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How intergroup contact and communication about group differences predict collective action intentions among advantaged groups

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ABSTRACT

Though greater intergroup contact has been shown to predict greater support for social change among advantaged group members, little is known about what occurs during the contact that may encourage members of advantaged groups to become willing to engage in collective action in solidarity with the disadvantaged. We argue that intergroup contact with disadvantaged group members may motivate advantaged group members' willingness to engage in collective action through the mediating pathway of *communication about group differences in power* during contact. Two studies tested this proposition by examining how advantaged group members communicate about group differences with disadvantaged groups during contact in two distinct national contexts: White Americans in contact with Black Americans in the U.S. (Study 1) and Turks in contact with Kurds in Turkey (Study 2). In addition, Study 2 extended the research by specifying that it is communication about group differences in *power*—not communication about group differences in *culture*—that mediates the relation between advantaged group members' contact with the disadvantaged and their willingness to engage in collective action in solidarity with the disadvantaged. We discuss the implications of these findings for future research on intergroup contact, along with highlighting the importance of communicating about power differences across group lines.

Introduction

> "Knowledge of other groups derived through free communication is as a rule correlated with lessened hostility and prejudice." (Allport, 1954, p. 226)

Typically, members of historically advantaged groups tend to deny the existence of intergroup inequality and are motivated to preserve their own privileged positions in society (Knowles et al., 2014; Sidanius, Sheehy-Skeffington, Kteily, & Carvacho, 2017). As such, many scholars have proposed that when members of historically advantaged groups have contact with members of historically disadvantaged groups, they may report more positive attitudes toward the disadvantaged while remaining unmotivated to change structural relations between the groups (e.g., Dixon et al., 2012; Dixon, Durrheim et al., 2010; Dixon, Tropp et al., 2010; Saguy, Pratto

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et al., 2009; Saguy, Tausch et al., 2009; Wright & Lubensky, 2009).

Nonetheless, emerging research has begun to converge in showing that, for members of advantaged groups, contact with members of disadvantaged groups can promote greater support for social change and greater willingness to participate in collective action to promote social equality (e.g., Hässler et al., 2020; Reimer et al., 2017; Tropp & Barlow, 2018; van Zomeren et al., 2011v). Thus far, most of the research in this area has focused on the emotional transformations that occur when members of advantaged groups have meaningful contact experiences with members of disadvantaged groups (see Tropp & Barlow, 2018, for a recent review). For example, in the context of race relations in the U.S., Selvanathan et al. (2018) showed that positive contact with Black Americans predicted greater support for collective action for racial justice through a sequential process of fostering greater empathy toward Black Americans and greater anger over the unjust treatment they receive. At a more basic level, it has been proposed that contact may encourage advantaged group members to care about the experiences and interests of groups beyond their own (Tropp & Barlow, 2018; Wright et al., 2005), and this emotional transformation fosters advantaged group members' willingness to support and participate in protests for racial justice (Tropp & Uluğ, 2019).

Still, less is known about what actually occurs during the contact that might encourage members of advantaged groups to become willing to engage in collective action in solidarity with the disadvantaged (see Harwood et al., 2013 for a related argument). Further research is needed to understand the nature and content of communication between groups in contact because it is through such communication that meanings are created, valuable information about relations between groups are conveyed, and guidelines for intergroup attitudes and behavior are shaped (Gudykunst & Mody, 2002; Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001).

One line of research relevant to this issue has focused on whether members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups communicate about similarities or differences during contact (Bikmen & Sunar, 2013; Saguy, 2018; Saguy et al., 2008; Saguy, Pratto et al., 2009; Saguy, Tausch et al., 2009). This body of work indicates that members of advantaged groups typically prefer to avoid discussions of group differences—and particularly group differences in *power*—to focus instead on commonalities between groups (Saguy & Kteily, 2014). Yet, other research suggests that communication about group differences in power is precisely what is necessary to raise awareness of social inequality (Bikmen & Sunar, 2013).

At the same time, as we acknowledge that advantaged group members typically prefer to avoid communication about group differences, we also contend that such a preference does not mean cross-group discussions of power never occur. Instead, we propose that the more members of advantaged groups do communicate with members of disadvantaged groups about group differences in power, the more likely they are to recognize their own privilege and the ways in which members of disadvantaged groups are discriminated against (Nordstrom, 2015; Uluğ & Tropp, 2020), and the more willing they should be to take action to promote intergroup equality.

To our knowledge, only one published study has considered this general proposition (Vezzali et al., 2017). Vezzali et al. (2017) asked Italian undergraduate students to complete a survey about their contact experiences with immigrants. In this survey, they were asked two items: "*In general, when you have contact with immigrants, is the interaction mainly focused on 1) the differences between Italians and immigrants?*, and *2) the things that Italians and immigrants have in common?*" (p. 55). The authors calculated the difference between these two items by subtracting scores on the commonalities item from the differences item. Consistent with expectations, they observed that the more Italian students reported contact with immigrants focused on differences, the more willing they were to support collective action to promote intergroup equality. However, one limitation of this study is that the *differences* item did not explicitly assess the degree to which communication about differences focused on group-based inequalities (e.g., power differences), as compared to other differences that might exist between the groups.

The present research

In the present research, therefore, we examine advantaged group members' contact with members of disadvantaged groups, and their communication with the disadvantaged about group differences in power, and how these factors contribute to predicting their willingness to engage in collective action in solidarity with the disadvantaged. In so doing, across two studies conducted in the U.S. (Study 1) and Turkey (Study 2), we seek to replicate and extend the work of Vezzali et al. (2017) by asking advantaged group members directly about the degree to which they communicate about group differences in power during contact with members of disadvantaged groups. By examining these issues among White Americans in relation to Black Americans in the U.S. (Study 1), and among Turks in relation to Kurds in Turkey (Study 2), this research incorporates responses from advantaged groups in two different national contexts, while also including participants from both WEIRD and non-WEIRD societies (see Henrich et al., 2010). In Study 2, we also extend the research further by distinguishing explicitly between communication during contact that centers on group differences in power, as compared to that which centers on group differences in culture. This feature of the study allows us to test directly whether any discussion of group differences may motivate advantaged group members' willingness to engage in collective action in solidarity with the disadvantaged, or whether such motivation is uniquely linked to communication about group differences in power.

Study 1

Study 1 examines how White Americans' contact and communication about group differences in power with Black Americans predict their willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice. Both historically and currently, Black Americans have been regularly subjected to discriminatory treatment during encounters with police (Davenport et al., 2011; Glaser, 2015), in the criminal justice system (Alexander, 2010; Hunt, 2015), and when they seek to exercise their right to vote as U.S. citizens (Solomon et al., 2019; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2018) as compared to what White Americans experience. Black Americans also typically have less

access to high-quality education and health care relative to most White Americans (American Psychological Association, 2012; Williams & Rucker, 2000). Yet, until quite recently, and especially before the 2020 protests in response to the death of George Floyd, relatively few White Americans had taken to the streets to protest for racial justice in the U.S. (see Fisher et al., 2017; Harmon & Tavernise, 2020; Tropp & Uluğ, 2019). Thus, in Study 1, White Americans were surveyed to examine the degree to which greater contact with Black Americans would predict greater willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice, and whether communication with Black Americans about racial group differences in power would mediate the link between contact and willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice.

Method

Participants and procedure

A total of 259 self-identified White American participants were recruited to complete online surveys through Amazon's Mechanical Turk in May 2015. Participants received $1.00 USD as compensation for their participation at the end of the study. One hundred twelve (45 %) participants identified as male, 138 (55 %) identified as female, and nine did not respond. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 83 years ($M = 35.98$, $SD = 11.91$). Seventy-six respondents (30 %) had a *high school* education or less, 43 (17 %) had an *associates degree*, 100 (40 %) had an *undergraduate degree* from a four-year college or university, and 26 (11 %) had an *advanced graduate degree* and 5 (%2) chose *other*.

Measures of key study variables

Intergroup contact

Participants responded to two questions assessing their contact with Black people (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005): "*How many Black people do you know, at least as acquaintances?*" and "*Of the Black people you know, how many would you consider to be friends?*". Responses to the two items ranged from 0 (*none*) to 6 (*6 or more*) and were averaged to create a reliable composite measure prior to data analysis (Spearman-Brown coefficient = .79).

Communication about group differences in power

We used three items to assess communication about group differences in power by adapting some items from Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, and Pratto (2008). Specifically, using the same item stem, White participants were asked: "*When I come into contact with Black people, we talk about…*" (1) *racial injustices in society*, (2) *personal experiences with racial discrimination*, and (3) *the existence of White privilege*. Responses to these items ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*almost always*) and were averaged to create a reliable composite measure prior to data analysis ($\alpha = .90$)

Willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice

Willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice was assessed by adapting items from Kelly and Breinlinger (1995) and Tropp and Brown (2004). Using the same item stem, White participants were asked: "*How willing are you to…*" (1) *sign a petition to support racial justice*, (2) *write letters to public officials or other people of influence to protest against racial injustice*, (3) *attend demonstrations, protests or rallies against racial injustice*, (4) *vote for political candidates who support racial equality*, and (5) *attend meetings or workshops on racial issues*. Responses to these items ranged from 1 (*not at all willing*) to 9 (*extremely willing*) and were averaged to create a reliable composite measure prior to data analysis ($\alpha = .87$).

Results and discussion

Preliminary analyses

Inspection of the means shows that, on average, White participants reported greater numbers of Black acquaintances ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.97$) than numbers of Black friends ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 2.20$), $t(257) = 12.21$, $p < .001$, yet 94.6 % of the sample reported at least some degree of contact with Black people in the U.S. By contrast, mean reports of communication about group differences in power were below the midpoint of the 5-point scale ($M = 1.88$, $SD = .90$), $t(257) = -20.07$, $p < .001$, and only 57.8 % of the White participants reported at least some communication with Black people about racial group differences in power. Together, these trends suggest that White people typically have some degree of contact with Black people, yet are relatively unlikely to communicate with them about

Table 1
Correlations between key variables among White Americans.

Variables	1	2	3
1. Intergroup contact	–		
2. Communication about group differences in power	.21**	–	
3. Willingness to participate in collective action for racial justice	.16**	.47**	–

Note. **p < .01.

group differences in power. At the same time, mean reports of willingness to participate in collective action for racial justice fell above the midpoint of the 9-point scale ($M = 5.36$, $SD = 2.12$), $t(258) = 2.74$, $p < .01$, suggesting that most White people in the sample reported being at least somewhat willing to engage in collective action for racial justice.

Correlations among the variables are presented in Table 1. As expected, greater contact with Black people was positively associated with greater communication about group differences in power with them, as well as with greater willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice. Similarly, greater communication about group differences in power with Black people was positively associated with greater willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice.

Mediation analysis

We then conducted a mediation analysis by using PROCESS Model 4 (see Hayes, 2013) to test whether communication about group differences in power would mediate the association between contact with Black people and willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice.[1] Initial results indicated that greater contact with Black people predicted significantly greater communication about group differences in power, $b = .21$, $SE = .03$, $p < .001$, and greater communication about racial group differences in power predicted significantly greater willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice, $b = .46$, $SE = .13$, $p < .001$ (see Fig. 1). However, contact with Black people was no longer a significant direct predictor of willingness to participate in collective action for racial justice, $b = .07$, $SE = .06$, $p = .244$, once communication about group differences in power was included in the model, consistent with full mediation. The indirect effect of contact with Black people on willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice was tested using a bootstrap estimation approach with 10,000 samples; results indicated that the indirect effect of contact was significant when predicting willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice, $b = .10$, $SE = .03$, 95 % CI [.04, .15].

Study 1 offers initial support for our hypothesis that greater contact with Black people would predict Whites' greater willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice through the pathway of greater communication about group differences in power. However, a limitation of Study 1 is that it only assessed communication in terms of differences in *power* between the groups. We recognize that, importantly, racial and ethnic groups may differ from each other not only in terms of power, but also in terms of cultural traditions, practices, and customs (see, e.g., Sam & Berry, 2010; Williams & Spencer-Rodgers, 2010). Thus, an additional study is needed to investigate whether communication about *any* differences between groups—such as group differences in *culture*—may show similar effects to what we observed in Study 1, or whether it is specifically communication about group differences in *power* that mediates the link between contact and willingness to engage in collective action among members of advantaged groups.

Related work supports our contention that communication about group differences in power may be uniquely important for predicting advantaged group members' willingness to engage in collective action for social justice. For instance, research has shown that the more advantaged group members discuss societal inequalities with members of disadvantaged groups, the more they become aware of their own privileged positions in society (Nordstrom, 2015). Correspondingly, the more advantaged group members witness and become aware of societal inequalities between groups, as well as disparities in how different groups are treated, the more inclined they are to support collective action to promote intergroup equality (Tropp & Uluğ, 2019; Uluğ & Tropp, 2020). In Study 2, therefore, we sought to test directly how communication about group differences in *power*—as compared to communication about group differences in *culture*—would mediate the link between intergroup contact and willingness to engage in collective action in solidarity with the disadvantaged, among members of advantaged groups.

Study 2

Study 2 was conducted in Turkey, which allowed us to test for replication and extend the findings from Study 1 in a different societal context, while also providing us with the opportunity to examine links between intergroup contact, communication about group differences, and willingness to engage in collective action among advantaged group members (Turks) who differ in language and cultural practices from members of a populous disadvantaged ethnic minority group in Turkey (Kurds).

Relations between Turks and Kurds remain tense in Turkey due to a long history of human rights violations against Kurds (e.g., Minority Rights Group International, 2018; Uluğ & Cohrs, 2019), and ongoing discrimination against Kurds in employment and schools, as well as by government authorities (Department of Justice, 2018). Moreover, a nationally representative survey indicated that 23.4 % of the Kurds reported they could not express their ethnic identity freely, whereas only 3.2 % of Turks reported the same (KONDA, 2011). Moreover, recent poll data suggest that tensions between Turks and Kurds, and efforts to resolve conflict and foster greater social cohesion between these groups, remain one of the most salient and pressing problems challenging Turkish society as a whole (SETA, 2009).

Method

Participants and procedure

A total of 267 self-identified Turkish participants were recruited to complete online surveys voluntarily between December 2018

[1] As it is recommended to have at least three indicators for latent variables (Bollen, 1989; Kline, 2005), and our intergroup contact measure included only two indicators, these analyses were conducted using observed variables rather than latent variables.

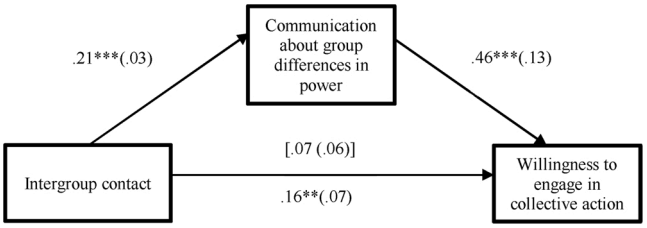

Fig. 1. Mediational analysis illustrating the direct and indirect effects of intergroup contact on communication about group differences in power and willingness to engage in collective action for racial justice (Study 1). The figure displays standardized regression coefficients (and standard errors). The numbers in brackets represent the standardized regression coefficient (and standard error) for the relation between intergroup contact and willingness to engage in collective action after adjusting for communication about group differences in power. $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$.

and January 2019. By distributing the link to the survey on Facebook and Twitter, we used both snowball sampling (i.e., asking people in our social networks to share the survey link with people in their social networks) and convenience sampling on social media. One hundred six participants (40 %) identified as male, 154 (58 %) identified as female, four (2%) identified as other, and three (1%) did not respond. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 72 years ($M = 30.47$, $SD = 10.53$). Thirty-eight (14 %) had a *high school* education or less, 146 (55 %) an *undergraduate degree*, 80 (30 %) had an *advanced graduate degree,* and three (1%) did not respond.

Measures of key study variables

Intergroup contact

Using the same two contact items as those used in Study 1, we adapted the items to fit the context of Turkish-Kurdish relations (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005): "*How many Kurdish people do you know, at least as acquaintances?*" ($M = 4.74$; $SD = .74$) and "*Of the Kurdish people you know, how many would you consider to be friends?*" ($M = 4.34$; $SD = 1.19$). Responses to the two items ranged from 0 (*none*) to 4 (*4 or more*) and were averaged to create a reliable composite measure prior to data analysis (Spearman-Brown coefficient = .71).

Communication about group differences in power

The same three items used in Study 1 were adapted to assess communication about group differences in power between Turks and Kurds. Specifically, Turkish participants were asked: "*When I come into contact with Kurds, we talk about…*" (1) *the injustice experienced by Kurds*, (2) *the discrimination faced by Kurds in their daily lives,* and (3) *how privileged Turks are in Turkey*. Responses to these items ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*almost always*) and were averaged to create a reliable composite measure prior to data analysis ($\alpha = .83$).

Communication about group differences in culture

In addition, we created two items to assess communication about ethnic group differences in culture between Turks and Kurds in a manner similar to how we assessed power differences: "*When I come into contact with Kurds, we talk about how Kurds and Turks have…*" (1) *different lifestyles* and (2) *different customs and cultural traditions*. Responses to these items ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*almost always*) and were averaged to create a reliable composite measure prior to data analysis (Spearman-Brown coefficient = .79).

Collective action for ethnic justice

We used four items to measure Turks' willingness to engage in collective action in solidarity with ethnic Kurds, which have been used effectively in the Turkish context in prior research (see Acar et al., 2020). Specifically, Turkish participants were asked to respond to statements indicating that they were willing to (1) sign a petition to protest the things done to Kurds, (2) boycott a store or company to protest the things done to Kurds, (3) take action through an NGO or Kurdish organization to fights against injustices towards Kurds, and (4) attend a peaceful demonstration to protest the things done to Kurds. Responses to these items ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and were averaged to create a reliable composite measure prior to data analysis ($\alpha = .92$).

Results and discussion

Preliminary analyses

Paralleling findings from Study 1[2], inspection of the means shows that, on average, Turkish participants reported greater numbers of Kurdish acquaintances ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .74$) than numbers of Kurdish friends ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.19$), $t(265) = 6.60$, $p < .001$, yet 99.2 % of the sample reported at least some degree of contact with Kurdish people in Turkey. At the same time, while most Turkish participants reported at least some communication with Kurds about group differences in power (79.4 %) and group differences in culture (83.5 %), mean reports of communication about group differences in power ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.06$) and group differences in

[2] Anonymized data from both studies have been deposited at the following link: https://osf.io/9zxk2/?view_only=7d556e4662d441a489f3fc394161cfef.

culture ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 1.05$) were below the midpoint of the 5-point scale, $t(266) = -6.30$ and -8.35, respectively, $p < .001$. Overall, these trends suggest that Turks typically have some degree of contact with Kurdish people, yet they are relatively unlikely to communicate with them about group differences. In addition, Turks' mean reports of willingness to participate in collective action for ethnic justice did not significantly differ from the midpoint of the 5-point scale ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.38$), $t(266) = 2.74$, $p = .16$, suggesting that most Turkish people in the sample were not strongly inclined to engage in collective action for ethnic justice.

Correlations between the variables are presented in Table 2. Greater contact with Kurds was positively associated with greater communication about group differences in power and showed a non-significant trend to be associated with greater communication about group differences in culture. Greater contact with Kurds was also positively associated with greater willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice. As in Study 1, greater communication about group differences in power was associated with greater willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice, yet communication about group differences in culture was not significantly associated with willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice.

Mediation analysis

As in Study 1, we conducted a mediation analysis by using PROCESS Model 4 (see Hayes, 2013) using observed variables. We tested whether communication about group differences in power mediated the link between Turks' contact with Kurds and their willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice. Because initial correlations revealed that communication about group differences in culture was not significantly associated with willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice, we only tested communication about group differences in power as a potential mediator of this link.

Initial results indicated that greater contact with Kurds was a significant predictor of communication about group differences in power, $b = .33$, $SE = .07$, $p < .001$, and communication about group differences in power was a significant predictor of willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice, $b = .48$, $SE = .07$, $p < .001$ (see Fig. 2). Contact with Kurds remained a significant—albeit somewhat weaker—direct predictor of willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice once communication about group differences in power was included in the model, $b = .14$, $SE = .09$, $p = .008$, consistent with partial mediation. The indirect effect of contact with Kurds on willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice was tested using a bootstrap estimation approach with 10,000 samples; results indicated that the indirect effect of contact with Kurds was significant when predicting willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice, $b = .16$, $SE = .03$, 95 % CI [.10, .22].

Like Study 1, Study 2 showed that greater intergroup contact with Kurds predicts greater willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice through the pathway of greater communication about group differences in power. In addition to replicating the findings of Study 1, findings from Study 2 also suggest that it is not sufficient for groups to engage in communication about any group differences to observe such effects; rather, it appears to be only communication about group differences in power that may motivate members of advantaged groups to take action against ethnic injustice.

General discussion

Overall, results from these studies lend support for our hypothesis that greater contact with members of disadvantaged groups would correspond with advantaged group members' greater willingness to engage in collective action in solidarity with the disadvantaged, through the pathway of communication about group differences in power. Comparable patterns of effects were observed across the two studies, which were conducted in different national contexts with distinct forms of societal conflict and varying levels of communication about group differences between advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Moreover, extending the research from Study 1 and expanding upon earlier findings by Vezzali et al. (2017), Study 2 demonstrated that it is specifically communication about group differences in power—and not communication about group differences in culture—that appears to mediate the relation between advantaged group members' contact with disadvantaged groups and their willingness to engage in collective action to promote the interests of the disadvantaged. Here, it is worth noting that we did not use the exact same items that Vezzali et al. (2017) used in their research. While Vezzali et al. (2017) used the terms "contact" and "interaction" to frame their work, we have sought to distinguish between "contact" and "communication" with members of an outgroup, as communication refers more specifically to ways in which information about relations between groups are conveyed, and guidelines for intergroup behavior are shaped (see Gudykunst & Mody, 2002; Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001). Results from our studies illuminate how communication about group differences in power, and not merely interaction between groups, can help advantaged group members to recognize intergroup inequalities and become more willing to take action to address them.

As such, this research usefully adds to other recent work investigating the interface between intergroup contact and support for social change among advantaged and disadvantaged groups (e.g., Dixon et al., 2012; Hässler et al., 2020). A growing body of research suggests that the more advantaged group members have contact with members of disadvantaged groups, the more inclined they are to support efforts to promote social change toward greater intergroup equality (e.g., Dixon, Durrheim et al., 2010; Dixon, Tropp et al., 2010; Hässler et al., 2020; Tropp & Barlow, 2018). Yet, little prior work has specified processes that explain why such effects emerge. Complementing other recent work on communication about inequality across group lines (e.g., Bikmen & Sunar, 2013; Nordstrom, 2015), the present research helps to fill this gap by clarifying how communication about group differences in power links advantaged group members' contact experiences with disadvantaged groups to their willingness to take action to promote greater intergroup equality.

In so doing, the present research may also offer further insight regarding ways in which intergroup contact can mobilize support for social change among advantaged group members while minimizing the potential for contact to de-mobilize members of disadvantaged

Table 2
Correlations between key variables among Turks.

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Intergroup contact	–			
2. Communication about power differences	.33***	–		
3. Communication about cultural differences	.11^{+}	.36***	–	
4. Willingness to participate in collective action for ethnic justice	.30***	.53***	−.04	–

Note. $^{+}p = .07$, ***$p < .001$.

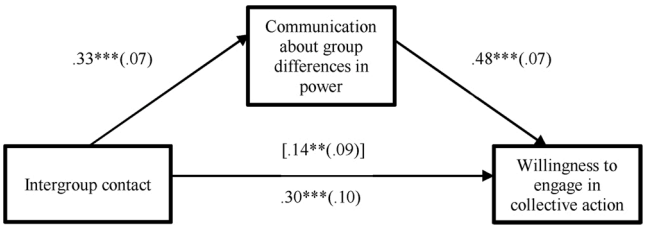

Fig. 2. Mediational analysis illustrating the direct and indirect effects of intergroup contact on communication about group differences in power and willingness to engage in collective action for ethnic justice (Study 2). The figure displays standardized regression coefficients (and standard errors). The numbers in brackets represent the standardized regression coefficient (and standard error) for the relation between intergroup contact and willingness to engage in collective action after adjusting for communication about group differences in power. **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

groups (*cf.* Dixon et al., 2012; Hässler et al., 2020; Wright & Lubensky, 2009). One limitation of this research is that it does not include responses from the disadvantaged group members who are engaged in communication about group differences in power with the advantaged. Nonetheless, other recent work suggests that when disadvantaged group members have reason to believe that advantaged group members support intergroup equality, their contact with the advantaged does not typically undermine their own support for social change (e.g., Becker et al., 2013; Techakesari et al., 2017). That said, our current understanding of what "supportive contact" actually looks like in natural intergroup encounters, or how actual communication about group differences in power takes place, remains quite limited (see Harwood et al., 2013). Indeed, thus far, most studies in this area have manipulated perceptions of advantaged group beliefs by asking members of disadvantaged groups to think about advantaged group members they know, or by scripting and manipulating utterances from an advantaged group member in experimental settings (e.g., Becker et al., 2013; Droogendyk et al., 2016; Techakesari et al., 2017). More research is therefore needed to examine how members of advantaged groups communicate about group differences in power, and how members of disadvantaged groups both respond to what the advantaged say and how they communicate about group differences in power themselves, to understand more fully how contact between advantaged and disadvantaged groups may shape their willingness to take action to promote intergroup equality.

Relatedly, findings from both studies indicate clearly that, while members of advantaged groups report regularly coming into contact with members of disadvantaged groups, it is much less common for them to report that they communicated about group differences in power during the contact. This may well be because members of advantaged groups typically prefer to avoid discussions of group differences, and particularly those that involve group differences in power (Saguy & Kteily, 2014; Saguy, Pratto et al., 2009; Saguy, Tausch et al., 2009). In light of the ways in which acknowledging power differences between groups can make members of advantaged groups feel defensive and uncomfortable (see, e.g., DiAngelo, 2018; Pettit, 2006; Phillips & Lowery, 2018), further work is likely needed to test strategies that can prepare advantaged group members to stay engaged in these challenging conversations, in order to work in solidarity with the disadvantaged to promote greater intergroup equality.

Limitations of the current contribution include that it relied on cross-sectional, non-representative self-report data and used correlations among observed variables to test for mediation. Several scholars have noted that using cross-sectional data for mediation analysis can lead to biased estimates, even under ideal conditions (Maxwell & Cole, 2007; Spector, 2019). Though it is common practice in psychological research (Cole & Preacher, 2014; Fiedler et al., 2011), this analytic strategy does not directly test whether a specified variable is indeed a mediator of the relevant effect. Future studies should therefore test for mediation more directly using longitudinal or experimental research designs, ideally with more representative samples.

Additionally, it is worth noting that, in these studies, we did not focus on how group members may communicate about similarities between groups during contact (see Bikmen & Durkin, 2014). Considering both similarities and differences between groups may help to elucidate further why only communication about group differences in power is uniquely associated with advantaged group members' willingness to engage in collective action. Discussions of cross-group similiarities often revolve around shared interests and common identities, which may obscure recognition of power inequalities and disparities between groups (Bikmen & Durkin, 2014; Saguy, Pratto et al., 2009; Saguy, Tausch et al., 2009).

It is also worth noting that data for these studies were collected between 2015 and 2019, prior to the killing of George Floyd in May 2020. One might ask whether the White Americans surveyed in Study 1 may be more willing to protest for racial justice now, as compared to the willingness they reported before Floyd's unfortunate death. As more White Americans bear witness to brutal incidents of racial discrimination targeting Black people, it is possible that they will become increasingly motivated to engage in collective action

for racial justice (see, e.g., Uluğ & Tropp, 2020). Relatedly, greater public awareness of discriminatory acts targeting Kurds in Turkey could motivate Turks' willingness to condemn ethnically-motivated violence and support action for ethnic justice (see, e.g., McKernan, 2020). Future research in this area would benefit from longitudinal research designs that can monitor shifts over time in advantaged group members' perceptions of intergroup inequalities and their willingness to protest in response to particular discriminatory incidents and cornerstone events that may arise.

In sum, our research investigates how contact with disadvantaged groups may motivate advantaged group members' willingness to engage in collective action to promote intergroup equality, through the mediating pathway of communication about group differences in power. Studies conducted among White Americans in the U.S. (in relation to Black Americans) and among Turks in Turkey (in relation to Kurds) both indicate that the association between contact with disadvantaged groups and willingness to engage in collective action for intergroup equality is largely mediated by the degree to which members of these advantaged groups communicate about group differences in power with the disadvantaged. Though these studies were collected before 2020, we believe that findings from our studies are highly relevant to—and have practical implications for—intergroup dynamics we observe in the world today. As the Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated intergroup divisions and exposed longstanding disparities between racial and ethnic groups across the globe (see, e.g., Kowalski & Erdemir, 2020; Oppel et al., 2020), our studies show that how members of advantaged groups engage with members of disadvantaged groups and communicate about intergroup differences bears importance for their willingness to actively challenge existing social inequalities. Still, further work is needed to understand the nature and contours of communication about group differences in power between members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups, and to test strategies that may enhance the willingness and preparedness of advantaged group members to engage in, rather than avoid, discussions of group differences in power with members of disadvantaged groups.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors report no declarations of interest.

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