

Study investigates the role of allies in advancing social movements

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A new study sheds light on the crucial role of allies in social movements, showing how their participation can sway public opinion on protests. By positively influencing public perceptions and encouraging participation

from both advantaged and disadvantaged groups, allies can play a significant role in addressing structural inequality. This research offers valuable insights for activists and policymakers aiming to foster positive change in society.

A new study led by Dr. Devorah Manekin from Hebrew University's Department of International Relations highlights how allies from advantaged groups can support [social movements](#) of disadvantaged groups. This research, focused on the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, shows how White allies positively influenced public opinion among both Black and White audiences. The work is [published](#) in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Dr. Manekin and her team used surveys and social media analysis to understand the impact of allies. They discovered that among White respondents, allies increased [public attention](#) and support for the protests. Among Black audiences, allies were supported for their perceived strategic benefits, such as attracting attention to the movement and reducing the likelihood of heavy policing.

The study also found that, while protests led by ethnic minorities are often perceived as more violent and requiring more police, the presence of allies reduced these negative perceptions, making the protests feel safer for everyone.

Dr. Manekin said, "Our research shows how important allies can be in shaping public opinion and increasing support for social movements. While there are valid concerns about allies becoming overly prominent in the movement, our findings show that thoughtful allyship is perceived positively by the public and can thus be a powerful means of combating inequality."

These insights are valuable for activists, policymakers, and researchers,

helping them understand and support social movements better.

More information: Devorah Manekin et al, The politics of allyship: Multiethnic coalitions and mass attitudes toward protest, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2024). [DOI: 10.1073/pnas.2314653121](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2314653121)

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