Collective Autonomy and it's Role in Collective Action for Racial Justice

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QUESCREN - Strengths in Communities

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Road Map

1. Collective Autonomy (Restriction)
   - What is it
   - Why does it matter

2. Collective Autonomy and Racial Justice
   - Black social justice movements
   - White allyship vs. backlash

Collective Autonomy (Restriction)

What is it?

ALLOWED: Small religious symbols

BANNED: "Overt and conspicuous" symbols
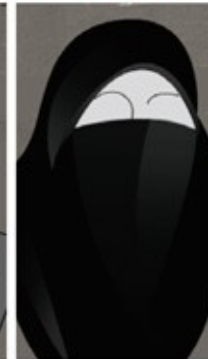
SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC

""If we try to even have a cultural identity, it's considered racist."

White American participant

Collective Autonomy Restriction: Our perception that other groups try to control how our group defines and expresses its sociocultural identity and behavior.

	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree 7
Other groups have tried to control what we should value and believe	X						
Other groups have tried to control what customs and practices we should follow		X					

Collective Autonomy (Restriction)

Why does it Matter?

Self Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory

- **Personal autonomy**: Feeling volitional and free to act in accord with identity / values as an individual.

- **40+ years of research linking PA to well-being** across multiple domains (family, romance, friendships, sports, schools, organizations, national contexts)

Ryan & Deci, 2017; Chirkov, et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2015

Self Determination Theory
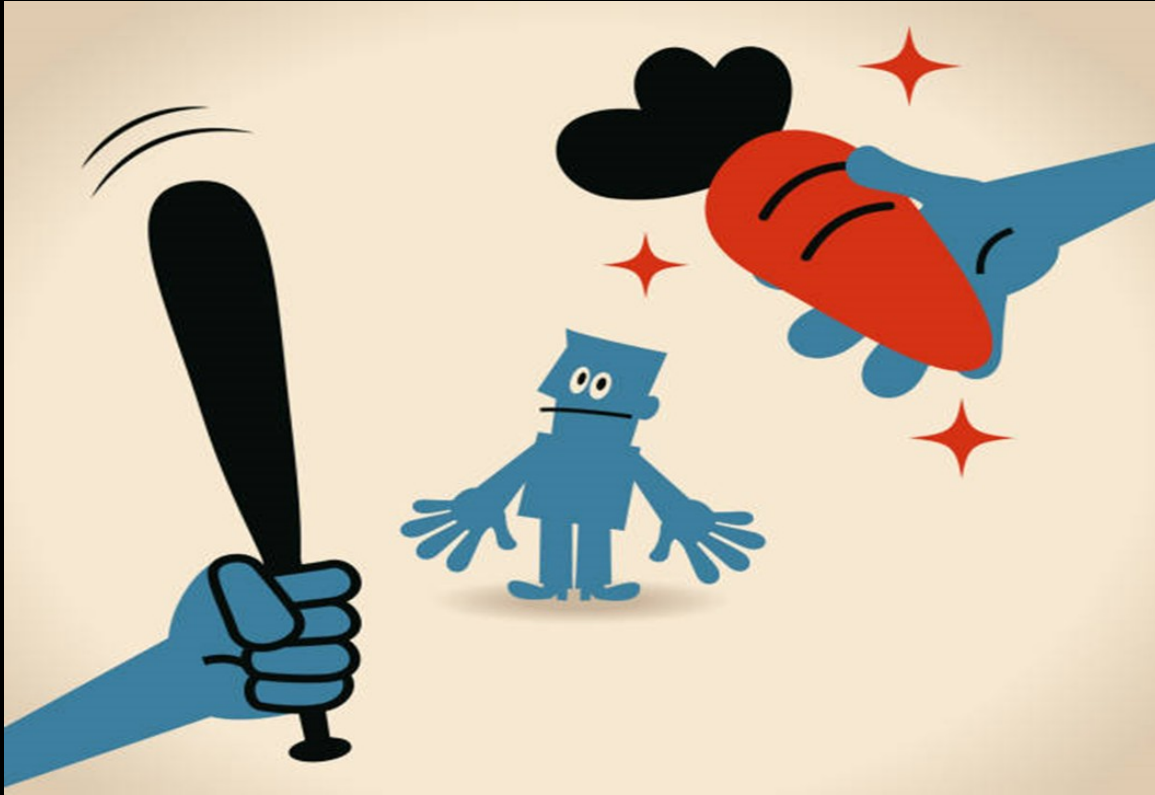
- Autonomy supportive vs. restrictive environments: Focus has been supports and restrictions acting directly on the individual.

Ryan & Deci, 2017; Chirkov, et al., 2003; Chen et al., 2015

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Approach

- **Social Identification**: Seeing a social group as a significant part of who we are, and feeling meaningful social and emotional ties

- **From we to me:** We derive part of who we are as individuals from our social identities and feel connected to our groups. So, threats to our groups can impact us personally.

Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987; Branscombe et al., 1999

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Integrative Framework
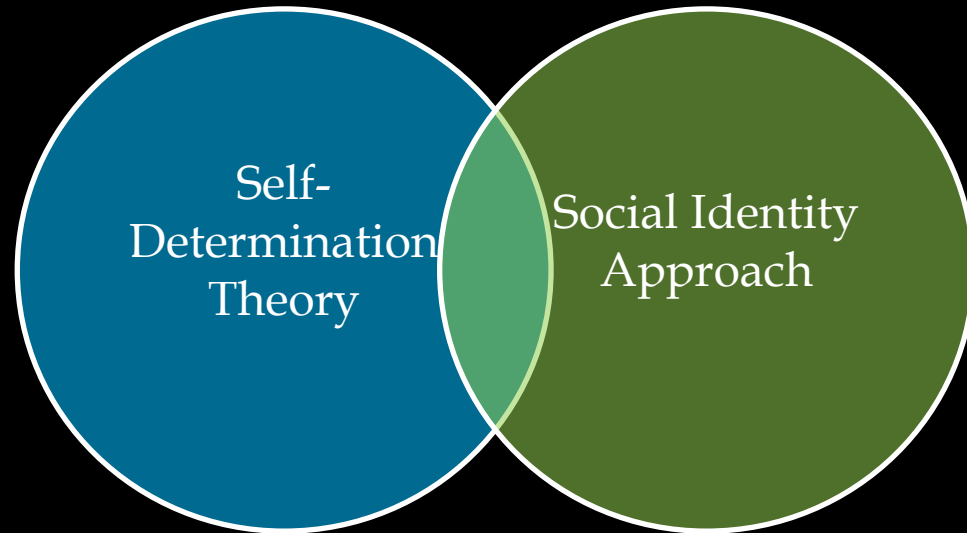
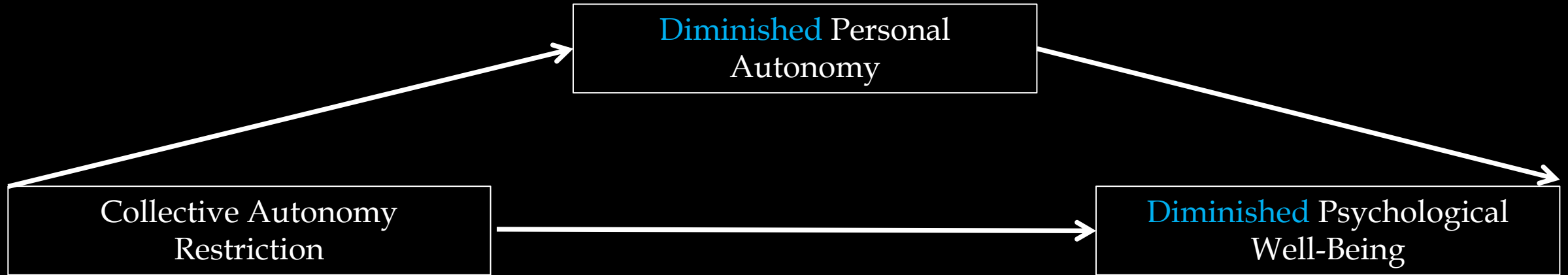Because we are connected to our social groups, we might personally feel controlled if we feel that the freedoms of our groups are being restricted

Freedom is indivisible; the chains on any one of my people were the chains on all of them, the chains on all of my people were the chains on me.
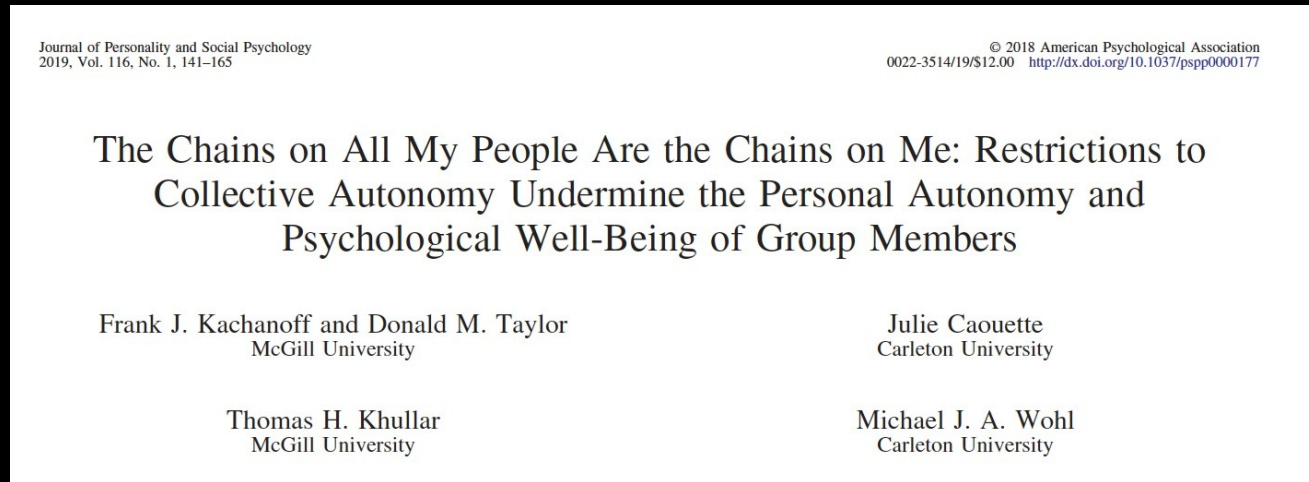
Nelson Mandela

Integrative Framework

Support for model across individualistic and collectivistic cultures

The Chains on All My People Are the Chains on Me: Restrictions to Collective Autonomy Undermine the Personal Autonomy and Psychological Well-Being of Group Members

Frank J. Kachanoff and Donald M. Taylor
McGill University

Julie Caouette
Carleton University

Thomas H. Khullar
McGill University

Michael J. A. Wohl
Carleton University

Support for model amongst LGBTQ+ community

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ARTICLE

Check for updates

Free to fly the rainbow flag: the relation between collective autonomy and psychological well-being amongst LGBTQ+ individuals

Frank J. Kachanoff[a*], Fiona Cooligan[b*], Julie Caouette[b] and Michael J. A. Wohl[b]

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LGBTQ+ Community Studies

- **3 Samples of LGBTQ+ individuals:** Canadian community sample (N=114); Online American Sample 1 (N=370; Qualtrics Panel) ; Online American Sample 2 (N=396; Mturk).

- **Narrative Writing Manipulation:** Describe collective autonomy restriction vs. collective autonomy support impacting one's community.

- **Prediction:** LGBTQ+ community members will feel less personally autonomous and less psychological well-being when they write about how their community lacks (vs. has) collective autonomy.

Participant in Restriction Condition: "The biggest barrier to collective autonomy for the trans community in Canada is likely the evaluations needed before acquiring hormones. While I was lucky and found a councilor quite open to a full spectrum of gender expression all the way to non-binary status, many are faced with a pressure to present as near gender stereotypes in order to be given access to HRT."

- asexual/ace trans girl, and bi-romantic individual

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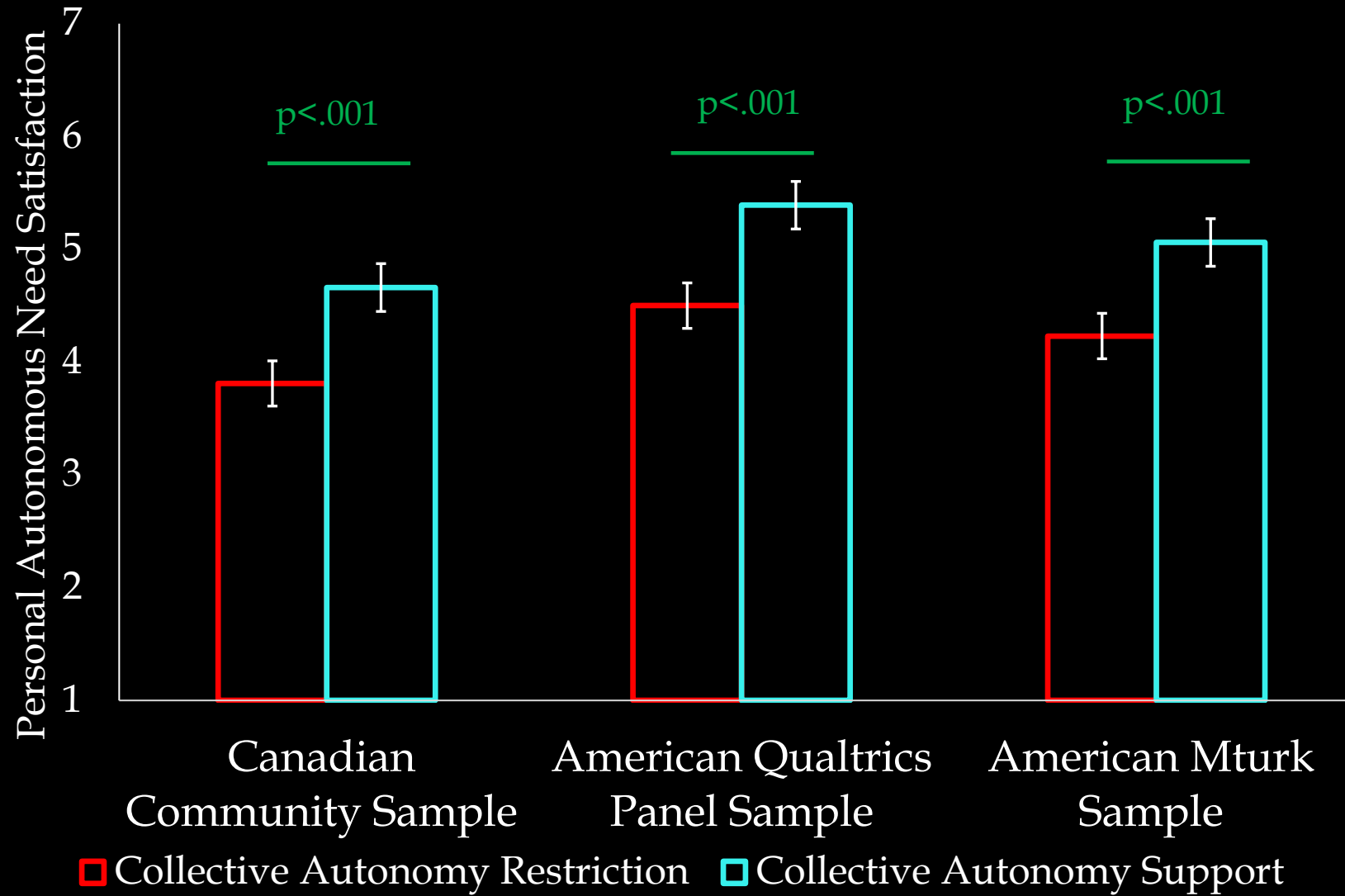
- asexual/ace trans girl, and bi-romantic individual

Did community members feel less personal autonomy when asked to write about how their group lacked (vs. had) collective autonomy?
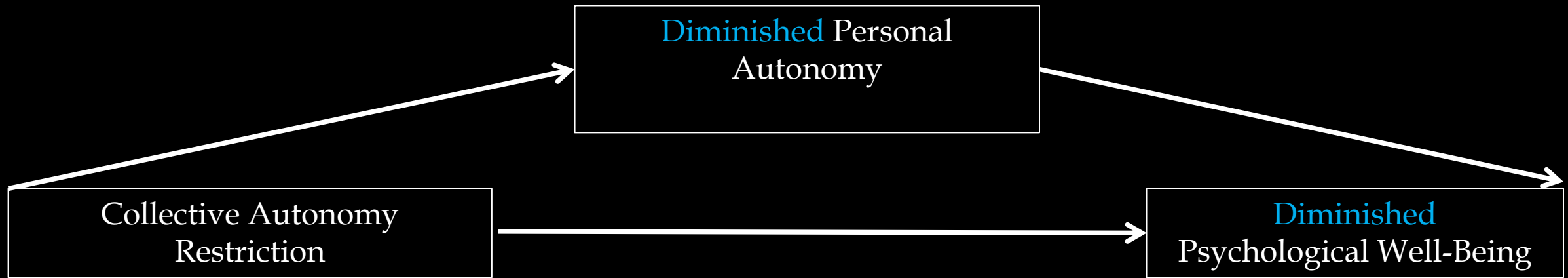
E.g., "I had a lot of pressures I could do with out (reversed coded)"
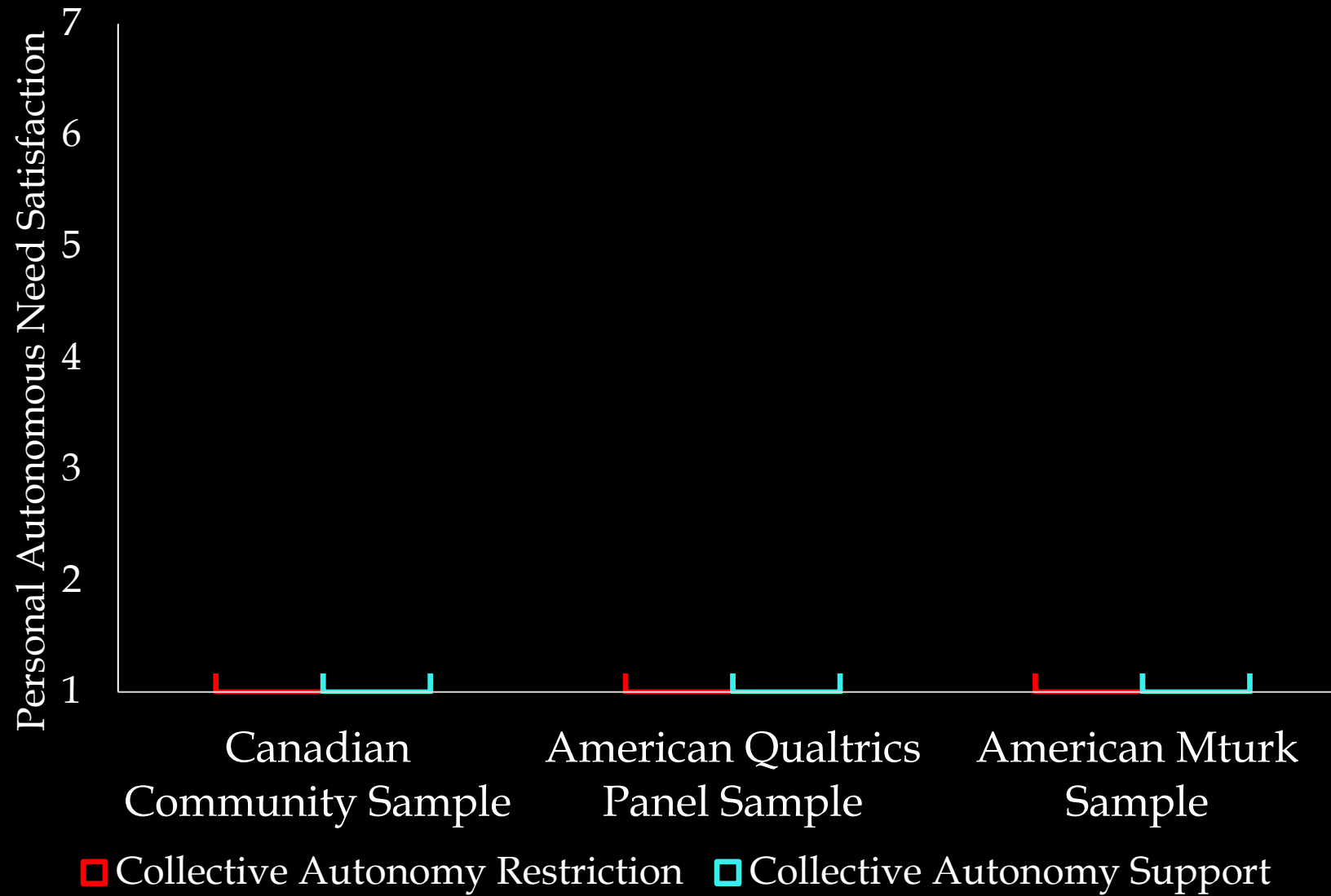
Did community members feel less psychological well-being when asked to write about how their group lacked (vs. had) collective autonomy?

In all 3 samples – Thinking about restrictions to the LGBTQ+ community's autonomy reduced people's own personal autonomy, which in turn, reduced people's psychological well-being

Application to the English-Speaking Black Community of Quebec

- Threats to collective autonomy of Black community might be harmful to well-being.

- Important to consider how collective autonomy might be restricted by:

    - COVID-19 pandemic
    - Structural Racism
    - Laws such as Bill 96 and Bill 21

Collective Autonomy and Racial Justice

- Black social justice movements
- White allyship vs. backlash

If collective autonomy is essential for group members well-being then groups may fight for power and status to protect their autonomy.
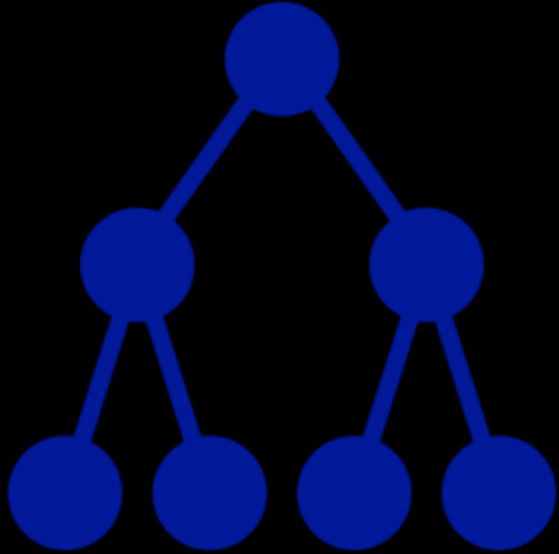
Power: Potential to influence and resist influence (Pratto, 2016)

- *Use power to resist restrictions from others (Lammers et al., 2016)*

Status: Positivity and moral value of group identity (Cheng et al., 2013)

- *If you are seen as good/moral, less reason for others to restrict you (Verkuyten, et al., 2020,2021)*

Kachanoff, Gray, Koestner, Kteily, & Wohl, 2022, *Psych Compass*

TABLE 1 A power and status "threat and defense" perspective of collective autonomy restriction

	Collective autonomy perceived as secure	Collective autonomy perceived to be threatened
Disempowered group	More tolerance for lacking structural power and status	More mobilization to gain power and status
Powerful group	More openness to relinquishing power/ acknowledging intergroup transgressions perpetrated against other groups.	More defensiveness against relinquishing power/ acknowledging intergroup transgressions perpetrated against other groups.

Kachanoff, Gray, Koestner, Kteily, & Wohl, 2022, *Psych Compass*   36

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Collective Autonomy and Racial Justice
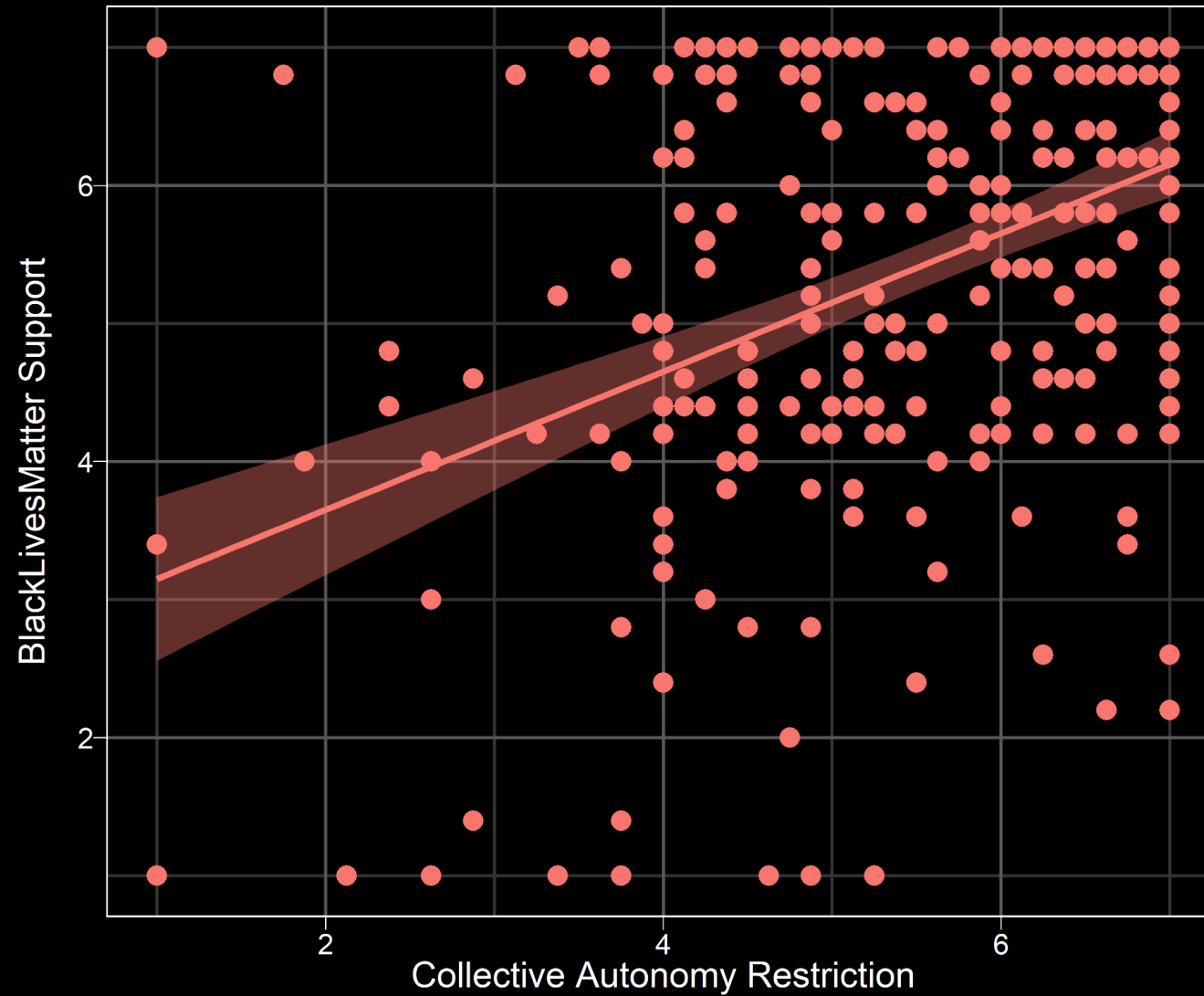
- Black social justice movements

Sample: 292 Black Americans (Prodege Panel Sample; approximated 2010 Census).

Prediction: Collective autonomy restriction would relate to Black Americans' support for collective action even when accounting for other forms of discrimination.

BlackLivesMatter Support: e.g., "I stand in solidarity with supporters of the BLM movement"

Application to the English-Speaking Black Community of Quebec

- The need to protect collective autonomy might be one important driver of Black Social Justice Movements in Quebec.

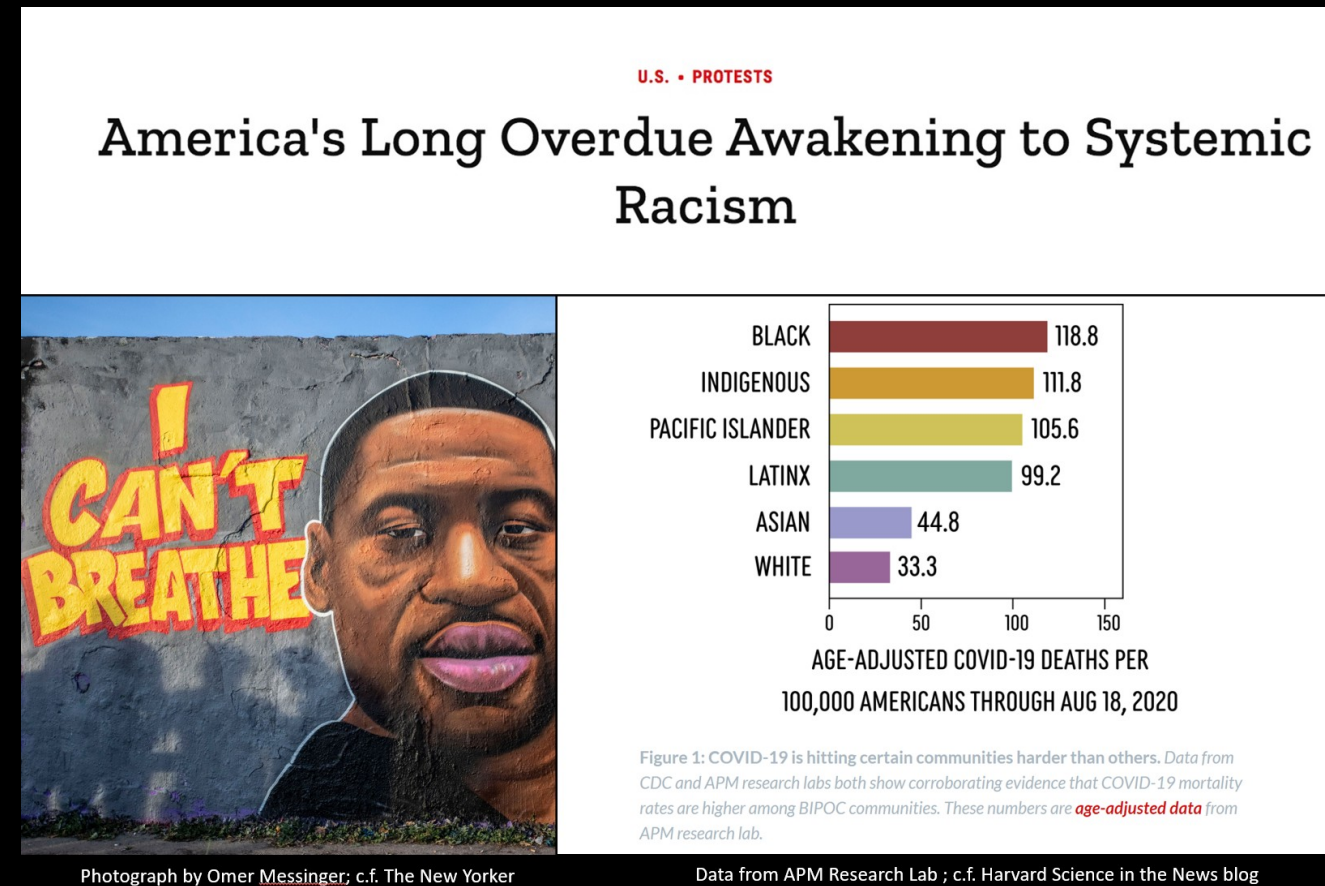- Future research could explore impact of Laws such as Bill 96 in this regard.

Collective Autonomy and Racial Justice

- White allyship vs. backlash

Study 4 - Privileged groups and confronting systemic inequities

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Photograph by Omer Messinger; c.f. The New Yorker   Data from APM Research Lab ; c.f. Harvard Science in the News blog

Racism as an Individual Process

"not being racist"

Conversations About Racism are Shifting in Focus

Racism as a Structural/Cultural Process

"being anti-racist"

Salter et al., 2020; Kendi, 2019

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Emily Pothast

Apr 29, 2021 · 6 min read · ✦ Member-only · ▶ Listen

The 'Pyramid of Hate' that Brought Down Basecamp

Basecamp bosses banned politics at work over a social justice diagram

The ADL's "Pyramid of Hate." Image via adl.org.

TABLE 1 A power and status "threat and defense" perspective of collective autonomy restriction

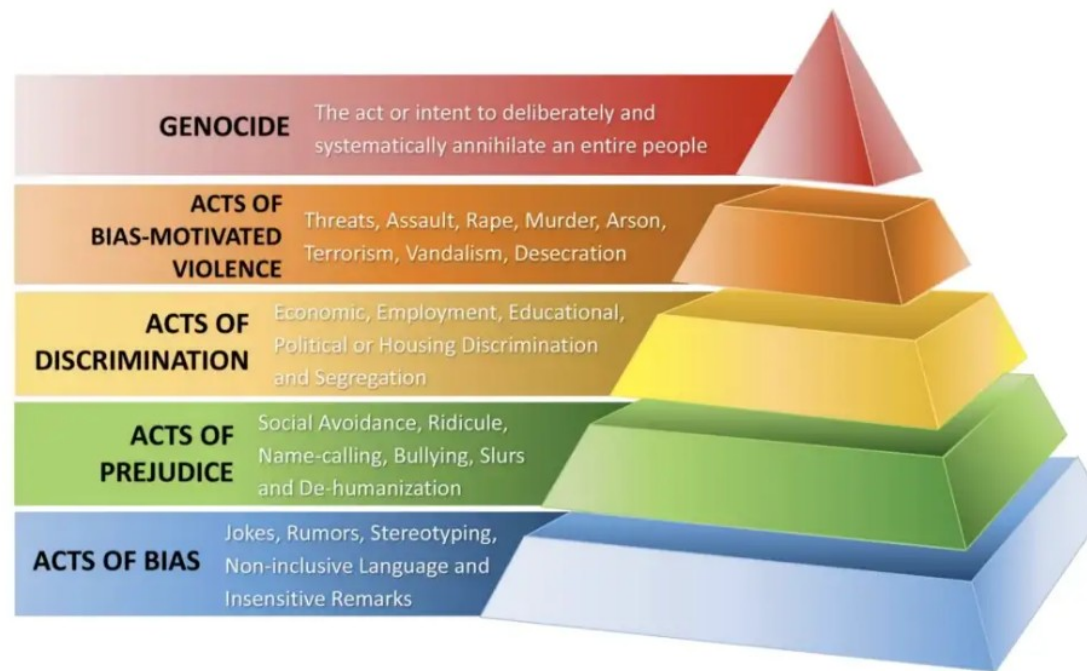|	Collective autonomy perceived as secure	Collective autonomy perceived to be threatened
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The 'Pyramid of Hate' that Brought Down Basecamp
Basecamp bosses banned politics at work over a social justice diagram

The ADL's "Pyramid of Hate." Image via adl.org.

Do members of privileged groups resist confronting the transgressions of their group in part because of a concern over collective autonomy restriction?
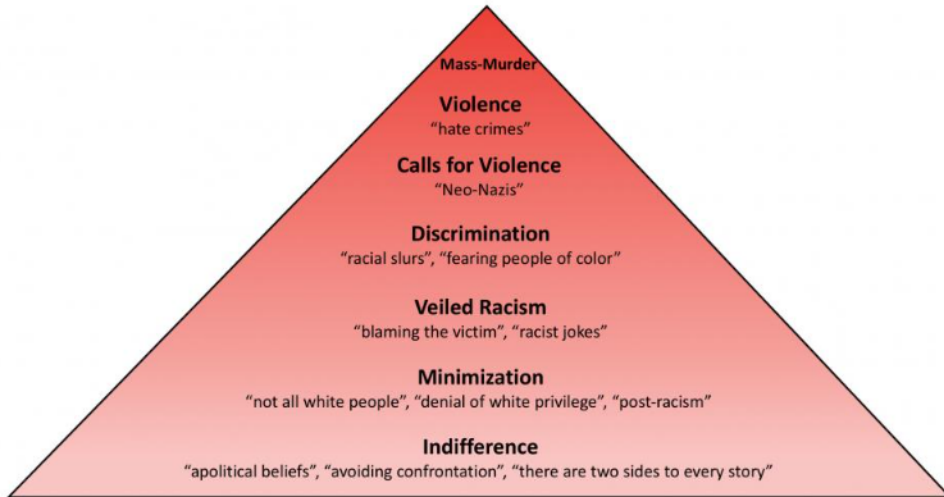
Study Overview

- 245 White Americans (68 conversation groups)

- **Baseline:** Collective autonomy restriction (CAR) assessed <u>1 week</u> before group conversation

- **Group Conversation:** 3-4 White Americans engaged in challenging conversation about structural racism

- **Outcomes**
  - **Verbal behavior during conversation:**
    - Support and engagement
  - **Self-report following conversation:**
    - Motivation to take future anti-racist action.

- ➢ **Predictions:**
  - White's own CAR at baseline predicts more anti-racism support and engagement
  - CAR perceptions of conversation partners at baseline predicts more anti-racism support and engagement

The Pyramid of White Supremacy

In a pyramid, every brick depends on the ones below it for support. If the bricks at the bottom are removed, the whole structure comes tumbling down.

Mass-Murder

Violence
"hate crimes"

Calls for Violence
"Neo-Nazis"

Discrimination
"racial slurs", "fearing people of color"

Veiled Racism
"blaming the victim", "racist jokes"

Minimization
"not all white people", "denial of white privilege", "post-racism"

Indifference
"apolitical beliefs", "avoiding confrontation", "there are two sides to every story"

Discussion Instructions (please read carefully before entering the chatroom):
In this study, we want you to interact with the other participants in your group as if the pyramid has just been shared on your company's discussion forum.

Try to react and discuss it with your fellow employees as if you really work employees at NewKnowledgeTech Corp seeing it for the first time. For example, you might discuss how the pyramid applies to the "funniest names" list shared at NewKnowlegeTech Corp.

We have programmed the Qualtrics survey such that you can only move on to the next survey page after a minimum of 8 minutes, but you might have to stay on the page a little longer if it takes a while for members of your group to join.

>> You are now connected. Please wait while your chat group is filled. Once all participants have connected, you will be able to chat.

Send

Anti-racism conversation modeled after real world incident

- Three independent coders read/scored verbal interactions of each participant (*read holistically in context of full group conversation*).

- A given behavior scored as present if detected by at least one of three coders.

(17:09:10) User 1: I have been looking at the pyramid and I think it gives some interesting ideas for discussing discrimination.
(17:09:39) User 2: I agree. What do you both think about this list of names? Do you think there is any racism involved in it?
(17:10:18) User 1: I like the fact that it starts with indifference at the bottom. Making the world a better place is a responsibility we all share.
(17:10:33) User 3: I'm confused. Is there a list of names? I didn't see it
(17:10:42) User 2: I completely agree with that
(17:10:48) User 4: same here
(17:10:59) User 2: There is no actual list for us to look at, just a description of what was on it.
(17:11:12) User 3: THanks! got it
(17:11:56) User 1: I think a list of name that are supposed to be funny but that include obviously minority name is clearly a kind of veiled racism.

- Three independent coders read/scored verbal interactions of each participant (*read holistically in context of full group conversation*).

- A given behavior scored as present if detected by at least one of three coders.

(17:26:07) User 1: Have you all seen the Pyramid of White Supremacy email?
(17:26:20) User 2: Yes, I saw it.
(17:26:26) System: >> User 4 has Disconnected
(17:26:59) User 2: It is pretty insulting, to be honest.
(17:27:06) User 1: I was thinking that it really puts us in a group that no matter what we must be rasists.
(17:27:25) User 2: I find the pyramid itself to be racist.
(17:27:36) User 2: Disgusting
(17:27:51) User 3: hello everyone
(17:27:57) User 2: Hello
(17:29:03) User 1: Then the name list just makes it look like all of this is true. Just because of a few crappy employees wasting work time.
(17:29:04) User 3: To me it seemed racist.
(17:29:41) User 3: 😢 😢

Conversation Outcomes

- Three independent coders read/scored verbal interactions of each participant (*read holistically in context of full group conversation*).

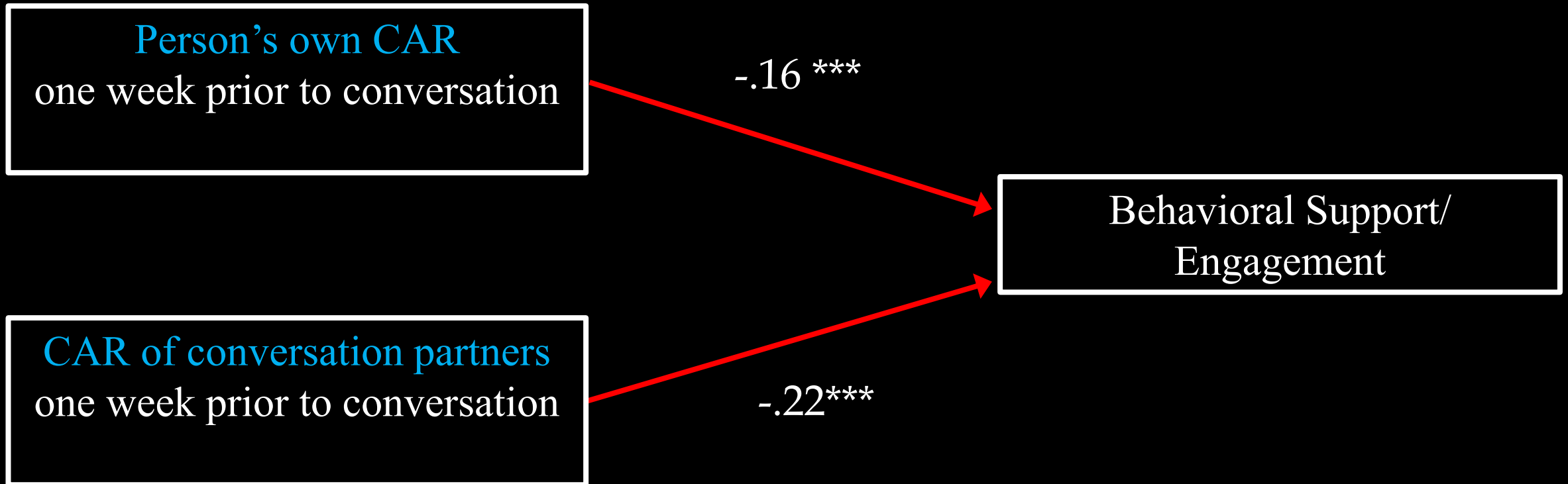- A given behavior scored as present if detected by at least one of three coders.

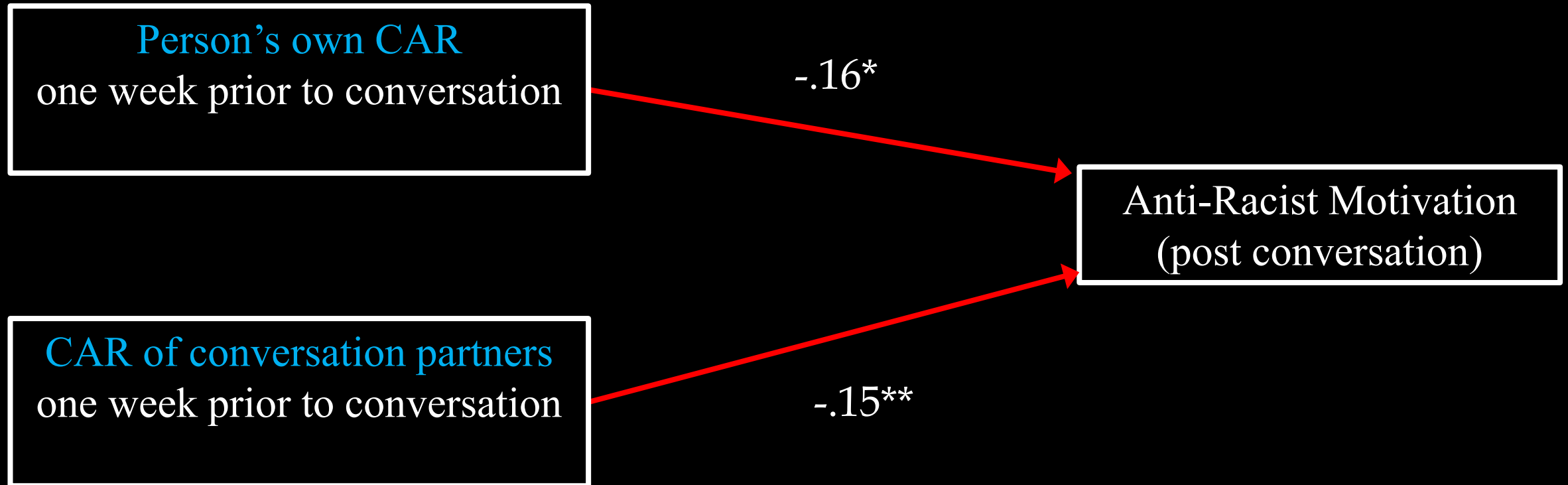| Support/Engagement |
| --- |
| **Explaining intended message of pyramid tool**: Verbally explaining the intended meaning of the pyramid teaching tool (i.e., foundations of racism)/ asking questions. |
| **Personal reflection:** Describing behaviors one did in the past that can reinforce structural racism + committing to future anti-racist action. |
| **General support for anti-racism**: Generally expressing support for pyramid teaching tool + talking about structural racism in schools/organizations |

Conversation Outcomes

Person's own CAR
one week prior to conversation

-.16 ***

Behavioral Support/
Engagement

CAR of conversation partners
one week prior to conversation

-.22***

Self-report outcomes following conversation

Person's own CAR
one week prior to conversation

-.16*

Anti-Racist Motivation
(post conversation)

CAR of conversation partners
one week prior to conversation

-.15**

E.g., "Did your conversation make you want to play active role in challenging systemic injustices in America?"

Application to the English-Speaking Black Community of Quebec

- Richard's work shows that support and participation in the BLM movements has been an important part of Black Quebecers' experience.

- It is essential for White Quebecers to play a significant role in doing the work necessary to push for racial equality.

- Reducing White angst over their collective autonomy might be important step in increasing White commitment to racial equity.

Thank you

Chloe Hsueh

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Nour Kteily

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Thank you

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Alana Bertin
Helena Renault
Tina Giordana
Alana Cohen
Maria-Angelica Camacho
Anabelle Cournoyer
Jonathan Doherty

Fedra Fotouhi
Xu Elsie Yan
Kim Abi Zeid Daou
Fiona Cooligan
Cessen Kidane
Julie Rivest
Jingfei Wang
Hyun Joon Park
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Tania Dargy
Jacqueline Kueper
Marc Saffran
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Lisa Zemanovich
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Scott Neufeld