

# An integrative framework on the impact of allies: How identity-based needs influence intergroup solidarity and social movements

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## Abstract

What impact do advantaged group allies have within social movements? Although solidarity between advantaged and disadvantaged group members is often encouraged to achieve long-term social change, allies run the risk of being ineffective or counter-productive, therefore making it important to shift our focus towards understanding the impact of allies. We propose an integrative theoretical framework describing the positive and negative impact of allies based on their distinct identity-based needs: advantaged group members' need for moral acceptance and disadvantaged group members' need for empowerment and respect. By consolidating extant literature and identifying gaps in prior research, we propose a set of hypotheses concerning (a) tensions that arise within intergroup solidarity efforts for social change between advantaged group allies and disadvantaged group members, and (b) the role of allies in influencing broader public opinion to advance the psychology of social change.

## KEYWORDS

allies, intergroup relations, needs-based model, social change, social movements, solidarity

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

History is rife with stories of advantaged group *allies*—people belonging to groups that hold power and privilege in society who work to end oppression against disadvantaged groups. From the perspective of disadvantaged groups, allies are those who provide support for the disadvantaged group and engage in informed actions to challenge inequality (Brown & Ostrove, 2013; Ostrove & Brown, 2018). The concept and terminology of “allies” have their roots in decades of social movements and grassroots organizing for equality and justice, and have only recently been examined within social psychology. Examples of advantaged group allies include White South Africans who joined Black South Africans in civil disobedience efforts against state-sponsored apartheid, non-indigenous groups who advocate for indigenous rights in the Americas, feminist men who founded organizations to mobilize other men against sexism, and heterosexual cisgender individuals who routinely attend annual Pride Parades

to celebrate sexual and gender diversity. These anecdotes suggest that advantaged group allies have long been part of the struggle for social change alongside disadvantaged groups. What is the impact of having allies in a movement?

Given the asymmetrical power relations between advantaged and disadvantaged group members, activists and scholars have widely discussed the benefits and pitfalls of including allies within a social movement (e.g., hooks 1986; Kivel, 2002; Kraemer, 2007; Spivak, 1988). From a social psychological perspective however, scholars have tended to examine factors that *motivate* advantaged group allies' involvement in social change efforts (e.g., Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006; Russell, 2011; Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009; van Zomeren, Postmes, Spears, & Bettache, 2011) with relatively little consideration of the potential downside—for example, that ally involvement may make advantaged group members' voices louder than the voices of disadvantaged groups in representing their groups' concerns (see Droogendyk, Wright, Lubensky, & Louis, 2016).

Getting allies to come to the table is not sufficient to produce social change—we also need to systematically understand the *impact* that allies have on social movements, which may be both positive and negative. In this article, we propose a theoretical framework assessing the social psychological consequences of allies in terms of shaping social movement dynamics and influencing social change in a broader societal context.

We argue that focusing on the impact of allies is important for at least two reasons. First, by definition advantaged group allies work in solidarity with the disadvantaged group, either directly or symbolically, yet there is limited understanding about whether and how such solidarity is achieved. Advantaged and disadvantaged group members have different levels of power and privilege in society; these differences can become sources of conflict when they attempt to work together for social change. For this reason, activists from disadvantaged groups have debated whether and how advantaged group members should be involved in social change efforts, for example because of concerns about who gets to speak for the disadvantaged group and define their interests (e.g., Hooks, 1986; Spivak, 1988). Advantaged group allies themselves have discussed challenges in building and sustaining solidarity with disadvantaged group members (e.g., Case, 2012; Drick, 2015). Yet research on the predictors of advantaged and disadvantaged group members' collective action for social change have grown rather separately and have rarely considered *both* groups' perspectives simultaneously to analyze how they fit (but see Craig, Badaan, & Brown, 2020; Iyer & Ryan, 2009). Jointly considering both groups' perspectives in intergroup solidarity movements is critical to identifying possible intergroup tensions that arise during solidarity and subsequently addressing those tensions effectively to promote more successful solidarity-based action.

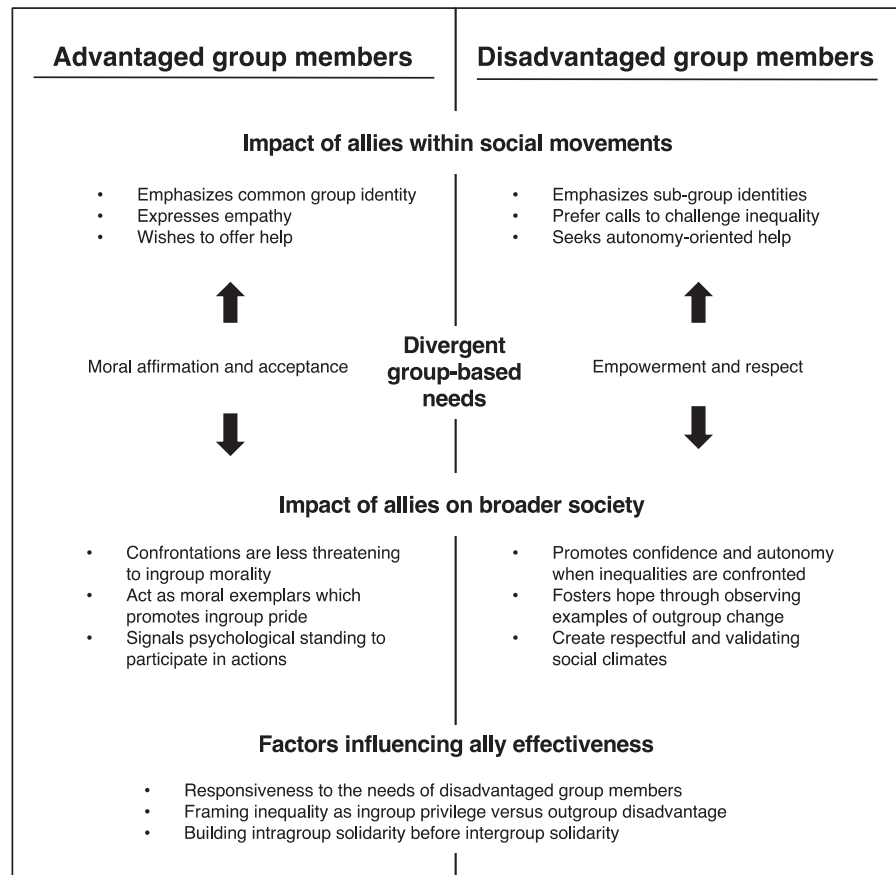
Second, several models of social change have suggested that solidarity between advantaged and disadvantaged group members in collective action is important for long-term social change, and that a movement's success critically relies on its ability to raise broader public support for its goals (e.g., Butera, Falomir-Pichastor, Mugny, & Quiamzade, 2017; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Subašić, Reynolds, & Turner, 2008). The extensive literature on the motives of advantaged group members in recognizing inequality and supporting social change also comes with the largely implied argument that advantaged group members' involvement is important (e.g., Leach et al., 2006; Thomas et al., 2009; van Zomeren et al., 2011). Further, social movements often organize collective actions aimed at promoting awareness of, and support from, target audiences, including the general public outside a movement (Benford & Hunt, 1992; Tilly, 2008). This is a place where advantaged group allies could play an important role. However, there is limited research examining whether, when, and how advantaged group allies are in fact effective in promoting broader engagement among the general public to contribute to social change.

To begin addressing the aforementioned gaps, we propose an integrative framework on the impact of allies by drawing on the now classic idea that advantaged and disadvantaged group

members typically have divergent identity-based needs when approaching intergroup relations, largely due to their relative status and power in an unequal society (for reviews see Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009; Nadler & Shnabel, 2015; Shelton, Richeson, & Vorauer, 2006). When inequality is perceived as unjust, intergroup transgressions threaten advantaged and disadvantaged group members in distinct ways. Advantaged group members, who benefit from inequality and have an ingroup history of perpetrating harm against the outgroup, tend to have concerns about their moral standing and are motivated to be accepted (Shnabel, Nadler, Canetti-Nisim, & Ullrich, 2008; Siem, Oettingen, Mummendey, & Nadler, 2013). Disadvantaged group members, who are harmed by inequality and have experienced group-based victimization, tend to have concerns about being respected and are motivated to be empowered (Shnabel et al., 2008; Siem et al., 2013). These distinct identity-based needs are contingent upon advantaged and disadvantaged group members perceiving the illegitimacy of social inequality (Hässler, Shnabel, Ullrich, Arditti-Vogel, SimanTov-Nachlieli, 2018). Further, it has been found that group-based stereotypes are consistent with these distinct motivations. Advantaged group members are stereotyped as highly competent but not warm and likeable, whereas disadvantaged group members are stereotyped as incompetent but highly warm and likeable (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002).

As people are motivated to restore positive aspects of their social identities, the needs-based model of reconciliation posits that advantaged group members have a heightened need for moral affirmation and acceptance, whereas disadvantaged group members have a heightened need for respect and empowerment (Shnabel et al., 2008; Shnabel, Nadler, Ullrich, Dovidio, & Carmi, 2009). Failing to satisfy these identity-based needs can undermine harmonious intergroup relations. Much of the research on the needs-based model has been conducted in the context of protracted, violent intergroup conflicts (such as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict), with the goal of reconciliation and conflict reduction between members of perpetrator and victim groups (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015; Shnabel et al., 2009). Applying the needs-based model to the context of unequal intergroup relations, Siem et al. (2013) found that group-based needs diverged when both sides perceived inequality to be illegitimate. Further, Shnabel, Ullrich, Nadler, Dovidio, and Aydin (2013) found that exchanging messages that satisfied the need for acceptance among advantaged group members and the need for empowerment among disadvantaged group members promoted greater willingness to engage in collective action to address intergroup inequality. However, people's intentions to engage in collective action represent only the first step towards social change. As an important next step, we argue that these divergent identity-based needs may influence the intergroup dynamics within social movements, as well as the impact of allies on the general public outside the movement (see Figure 1 for an illustration). In what follows, we start by reviewing extant research to support the premise that advantaged and disadvantaged group members have divergent psychological needs during efforts for social change.

**FIGURE 1** How divergent group-based needs can shape the impact of allies within social movements and the impact of allies on broader society



## 2 | DIVERGENT GROUP-BASED NEEDS DURING EFFORTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Advantaged group members are part of a high-status group that largely benefit from systems of inequality. When advantaged group members are made aware of ingroup wrongdoings or come to recognize the illegitimacy of inequality, the image they have of their ingroup's morality becomes tarnished (Knowles & Peng, 2005; Piff, Martinez, & Keltner, 2012; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006). Advantaged group members also tend to worry about appearing prejudiced, ignorant, or naïve about issues of inequality (Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008; Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998). Such threats to moral image motivate a desire to be accepted and liked by disadvantaged group members during intergroup interactions (Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010). In addition, advantaged group members feel a range of moral emotions in response to injustice (e.g., guilt, anger, empathy; for a review see Thomas et al., 2009), which may prompt a desire to affiliate and advocate for the disadvantaged group. Prior work on the needs-based model has further found that advantaged group members were more willing to engage in efforts for equality when they received messages from the disadvantaged group reassuring them that their group was morally accepted (Shnabel et al., 2013). Consistent with the needs-based model, in the context of intergroup dialogue on topics of racial oppression (such as slavery), when historical injustice was salient, White Americans were more responsive to messages from Black Americans that expressed

moral and social acceptance of White Americans (Ditlmann, Purdie-Vaughns, Dovidio, & Naft, 2017). By extension, moving beyond the motivation for social change as an outcome, we argue that advantaged group allies may seek moral affirmation and acceptance from disadvantaged group members during their participation in social change efforts, for example through their involvement in a movement's structure and decision-making efforts.

The psychological (and practical) needs of disadvantaged group members are quite different from advantaged group allies in social change. As part of a low-status group subjected to discrimination and prejudice, disadvantaged group members face both physical and psychological harm. This harm includes threats to their sense of personal power and control (Ryff, Keyes, & Hughes, 2003). The negative impact of being disadvantaged is often experienced long after specific wrongdoings have passed (Pascoe & Richman, 2009). Disadvantaged group members also tend to fear being targets of prejudice and discrimination in everyday life (e.g., Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002). For example, when interacting with White Americans, Black Americans have a desire to be respected and viewed as competent (Bergsieker et al., 2010; Buttny & Williams, 2000). Similarly, among gay and lesbian people in Germany, Simon and Grabow (2014) found that feeling respected by the broader heterosexual society was linked to the desire to be recognized as equal members of society (see also Simon, Mommert, & Renger, 2015). Disadvantaged group members have developed strategies to respond to inequality and

injustice, including engaging in collective action to challenge inequality (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Consistent with the needs-based model, past research has found that disadvantaged group members were more willing to engage in collective action when they received messages reassuring them that their group was respected (Shnabel et al., 2013). By extension, moving beyond the intention to engage in collective action as an outcome of needs satisfaction, we argue that disadvantaged group members may seek empowerment and respect from advantaged group members during their involvement in social change efforts, for example, through movement-building processes and strategies in the context of a movement for social change.

Taken together, extant research supports the idea that advantaged group allies and disadvantaged group members have divergent needs and motivations during efforts for social change. This premise assumes ongoing inequality between groups, which makes identity-based needs particularly salient and important for advantaged and disadvantaged groups advocating for social equality and justice together. We further argue that these unique group-based needs are likely to shape specific ways in which advantaged group allies approach social change efforts (i.e., through their preferences, attitudes, and behaviors), and how these approaches are perceived by disadvantaged group members within a movement. In doing so, we focus on advantaged and disadvantaged group members who are already critical of intergroup inequalities and support changing the status quo. Two boundary conditions define the scope of our review. First, those who are strong proponents of status-legitimizing ideologies (e.g., system justification, social dominance, Protestant work ethic) are unlikely to see group-based inequality as legitimate (e.g., Hässler, Shnabel, Ullrich, Arditti-Vogel, & SimanTov-Nachlieli, 2019; Wilkins & Kaiser, 2014). Instead, they view the social system as being fair, fail to see ingroup privilege, and in fact may claim “reverse discrimination” because they believe that the playing field is level to begin with. Such individuals are not expected to be allies of equality-driven collective action and fall outside the scope of this review. Second, group members with intersectional identities, who identify with a group that is advantaged (e.g., male) and another that is disadvantaged (e.g., working class) may also not perceive themselves as being privileged and thus may reject claims of intergroup inequality. This type of group also falls outside the scope of this review. With this in mind, we discuss below how advantaged group allies likely influence three dynamics within movements for social change: (a) representations of group identities, (b) communicating support, and (c) helping relations (see Table 1 for a summary of hypotheses).

### 3 | THE IMPACT OF ALLIES WITHIN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

#### 3.1 | Representations of group identities

When considering how advantaged and disadvantaged groups may work together for social change, one key issue is how to manage

multiple group identities. A large body of research has shown that forging superordinate identities is linked to intergroup cooperation and harmony (for a review, see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014). Emphasizing a common identity between advantaged and disadvantaged groups can motivate advantaged group members to engage in social change efforts to support the disadvantaged group (Reicher, Cassidy, Wolpert, Hopkins, & Levine, 2006; Selvanathan, Khoo, & Lickel, 2020). Research on opinion-based groups further suggests that building social identities around shared opinions, such as feminism or equality, can promote shared feelings of anger over injustices, which is a powerful motivator of collective action for social change (Bliuc, McGarty, Reynolds, & Muntele, 2007). It is therefore likely that advantaged group allies will emphasize a common identity with the disadvantaged group during solidarity efforts, for example, by accentuating their shared identity as supporters of the cause.

One way that group identities are represented is during intergroup interactions. The topics that are emphasized during intergroup interactions can signal whether groups are focusing on shared or distinct identities. Discussions between disadvantaged and advantaged group allies are key to realizing shared opinions and to subsequently mobilizing for social change (Thomas et al., 2009). During interactions with disadvantaged group members, advantaged group members prefer discussing issues that highlight intergroup commonalities, such as shared hobbies or cultural similarities (Saguy, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2008). This preference is linked to advantaged group members' desire to uphold the status quo and draw attention away from inequalities (Saguy et al., 2008; see also Bikmen & Durkin, 2014; Hammack & Pilecki, 2015). However, as advantaged group members' intentions to challenge the status quo increase, their desire for discussing status differences increases as well (Saguy et al., 2008). Extending this prior work to the context of solidarity-based efforts for social change, it is possible that advantaged group allies may discuss topics that highlight commonality with disadvantaged group members because they desire acceptance. But instead of power-neutral topics such as shared hobbies or cultural similarities as in Saguy et al.'s (2008) work, we propose that within a movement's context advantaged group allies will highlight their recognition of inequality and their common goals of achieving a more equitable society during activist meetings and grassroots mobilization efforts. Focusing on such topics is likely to reduce status-based divisions and establish a common group identity with disadvantaged group members. As a result, allies may frame movement demands and focus mobilization efforts on affirming shared goals between advantaged and disadvantaged groups because such an approach to social change helps include the advantaged group within the moral circle. Further, advantaged group allies may also want to be involved in discussions on movement strategizing and contribute ideas to movement organizing, so that they too have a role to play in advancing social change.

Hypothesis 1: Advantaged group allies prefer emphasizing a common group identity with the disadvantaged group during efforts for social change (i.e., frame movement demands as shared goals, desire to

**TABLE 1** Hypotheses on the consequences of ally involvement in social change efforts

	Advantaged group members	Disadvantaged group members
Impact of allies within social movements		
Representations of group identities	H1: Advantaged group allies prefer emphasizing a common group identity with the disadvantaged group during efforts for social change (i.e., frame movement demands as shared goals, desire to be included in strategic movement organizing) because it promotes feelings of moral acceptance	H2: Disadvantaged group members prefer emphasizing sub-group identities when in solidarity with majority group allies (i.e., focus movement demands on power differences, become leaders of the movement) because it promotes feelings of empowerment
Communicating support	H3: Advantaged group members seek to express empathy to disadvantaged group members (e.g., by offering emotional support, prioritizing relationship-building efforts) because it promotes feelings of moral acceptance	H4: Disadvantaged group members prefer advantaged group members to participate in efforts that explicitly challenge inequality and express anger through outward action (e.g., confronting discrimination, showing up to protests organized by the disadvantaged group) because it promotes feelings of empowerment
Helping relations	H5: Advantaged group allies wish to offer help, even dependency-oriented help, to disadvantaged group members (e.g., by being a movement's spokesperson, engaging in charity) because it promotes feelings of moral acceptance	H6: Disadvantaged group members prefer receiving autonomy-oriented (and will reject dependency-oriented) help from advantaged group allies (e.g., desiring allies to show up to protests organized by disadvantaged groups, but remaining out of the spotlight) because it promotes feelings of empowerment
Impact of allies on broader society		
Confronting inequalities	H7: When allies confront inequalities, it is less threatening to ingroup morality and helps foster a sense of moral responsibility, thereby motivating other advantaged group members who are potential sympathizers of a movement to engage in social change efforts	H8: When allies confront inequalities, it encourages disadvantaged group members' confidence and autonomy, which can foster greater social change intentions
Role modeling	H9: Allies serve as ingroup moral exemplars who can boost ingroup pride and subsequently mobilize more advantaged group allies among potential sympathizers	H10: Disadvantaged group members feel hopeful when observing advantaged group allies come to advocate for equality, which can motivate further social change efforts
Social norms	H11: Advantaged group allies help promote the perception that advantaged group members have the psychological standing to participate in efforts for social change, thereby creating more allies	H12: Advantaged group allies help create social climates that validate the experiences of disadvantaged group members (e.g., egalitarian norms) and legitimize a movement, which fosters disadvantaged group members' feeling of being respected and empowered
Moderating factors of ally effectiveness		
Responsiveness to the needs of the disadvantaged group	H13: Allies will be more effective when they engage meaningfully with and act in response to disadvantaged group members' needs, because it conveys allies' moral standing to act for social change	
Framing inequality as ingroup privilege versus outgroup disadvantage	H14: Allies will be more effective when confronting inequality if they frame inequality in terms of ingroup privilege compared to outgroup disadvantage because allies have the knowledge and legitimacy to do so, and it is not as threatening to the advantaged group's moral image	
Building intragroup solidarity before intergroup solidarity	H15: When faced with injustice that threatens a disadvantaged group's identity, disadvantaged group members may be first and foremost interested in fostering <i>intragroup</i> solidarity so as to empower the ingroup and create a cohesive group identity, before seeking <i>intergroup</i> solidarity with advantaged group members	

be included in strategic movement organizing) because it promotes feelings of moral acceptance.

Even though disadvantaged group members may agree with and share advantaged group allies' goals for social change, they

may want to also emphasize their disadvantaged group identity. Past research has shown that disadvantaged group members generally desire to remain strongly identified with their disadvantaged group and emphasize group differences, even while sharing a common group identity with advantaged group members

(Dovidio et al., 2009; Ufkes, Calcagno, Glasford, & Dovidio, 2016). Studies have found that focusing on dual group identities—superordinate and subgroup identities—compared to focusing on common group identity alone, promotes disadvantaged group members' recognition of injustice and collective action intentions (Banfield & Dovidio, 2013; Glasford & Dovidio, 2011). Similarly, during intergroup interactions, disadvantaged group members prefer to discuss status and power differences in addition to intergroup commonalities (Saguy et al., 2008; see also Bikmen & Durkin, 2014; Hammack & Pilecki, 2015). By bringing together the literatures on communication preferences and group-based needs, we propose that in the context of solidarity for social change, disadvantaged group members may experience empowerment by emphasizing their disadvantaged group (or subgroup) identity within the context of a shared (or superordinate) identity with advantaged group allies. This means that in a social movement, disadvantaged groups may focus movement demands and mobilization efforts on intergroup power differences, for example by delineating what allies can (or cannot) do due to their privileged position. To gain a sense of empowerment, we propose that disadvantaged group members may want to advocate for their own solutions for inequality and ultimately spearhead their own movements. A movement's top leadership structure may therefore exclude allies because disadvantaged group members will be motivated to take the lead on strategizing and directing mobilization efforts by holding prominent leadership roles within a movement. Scholars have described how leadership can be reflected in various aspects of a social movement, including its organizational structure, goals, framing methods, and decision-making strategies (Morris & Staggenborg, 2004). However, the research thus far has not considered how disadvantaged group members may have a desire to lead their own efforts for social change, in part because it helps empower their group.

**Hypothesis 2:** Disadvantaged group members prefer emphasizing sub-group identities when in solidarity with majority group allies (i.e., focus movement demands on power differences, become leaders of the movement) because it promotes feelings of empowerment.

It is worth noting that the focus on common or distinct group identities need not be mutually exclusive. Prior research has shown that dual group identities (i.e., highlighting both shared superordinate identities and distinct subgroup identities) can help prevent identity threat (Simon & Ruhs, 2008; Ufkes et al., 2016). A movement that emphasizes dual group identities may highlight common goals between disadvantaged and advantaged group members while simultaneously focusing on group differences in power and privilege. A focus on dual group identities can simultaneously have movement goals that include advantaged group allies within the struggle, as well as empower disadvantaged group members as decision-makers. In such a movement, there may be a recognition that disadvantaged group members should

have key leadership roles, whereas allies should have more supportive or follower roles, thereby empowering disadvantaged group members while simultaneously promoting moral acceptance among advantaged group allies.

### 3.2 | Communicating support

An important element in ally involvement in efforts for social change involves communicating support to disadvantaged group members. In response to injustice, advantaged group allies tend to experience empathy for the disadvantaged group, which helps foster social connections and prosocial behaviours (Stephan & Finlay, 1999; Thomas et al., 2009). It is likely that allies will express empathy and attempt to take the perspective of disadvantaged group members to signal solidarity in the hopes of making disadvantaged group members feel heard and understood. Expressing empathy to disadvantaged group members also helps allies distance themselves from wrongdoings committed by ingroup members, therefore promoting allies' sense of morality and acceptance. In line with this idea, prior research has shown that when people felt shame about the immoral actions committed by their ingroup, they distanced themselves from the ingroup and instead affiliated themselves with the harmed group (Berndsen & Gausel, 2015). Further, appraising group-based advantage as unearned privilege brings up feelings of collective guilt, which has been linked to support for compensatory efforts for the disadvantaged group (Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Mallett, Huntsinger, Sinclair, & Swim, 2008).

By extension, we propose that within the context of social movements, allies will seek to build accountable and trusting relationships with disadvantaged group members by providing emotional support and fostering genuine friendships across group boundaries. Allies may therefore prioritize movement efforts on relationship-building activities and events as well as on symbolic actions that emphasize a shared relationship between advantaged and disadvantaged group members. For example, advantaged group allies may release joint statements with disadvantaged group members, which offers the opportunity for advantaged group allies to express empathy and support the harmed group. However, such a focus may distract from more overt or risky actions that challenge systems of inequality. It is also possible that these efforts may assuage feelings of shame and guilt among advantaged group members but do little to affect systemic change (see Iyer et al., 2003).

**Hypothesis 3:** Advantaged group members seek to express empathy to disadvantaged group members (e.g., by offering emotional support, prioritizing relationship-building efforts) because it promotes feelings of moral acceptance.

Advantaged group members' attempts to affiliate with the disadvantaged group may not always be effective. Research on interracial



contact has shown that White Americans' desire to maintain a positive impression of themselves promoted the perception that they could accurately understand Black Americans' experiences of racial discrimination (Holoien, 2016). However, disadvantaged group members did not feel similarly understood during these interactions (Holoien, Bergsieker, Shelton, & Alegre, 2015) and racial minorities tend to feel less supported by their White friends compared to friends from their ingroup (McGill, Way, & Hughes, 2012; Shelton, Trail, West, & Bergsieker, 2010). Expressions of empathy from the advantaged group are also laden with power differences. Targets of empathy tend to be those who have lower status in society (Vorauer & Quesnel, 2016). Messages of empathic concern from the advantaged group may therefore be insufficient to establish solidarity with disadvantaged group members and may even be interpreted as patronizing. There is also evidence that compared to messages that emphasize emotional closeness, disadvantaged groups respond more favorably to messages that call for systematic change and an end to discrimination. Specifically, Rattan and Ambady (2014) found that non-targets of LGBT prejudice tend to provide the LGBT community with supportive messages focused on social connection (e.g., emphasizing support and empathy) rather than social change (e.g., advocating for reducing societal bias). However, LGBT youth found social connection messages less comforting than social change messages.

While expressions of empathy and understanding can foster advantaged group members' sense of acceptance in social change efforts, allies who call attention to systems of inequality can empower disadvantaged group members. In line with this, prior research has shown that when advantaged group members directly criticize unjust systems during intergroup interactions, it can empower disadvantaged groups' intentions to engage in collective action (Becker, Wright, Lubensky, & Zhou, 2013; Droogendyk, Louis, & Wright, 2016). Specifically, Droogendyk, Louis, et al. (2016) found that when advantaged group members explicitly denounced inequality during intergroup contact with disadvantaged group members, such interactions can fuel disadvantaged group members' perceptions of injustice and desire for collective action. Further, feelings of anger and outrage are linked to the marginalized group's collective reactions to injustice (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2009). Therefore, although advantaged group members feel a range of self-focused emotions such as guilt and shame in response to ingroup privilege and injustice, anger or moral outrage in particular may be an important affective vehicle to express support for the harmed group (see Thomas et al., 2009). And while advantaged group members may seek emotional connection by expressing empathy to disadvantaged group members, communicating disapproval of injustices and intentions to challenge the status quo is necessary to empower disadvantaged group members and subsequently foster intergroup solidarity for social change.

Hypothesis 4: Disadvantaged group members prefer advantaged group members to participate in efforts that explicitly challenge inequality and express anger through outward action (e.g., through confronting

discrimination, showing up to protests organized by the disadvantaged group) because it promotes feelings of empowerment.

Effective solidarity therefore rests on both the expression of empathy and of intentions to challenge inequality by advantaged group allies. From the perspective of disadvantaged groups, it may be desirable for allies to incorporate both approaches to a certain extent (Brown & Ostrove, 2013; Ostrove, Kornfeld, & Ibrahim, 2019). For example, work by Brown and Ostrove (2013)—which focused on how disadvantaged group members viewed advantaged group allies—showed that disadvantaged groups perceive effective allies as being interpersonally supportive (e.g., understanding and helpful) *and* as actively taking informed actions to address inequality (e.g., confronts bias, challenges structural injustice). These two dimensions of being a good ally are also consistent with conceptual work on the role of allies in advancing social justice (Goodman, 2001; Kivel, 2002). Thus, establishing meaningful relationships with disadvantaged groups *and* challenging injustice are not mutually exclusive; both behaviors may reinforce one another and improve the effectiveness of allies in advancing equal rights.

### 3.3 | Helping relations

When advantaged group members advocate for disadvantaged groups, this relationship can be construed as a form of intergroup helping (Droogendyk, Wright, et al., 2016). Research on intergroup helping between groups with unequal status has found that the act of a high-status group helping a low-status group may sometimes be strategic and serve to bolster power relations, even if it is well-intended (Nadler, 2002; see also Jackman, 1994). According to this perspective, high-status groups might offer dependency-oriented help (providing temporary solutions to problems faced by disadvantaged groups), which asserts and maintains the advantaged group's dominant status (Halabi, Dovidio, & Nadler, 2008; Jackson & Esses, 2000). Thus, seemingly prosocial behaviors can maintain group-based hierarchies if they do not empower disadvantaged group members to advocate for their ingroup interests. For example, prior research has found that intergroup helping may be a way to counter negative stereotypes about one's group, therefore promoting one's group interests rather than focusing on advancing the interests of a disadvantaged group (Hopkins et al., 2007; van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2012).

Bridging the literature on helping relations and the literature on group-based needs, we postulate that the desire to be morally accepted might promote advantaged group members' willingness to offer help. Even if there are good intentions to help, advantaged group members may engage in dependency-oriented help aiming to alleviate the suffering of disadvantaged groups—especially if advantaged group members believe that the disadvantaged group lack autonomy to help themselves. Allies may seek to be involved in movements by being a spokesperson for the harmed group (for example by speaking out against injustice to the media), or by

trying to protect the harmed group from criticisms. Allies may also be involved in charitable giving, such as raising money or volunteering their time to help disadvantaged groups—which may provide material benefits to the disadvantaged group but does little to challenge structural conditions that gave rise to inequality in the first place.

Hypothesis 5: Advantaged group allies wish to offer help, even dependency-oriented help, to disadvantaged group members (e.g., by being a movement's spokesperson, engaging in charity) because it promotes feelings of moral acceptance.

Past research has shown that disadvantaged group members, who are typically concerned with equalizing power relations and desire self-advocacy, are often resistant to receiving dependency-oriented help from advantaged group members (Halabi et al., 2008; Nadler & Halabi, 2006; Wakefield, Hopkins, & Greenwood, 2013; see also Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy, 2005). While most studies on intergroup helping have focused on everyday contexts where there are opportunities for intergroup contact (e.g., educational or work settings), in one study that examined intergroup helping within the context of social change, Wiley and Dunne (2019) found that feminist women viewed men who offer autonomy-oriented help as better allies than men who offered dependency-oriented help. Even if allies do not explicitly intend to offer dependency-oriented help, disadvantaged group members may question allies' underlying motivations for providing help and be wary of the implications of accepting help from them. Indeed, qualitative accounts of ally experiences suggest that advantaged group members report facing scepticism and distrust from the disadvantaged group when they participate in actions for social change (Kowal, 2011; O'Brien, 2001).

In contrast to dependency-oriented help, disadvantaged group members tend to respond positively to autonomy-oriented help, which encourages their sense of independence (Nadler, 2002; Nadler & Halabi, 2006). In interpersonal contexts, autonomy-oriented support promotes the well-being and self-esteem of recipients of help (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). In intergroup contexts, when sexual minorities received autonomy-oriented support from their social circles, they experienced greater well-being and engaged in more identity disclosure (e.g., "coming out" as gay), which are empowering acts of taking ownership of one's marginalized identity (Ryan, Legate, Weinstein, & Rahman, 2017; Wessel, 2017). Thus, in the context of movements, we propose that allies can offer autonomy-oriented help by showing up to actions that are planned by the disadvantaged group without necessarily expecting to make joint decisions about protest actions. As mentioned earlier, disadvantaged group members may desire to take on leadership roles; by contrast, allies taking on follower roles will construe helping relations as more autonomy-oriented rather than dependency-oriented. Allies can also direct media attention to the disadvantaged group's plight rather than draw attention to their own involvement. Taken together, even when advantaged group

allies may be motivated to help disadvantaged group members, there is a risk that their help may be construed as asserting power inequalities, which can evoke resistance from disadvantaged group members.

Hypothesis 6: Disadvantaged group members prefer receiving autonomy-oriented (and will reject dependency-oriented) help from advantaged group allies (e.g., desiring allies to show up to protests organized by disadvantaged groups, but remaining out of the spotlight) because it promotes feelings of empowerment.

Accordingly, to foster effective intergroup solidarity, advantaged group members should offer autonomy-oriented help and avoid providing dependency-oriented help, since such helping relations may simultaneously promote allies' sense of acceptance and disadvantaged group members' sense of empowerment. Allies' motivation to be morally accepted can therefore be harnessed to promote helping behaviors that are in line with disadvantaged group members' needs. Further, it is also important to consider how offering help in and of itself may not be welcomed by disadvantaged groups, unless the help offered serves to empower the disadvantaged group.

Beyond the ways in which advantaged group allies can shape the dynamics *within* efforts for social change, as we alluded to earlier, we further argue that ally involvement in social change efforts can also, for better or worse, shape the impact of those social change efforts on *broader* society (see Figure 1 for an illustration). Specifically, allies have the potential to influence attitudes of people who are external to a movement in ways that could encourage their involvement in social change efforts as well. We consider this possibility next.

## 4 | IMPACT OF ALLIES ON BROADER SOCIETY

Social movement scholars have extensively described social movements as an attempt to challenge existing social structures by organizing actions to communicate with targeted audiences (Benford & Hunt, 1992; McCarthy & McPhail, 2006). At their heart, efforts for social change can be construed as attempts at persuasion. Scholars from related fields such as sociology and political science have investigated when and how movements persuade policymakers (e.g., Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, & Su, 2010; Biggs & Andrews, 2015) and shift public opinion to conform to the goals of a movement (e.g., Branton, Martinez-Ebers, Carey, & Matsubayashi, 2015; Wallace, Zepeda-Millán, & Jones-Correa, 2014). This prior research has also examined how the effectiveness of a movement can be shaped by *allies*, but it has conceptualized allies as people and collective entities that are *outside* a movement—such as sympathetic organizations, policymakers, or other social



movements—rather than individuals *within* a movement. For example, support from government officials who are sympathetic to a movement increased the likelihood of policymakers enacting legal changes in line with the goals of a movement (Amenta, Dunleavy, & Bernstein, 1994; Meyer, 2004); and support from businesses that are sympathetic to activist demands increased the likelihood of targeted firms listening to the demands of activist organizations (Arenas, Sanchez, & Murphy, 2013; Frooman, 1999). There remains an important gap in our understanding of whether and how having advantaged group allies involved *within* movements for social change influences societal attitude change, behavior change, and related outcomes that would indicate movement success. While social movement scholars have thus far led the effort in studying alliances that social movements form, to the best of our knowledge, no published research has examined the *consequences* of ally involvement in social movements on broader social attitudes and behaviors.

Nevertheless, there is an emerging literature that has investigated how people psychologically respond to collective action more generally. This work has examined the impact of collective action on broader social attitudes, and has focused on the different tactics that movements use (e.g., violence vs. non-violence; moderate vs. extreme strategies) in terms of how it can influence public sympathy for the movement (Feinberg, Willer, & Kovacheff, 2017; Thomas & Louis, 2014). However, this work has not examined how the group composition of social movements can shape public perception of the movement. Building on this literature, we propose that the presence of allies in collective action can influence the effectiveness of collective action in shaping the social attitudes, beliefs, and norms of societal members to be in line with the goals of a movement.

The idea that having allies within a social movement can shape public perception of movements is related to classic persuasion research, which suggests that the source of a message can influence the impact of the message on its intended audience (Pornpitakpan, 2004), as well as leadership research which argues that leaders need to establish a shared identity with followers in order to create change (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005). Members of broader society who are not active participants in social change efforts are the targeted audience of a social movement hoping to mobilize support for their cause. To be effective proponents of social change, allies need to be responsive to identity-based needs of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups in society. We propose that allies' involvement in social change efforts has the potential to promote acceptance among members of the broader society who are advantaged, and empowerment among members of the broader society who are disadvantaged. Specifically, in response to allies, other advantaged group members who are sympathetic to a cause may come to feel that they too have something to contribute and therefore feel motivated to become involved in social change efforts themselves. For disadvantaged group members, the involvement of allies may be seen as providing legitimacy to the goal of social change and therefore they feel supported in their struggle, which could subsequently motivate continued efforts for social change. Below, we

describe the possible ways that allies can impact this broader society in terms of (a) confronting inequality, (b) being role models, and (c) influencing social norms (see Table 1 for a summary of hypotheses).

#### 4.1 | Confronting inequality

Allies may be able to confront other advantaged group members' prejudices in a way that is less morally threatening to those individuals than equivalent action taken by disadvantaged group members. In interpersonal contexts, extensive research has shown that advantaged group members tend to be more effective at persuading fellow group members to adopt egalitarian attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Dickter, Kittel, & Gyurovski, 2012; Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Gervais & Hillard, 2014; Schultz & Maddox, 2013). In contrast, disadvantaged group members who confront prejudice tend to be negatively evaluated and elicit resistance from advantaged group members (Eliezer & Major, 2012; Garcia, Reser, Amo, Redersdorff, & Branscombe, 2005; Kaiser & Miller, 2001; Rasinski & Czopp, 2010). Although this work has generally not focused on the underlying cause of these effects, we suggest that being confronted by a disadvantaged group member is likely to threaten advantaged group member's moral integrity, particularly because advantaged group members worry about being stereotyped as ignorant and prejudiced (Goff et al., 2008; Vorauer et al., 1998). One reason allies (vs. targets of discrimination) may be more persuasive during confrontations of inequality is because their confrontations may not be as threatening to advantaged group members' sense of morality, especially since advantaged individuals are often perceived to have the ingroup's best interests at heart when they criticize the ingroup (Hornsey, Oppes, & Svensson, 2002). Further, allies may also be more effective in establishing a sense of common cause between the advantaged and disadvantaged group in the struggle for equality. As a case in point, Subašić et al. (2018) found that when male (but not female) leaders framed gender equality as an issue that concerns both men and women, it increased men's collective action intentions. This suggests that allies can effectively position the advantaged group as having the moral responsibility for taking actions towards social change. However, it is important to note that allies may be able to motivate other advantaged group members' involvement in social change efforts only to the extent that allies are seen as upholding ingroup norms (i.e., prototypical members of their group, allyship is viewed as compatible with ingroup values). Findings on the black sheep effect and do-gooder derogation would suggest that allies could be seen as moral rebels or whistle-blowers who threaten the positive self-image of advantaged group members who fail to challenge injustice (e.g., Kutlaca, Becker, & Radke, 2020; Marques & Paez, 1994; Monin, Sawyer, & Marquez, 2008). Thus, to prevent such backlash it is important for allies to affirm the ingroup's morality.

Hypothesis 7: When allies confront inequalities, it is less threatening to ingroup morality and helps foster a sense of moral responsibility, thereby motivating

other advantaged group members who are potential sympathizers of a movement to engage in social change efforts.

Beyond the impact of allies on other advantaged group members, allies may also promote empowerment among disadvantaged individuals in broader society. For one, observing advantaged group members stand up against prejudice and discrimination can foster feelings of confidence and autonomy among disadvantaged group members who are targets of these institutional biases. Supporting this idea, Cihangir, Barreto, and Ellemers (2014) found that when male allies suggested that sexism took place during a job interview, women engaged in fewer self-handicapping behaviors and reported more performance self-esteem than if the suggestion came from a female source. Cihangir et al. (2014) postulate that the suggestion of sexism from a female source elicits social identity threat and stereotype-consistent behaviors, whereas the same suggestion from a male source reduces social identity threat because it demonstrates that men can be allies. Further, females were also more likely to file a complaint against sexism when a male ally suggested that sexism took place (Cihangir et al., 2014). These findings indicate that allies affirming the role of inequality in social relations can empower disadvantaged group members to confront injustices in the future, knowing that there are allies who will support their confrontations (see also Becker et al., 2013; Droogendyk, Wright, et al., 2016). Indeed, when racial minorities do confront discrimination against their group, they experience a greater sense of autonomy, which can subsequently lead to improved psychological well-being (Sanchez, Himmelstein, Young, Albuja, & Garcia, 2016).

Hypothesis 8: When allies confront inequalities, it encourages disadvantaged group members' confidence and autonomy, which can foster greater social change intentions.

## 4.2 | Role modeling

Advantaged group members who support social change in theory but are not yet active in social movements may benefit from seeing allies within movements because allies could serve as positive role models. Allies may increase other advantaged group members' sense of ingroup morality, which may subsequently motivate their involvement in social change. When advantaged group members observe an ally (who is an ingroup member) confronting prejudice or advocating for disadvantaged groups' rights, they may feel a sense of ingroup pride. Such feelings of pride could promote advantaged group members' support for social change. Indeed, prior research by van Leeuwen, van Dijk, and Kaynak (2013) found that experiencing ingroup pride (evoked by reading narratives of ingroup members helping outgroup members) promoted greater willingness to engage in intergroup helping. Similarly, Thomas, Amiot, Louis, and Goddard (2017) found that when people observed ingroup members help others (such as providing humanitarian aid), perceiving the help as

freely given and as a reflection of the helper's core values promoted greater ingroup pride among observers. Research from conflict settings (e.g., Bosnia and Herzegovina) further suggest that in the aftermath of historical mass atrocities, when perpetrator group members are exposed to stories of moral exemplars—ingroup members who put their lives at risk to help outgroup members—it helps restore a threatened moral image of the ingroup (Čehajić-Clancy & Bilewicz, 2020). In the context of advocating for social change, qualitative work on the experiences of social justice allies has shown that a key part of ally development is being able to find and learn from other allies who serve as role models (Broido, 2000; O'Brien, 2001). Therefore, the effectiveness of role modelling is applicable for advantaged group members who are 'silent sympathizers' and would not, for example, apply to advantaged group members who defend the status quo.

Hypothesis 9: Allies serve as ingroup moral exemplars who can boost ingroup pride and subsequently mobilize more advantaged group allies among potential sympathizers.

For disadvantaged group members in broader society, the involvement of allies in social change may foster a sense of hope for social change, which in turn can increase their commitment to strive for social change efforts. One factor that facilitates social change is holding onto hope, or the belief that social change is possible in the future (Greenaway, Cichocka, van Veelen, Likki, & Branscombe, 2016). Experiencing hope may be an important precursor to perceived group efficacy, which mobilizes participation in efforts for social change (Cohen-Chen & van Zomeren, 2018). Prior research in the context of ongoing intractable intergroup conflicts has found that when people believe that an outgroup can change and become more moral, it fosters hope for a better future and more support for collective action for social change (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Saguy, & van Zomeren, 2014). Similarly, in the context of allies advocating for social change, advantaged group members challenging the status quo and acknowledging ingroup privileges is counter to the general perception that advantaged group members tend to perpetuate discrimination and are ignorant of group-based inequality. Thus, when disadvantaged group members observe allies challenge injustices on behalf of the disadvantaged group, they may feel a sense of hope and efficacy that collective change is possible together.

Hypothesis 10: Disadvantaged group members feel hopeful when observing advantaged group allies come to advocate for equality, which can motivate further social change efforts.

## 4.3 | Social norms

Ally participation in efforts for social change communicates to other advantaged group members that they are accepted in such

efforts, or in other words, there is a place for advantaged group members in social change efforts. This is crucial because prior work has suggested that even when advantaged group members support the cause for equality, one reason why they may fail to participate in actions for social change is because they lack psychological standing, which refers to the extent to which people feel that they are legitimate or appropriate actors for a cause (Miller & Effron, 2010; Ratner & Miller, 2001). Psychological standing comes from being personally affected by an issue and having a stake in it; allies may therefore lack psychological standing on the issues that they advocate for on behalf of disadvantaged groups. When people lack psychological standing, granting them standing by making the issue relevant to them can promote their involvement (Ratner & Miller, 2001). For example, Sherf, Tangirala, and Weber (2017) found that men's participation in gender equality initiatives increased when organizations affirmed men's role in gender issues and the appropriateness of their involvement in promoting women's rights in the workplace. Thus, the involvement of allies in a movement may be effective in mobilizing more support and participation among other advantaged individuals in broader society because it signals to them that they are accepted and have a part to play in creating social change.

**Hypothesis 11:** Advantaged group allies help promote the perception that advantaged group members have the psychological standing to participate in efforts for social change, thereby creating more allies.

Allies' role in empowering disadvantaged individuals may also take place indirectly through allies' influence on promoting inclusive social norms. Classic research on social influence suggests that people are at times likely to adopt the opinions of advantaged individuals (Wood, Pool, Leck, & Purvis, 1996). Social norms can have a strong influence on personal attitudes and behaviors (Tankard & Paluck, 2016). In the context of race relations, exposing people to anti-racist norms led to lower expressions of racial bias among observers (e.g., Blanchard, Crandall, Brigham, & Vaughn, 1994; Monteith, Deneen, & Tooman, 1996). In the context of ending violence against women, there is evidence that male allies who challenge harmful masculinity norms can help transform existing power relations that sustain gender-based inequalities (Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003). Another example of the influence of norms is research on the outcomes of Gay-Straight Alliances, which are grassroot student-led organizations made up of sexual minorities and their allies that have emerged in schools across the United States. The presence of Gay-Straight Alliances in schools has a host of benefits for LGBT students, including greater feelings of safety (Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, & Russell, 2011) and lower frequency of victimization (Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006), suggesting that the presence of such alliance-based organizations creates more supportive social climates. In the same way, solidarity between advantaged and disadvantaged groups collectively advocating for the interests of disadvantaged groups is likely to reduce expressions of prejudice in society by modeling egalitarian social norms. Ally

involvement can therefore increase the legitimacy of a social movement in the eyes of the broader public, for example, by starting to change the norm related to perceived acceptability of inequality. Such norm change could subsequently reduce disadvantaged group members' concerns about being targets of discrimination and, instead, foster social experiences that respect and validate disadvantaged group members' experiences. Respectful interactions can be empowering for disadvantaged group members, and also motivate their engagement in efforts for social change together with advantaged group allies (Glasford & Johnston, 2017).

**Hypothesis 12:** Advantaged group allies help create social climates that validate the experiences of disadvantaged group members (e.g., egalitarian norms) and legitimize a movement, which fosters disadvantaged group members' feeling of being respected and empowered.

Thus far, we have discussed the possible impact of allies within and outside a movement for social change. At this point, it is important to consider the conditions under which advantaged group allies' involvement in social change efforts may *not* be helpful to advance the interests of disadvantaged groups. Little research has investigated the conditions under which advantaged group allies are effective (or ineffective) in promoting social change (see Droogendyk, Wright, et al., 2016 for a discussion). The framework we propose in this article suggests that allies will be effective to the extent that they empower disadvantaged group members, while simultaneously promoting moral acceptance to motivate other advantaged group members' involvement in social change efforts. In what follows, we briefly discuss several moderating factors that are likely to influence allies' effectiveness in doing so (see Table 1 for a summary of hypotheses).

## 5 | MODERATING FACTORS: CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ALLIES MAY BE MORE (OR LESS) EFFECTIVE

### 5.1 | Responsiveness to the needs of the disadvantaged group

An important factor determining whether allies are effective in challenging injustice is the presence and actions of disadvantaged group members during injustice-oriented events. Targets of discrimination are generally deemed more knowledgeable about issues of inequality (Crosby & Monin, 2013). For example, it was found that when a racially offensive remark was made during an interaction, people tended to look to racial minorities, presumably for guidance on how to respond to the situation (Crosby, Monin, & Richardson, 2008). If disadvantaged group members are perceived not to need help or support, then this perception could increase the belief that allies lack the psychological standing to act in response to unjust situations (Ratner & Miller, 2001). Such

situations may also cause people to see allies' actions as attempting to provide dependency-oriented or unwelcome help, which fit with counterproductive "savior narratives" that tend to be salient during situations of unequal power relations (Cole, 2012). To be trusted as legitimate actors that provide appropriate support, allies should seek to primarily convey physical or symbolic solidarity with the disadvantaged group that is the target of the injustice-oriented event.

Hypothesis 13: Allies will be more effective when they engage meaningfully with and act in response to disadvantaged group members' needs, because it conveys allies' moral standing to act for social change.

## 5.2 | Framing inequality as ingroup privilege versus outgroup disadvantage

Another factor that may influence whether advantaged group allies are effective in confronting prejudice is the content of their communication around injustice. Prior work has identified outgroup disadvantage and ingroup privilege as two strategic ways that injustice is framed (Lowery, Knowles, & Unzueta, 2007; Powell, Branscombe, & Schmitt, 2005). Advantaged group members may be in a unique position to draw attention to ingroup privilege rather than to outgroup disadvantage. Littleford and Jones (2017) provide evidence in support of this idea; a college class on White privilege promoted more acknowledgement of racial disparity compared to when the class focused on Black disadvantage, but only when it was taught by a White (not Black) professor. Framing inequality in terms of the experiences of discrimination may be perceived as beyond the scope of knowledge of advantaged group members, therefore reducing their effectiveness. In contrast, allies may be more effective when they call out ingroup privileges. This might be because assertions about ingroup privilege can be construed as ingroup criticism; prior research has shown that criticisms of a group receive less reactance from ingroup members if the person critiquing is an ingroup member compared to an outgroup member (Hornsey et al., 2002).

Allies may also consciously or unconsciously focus on ingroup privilege in ways that affirm valued dimensions of ingroup identity, rather than threaten ingroup morality. For example, in interviews with White allies, Greenwood (2015) found that allies emphasized feelings of gratitude over the resources that they had access to, rather than focusing on guilt that might arise from ingroup privilege; strategically using positive emotions helped allies appeal to other White people within their community to motivate their support for race reparations. Talking about ingroup privilege may also be more appropriate than outgroup disadvantage because it can be framed positively in terms of lifting up others who do not have those privileges. In comparison, talking about outgroup discrimination may be less acceptable because of its negative framing, which tends to carry an accusation against the advantaged group for their discriminatory actions.

Hypothesis 14: Allies will be more effective when confronting inequality if they frame inequality in terms of ingroup privilege compared to outgroup disadvantage because allies have the knowledge and legitimacy to do so, and it is not as threatening to the advantaged group's moral image.

## 5.3 | Building intragroup solidarity before intergroup solidarity

Finally, it is important to note that disadvantaged group members may not always seek to build solidarity with advantaged group allies. Disadvantaged group members may first emphasize *intragroup* solidarity, that is, creating cohesion, shared norms, and increasing ingroup identification among ingroup members. Prior work has shown that when people's sense of personal control is threatened, as is the case when ingroup members are targets of discrimination, people have a desire to affiliate with agentic groups that can effectively restore their sense of control (Stollberg, Fritzsche, & Backer, 2015; see also Fritzsche et al., 2013). Thus, disadvantaged group members may seek to build intragroup solidarity by building consensus within the group (Stott & Drury, 2004) and empowering the ingroup to advocate for social change together (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). In fact, the more disadvantaged group members report having contact with ingroup members, the more they express intentions to engage in collective action to challenge the status quo (Sengupta, Milojev, Barlow, & Sibley, 2015).

During the process of building intragroup solidarity, disadvantaged group members may be hesitant about affiliating with advantaged group allies. Prior research has found that when disadvantaged group members' sense of power was threatened, they tended to stereotype the advantaged group as lacking interpersonal warmth and instead stereotyped their ingroup as possessing more achievement-related attributes, which can facilitate opposition to inequality through collective action (Reynolds, Oakes, Haslam, Nolan, & Dolnik, 2000). Similarly, Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins (2006) found that British Muslims' concerns about combating Islamophobia impacted whether and how they approached contact with non-Muslims to further their goals of social change. Indeed, prominent activist writings by disadvantaged individuals often focus on the importance of building a strong, independent community within the ingroup. One of the core principles of the Black Power movement in the United States centered on promoting self-determination for Black people (e.g., Hamilton & Ture, 2011). Feminist scholars have likewise argued that building political solidarity among women is crucial for the success of feminist movements (e.g., hooks, 1986). Given that creating intragroup solidarity among disadvantaged group members can serve to empower them, intragroup solidarity may be the first step towards fostering successful intergroup solidarity in the future.

Hypothesis 15: When faced with injustice that threatens a disadvantaged group's identity, disadvantaged

group members may be first and foremost interested in fostering *intragroup* solidarity so as to empower the ingroup and create a cohesive group identity, before seeking *intergroup* solidarity with advantaged group members.

## 6 | CAVEATS AND REMAINING QUESTIONS

An important caveat to our theoretical framework is that although identity-based needs around moral acceptance and empowerment are likely to influence the role that allies play in many inequality-oriented situations, we by no means suggest that this will *always* be the case. Undoubtedly, there are other important motivations that shape how advantaged group members' approach solidarity and social change. For example, allies' motivation for activism has been linked to having fundamental principles of justice and human rights (Russell, 2011) as well as a sense of moral conviction (van Zomeren et al., 2011). These motives may shape the nature of intergroup solidarity when disadvantaged group members also subscribe to these values and moral principles—therefore allowing a common identity to emerge around shared values. Our framework also focuses on allyship in the context of structural inequality rather than direct violence. Situations involving existential threats such as genocide and mass violence may motivate the inclusion of advantaged group allies early in the movement as a strategic choice to increase a movement's efficacy. If a disadvantaged group is a numerical minority facing state violence (e.g., refugees escaping civil war), gaining the advantaged group's help may be the only way to increase the size and power of a movement, thereby contributing to the movement's ability to push for social change (see Kende, Lantos, Belinszky, Csaba, & Lukács, 2017). In such contexts, identity-based needs would likely play a secondary role to more immediate survival or pragmatic goals.

We also acknowledge that while identity-based needs may present a useful lens to understand the social psychological impact of allies, divergent needs are not the sole reason for differing perspectives among advantaged and disadvantaged group members within a movement. For example, as other scholars have suggested, circumstances in which advantaged groups fail to recognize their privilege can trigger the breakdown of intergroup solidarity with disadvantaged group members (Droogendyk, Wright, et al., 2016). Further, although we focus on the needs of advantaged and disadvantaged groups to help explain the impact of allies, we by no means imply that the needs of advantaged allies must be catered for if social change is to be achieved. What we do suggest is that understanding how allies' identity-based needs come into play during solidarity efforts is important to ensure that their involvement helps advance, rather than hinder, social change. We argue that research on the impact of allies should critically consider both the positive and negative ramifications of their involvement, as well as conditions under which ally involvement may be undesirable and even unwelcome by the disadvantaged group (see Droogendyk, Louis, et al., 2016). For example,

to what extent does the social influence that allies have end up hindering disadvantaged groups' voice, agency, and representation of the issues they face? Such questions must be critically examined, and one way to do so is through the lens of identity-based needs.

Our framework raises further questions about the involvement of advantaged group allies in social change efforts and how solidarity-based movements compare to more homogeneous or separatist movements. For example, does including allies within a movement increase the acceptance and legitimacy of the movement in the public eye, or does this diversity dilute the movement's message and goals by making the movement more palatable to the advantaged group in society? Do solidarity-based movements appear more or less threatening to the general public and to adversaries compared to separatist movements? Arguably, there needs to be a balance between the extent to which allies empower disadvantaged groups, while simultaneously ensuring that the voices of allies do not become louder than the voices of disadvantaged group members during intergroup solidarity for social change. Our analysis therefore represents a shift away from examining *why* one becomes an ally, and towards examining *how* one can be a good ally. Future work should more closely investigate the kind of allyship behaviors that are desired by the disadvantaged group.

Finally, we note that the term and definition of "ally" is often debated within activist circles (Carlson, Leek, Casey, Tolman, & Allen, 2019). A component of the definition of allyship is the distinction between identity and behavior. Although advantaged group allies are typically defined as those who engage in actions with the goal of improving the status of the disadvantaged group (see Brown & Ostrove, 2013; Droogendyk, Wright, et al., 2016; Ostrove & Brown, 2018), those who call themselves allies may use this self-definition without necessarily committing to taking action. As a result, activists have pushed for a different set of terminology such as "co-conspirators" or "accomplices" instead of "allies" to emphasize the need for a united front based on action (Hackman, 2015; Indigenous Action, 2014). Recently, scholars have also sought to distinguish between allyship versus solidarity whereby allyship benefits the disadvantaged group primarily in ways that are also compatible with advantaged group goals, but solidarity is based on establishing a common superordinate identity with the disadvantaged group (Craig et al., 2020; Louis et al., 2019). Further complicating the link between ally identity (as a label) and behavior (as the action), it is possible that advantaged group members who engage in social change behaviours may not label themselves as 'allies' simply as a strategy to normalize their behaviour in the broader community which may make ally behaviors more likely to be adopted by others, rather than remain a niche behaviour among a few people. Moving forward, the contested nature of being and defining an ally deserves further scholarly attention as we unpack the consequences of allies.

## 7 | CONCLUDING REMARKS

Allies are often hailed as an important part of social change efforts, yet the impact of allies often goes unquestioned within mainstream



social psychological theorizing on social change. The predominant focus in the literature thus far has been on when and why advantaged group members participate in social change efforts, implicitly assuming that advantaged group members' involvement makes a positive contribution to social change. We argue that until we understand the motivation and needs of allies alongside the motivation and needs of disadvantaged groups, as well as how disadvantaged groups perceive advantaged group allies, our efforts at promoting positive social change by encouraging allyship is incomplete. Thus, our proposed theoretical framework jointly considers how divergent needs of morality/acceptance among advantaged group members and of empowerment/respect among disadvantaged group members come together to shape psychological dynamics within social movements and the impact on the broader public observing the movement. We integrate a range of existing literatures (e.g., prejudice reduction, confrontations of discrimination, intergroup helping, intergroup contact, collective action) within an identity-based needs framework to highlight gaps in knowledge and propose testable hypotheses to be examined in future research. By critically considering the impact of allies, our framework illuminates both the pitfalls and potential rewards of having advantaged group allies involved in promoting social change.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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