95% CI [0.21, 0.52]

Notes. *SE* = standard error; CI = confidence interval. *N* = 750. Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Numbers reported in square brackets show the coefficient for the interaction term. Regression results are reported in Supplemental Table S8.

*** *p* < .001 (two-tailed).

¹¹ We also examined our full set of hypotheses in a multigroup analysis (Lomax, 1983). This analysis showed that the structural equation model constraining all paths to equality for Asian and White participants significantly deteriorated fit compared to an unconstrained model (Change in χ^2 = 133.01, *p* < .001), providing additional support that our observed effects significantly varied by participant race.

Figure 11
Serial Mediation Analysis Among Asian Participants in Study 3



Indirect effect via perceived similarity only: 0.06, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [-0.005, 0.15], 90% CI [0.01, 0.13]

Indirect effect via dual identity only: -0.09, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.19, 0.001], 90% CI [-0.17, -0.01]

Indirect effect via perceived similarity and dual identity: 0.05, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI [-0.003, 0.11], 90% CI [0.005, 0.09]

Note. $SE =$ standard error; $CI =$ confidence interval. $N = 376$. Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates.

Regression results are reported in Supplemental Table S9.

† $p < .10$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

with Black individuals and pro-Black allyship intentions (among Asian and White participants together), consistent with the logic of Hypothesis 3. Moreover, incorporating an additional step in our mediation model—dual identity—we find support for our overall model: perceived discrimination increases perceived similarity among Asian employees (but not Whites), which in turn increases their perception of dual identity with Black employees, and ultimately their pro-Black allyship at work.

General Discussion

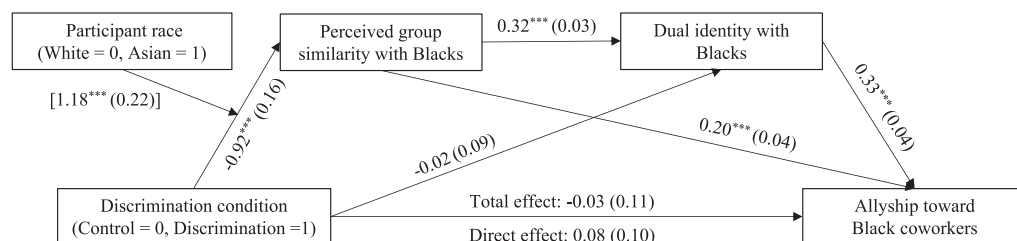
Our investigation sheds light on the poorly understood racial experiences of Asian employees, by directly assessing Asian employees' experiences of workplace racism and examining how such experiences impact their propensity to combat racism against Black coworkers. Overall, we find that Asian employees' experience of workplace discrimination increases their perceived similarity with Black individuals and, subsequently, their pro-Black allyship at work (Hypothesis 1–Hypothesis 2; Studies 1–3). In a preregistered experiment and replication, we also demonstrate that Asian and White

employees' relationships with workplace discrimination differ in important ways: Whereas Asian employees' perceptions of anti-in-group discrimination increase perceived similarity with, and allyship toward, Black coworkers, White employees' perceptions of discrimination decrease perceived similarity with, and allyship toward, Black coworkers (Hypothesis 4–Hypothesis 5; Studies 2–3). Finally, we find initial support for the notion that zero-sum beliefs may strengthen the relationship between perceived similarity and allyship toward Black colleagues, among Asians (Hypothesis 3; Study 1) and in combined samples of Asians and Whites (Studies 2–3).

Theoretical Implications

The current work deepens understandings of racism in the workplace by expanding the conception of race relations to more than two groups. Past research on race relations has typically emphasized the relationship between White and Black individuals, or between White individuals and "racial minorities" as a monolith (see McCord et al., 2018). However, most Americans conceive of more than two racial groups in the United States, with distinct

Figure 12
Moderated Serial Mediation in Study 3



Indirect effect via perceived similarity and dual identity among Asians: 0.03, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [-0.003, 0.06], 90% CI [0.002, 0.05]

Indirect effect via perceived similarity and dual identity among Whites: -0.10, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [-0.15, -0.05]

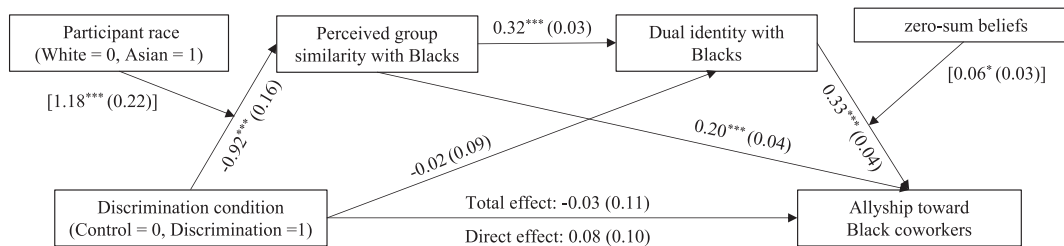
Index of moderated mediation via perceived similarity and dual identity: 0.12, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI [0.07, 0.19]

Note. $SE =$ standard error; $CI =$ confidence interval. $N = 750$. Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Numbers reported

in square brackets show the coefficient for the interaction term. Regression results are reported in Supplemental Tables S10.

*** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Figure 13
Full Path Analysis in Study 3



Note. $N = 750$. Numbers shown are unstandardized estimates. Numbers reported in square brackets show the coefficient for the interaction term. Regression results are reported in Supplemental Table S11.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

stereotype content attached to each group (Hall et al., 2015, 2019; Rosette et al., 2008, 2018; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Thus, race relations in the workplace are likely to be a complex set of relationships between more than two racial groups. In the current work, we focus on Asian employees' perceived relationship with Black employees, and delineate how Asian and White employees differ in how workplace experiences affect their relationships with Black coworkers. By identifying processes that propel Asian employees toward pro-Black allyship at work, and by showing how this engagement process differs significantly from White employees, we describe a more complicated picture of race relations. Our results demonstrate the need to examine racism more holistically, considering how all actors and stakeholders may be impacted.

Our work also contributes to the emerging literature on allyship in three ways. First, we empirically examine how allyship may manifest in the organizational context. While prior research suggests that allyship may be an especially useful tool to combat racism (Craig & Richeson, 2016; Sue et al., 2019), limited racial allyship research has considered workplace settings. This oversight is critical, because allyship in organizations likely entails both opportunities and challenges that are not present outside of organizations. For example, the workplace is a major site of the production and reproduction of racism (Nkomo, 1992; Nkomo & Ariss, 2014; Ray, 2019). Therefore, allyship in organizations may be an especially effective tool in reducing racism in society. At the same time, constraints that do not exist outside of organizations may present challenges to allyship in organizations. We find that perceptions of similarity to their Black coworkers increase Asian employees' engagement in allyship, suggesting that in organizations, such relationships with coworkers may help overcome such fear and barriers. Future research investigating the expression of, and antecedents to, workplace allyship would be fruitful.

Second, we highlight Asian employees as potential allies to other racial minority employees. Conceptually, allyship has been contrasted with collective action in the intergroup literature (Craig et al., 2020; van Zomeren et al., 2008; Wright, 2010), in that allyship is demonstrated by an advantaged out-group member (typically, from the most dominant group) toward members of a disadvantaged group, whereas collective action is taken by disadvantaged group members who act as representatives of their group. Indeed, it is the presence of and the unique privileges allies have that is thought to make allyship effective: Research suggests that an ally's promotion of policies

(Gardner & Ryan, 2020; Hekman et al., 2017) and confrontation of prejudice (Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Eliezer & Major, 2012; Rasinski & Czopp, 2010) are perceived more positively compared to a disadvantaged group member's similar actions. However, this prior research on allyship has often focused on how members of the most dominant group in a status hierarchy (e.g., men; White individuals) can act as effective allies, overlooking the possibility that other, relatively advantaged groups may also act as allies (Brown & Ostrove, 2013). Our work challenges this approach, by showing that Asian employees can also be motivated to act specifically as pro-Black allies given their relative privilege in the racial hierarchy.

Our expanded conceptualization of allies also highlights the fact that antecedents to allyship for relatively dominant groups may be distinct from those of the most dominant group. For instance, past work typically highlights lack of awareness of racism (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2020; Craig et al., 2020) or lack of psychological standing (Sherf et al., 2017) as a barrier for dominant group allies. However, these are less likely to be barriers for Asian employees, especially within the context of racism in the workplace. We instead identify novel antecedents to workplace allyship: perceived similarity and zero-sum beliefs may serve as important antecedents to Asian employees' pro-Black allyship. Future work might consider additional complexity. For instance, while Black employees are typically conceptualized as disadvantaged group members in the literature of allyship, our model suggests that Black employees may likewise serve as allies to Asian employees in situations where they may have relative privilege. For instance, Asian employees are perceived as more foreign relative to Black employees (Zou & Cheryan, 2017) and therefore can be allies toward Asians around issues of assimilation or xenophobia. More broadly, future work may examine how various antecedents to allyship, including but not limited to perceived similarity, may differentially impact allies depending on their racial group membership.

Finally, our work highlights nuance in conceptualizations of zero-sum beliefs. Existing research on the impact of zero-sum beliefs has focused on contexts of dichotomous relationships (e.g., an individual is competing with another individual; a group member is considering a single out-group). Therefore, zero-sum beliefs have often been theorized, and found, to result in greater competitive behavior, without much of a possibility for actors to consider an out-group as simultaneously belonging to a shared superordinate group. We hypothesize and find some support for the notion that, in the

context of more than two groups, zero-sum beliefs may lead to greater cooperation with, and allyship toward, members of an out-group, to the extent that the out-group is considered similar or aligned with a focal actor's in-group. In other words, we clarify and decouple the psychology of zero-sum beliefs from out-group derogation, by suggesting that these beliefs can lead to either greater cooperation or competition depending on where a focal actor draws the line between their in-group and out-groups. In doing so, we also integrate CIIM with RGCT, by identifying the creation of a dual identity as one mechanism that can help model RGCT outcomes, even in *multiple* group settings.

Practical Implications

While our research highlights Asian employees' potential to fight against anti-Black racism at work, it also suggests that Asian employees' support for pro-Black allyship may be variable and cannot be taken for granted by managers. Specifically, our results demonstrate that both perceived similarity and zero-sum beliefs may be antecedents to Asian employees' pro-Black allyship. To the extent these antecedents are not present, then Asian employees' support for pro-Black allyship may wane. Indeed, it is possible that some Asian employees see themselves as irrelevant to the persistence of racism at work, given that common organizational portrayals of racism that focus on the White–Black dichotomy (Lai & Babcock, 2013). As such, organizational efforts toward diversity, equity, and inclusion might instead proactively position Asian employees as potential allies to members of other racial groups. For instance, while our research suggests that perceived similarity based on *negative* experiences (i.e., discrimination) propels Asian employees toward allyship, this mechanism suggests that managers may also foster workplace allyship by creating a common group identity among employees built upon *positive* shared experiences (i.e., shared experience of success).

Asian employees' experience of race at work has long been ignored (Cheng & Thatchenkery, 1997; Landau, 1995; Sy et al., 2010), veiled behind positive stereotypes suggesting that Asian employees primarily benefit from their race. However, the current work suggests that greater attention on Asian employees' experience of racism is warranted. A closer look at participants' responses in Study 1 showed that an alarming 76.77% of Asian employees *somewhat agreed*, *agreed*, or *strongly agreed* to one or more items of the racial discrimination measure we administered, suggesting that anti-Asian discrimination at work is prevalent. These results in turn echo disturbing trends in racism against Asian Americans, including hate crimes on the rise (Norwood, 2021). Complementing prior work in social psychology that suggests that Asian individuals' experience of racism is qualitatively different from that of other racial groups (e.g., Zou & Cheryan, 2017), our research suggests that organizations would do well to take a holistic and inclusive view of race and racism. For instance, organizations should educate leaders and employees about how racial discrimination at work may target a variety of groups and take many different forms.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Our work is not without limitations. Although Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, and 5 were supported, we found mixed support for Hypothesis 3: that zero-sum beliefs moderate the indirect effect of perceived

discrimination on pro-Black allyship via perceived similarity among Asian participants. This hypothesis was supported in Study 1, but not in Studies 2 and 3. However, in path analyses that included both Asian and White participants, we found support for the idea that zero-sum beliefs can propel allyship to the extent that individuals perceive a common superordinate identity with targets of allyship. Future work might unpack these patterns further. For example, we expect that—under conditions of high perceived similarity—high zero-sum beliefs ought to be associated with increased allyship toward the out-group perceived to be similar for participants of any background, not just Asians. Yet, what determines employees' perceived similarity Black coworkers likely differs depending on the race of the employee. It would also be fruitful to examine potential reasons behind apparent discrepancies in the zero-sum belief moderation effect across study designs. It is possible that in an experimental context in which the participants' experiences are less visceral than their memories and long-held beliefs, a larger sample is required to observe this moderation effect.

Additionally, while Studies 2 and 3 were designed to experimentally probe our hypothesized relationships to establish causality, this tightly controlled design also precluded us from measuring participants' actual allyship behavior. In addition to verifying allyship behavior, future experiments measuring and manipulating perceived discrimination in a variety of ways would help examine the robustness of our findings.

Finally, the current work does not examine the finer distinctions between different subgroups within the Asian racial group. Though we do not expect our hypothesized allyship processes to differ by subgroups of Asian Americans (e.g., East Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, etc.), future work might consider when and how other experiences of racism at work may differ across subgroups (Kuo et al., 2020).

In addition to further replicating the results and investigating the nuances of the current work, we suggest that four avenues of future research would be particularly fruitful. First, we did not examine how Latino employees' experiences of race compare to that of Asian, Black, or White employees in the current work. In past research, Latino Americans have also been conceptualized as an intermediate status group in the U.S. racial hierarchy, much like Asian Americans (O'Brien, 2008). At the same time, Latino Americans' experience of racism are also qualitatively different from that of both Asian and Black Americans in that Latino Americans are often stereotyped as both foreign *and* inferior (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Future work examining how Latino employees' experiences of racism converge and diverge from employees of other racial groups are likely to be especially useful in illuminating the full picture of race in the workplace.

Second, future work may investigate how Asian employees' allyship efforts are perceived compared to the allyship efforts of employees of other racial groups. For example, to the extent that organizational actors believe that anti-Black racism is usually perpetrated by White employees, Asian allies may be perceived as impartial, and therefore more effective "third-party intervenors." At the same time, because Asian employees tend to hold fewer positions of power compared to White employees in organizations, Asian allies' efforts may be less impactful than those of White allies. Future research may consider these possibilities.

Third, future research may consider how the processes examined in the current work may generalize as societal-level power dynamics

between racial groups change. Our hypotheses presume that Asian employees are aware of the undeniable presence of anti-Black discrimination. Unfortunately, anti-Black racism has been a stubborn problem that has persisted in organizations and society through centuries. Thus, unless anti-Black racism is eradicated, we believe that our hypothesized effects of perceived anti-Asian discrimination are likely to persist. However, it is possible that perceptions of racial progress (separable from actual progress) may weaken the relationship between perceived anti-Asian discrimination and perceived similarity between Asians and Blacks.

Finally, while the current research focuses on processes that lead Asian employees to combat anti-Black racism as a way to combat racial inequity in organizations (and beyond), an equally important mechanism that fuels racial inequity is racial privilege (Jun et al., 2022; Nkomo & Ariss, 2014; Phillips & Jun, 2022; Phillips & Lowery, 2018). To the extent that Asian employees not only suffer, but also benefit from the workplace racial hierarchy, their experiences of their own racial privilege—and willingness to let this go—will be important to understand (Phillips et al., 2022). Thus, future research investigating processes that propel Asian employees to maintain their relative racial advantage and actively discourage Asian employees from engaging in allyship would be important to consider. Future research might also consider the role of both advantage and disadvantage experiences in shaping employees' relationship to the racial hierarchy at work. For example, it is possible that Asian employees' own experience of racial discrimination might also increase their understanding and willingness to acknowledge their relative racial privilege (e.g., Rosette & Tost, 2013).

Conclusion

To better combat racism at work, we must better understand it. A deeper understanding of racism, in turn, will require a holistic investigation of how members of all racial groups are impacted by, contribute to, and combat racism in the workplace. In this process, no group should be overlooked: Asian employees may have the potential to tip the balance toward greater racial equity, to the extent their own experiences of racism motivate them to act in allyship to reduce racism against other groups.

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Appendix

Measures

All measures used a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree* unless noted otherwise.

Study 1

Workplace Discrimination

Participants' experiences of workplace discrimination were measured using Sanchez and Brock's (1996) 10-item measure. The question stem read, “How much do you agree with the following statements regarding your work experience in the past few months?,” with items (a) I feel uncomfortable when others make jokes or negative commentaries about people of my racial background; (b) I sometimes feel that my race is a limitation.; (c) many people have stereotypes about my racial group and treat me as if they were true; (d) people think I am unsociable when in fact I have trouble communicating in English; (e) I sometimes feel that people actively try to stop me from advancing because of my race; (f) it bothers me when people pressure me to assimilate; (g) I do not get enough recognition because I am different; (h) I feel that my accent is a limitation at work; (i) I feel that others exclude me from their activities because of my racial background; and (j) people look down upon me if I practice customs of my culture.

Perceived Group Similarity With Blacks

We assessed participants' perceptions of their racial group's similarity with Black individuals by adapting Cortland et al.'s (2017) two-item measure. The question stem read, “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?,” and the two items were, (a) Asian Americans and Black Americans are very similar to each other, and (b) Asian Americans and Black Americans have a lot in common.

Zero-Sum Beliefs

We used Wilkins et al. (2015) four-item scale to measure participants' general zero-sum beliefs. The question stem read,

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? There are no right or wrong answers; your first feeling is generally best,” and items were, (a) when one group gets ahead, the others are held back; (b) progress for one group does not have to come at the expense of another (reverse-coded); (c) gains for one group, mean another group loses; (d) decreased bias toward one group, naturally means another group will experience more bias.

Workplace Allyship Toward Black Coworkers

We selected items from Hope et al.'s (2019) measure of workplace allyship that were either already applicable or could be adapted to be applicable to the organizational context. The question stem read, “In the past couple of weeks, how frequently did you engage in the following behaviors, in support of *African American/Black employees in your organization*?” Items were (a) displayed a poster or bumper sticker with a cause specific to the Black community; (b) went out of my way to collect information on a cause specific to the Black community; (c) presented facts to contest another person's social or political statement about the Black community; (d) confronted jokes, statements, or innuendos that oppose the Black community; (e) signed a petition for a cause specific to the Black community; (f) tried to change a coworker's mind about an issue specific to the Black community; (g) wore a t-shirt or button with a message in support of the Black community; (h) mentored a Black coworker. Participants used a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *never* to 7 = *always* to respond.

Study 2

Workplace Discrimination

To test for the effectiveness of our manipulation, we again used Sanchez and Brock's perceived workplace discrimination scale. While we included all 10-items of the original measure for completeness, we preregistered to use four items that appeared to be more applicable participants of all races, based on a pretest

(Appendix continues)

conducted on a separate sample of 193 White participants (Please see [Supplemental Materials](#), for details on this pretest and supplementary analyses using the full scale). The question stem read, "Please imagine working at the organization in the scenario. To what extent would feel in the following ways in the organization?" The four items used in analyses were (a) I would feel uncomfortable when others make jokes or negative commentaries about people of my racial background; (b) I would feel that my race is a limitation; (c) I would think that many people have stereotypes about my racial group and will treat me as if they were true; and (d) I would feel that people will actively try to stop me from advancing because of my race.

Perceived Group Similarity With Blacks

We again assessed participants' perceptions of their racial group's similarity with Black individuals by adapting [Cortland et al. \(2017\)](#) two-item measure. The question stem read, "In the organizational scenario you read about, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? In the organizational scenario ...," and items read, (a) [Asian/White] Americans and Black Americans are very similar to each other, and (b) [Asian/White] Americans and Black Americans have a lot in common. Participants read items that corresponded to their racial group.

Zero-Sum Beliefs

The measure of participants' zero-sum beliefs was identical to that of Study 1.

Workplace Allyship Toward Black Coworkers

We measured participants' intentions to engage in allyship behaviors toward Black coworkers, again adapting [Hope et al. \(2019\)](#)

measure. The question stem read, "Again, please imagine working in the organization in the scenario. How likely are you to engage in the following behaviors in the organization?" Items presented were identical to that of Study 1, except that they were written in present tense (e.g., "Display a poster or bumper sticker with a cause specific to the Black community"). Participants used a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *extremely unlikely* to 7 = *extremely likely* to respond.

Attention Check

Participants were asked to, "Please select 'six' on the scale below," with answer choices, *strongly disagree*, "2," "6," "4," "5," "3," and *strongly agree*.

Study 3

All measures used in Study 3 were identical to those of Study 2. Additionally, in Study 3, we measured participants' *perceptions of dual identity* with four items adapted from [Eller and Abrams \(2004\)](#), [Hornsey and Hogg \(2002\)](#), [Riek et al. \(2010\)](#), and [Ufkes et al. \(2016\)](#): (a) I perceive Asians/Whites and Blacks as two groups within a larger group; (b) I view Asians/Whites and Blacks as two groups also having one common identity; (c) I view Asians/Whites and Blacks in America as two groups that are also part of one group; and (d) I perceive Black Americans as people from a different group that, at the same time, also share a common group membership with me. Participants used a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree* to respond.

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