

Attitudes Toward Black and Blue Lives Matter

Alexandria B. Thomas and Joy R. Drinnon

Milligan University

Abstract

The Black Lives Matter movement, created in 2013 after the death of Trayvon Martin in order to bring awareness to police brutality and racial injustice, and the Blue Lives Matter movement, a countermovement created in 2014 with a mission to support police and their families, have been heavily politicized in the eyes of the public with little to no literature exploring the attitudes associated with either movement. We replicated a study conducted by Holt and Sweitzer (2018) but extended our measures to include the Blue Lives Matter movement. We also conducted an experiment to test reactions to bumper stickers supporting either of the two movements or the sentiment behind each movement. Our results included data from 568 participants across the United States and were consistent with previous findings. We found that Blacks and non-Whites, Democrats, and women tend to favor the Black Lives Matter movement, and those 55 and older, Republicans, and men tend to favor the Blue Lives Matter movement. Social Dominance Orientation was found to be positively correlated with support for Blue Lives Matter and negatively related to Black Lives Matter. Not surprisingly, reactions to the bumper stickers showed that people reacted more negatively toward drivers displaying the motto for either movement as compared to drivers supporting the messages of each (e.g., racial equality). However, strong support for one movement was not found to be a predictor of weak support for the opposing movement. We concluded that weak support for the Black Lives Matter movement is not so much fueled by opposition to racial justice, but instead by the belief that marginalized groups should remain lower amongst the social hierarchy, and support for these movements may not be as polarized as we think.

Keywords: bumper sticker, competitive victimhood, group identity, prejudice

Attitudes Towards Black and Blue Lives Matter

Introduction

Racial injustice has persisted throughout United States history as an epidemic rooted in institutionalized practices and societal barriers created to promote the inequity of marginalized groups. The Black and Blue Lives Matter movements have been prominent throughout the last decade following examples of police brutality towards African Americans and have flooded social media and headlines as a result. The political climate of our nation has resulted in drastic polarization and the assumption that social movements have become heavily politicized may not fully explain support for the Black and Blue Lives Matter movements. In this study, we aim to explore the attitudes towards these movements in hopes of revealing more insight into the predictors and motivations associated with support for both movements.

Black Lives Matter Background

In February of 2012, Trayvon Martin, a seventeen-year-old young man, was headed back to his father's fiancé's house in Sanford, Florida from a convenience store where he had purchased an Arizona iced tea and bag of skittles. Neighborhood watch, George Zimmerman, spotted Trayvon in his black hoodie, called the non-emergency police line to report his suspicions, and ignored dispatcher's advice to not follow the young man. Soon thereafter, Zimmerman shot Martin with no witnesses in sight. On police's arrival to the scene, Zimmerman was not arrested following his claim that he only acted in self-defense ("Florida Teen...", 2013). The shooting and killing of Martin that night by Zimmerman, served as the catalyst for the international human rights campaign: The Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM). However, the verdict of not guilty of second-degree murder and acquittal of manslaughter, following the trial, sprung Alicia Garza into action. Garza explained in an interview, "It was a verdict that said:

Black people are not safe in America" (Day, 2015). Garza, who has a younger brother of similar build and height to that of Martin, ended her Facebook message with "Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter." Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement alongside Garza and a community organizer working in public reform at the time, reposted Garza's words with the hashtag "#BlackLivesMatter" (Day, 2015). Opal Tometi, former Executive Director of the United States' first national immigrant rights organization, is recognized as the third co-founder of the organization (Turan, 2020).

Following 2013, the hashtag and organization began to grow in popularity. It was estimated that by May of 2018, the hashtag had already been used over thirty million times on Twitter (Turan, 2020). After Eric Garner was killed by New York City police officers who put him in a choke hold while being arrested, Patrisse Cullors organized the "Black Life Matter Ride," that took place in Ferguson, Missouri drawing over 500 people in attendance (Turan, 2020). Protests continued to take place that year in New York City, Los Angeles, and Minnesota where two to three thousand protestors were confronted in the Mall of America by police equipped with riot gear and bomb-sniffing dogs. In 2015, the organization expanded their focus to injustice surrounding Black and transgendered women after 13 of the record number 21 transgender people killed that year were Black (Turan, 2020). In 2016, big name athletes such as LeBron James and Carmela Anthony began to use their platforms to raise awareness for the injustice and brutality taking place within the country. In August of that year, Colin Kaepernick, San Francisco 49ers quarterback, was first seen kneeling during the playing of the national anthem prior to a National Football League (NFL) game (Boren, 2020; Olusoga & Olusoga, 2020). He has not played professionally since the last game of that season, and it is suspected that he was being blackballed by NFL owners as a result of his demonstrations.

President Donald J. Trump made a statement in regard to those choosing to kneel during the anthem at one of his rallies in Huntsville, Alabama by saying, “Wouldn’t you love to see one of these NFL owners, when someone disrespects our flag to say, ‘get that son of a b---- off the field right now’” (49ers, 2017). Kaepernick and many others who have chosen to use kneeling as a form of demonstration have emphasized that it is not intended to be a form of disrespect (Boren, 2020; Olusoga & Olusoga, 2020). Since then, other professional athletes, such as Meghan Rapinoe, other members of the United States women’s soccer national team, Bruce Maxwell, and Race Imboden have knelt on national and worldwide platforms (Mather, 2020).

In 2020, several more high-profile cases of unjustified homicide were reported and sparked renewed interest in BLM. There was the death of Ahmaud Arbery in February who was pursued by three White residents and shot while jogging, Breonna Taylor in March who was sleeping in her bed when officers shot her in the course of carrying out a no-knock search warrant, and George Floyd whose death was captured on video displaying officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on Floyd’s neck as he pleaded repeatedly “I can’t breathe” (Toran, 2020). Following Floyd’s death, officer Chauvin was charged with second-degree murder and the other three officers at the scene were charged with aiding and abetting second-degree murder (Condon et al., 2020). In response, protests exploded in frequency, size, and international scope with more than 450 major protests being organized around the world during the summer of 2020, and more specifically, approximately 15 to 26 million demonstration participants in the months of June and July alone (Buchanan et al., 2020).

In a comparative analysis of the Civil Rights movement and Black Lives Matter movement, Black Lives Matter is noted as both mimicking and differentiating from the framework of the Civil Rights movement (Clayton, 2018). The Civil Rights movement

emphasized equality of all people in relation to White people, and although both movements are motivated by injustice towards African Americans, the Black Lives Matter movement has narrowed their focus to police brutality and systemic racism present in the justice system. Through its progression, the scope of the Black Lives Matter movement has broadened to advocate for more marginalized groups such as members of the LGBTQ+ community and other minorities. Through his analysis, Clayton (2018) explains the mindset of the movement by emphasizing that the slogan, “Black Lives Matter,” does not refute the notion that all lives matter. Instead, the slogan aims to raise awareness of the unique struggles African Americans face presently in the United States. On the Black Lives Matter website (Black Lives Matter, n.d.), they state, “We are working for a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise.” In addition, Clayton (2018) notes the organization has never belittled the importance of law enforcement or suggested their role in society should be eliminated, but instead have drawn attention to poor policing practices that result in the deaths of African Americans through the tendency to shoot first and ask questions later.

Blue Lives Matter Background

Blue Lives Matter, a countermovement that emerged in 2014, uses the same narrative as the Black Lives Matter movement, but reversed to support law enforcement. The New York City chapter states their mission is to raise awareness and enlist the public’s aid for the needs of police officers, to help police officers and assist each other, and to provide a police officer’s family with comfort and support as they go through hard times (Blue Lives Matter NYC, 2020). The national organization was founded by Joseph Imperatrice, Christopher Brinkley, and Carlos Delgado after the fatality of New York City Police Department Officers Rafael Ramon and Wenjuan Liu in Brooklyn in 2014 (O’Leary, 2020). Retired Las Vegas Metropolitan Police

Department Lieutenant, Randy Sutton, serves as the organization's spokesperson and through his dynamic presentation, "Policing with Honor," Lieutenant Sutton discusses how to survive the career both ethically and physically ("Bio", 2017). In 2016, Louisiana became the first state to expand the state's hate crime status to add targeting first responders, and Lieutenant Sutton emphasized the necessity for such a bill by classifying police officers as a "minority group needing extra support" (Conlon, 2016). Prior to that, rallies were already being organized in efforts to show support for law enforcement. During September of 2015, a rally took place in Hollywood after the shooting of a Houston police officer a month prior (Sahagun, 2015). Following this, supporters marched in Philadelphia in April of 2018, rallied in New York in the summer of 2020, and continue to show support through public demonstrations sporadically across the nation (Corcione, 2018 & Kim & Wilson, 2020).

The "Ferguson Effect" (the residual consequences following the events that took place in Ferguson, Missouri during the summer of 2014) is used by the organization to support their claim that media pressure against law enforcement has led to a rise in violent crime as a result of police avoiding certain areas where they perceive themselves as targeted (Maguire, Nix, & Campbell, 2017). A statement by the Blue Lives Matter organization makes claims that law enforcement officials are seen as easy targets for slander and physical attacks (Solomon & Martin, 2019). Public statements from counter movements, including the Blue Lives Matter movement, do not deny the wrongful deaths, nor the role race has played in the use of unjustified force by authorities but considers these cases "anomalies" (Solomon & Martin, 2019). Additionally, the organization calls into question the legitimacy of complaints and lawsuits against them for unjustified actions against minorities.

Similar counter movements and slogans have surfaced in recent years aimed at shifting the attention away from the issue of race. “All Lives Matter” has recently gained support due to its maximized inclusion. However, David Brebrick, J.D., a counselor and the author of “Talking Back to Dr. Phil: Alternatives to Mainstream Psychology, stresses that although this particular slogan and message comes off as appealing by using inclusivity as a masquerade, it eliminates race from the conversation, which goes on to display a willful ignorance to the issue of race present in America. (Brebrick, 2017). He elaborates on his claims by explaining when a White person uses the response “All lives matter,” they are refusing to acknowledge the privilege they possess that those of color are not able to enjoy. These words signify negation, refutation, and debate against Black Lives Matter, and illustrate the concept of competitive victimhood. Although many individuals view their occupation as a part of their core identity, officials are able to choose whether or not they want to be identifiable as officers (Solomon & Martin, 2019, p.24). Although you can choose to be a police officer, you cannot choose to be Black.

Maintaining the Message

Means, Symbols, Flags, Hashtags

A raised fist has become a well-recognized symbol of the Black Lives Matter movement. However, its meaning goes well beyond combating police brutality towards marginalized groups. Its origins date back to the early 1900s from which it has been a symbol of fighting oppression for nearly a century, and one active participant in the movement explained that the raised fist “signifies resiliency and power through every triumph and struggle” (Stout, 2020).

The flag associated with the Blue Lives Matter movement is a black and white American flag with a blue line replacing the fourth horizontal white line. This blue line represents cops “line of duty” and the “thin blue line,” is meant to symbolize society’s barrier from erupting into

chaos (O'Leary, 2020). Many Blue Lives Matter demonstrators have been photographed wearing "Make America Great" attire in addition to the movement's own branding, showing their affiliation with President Donald J. Trump and the Republican party. It is also no secret that the slogan "Blue Lives Matter" shares major similarities to the "Black Lives Matter" slogan. However, the use of hashtags and social media continues to be a large factor in the Black Lives Matter movement.

Social Media

Social media serves as an asset to relay information to individuals around the world, and social science research concluded that images and exposure can increase a person's support (Leach & Allen, 2017). Social media has been an indispensable tool of the Black Lives Matter movement to spread awareness and the hashtag "#BlackLivesMatter." Images specific to the movement on Twitter were more likely than non-image posts to be retweeted and receive retweets from individuals who had no prior activity on the platform pertaining to the protest (Casas & Williams, 2019). Additionally, people in areas experiencing high rates of police killing Black people, engage in more online activity and express more negative affect in their posts (Leach & Allen, 2017). However, social media poses difficulties when attributing words and images to human life. Although pro-White implicit racial bias did decrease alongside the Black Lives Matter movement and its high point of struggle, findings also suggested that opinions expressed through speech, as opposed to other forms of communication such as text and images, increase the likelihood that audiences will attribute humanlike qualities to the message (Sawyer & Gampa, 2018). Protests, speeches, and public appearances by the organization have transformed a digital movement back to the cities, streets, and neighborhoods that were once home to Trayvon Martin, and are still home to African American individuals across the nation.

Protest and Counter Protests

Many Black Lives Matter protests are joined by Blue Lives Matter counter protesters, and even more Blue Lives Matter protests experience a presence of Black Lives Matter supporters to some degree. They urge a shift in narrative back towards the more prominent racial issues African Americans face as opposed to continued support by Blue Lives Matter activists who deny any systematic injustice among law enforcement. For example, Blue Lives Matter protesters stood on one side of the street and Black Lives Matter protesters stood on the other side in front of the former site of the Christopher Columbus Memorial near the south end of Grant Park in the Summer of 2020 (Barnes, 2020). Both were separated by only a thin line of on-duty police on bicycles who soon became drowned out by the chants and metal clanking produced by either side. Similarly, demonstrations spanning a weekend in Brooklyn following the decision by the New York City Council to cut the NYPD's budget by one billion dollars, were met by Black Lives Matter supporters in local residences to counter protest in opposition peacefully (Bates, 2020). It is estimated that for every ten Blue Lives Matter supporters, one Black Lives Matter supporter was allegedly threatened with violence upon their arrival and enacted with excessive force by officers on the scene.

Relevant Theories

Competitive Victimhood

Competitive victimhood occurs in response to the perception of an identity-based threat, which can then translate into behaviors, including efforts to outbid a rival group for moral legitimacy in the eyes of third-party audiences (Solomon & Martin, 2019). Competitive victimhood is a concept that can emerge solely based on the perception of only one group in the dyad. More specifically, through the lens of the Black and Blue Lives Matter movement, the

Blue Lives Matter movement often supports a narrative resembling the tendencies of competitive victimhood that the Black Lives Matter movement does not recognize because they understand themselves to be the victim. They do not recognize a valid argument for police officers to be considered a victim. In this sense, only the Blue Lives Matter organization is aware of their role in the dyad. However, this does not negate the necessary role the Black Lives Matter organization plays in order for this to be considered competitive victimhood. On the other hand, if both groups are aware of their role in the dyad, the competitive victimhood process has the potential to become cyclical. The role of the victim provides several positive functions for individuals and groups. These positive functions include: (a) increasing in-group cohesiveness, (b) justification or denial of in-group violence, (c) avoidance of negative emotion, and (d) recruitment of material and moral support from third parties. The competitive mind-set and positive functions served by competitive victimhood further amplify the conflict and makes it especially difficult for groups to reconcile (Noor et al., 2012).

The Black Lives Matter movement makes a case for victimization by highlighting examples of physical, material, and psychological harm. Although police are recognized as the main perpetrators amongst Black Lives Matter supporters, they are not explicitly named in the movement's mission statement. Furthermore, the movement sheds light on disparities amongst economic opportunities, housing, education, and health as a result of systematic racism stemming from historic injustices. The Black Lives Matter movement immediately became a threat to police. Police were no longer being widely praised and labeled as heroes, but instead ironically as perpetrators of crimes. As the Black Lives Matter movement grew, it was inevitable that law enforcement would engage in efforts to reshape the narrative by offering examples of victimhood as predicted by competitive victimhood. According to Solomon & Martin (2019),

counter-messages, similar to the examples of “Blue Lives Matter” and “All Lives Matter,” are designed to re-establish feelings of efficacy and morality. Efficacy is the ability to produce an intended or desired result (Leach & Allen, 2017), and strengthening morality is used in attempt to reduce the perceived moral gap between the ingroup and outgroup (Sullivan et al., 2012). The Blue Lives Matter movement’s counter-messages to the Black Lives Matter movement allow them to gain a sense of morality while also improving efficacy. In a study on competitive victimhood throughout university admissions, Whites accused of victimizing Blacks were more likely to claim that Whites are actually the ones discriminated against in the admissions process. These findings demonstrated that people will engage in more competitive victimhood as a response to evidence that their group has committed illegitimate harm (Sullivan et al., 2012).

In-Group and Out-Group

In-groups and out-groups are fundamental to human psychology. An individual’s in-group refers to those they hold membership with and belong to, and an out-group is one in which they do not belong. The social identity theory addresses how an individual’s sense of self is intertwined with their social group memberships (Tajfel, 1979). Literature shows a positive correlation between expressing strong explicit ingroup preferences and experiencing hostile out-group attitudes (Sawyer & Gampa, 2018,). When society oppresses minority groups, those minority groups are more likely to show stronger alliances to the in-group they recognize with as a result. A study conducted by Leach et al. (2010) supported this idea by examining the negative social identity implied through social devaluation of members in Jewish societies at three large universities, and the same devaluation of students at the University of Amsterdam in comparison with those of their neighboring university. Their findings suggested that despite the reality of such group devaluation and a sense of rejection, group identity allows individuals to combat

these threats to esteem by providing resources of assurance. In simpler terms, increased group identification serves as a self-protective coping mechanism, and this phenomenon accounts for why individuals adhere to their group stronger when in the midst of out-group opposition (Leach et al., 2010).

The Black Lives Matter movement has adopted a similar mindset, where Blacks who suffer from police brutality are able to invest in self-protective coping through the in-group identification the movement provides. Although the organization includes support from a wide range of ethnicities including Caucasian, Hispanic, and Asian, the two-thirds of American adults who say they support the movement (38% saying they strongly support it), is mainly made up primarily of African Americans (Parker, Horowitz, & Anderson, 2020). Surveys conducted by The Pew Research Center go on to state that 91% of Democrats and Democratic leaners say they support the movement, compared with 40% of Republicans and Republican leaners, and White Democrats are 55 percentage points more likely to express support than White Republicans (Parker, Horowitz, & Anderson, 2020). Additionally, these same surveys revealed that four-in-ten Republicans say Trump has made things better in terms of race relations, while 80% of Democrats say Trump has made race relations worse. Former White House press secretary under the Trump administration, Kayleigh McEnany, said in August of 2020 following Goodyear's ban of certain political apparel, that the "Make America Great Again" slogan is "pretty much" synonymous with the "Blue Lives Matter" slogan (Bowden, 2020; Barrabi, 2020). More notably, during his presidential campaign, President Trump prominently featured a Blue Lives Matter flag at multiple rallies (Schulte, 2020). Identification of one's in-group membership can be signified by logos placed on property, bumper stickers, flags, banners, slogans displayed on social media,

and through many other means. However, participation in protests, signing of petitions, and more action-based gestures can also be a huge indicator of one's in-group identification.

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

Social dominance orientation (SDO) serves as a form of ingroup preference, and its theory explains how the more likely an individual in the dominant group is to believe the racial class system is justified, the more that person is oriented towards social dominance. (Holt & Sweitzer, 2018). Race is viewed as a “zero-sum game” for a portion of individuals who view a gain by another as a loss for them. Social domination orientation is specifically those attitudes towards hierarchies. The belief that one's ingroup should dominate. This, in return, assumes the belief that society should be structured in terms of inequality. A study conducted by Meleady and Vermue (2019), explored how intergroup contact motivated, or failed to motivate, the advantaged group to partake in the plight of the disadvantaged group (outgroup). They concluded that negative contact was positively associated with prejudice, social distance, and SDO, while negatively associated with collective action (Meleady & Vermue, 2019, p. 310).

Ethnic Identity

Race, usually associated with biology and linked with physical characteristics such as skin color or hair texture, differs from ethnicity which is linked with cultural expression and identification (Blakemore, n.d.). Ethnic identity includes the sharing of customs, language, traditions, and pride. Race, an important facet on its own, does not require the same personal understanding as ethnicity. For example, Europeans may share a racial heritage, but their ethnic identities are distinct based on cultural, geographical, or religious factors (e.g., Jewish, Italian, Irish). Some political and social issues are particularly relevant to one's racial or ethnic identity. In order to understand the degree to which an issue matters to an individual, one must measure

their “buy-in” with their ethnic identity (Holt & Sweitzer, 2018). Ethnic identity is a stronger feature for some individuals than others. For example, White Americans have been found to not view their race or ethnic identity as a significant part of their identity (Holt & Sweitzer, 2018). African Americans, on the other hand, have a stronger ethnic identity (Holt & Sweitzer, 2018). Ethnic Identity can also impact how a person perceives those not of the same ethnicity. Therefore, sharing social connection through discussions can serve as a predictor for more positive perceptions of outgroup members. Ethnic identity has been shown to moderate attitudes toward the Black Lives Matter movement differently for Blacks and Whites (Holt & Sweitzer, 2018).

Holt and Sweitzer (2018)

Holt and Sweitzer (2018) measured ethnic identity and social dominance orientation to see the effects of support for the Black Lives Matter movement. They found the effects of social dominance orientation on attitudes toward the Black Lives Matter movement to be significant and negative. Specifically, they noted White American respondents showing a high social dominance orientation and low level of ethnic identity, had very negative attitudes toward the Black Lives Matter movement. It was apparent that ethnic identity and social dominance orientation operated independently in their sample. White Americans’ have developed an understanding that in order to maintain their status at the top of the racial hierarchy, challenges to the status quo, such as African American lives mattering equally, jeopardize their dominance.

Purpose and Hypothesis

In this study, we sought to partially replicate the work of Holt and Sweitzer (2020), with an extension to Blue Lives Matter. In addition, we examined how ethnic identity, social dominance orientation, and group membership play a role towards attitudes of both movements.

More specifically, we measured the relationship between individual political party identification and ethnic identity strength, with the perception of those considered a part of an out-group. These facets are consistent with the methodology of previous studies but will be accounted for more heavily in this study. We hypothesized that the results would support that of Holt and Sweitzer (2018) but pertain to both movements and yield a wider view of how implicit and explicit attitudes are influenced.

We hypothesized that Whites would favor Blue Lives Matter more than African Americans, and African Americans will favor Black Lives Matter more than Whites. Additionally, we understood age may have played a role in the perceptions of drivers due to the emergence of social media and the role of society amongst different generations. As a result, we hypothesized that younger participants would favor Black Lives Matter and older participants would favor Blue Lives Matter.

Understanding that both of these movements have become heavily politicized in the eyes of the general public led us to believe that those who identify as Republican will have more positive attitudes towards the Blue Lives Matter movement than the Black Lives Matter movement, and those who identify as being Democrats will have more positive attitudes towards the Black Lives Matter movement than the Blue Lives Matter movement. Finally, given that these two movements are representative of competitive victimhood, we expected that attitudes towards Black Lives Matter would be inversely correlated with attitudes toward Blue Lives Matter.

Additionally, through the present study, we sought to test whether people would respond differently to a hypothetical driver based on whether the sticker showed either the message or the slogan associated with one movement or the other. The presence of a sticker that threatens one's

own in-group will provoke anxiety and lead to out-group derogation. As a result, we hypothesized that respondents who see a hypothetical driver displaying either a Black Lives Matter or Blue Lives Matter slogan will be less likely to say they would help this driver and report more negative impressions of the driver than participants who see a sticker supporting just the message behind either movement. Furthermore, we hypothesized race will interact with the slogan sticker conditions, such that Black respondents will rate drivers with Blue Lives Matter slogans more negatively than drivers with Black Lives Matter slogans.

Method

Participants

Participants were collected from five different platforms through Qualtrics. Our sample size included 568 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk ($n = 198$) that were paid \$0.50 USD as compensation for completing the survey, the Social Psychology Network ($n = 213$), and other social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, and Survey Circle ($n = 157$). Other than Amazon Mechanical Turk, no incentive was offered for completing the survey, because this platform was used as a means to target individuals who identified as Black or African American in order to maintain a more representative sample.

A large portion of the United States was represented with participants from 41 states; the majority of respondents were from zip codes classified as urban areas (84.2%). Participants ranged in age from 14 to 77 ($M = 31.8$, $SD = 12.0$). Females accounted for 59.2% of respondents and males accounted for 40.3% of respondents, while three identified as “other”. We had a fairly representative sample in terms of ethnicity as compared to the national averages. According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2019 76.3% of the population was White, 18.5% was Hispanic, 13.4% was Black, 5.9% was Asian, 2.8% was biracial, 0.2% was Native

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 1.3% was American Indian/Alaska Native (Bureau, n.d.). Our sample was 57.6% White/Caucasian ($n = 328$) and 42.4% non-White ($n = 241$). More specifically, 57.6% were White ($n = 328$), 6.7% were Hispanic ($n = 38$), 25.9% were Black ($n = 147$), 1.9% were Asian ($n = 11$), 5.5% were biracial ($n = 31$), 0.4% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ($n = 2$), and 1.1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native ($n = 6$), and 0.9% were middle Eastern ($n = 5$). Furthermore, 19.9% identified as Republican ($n = 313$), 55.1% identified as Democrat ($n = 313$), 15.7% identified as an Independent ($n = 89$), and 2.8% selected “something else” ($n = 16$).

Procedure

Data was collected between November 10, 2020 and February 13, 2021, after receiving IRB approval. Due to Covid-19, all data was collected virtually. A direct link to the survey was provided to those willing to participate. A brief overview, expected completion time, contact information for all researchers, and a notice of confidentiality were included on the first page of the survey along with the option to give consent to begin.

Experimental Manipulation of Bumper Sticker Conditions

Participants were then randomly assigned to one of four conditions, each showing different bumper stickers on a vehicle. The four conditions were divided into either the “meme” or “messaging” condition, with either explicit wording linking the sticker to either the Black or Blue Lives Matter movement, or imaging portraying the message of either movement. These stickers were carefully selected for each condition. Both “motto” stickers chosen are recognized as the trademarks for either movement, and the “messaging” stickers were chosen based off of their slogans which accurately portray the missions expressed by both movements. We had help photoshopping each sticker on to an identical car, which closely resembled a real-life depiction

of each bumper sticker. It was one of our goals to make sure the car was gender neutral and was absent of any identifiers.

There was a space provided to describe the image they had just been shown of the randomly assigned bumper sticker on the car. Although this section revealed insight into underlying opinions and feelings about the two movements, we did not incorporate these into our results. Participants were asked to make assumptions about the driver through three questions on driving abilities (4 options; “extremely incompetent” to “extremely competent”), friendliness/agreeableness (4 options; “Dislike a great deal” to “like a great deal”), and the likelihood that they would let the driver merge in front of them (“yes”, “no”, “maybe”). Then they were asked to guess the driver’s corresponding demographics including race, age, gender, and political party identification.

After the experimental manipulation sections, we measured social dominance orientation, ethnic identity, and attitudes toward both the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Blue Lives Matter movement. Finally, at the end of the survey, an option for additional comments was offered out of curiosity.

Measures

Attitudes Toward the Two Movements

Measures of attitudes toward each movement were shortened from that of Holt and Sweitzer (2018) who used six items, to only five because it was decided that the wording of one question was almost identical to the preceding question. The shortened scale was reliable. The final five items we selected were: 1) My personal attitude about the Black Lives Matter Movement is that I (“dislike a great deal”; “like a great deal”), 2) In my opinion, the Black Lives Matter movement is (“very bad” ; “very good”), 3) In terms of the Black Lives Matter

movement, I think what protesters are doing is... (“very unwise”; “very wise”), 4) In my opinion, the Black Lives Matter movement will ultimately prove to be... (“very harmful”; “very beneficial”), and 5) To what extent do you agree that the Black Lives movement is necessary? (“very unnecessary”; “very necessary”). To maintain consistency, and since Holt & Sweitzer (2018) did not include measures of attitudes towards the Blue Lives Matter movement, questions were replicated, and we simply replaced the word “Black” with “Blue.” Reliability in our sample was high for both measures: Cronbach’s alpha for Black Lives Matter = .89, 95% CI [.875, .90] and for Blue Lives Matter $\alpha = .93$, 95% CI [.91, .94].

Social Dominance Orientation

We measured social dominance orientation using the short-form SDO7, which Ho et al., (2015) demonstrated to differentiate between two dimensions of preference for group inequality. The 4-item SDO-D (dominance) subscale measures preference for aggressive dominance of one group over another. An example item is “Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups”. The 4-item SDO-E (egalitarianism) subscale measures a preference for hierarchy-enhancing ideologies and policies to sustain group-based inequality. An example item is “Group equality should not be our primary goal.” Reliability for both subscales was acceptable in our sample (SDO-D $\alpha = .72$, 95% CI [.67, .75]; SDO-E $\alpha = .80$, 95% CI [.76, .82]).

Ethnic Identity

Similarly, ethnic identity (EI) was measured through ten questions in the previous study, but only four in ours with a 5-point Likert-type scale (Ho et al., 2015). The items were: 1) How strongly do you identify with other members of your ethnic group? 2) How important is your ethnicity to your identity? 3) How often do you think of yourself as a member of your ethnic group? 4) How close do you feel to other members of your ethnic group? Responses showed

signs of strong reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$, 95% CI = [.84, .88]. Overall, scores on the EI ranged from 4 to 20 ($M = 13.8$, $SD = 4.1$) and varied, as expected, by race. White Americans had significantly lower EI scores ($m = 12.01$, $sd = 3.65$) compared to Black ($m = 17.0$, $sd = 2.81$), Latino ($m = 16.45$, $sd = 3.82$), and bi-racial Americans ($m = 13.9$, $sd = 3.71$); $F(7, 560) = 32.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .29$.

Results

Who Favors Each Movement?

Race

The results of an ANOVA with race as a factor, indicated significantly higher scores on the attitudes towards Black Lives Matter among Blacks ($m = 25.42$, $sd = 4.71$) and Non-White/Other ($m = 24.08$, $sd = 5.59$) as compared to Whites ($m = 22.91$, $sd = 5.66$), $F(2, 565) = 11.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .038$. For Blue Lives Matter, the ANOVA was also significant, $F(2, 565) = 10.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .034$. Results indicated equal support for Blue Lives Matter among Whites ($m = 12.61$, $sd = 6.31$) and Blacks ($m = 13.50$, $sd = 6.72$), but significantly lower support by all other racial minorities ($m = 9.86$, $sd = 5.50$).

Political Party

For political affiliation, a t-test showed that Democrats ($m = 25.76$, $sd = 3.46$) significantly favored Black Lives Matter more than Republicans ($m = 18.79$, $sd = 6.90$), $t(132) = -10.27$, $p < .001$. Another t-test showed that Republicans ($m = 17.86$, $sd = 4.48$) significantly favored Blue Lives Matter more than Democrats ($m = 11.07$, $sd = 6.30$), $t(278) = 12.30$, $p < .001$.

Sex

Women ($m = 24.42$, $sd = 5.16$) were also more likely to favor Black Lives Matter than men ($m = 22.73$, $sd = 5.88$), $t(446) = -3.51$, $p < .001$. However, men ($m = 14.12$, $sd = 6.40$)

showed higher levels of support for Blue Lives Matter than women ($m = 11.27$, $sd = 6.12$), $t(563) = 5.32$, $p < .001$.

Age

One-way ANOVAs showed that there were no significant differences between age categories for support of Black Lives Matter $F(6, 549) = .81$, $p > .001$. There was, however a significant effect for age and Blue Lives Matter, $F(6, 549) = 17.07$, $p < .001$. Those who were 18-24 were less supportive ($m = 8.95$, $sd = 5.18$) than those 55 and older ($m = 15.30$, $sd = 6.2$).

Correlates Between Measures

Table 1 shows the correlations between the measurements. As can be seen, ethnic identity was found to relate similarly to support for each movement ($r = 0.2$ for each). Additionally, SDO was more strongly and positively related to support for Blue Lives Matter ($r = 0.62$) and was moderately, but negatively, related to Black Lives Matter ($r = 0.36$). In regard to support for either movement, Black Lives Matter was inversely, but weakly, related to support for the Blue Lives Matter movement ($r = -0.16$). Just because participants strongly favored one movement, that did not mean they strongly disliked the opposing movement.

Table 1

Correlates Between Measures

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. SDO Total Scale	568	18.9	10.1	—		
2. Ethnic Identity Scale	568	13.8	4.1	.093*	—	
3. Black Lives Matter	568	23.8	5.5	-.363**	.201**	—

Scale						
4. Blue Lives Matter Scale	568	12.4	6.4	.616**	.200**	-.157**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Experimental Manipulation of Bumper Sticker Results

It was found that drivers who display either of the “messages” are more likeable than those who display a “motto”. Drivers with the Black Lives Matter or racial equality stickers were liked more than either of the other stickers and drivers with police support stickers were liked more than those with Blue Lives Matter stickers. Results came from factorial ANOVAs with likability as the dependent variable and race, sex, political group, and sticker condition as factors. Once again, although statistically significant, this was a small effect. Furthermore, we found that drivers with the Black Lives Matter and racial equality stickers were liked more than the Blue Lives Matter and police support stickers, and support for the two “mottos” was more polarized than the two “messages.” However, those with the police support stickers were favored more in comparison to those with the Blue Lives Matter sticker.

Competency was viewed similarly to likability. When participants were in the Blue Lives Matter motto sticker condition, Democrats viewed the driver as substantially less competent than Republicans, in comparison to the other conditions. Additionally, non-White Republicans saw the driver as more competent than others. We saw that overall, people are willing to say they would let a hypothetical driver merge in front of them. What is more interesting is, the Blue Lives Matter motto sticker generated more negative responses. There were a higher number of participants that said “no” than “maybe,” which differed from all other conditions.

We went through and coded the optional comments as either for or against the sticker condition they were randomly assigned to. One thing that we found particularly interesting was that not a single one of the 116 people who offered an unsolicited comment, was against the racial equality sticker. However, this was not consistent with those who commented in the Black Lives Matter meme condition. This shows how refutation against the Black Lives Matter movement is not so much aimed at the message they portray, but the organization itself.

Discussion

Data pertaining to the Blue Lives Matter movement was not only absent in Holt & Sweitzer's (2018) study, but it was also virtually non-existent throughout other literature. Nonetheless, our results were largely consistent with those found by Holt and Sweitzer (2018). Evidence of who favors either movement was also consistent with our predictions and stereotypical ideologies of the general public. We found that Blacks and non-Whites, Democrats, and women tend to favor the Black Lives Matter movement. However, we did not find any age difference among support for this movement. Furthermore, results revealed that Republicans, men, and those who were fifty-five years of age or older, as opposed to eighteen to twenty-four years of age, favored the Blue Lives Matter movement, but we did not find any racial difference among support for this movement.

Although non-Whites were found to favor the Black Lives Matter movement, the lack of racial difference among support for the Blue Lives Matter movement differs from our expectations.

Social dominance orientation's positive correlation to the Blue Lives Matter movement is consistent with our initial hypothesis and emphasizes how this particular countermovement is motivated by the desire to reinforce social hierarchies and dominance over other racial groups. This is further emphasized by its negative correlation to the Black Lives Matter movement. Their

mission involves inclusivity, equity, and other realms promoting equality for all people of marginalized groups, which contradicts the theoretical framework of social dominance orientation.

Just because participants strongly favored one movement, that did not mean they strongly disliked the opposing movement. Instead support for either movement was independent of each other in a sense. Strong or weak support for one movement was not a predictor of an opposite level of support for the opposing movement as evidenced by the weak correlation between attitudes toward the movements. This also contradicts our original predictions and brings into question if supporting justice for all groups of people can create a bridge between these two polarized movements.

Overall, both the Black Lives Matter “messaging” and “motto” conditions were favored slightly more than both Blue Lives Matter conditions, signifying more positive attitudes towards the Black Lives Matter movement. As a result of support for the two “mottos” being more polarized than the two “messages,” we account this as another example of how the Black and Blue Lives Matter “motto” stickers yield more polarizing perceptions than the messaging stickers (racial equality & police support). Here we also see that political party affiliation plays a role in how these drivers are perceived, most likely based on connections made between the Republican party, Democratic party, and these movements.

Our data pertaining to competency reveals that Republicans tend to view those with the Blue Lives Matter “motto” and “messaging” stickers in a more positive light than Democrats. However, non-White Republicans viewed these same drivers as more competent which begs the question if political party affiliation is more influential on driver perceptions than ethnicity. These results yielded a higher quantity of negative responses overall, as opposed to participants

allowing the hypothetical driver to merge in front of them. Allowing a driver to merge in front of them, may not be a strong indicator of perceptions and attitudes towards the driver and their attached sticker. However, despite the overwhelming majority, a higher number of participants in the Blue Lives Matter “motto” condition said they would not allow the driver to merge in front of them as opposed to maybe letting them merge. The more polarizing views associated with this condition suggest that individual opinions of the Blue Lives Matter movement remain consistent with the framework of counter movements and its effects.

Although the “messaging” conditions were more heavily favored than the “motto” conditions, the Black Lives Matter messaging sticker showed little to no opposition, while the Blue Lives Matter messaging sticker was faced with substantial opposition. This could be attributed to the climate of our nation after the examples of racial inequality at the hands of law enforcement during the summer of 2020, but we would argue that support for police is a much more sensitive subject than the importance of racial equality. Individuals are much less likely to oppose the explicit notion of racial equality but are more likely to do so when put into action through movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement. This could be rationalized by the fact that promoting racial equality through messages does not pose as much of a threat to those who benefit from disparities as the practice of actively trying to promote racial equality throughout society. Actions speak a lot louder than words.

Conclusion

We wanted to gain a better understanding of how support for the Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter movements relate to one another and affect the perceptions of other people. With virtually no psychological studies on the Blue Lives Matter movement, and a limited number of studies pertaining to the Black Lives Matter movement, we found a compelling need

to explore both the implicit and explicit attitudes associated with both. In addition, society has been faced with an overwhelming number of outward demonstrations of racial injustice over the past decade, not only at the hands of police, but through many systematic practices and institutions. Most notably, in 2020, we saw an increased number of media coverage shedding light on malpractice and inhumanity amongst the police force costing nearly 200 African American lives (Cohen, 2020).

Our research revealed insight into how attitudes towards either movement are influenced by race, age, ethnic identity, social dominance orientation scores, and political party affiliation. Most hypotheses specific to the influence of demographics were found as expected, except we found no racial difference on support for the Blue Lives Matter movement and no age difference among support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Social dominance orientation aligned with our original predictions as well and supported the notion that those who score higher in social dominance orientation are more likely to support the Blue Lives Matter movement. Additionally, as previously mentioned, just because there is strong support for one movement, does not mean participants strongly dislike the opposing movement, revealing that mixed views were common among our sample. Generalizing this to the general population may not be applicable, but it is interesting to see that one attitude scale is not necessarily a predictor of the other. Polarity has been a common trend over the past year throughout many dimensions of society, but examples of commonality such as this should emphasize the possibility for more unified stances and collaboration towards the betterment of society as a whole. Despite misconceptions, we make judgements about drivers with bumper stickers, and using this methodology has allowed us to reveal some insight into the perceptions of the Blue Lives Matter movement.

Our study included limitations among our sample since we had a lack of representation of Republicans, women were overrepresented, and our sample was substantially higher educated than the general population. In 2019, high school was the highest level of education completed by 28.1% of the population age 25 and older and 22.5% finished four years of college (Bureau, 2020). Highest level of education for our sample included respondents with “less than high school” (n = 21, 3.7%), “HS graduate” (n = 49, 8.6%), “some college” (n = 138, 24.3%), “2-year degree” (n = 39, 6.9%), “4-year degree” (n = 201, 35.4%), and “professional degree or doctorate” (n = 120, 21.1%). The Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter movements have spread well beyond the United States, but our focus was on American citizens and their views. Future research may consider widening their focus to include other nationalities, more Republicans, and a more representative sample based on education levels. Furthermore, since both these movements are heavily active in the present time, further research would be appropriate to compare current attitudes with future attitudes while citing any new developments in legislation, notable events, and changes among either movement. A stronger focus on the association between social dominance orientation and support for police might also reveal some foundational insight. Additionally, understanding the role of politics in reference to these movements is critical considering how inclined we are to judge others based on their affiliation with an in-group.

Understanding the framework of counter movements, such as the Blue Lives Matter movement, allows us to make predictions on not only who will favor these movements, but what perceptions will be formed. It would be naive to neglect the influence of bipartisanship on these heavily politicized movements, as well. The role of social dominance orientation as a predictor for Blue Lives Matter support emphasizes the motive of the movement to regain dominance

amongst racial groups by partaking in competitive victimhood and other hierarchical behaviors promoting inequality. Both movements will continue to evolve in the coming years as racial injustice remains a prominent issue in American society, and African American lives continue to suffer as a consequence.

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