

The Social Causes and Political Consequences of Group Empathy

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Recent scholarship has discovered significant racial/ethnic group variation in response to political threats such as immigration and terrorism. Surprisingly, minority groups often simultaneously perceive themselves to be at greater risk from such threats and yet still prefer more open immigration policies and civil liberties protections. We suggest a group-level empathy process may explain this puzzle: Due to their higher levels of empathy for other disadvantaged groups, many minority group members support protections for others even when their own interests are threatened. Little is known, however, about the unique properties of group empathy or its role in policy opinion formation. In this study, we examine the reliability and validity of our new measure of group empathy, the Group Empathy Index (GEI), demonstrating that it is distinct from other social and political predispositions such as ethnocentrism, social dominance orientation, authoritarianism, ideology, and partisanship. We then propose a theory about the development of group empathy in reaction to life experiences based on one's race/ethnicity, gender, age, and education. Finally, we examine the power of group empathy to predict policy attitudes and political behavior.

KEY WORDS: group empathy, immigration, national security, political threats, policy attitudes and behavior

Globalization poses both opportunities and challenges for any nation. International labor flows create opportunities for the poorest of the world in ethnically and culturally distant lands. Accommodating newcomers often challenges nations trying to build social welfare programs to adequately serve their own citizens. Immigration openness also carries some security risk to the receiving nation. As the international reach of terrorist organizations such as ISIS and its affiliates grows, debates about the proper balance between civil liberties and security intensify. Against this backdrop, understanding the causal dynamics of public opinion about immigration is important.

Public opinion about immigration is often assumed to be monolithic, and little is known about the size or explanation for differences across racial or ethnic group lines. However, many public opinion domains appear to be group-centric: The media often discuss policies, and the public often thinks about them, in terms of who gets what and whether they deserve it (Nelson & Kinder, 1996). Large

racial and ethnic opinion gaps persist in many policy domains. Policies closely linked to racial redistribution, for example, often enjoy much less support from Anglos than from African Americans (Kinder & Winter, 2001). There is reason to believe immigration opinions might display similar contours.

Indeed, significant differences between Whites and non-Whites on immigration have been documented for some time (Brader, Valentino, Ryan, & Jardina, 2010; see also Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2008). Brader et al. (2010) find that African Americans resist, much more than Anglos, media depictions of immigrants as harmful to American culture and economic strength. Anglos are also less likely than African Americans to support policies allowing undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States (e.g., Dimock, Doherty, & Suls, 2013). This is true despite the fact that African Americans, on average, experience greater competition from immigrants for jobs and wages (Borjas, 2001; Gay, 2006).

In order to understand how members of one disadvantaged minority group might come to support the rights of another *even when they are in direct competition over rights and resources*, we have proposed Group Empathy Theory (Sirin, Valentino, & Villalobos, 2016; see also Sirin et al., 2014, in press). In a two-wave national-survey experiment with a random sample of Anglos and stratified oversamples of African Americans and Latinos, we manipulated the racial/ethnic characteristics of detainees targeted by immigration officials in one study and airline passengers targeted by airport security in the context of terror threat in another study. In the latter study, for example, a vignette described an individual standing in line to board a plane. Airport security claims the man acted suspiciously when he said “It’s a go” on a phone prior to boarding. The man, on the other hand, claims he simply told his friend “I’ve got to go.” In one condition, the vignette included a picture of an Anglo and the other of an Arab. The Arab individual received substantially less support than the Anglo among Anglo respondents, but substantially more support among African Americans and Latinos. Individual- or group-level perceptions of terrorism threat did not explain this difference. In fact, African Americans and Latinos supported the Arab passenger even though they perceived themselves to be at significantly higher risk from terror attacks than did Anglo respondents. These findings are intriguing, but they also demand a more detailed explication of the presumed causal mechanism: group empathy. This study therefore explores the properties, potential causal antecedents, and policy consequences of group empathy in the United States.

Group Empathy Theory

The growing literature on empathy displays some conceptual ambiguity. Some studies define empathy narrowly, as the cognitive ability to detect an emotion occurring in another person (e.g., Dymond, 1949; Kerr & Speroff, 1954). Others view empathy as a multidimensional construct, encompassing not only the ability to detect emotions in others but also the motivation to care about the other person in that situation (e.g., Batson, 1991; Batson & Ahmad, 2009; Cikara, Bruneau, & Saxe, 2011; Davis, 1980, 1983; Gleichgerrcht & Decety, 2014). Neurophysiological evidence points toward a concomitant role of cognitive and affective processes underlying the empathic response (see, for example, Lamm, Batson, & Decety, 2007). Zaki (2014) argues the emotional component captures the drive for people to avoid or approach experiencing others’ emotions in the first place. These cognitive and affective dimensions—respectively labeled *perspective taking* and *empathic concern*—are thus both considered necessary for empathy (see Mathur, Harada, Lipke, & Chiao, 2010).

Individual-level empathy seems to appear very early in childhood and strengthen through adolescence, perhaps as a consequence of social experiences requiring complex and multidimensional representations of others (O’Brien, Konrath, Grünh, & Hagen, 2012). This cognitive ability is then paired

with the motivational dimension, such that understanding another's emotions can have significant behavioral and attitudinal consequences.

Empathy at the individual level is associated with a number of positive psychological traits such as life satisfaction, enriched social networks, self-esteem (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998), reduced aggressivity (Richardson, Hammock, Smith, Gardner, & Signo, 1994), and prosocial interpersonal behaviors (Davis, 1983; Rumble, Van Lange, & Parks, 2010; Wilhelm & Bekkers, 2010). As a result, the social, personality-based, and experiential roots of individual-level empathy have received significant attention (O'Brien et al., 2012).

Davis (1980, 1983) proposed a now widely used measure of dispositional empathy, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), which displays substantial test-retest reliability and validity (see Pulos, Elison, & Lennon, 2004). The general scale consists of 28 items designed to capture cognitive and affective dimensions of empathy. A *perspective-taking* dimension is tapped, for example, by an item asking respondents how well the statement "I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision" described them. *Empathic concern* for others is measured by items such as "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me." The IRI is predictive of a variety of positive outcomes such as relationship satisfaction (Davis & Oathout, 1987) and helping behaviors (Davis et al., 1999).

A small but growing literature has explored whether interpersonal empathy might also play a role in reducing conflict between social groups. The prospect of *intergroup empathy*, where individuals from one social group come to take the perspective of members of potentially threatening or competitive outgroups, is intriguing. Since empathy probably evolved as a means for ingroup members to detect and react to threats to intimates, outgroup empathy should be rare and perhaps even negatively associated with attachments to the ingroup (Cikara et al., 2011; Cikara, Bruneau, Van Bavel, & Saxe, 2014). Still, it seems plausible that empathy *across* group boundaries might help reduce group conflict and violence, and so psychologists have begun to explore when it might occur (Batson & Ahmad, 2009). Furthermore, interpersonal versus intergroup empathy might have very different consequences for policy opinions in domains such as immigration, terrorism, and the like.

Work in political psychology has begun to explore the notion of group-level empathy. Often referred to as *ethnocultural empathy*, this literature is often focused on the development of compassion among the majority toward oppressed groups. Studies have explored the conditions under which Anglos will express empathy toward African Americans (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Wang et al., 2003). This line of work confirms that taking the perspective of an outgroup member can reduce racial stereotypes. It does not, however, explore where that kind of empathy comes from, how common it is, or what consequences it has for policy opinion and political behavior (if any). We take up these questions and explore the possibility that social groups may differ in the extent to which they express group-level empathy. We believe such differences might explain gaps in opinion on important policy issues.

We posit that empathy for outgroups emerges at a young age, as a result of socialization experiences. To take the perspective of another person, it helps to have in memory a repertoire of relevant experiences (Cao, 2010; Smither, 1977). We expect members of historically oppressed groups to be better able to perceive and relate to *other* minorities experiencing discrimination, especially when it mirrors their own group's experiences. A salient narrative of group oppression and struggle may in fact trigger empathy toward another experiencing discrimination (Eklund, Andersson-Straberg, & Hansen, 2009; Hoffman, 2000). According to Group Empathy Theory, therefore, historically disadvantaged groups (e.g., minorities and women) might find it easier to imagine themselves in the position of a person being unfairly treated, *even when that person comes from a different group* (Sirin et al., 2014, 2016, in press).

We suspect that demographic dimensions like race/ethnicity, gender, education, and age, may shape life experiences such as exposure to discrimination, intergroup contact, and economic

competition. These socialization experiences will, in turn, trigger sensitivity to the struggles of out-groups. Such experiences are likely to vary significantly across groups, and they will impact the lens through which people see the world. Minority group children, for example, might develop empathy as a result of their own experiences with discrimination or via the stories they hear about the struggles of their family and friends.

Gender differences in self-reported empathy at the individual level are well established (Davis, 1980; De Corte et al., 2007). These differences may emerge from the gender imbalance in the duration and quality of child-rearing experiences between men and women in most societies. Eagly's (1987) Social Role Theory, for example, suggests that the historical division of labor in heterosexual relationships—which has set women as primary caregivers—might lead to many of the gender differences we currently observe in attitudes and behavior (see also Eagly, Eastwick, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2009). We expect gender differences in individual-level empathy might also extend to the group level, since the gender gap in policy opinion has been traced more fundamentally to “compassion” issues such as social welfare support rather than those benefiting women more narrowly (Hutchings, Valentino, Philip, & White, 2004).

Empathy also seems to increase with age (Erikson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1989), though its growth may not be linear throughout the lifespan (O'Brien et al., 2012). As people move from adolescence to adulthood, they build increasingly sophisticated cognitive representations of other people's emotional experiences (e.g., Collins, 2003). Friendships, child-rearing, and workplace relationships may enhance the development of empathy. Education is also expected to boost group empathy through life experiences that are common in school settings (Cooper, 2011). The quality and quantity of contact with other groups is likely to be higher in school than in other contexts. In addition, older Americans and those who have achieved a higher socioeconomic status through education may experience less workplace competition. Therefore, we expect older and more educated Americans to exhibit higher levels of group empathy. We also explore the impact of income, metropolitan versus suburban or rural residence, Catholic identification, and household size as potential sociodemographic predictors of group empathy.

Hypotheses

We first examine measurement hypotheses related to our “Group Empathy Index” (GEI), which is a modification of Davis's IRI, discussed above, in order to determine its reliability and validity. We expect the GEI will be distinguishable from other key group-based predispositions such as social dominance orientation (SDO), authoritarianism, and ethnocentrism (H1a). We also perform a predictive validity test: We anticipate that group empathy should be a much better predictor of empathic social behaviors than these other predispositions (H1b).

Second, we test the theory's central claim about the social origins of group empathy. We suspect race/ethnicity, education, age, and gender may affect group empathy by structuring the social contexts in which people live (H2a). The life experiences that spring from these social contexts—exposure to discrimination, the quality and quantity of contact with other groups, and perceptions of intergroup economic competition—should also predict group empathy (H2b). These life experiences should mediate the effect of sociodemographic factors on group empathy (H2c). Though a cross-sectional survey design is not ideal for studying socialization processes such as these, ours is a preliminary yet vital examination of some of the possible mechanisms that produce group empathy.

Finally, we examine the consequences of group empathy for political attitudes and behavior. We expect group empathy will uniquely and powerfully affect policy opinion and behavior in domains such as immigration and national security, independent of other political predispositions such as social dominance orientation, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, political ideology, and party identification

Table 1. Group Empathy Index (GEI)*Perspective-Taking Items (Cognitive Subcomponent of Group Empathy)*

- I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both, including for issues involving other racial or ethnic groups.
- I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the “other person’s” point of view, particularly someone from another race or ethnicity. (R)
- When I’m upset at someone from another racial or ethnic group, I usually try to “put myself in their shoes” for a while.
- I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement (including those of other racial or ethnic groups) before I make a decision.
- I sometimes try to better understand people of other racial or ethnic groups by imagining how things look from their perspective.
- If I’m sure I’m right about something, I don’t waste much time listening to the arguments of people, particularly those of other racial or ethnic groups. (R)
- Before criticizing somebody from another racial or ethnic group, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.

Empathic Concern Items (Affective Subcomponent of Group Empathy)

- I often have tender, concerned feelings for people from another racial or ethnic group who are less fortunate than me.
- The misfortunes of other racial or ethnic groups do not usually disturb me a great deal. (R)
- I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person towards people of another racial or ethnic group.
- When I see someone being treated unfairly due to their race or ethnicity, I sometimes don’t feel very much pity for them. (R)
- Sometimes I don’t feel very sorry for people of other racial or ethnic groups when they are having problems. (R)
- When I see someone being taken advantage of due to their race or ethnicity, I feel kind of protective towards them.
- I am often quite touched by things that I see happen to people due to their race or ethnicity.

Note. R = Reversed items.

(H3). The political effects of group empathy should also be independent of individual-level dispositional empathy, as measured by the IRI (H4).

Sample

To test our hypotheses, we contracted with GfK Knowledge Networks to conduct a national survey with a randomized sample of Anglos and randomized, stratified oversamples of African Americans and Latinos in December 2013 to January 2014. A total of 1,799 respondents participated in the survey, which consisted of 633 Anglos, 614 African Americans, and 552 Latinos. The completion rate for the survey among those who had already agreed to participate in the ongoing Knowledge Panel was 67% for Anglos, 51% for African Americans, and 46% for Latinos. The cumulative response rate, which incorporates refusals to join the Knowledge Panel and is closest to the AAPOR RR1 standard, is 4.9%. In the analyses that follow, we use poststratification sampling weights provided by GfK on racial/ethnic group strata to bring the oversampled groups to their population proportions.

Measuring Group Empathy

To measure group empathy, we generated a 14-item “Group Empathy Index” (GEI) by adapting the perspective-taking and empathic-concern subscales of the IRI, discussed above, to have respondents focus on outgroups rather than their individual-level, interpersonal experiences. Table 1 lists the group-specific versions of each of the IRI items in these subscales. For example, we altered the perspective-taking item discussed above (“I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement before I make a decision”) to focus on outgroups: “I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement

(including those of other racial or ethnic groups) before I make a decision.” The empathic concern item discussed above (“I often have tender, concerned feelings for people who are less fortunate than me”) became: “I often have tender, concerned feelings for people from another racial or ethnic group who are less fortunate than me.” As with the original scale, the response options were placed on a 5-point scale ranging from “describes me extremely well” to “does not describe me well at all.”

Concerns about social desirability biases in self-reported measures of empathy like the IRI have recently been raised (Feldman, 2014). In particular, the substantial gender differences found in self-reported empathy may be driven mostly by social desirability: Men and women may differ in the degree to which they view empathy as a societally valued trait for their group and thus may misrepresent their actual level of empathy to an interviewer. Evidence for this comes mostly from the much smaller gender gap in an alternative measure of empathic ability referred to as the Mind in the Eyes Test (Baron-Cohen, Jolliffe, Mortimore, & Robertson, 1997). This test measures only the ability to correctly identify the emotional state of another person based solely on the expression in their eyes. While we are intrigued by the possibility of incorporating alternative measures of group-level empathy, we believe the GEI is distinctly useful for two reasons.

First, while gender differences in self-reported empathy are plausibly the result of social desirability, it is not clear how such bias would affect entire racial/ethnic groups. Second and more importantly, the GEI captures something the Mind in the Eyes Test does not: motivation. As we have argued above, empathic *ability*—the skill to identify an emotional state experienced by another—is a necessary condition for empathic responses, but it may not be sufficient. We think empathizing also implies one is motivated to take the perspective of that individual, vicariously experience the emotional state of that individual, and develop empathic concern for the well-being of that individual. These features of group-level empathy make the GEI a better measurement choice for distinctly measuring group- versus individual-level empathy. Further, the evidence we present below suggests the GEI provides a valid and reliable indicator of both critical dimensions. We do, however, believe these measurement approaches are complimentary, and we would welcome the application of implicit measures, including the Mind in the Eyes technique, for testing hypotheses related to Group Empathy Theory.

In addition to the GEI, which is general in nature, we also measured empathic concern and perspective taking toward specific groups in society. We did this to determine whether empathy is expressed exclusively for members of one’s own group or is also extended to members of outgroups. We expect minorities to display higher empathy for all outgroups, but particularly those who are disadvantaged. The instructions for the group-targeted empathic-concern measure read as follows: “For each of the following specific groups, how concerned do you feel about the challenges they face in our society these days?” The response options ranged from “very concerned” to “not at all concerned.” To measure group-targeted perspective-taking abilities, we asked respondents: “Regardless of the challenges another group faces, sometimes it is easier and other times more difficult to understand what members of a given group are going through. How easy is it for you to ‘put yourself in the shoes’ of individuals from each of the following groups in our society?” The response options ranged from “very easy” to “not easy at all.” Respondents evaluated several specific groups along these dimensions, including Anglos, African Americans, Arabs, Latinos, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and undocumented immigrants. We additively combined scores for the empathic-concern and perspective-taking submeasures to generate our group-targeted empathy measure.

Reliability and Validity of the Group Empathy Index (GEI)

We ran several analyses to examine the internal reliability and dimensionality of the GEI. The internal consistency of the measure is high (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$). In addition, the measure is

reliable for all three racial/ethnic subgroups in our sample ($\alpha_{Anglos} = .86$; $\alpha_{African\ Americans} = .83$; $\alpha_{Latinos} = .79$). An exploratory factor analysis further justifies the formation of a single Group Empathy Index.¹ The fit indices suggest a unidimensional underlying structure. The first factor predicts 62% of the variance, with an eigenvalue of 3.08 and factor loadings ranging from .75 to .81. No other eigenvalue is greater than .6. Moreover, the χ^2 difference test confirms significantly superior fit for the one-factor model over higher factor structures. Finally, the empathic-concern and perspective-taking dimensions are highly correlated ($r = .75$).

The fact that the GEI does not return a two-factor model with perspective taking and empathic concern as separate dimensions might seem contradictory to prior conceptualizations of empathy. However, this finding is consistent with recent studies that demonstrate these two subscales are part of a global unidimensional model of empathy (e.g., Alterman, McDermott, Cacciola, & Rutherford, 2003; Cliffordson, 2001; Litvack-Miller, McDougall, & Romney, 1997). We therefore consider perspective taking and empathic concern to be two key subdimensions of group empathy that together form the general group-empathy trait.

We also ran a predictive validity test on the GEI. Our survey included a question tapping respondents' motivation to intervene in a socially awkward situation where someone from a *different* group might feel insulted by a third party's jokes. We asked each respondent how likely they were to tell a person making racist jokes to stop, even if the jokes were not about the respondent's own racial/ethnic group. The response options ranged, on a 5-point scale, from "not at all likely" to "very likely." We expect a strong correlation between group empathy and responses to this item. By contrast, we do not expect this item to correlate highly with other group-relevant dimensions like SDO, authoritarianism, and ethnocentrism, because those predispositions do not tap the ability to experience another group's emotions and the motivation to help relieve their suffering.

We used a shortened version of the SDO battery consisting of agreement with four statements: (1) "It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom"; (2) "Inferior groups should stay in their place"; (3) "We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups" (reverse-coded); and (4) "We should increase social equality" (reverse-coded).² To measure authoritarianism, we employ the NES four-item authoritarianism scale tapping child-rearing attitudes. Respondents choose between pairs of desirable qualities in children that they deem more important: (1) independence versus respect for elders, (2) obedience versus self-reliance, (3) curiosity versus good manners, and (4) being considerate versus being well behaved. Those who choose "respect for elders," "obedience," "good manners," and "being well behaved" receive the maximum score on authoritarianism and those who choose "independence," "self-reliance," "curiosity," and "being considerate" score at the minimum. The child-rearing authoritarianism measure has been shown to be valid and reliable and correlates well with other measures of authoritarianism, such as Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) (Feldman, 2003; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009; but see Pérez & Hetherington, 2014). To measure ethnocentrism, we adopt Bizumic, Duckitt, Popadic, Dru, & Krauss's (2009) ethnocentrism scale that consists of four *intergroup* dimensions for ingroup preference, superiority, purity, and exploitativeness, and two *intragroup* dimensions for group cohesion and devotion. We chose one item from each dimension and generated an additive six-item index.

Intervening to discourage a "racist joke" correlates strongly with our general group-empathy index ($r = .38$). By contrast, zero-order correlations between SDO, authoritarianism, and ethnocentrism and responses to the "racist joke" question are very low ($r = .13$, $r = .02$, and $r = .08$, respectively). An ordinal logistic regression analysis with group empathy, SDO, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, and a host of

¹ We control for direction-of-wording effects by employing the strategy of item parcels with each parcel containing one pro-trait and one con-trait item.

² This shortened SDO scale is used by Sidanius and his colleagues in several studies (see, for example, Kteily, Sidanius, & Levin, 2011; Matthews, Levin, & Sidanius, 2009).

Table 2. Group Empathy as a Predictor of Motivation to Intervene in Order to Stop Derogatory Jokes About Another Racial/Ethnic Group

	Coef.	SE
Group Empathy	3.21***	(.40)
SDO	-.20	(.39)
Authoritarianism	.04	(.24)
Ethnocentrism	-.22	(.57)
Ideology	.04	(.40)
Party Identification	.09	(.29)
African Americans	.26	(.18)
Latinos	.33	(.18)
Age	.22	(.33)
Education	.25	(.58)
Female	.48***	(.14)
Income	-.21	(.32)
Metropolitan Residence	-.25	(.20)
Catholic	-.04	(.16)
Household Size	.43	(.47)
N	1724	

Note. Coefficients estimated using ordered logistic regression and adjusting for survey-sampling weights and stratification. Significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ level, two-tailed.

other controls including ideology, party identification, and key sociodemographic controls returns the same result. Table 2 displays the results for this model, demonstrating empathy has a strong and statistically significant, positive effect on one's likelihood to intervene to discourage racist jokes targeting other groups ($p < .001$). Other group-relevant dimensions have no effect. Our measure of group empathy, then, is empirically distinct from other group-relevant predispositions and exhibits strong internal reliability and predictive validity. These results are supportive of measurement Hypotheses 1a and 1b.

Antecedents of Group Empathy

We next explore potential antecedents of group empathy posited by the theory: sociodemographic categories and life experiences. Our intuition is that group-based empathy will be strongly conditioned by socialization processes occurring in the demographic contexts in which people grow up and live. In other words, life experiences should mediate the relationship between demographic contexts and group-level empathy. As we mentioned above, our cross-sectional survey design is not ideally suited for examining socialization processes like the one we posit, both because our sample does not include adolescents and because we cannot observe changes over time. Ours is, therefore, mainly a preliminary yet informative exploration into the impact of sociodemographic factors that structure group empathy.

Table 3 presents the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression results for sociodemographic factors and life experiences (Models 1 and 2) along with an omnibus model (Model 3). The results of Model 1 are presented in column 1 of Table 3, showing the impact of sociodemographic factors on general group empathy. As predicted, African Americans and Latinos both display higher levels of group empathy than Anglos. In addition, age, female gender, and especially education boost group empathy. These results are supportive of Hypothesis 2a.

Catholic respondents in our sample exhibit somewhat *less* group empathy compared to non-Catholics, but this is after we control for Latino identity, a heavily Catholic group. Anglo Catholics, in other words, are less empathic than other Anglos in this sample. By comparison, income,

Table 3. Antecedents of Group Empathy

	Model 1 Sociodemographics		Model 2 Life Experiences		Model 3 Full Model	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
African Americans	.04*	(.02)			.03*	(.01)
Latinos	.04*	(.02)			.03*	(.02)
Age	.10**	(.04)			.12***	(.03)
Education	.16**	(.06)			.06	(.05)
Female	.05***	(.01)			.04**	(.01)
Income	-.04	(.03)			-.07**	(.03)
Metropolitan Residence	-.01	(.02)			-.02	(.02)
Catholic	-.04*	(.02)			-.04**	(.02)
Household Size	.05	(.05)			.07	(.04)
Discrimination			.03*	(.02)	.04*	(.02)
Contact Quality			.35***	(.04)	.35***	(.04)
Contact Quantity			.06**	(.02)	.07**	(.02)
Economic Competition			-.07**	(.02)	-.07**	(.02)
Constant	.41***	(.05)	.32***	(.03)	.25***	(.05)
N	1781		1760		1742	

Note. Coefficients estimated using OLS regression and adjusting for survey-sampling weights and stratification. Significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ level, two-tailed.

metropolitan residence, and household size are unrelated to empathy once the other sociodemographic factors are taken into account.

Table 3, Model 2 analyzes the link between key life experiences and group empathy. Specifically, this model includes personal experience of discrimination, the quality and quantity of intergroup contact, as well as perceived economic competition with other groups. To measure personal experience of discrimination, we asked respondents how fairly (ranging from “very fairly” to “very unfairly”) they felt they were treated by law enforcement. To measure the quality of intergroup contact, we asked respondents to evaluate the nature of their interactions with members of other groups across five dimensions: superficial, voluntary, cooperative, pleasant, and equal in status (adopted from Islam & Hewstone, 1993). We then generated an additive scale for contact quality. To measure the quantity (i.e., frequency) of intergroup contact, we asked respondents: “In general, how often do you have contact with people of other racial or ethnic groups in your daily life?” The response options ranged, on a 5-point scale, from “almost never” to “very often.” We also included in the survey a measure (adopted from Oliver & Wong, 2003) that taps into perceptions of economic competition based on respondents’ level of agreement with the following statement: “More good jobs for other racial or ethnic groups mean fewer good jobs for my own group.”

The results are consistent with our expectations about the link between life experiences and group empathy (H2b). Those who report they have experienced unfair treatment by law enforcement exhibit significantly higher levels of group empathy. The quality of contact with other groups makes an even bigger contribution, in fact the largest of any variable in the model. The quantity of contact with other groups also boosts group empathy, though more modestly. Perceived economic competition, on the other hand, is negatively associated with group empathy, as we predicted. In general, these results are consistent with our theoretical expectations about the antecedents of group empathy.

We next combine Models 1 and 2 in order to explore our prediction that life experiences mediate the relationship between sociodemographics and group empathy. If so, the social demographic context should become less powerful as a predictor of empathy when we include the mediators in the model. This is exactly what happens for race/ethnicity, education, and gender, suggesting partial mediation

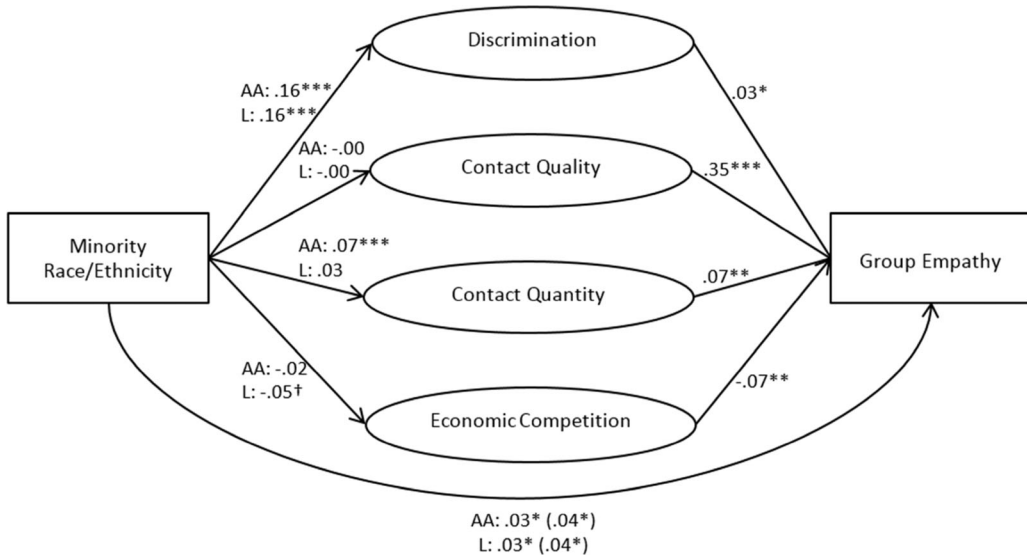


Figure 1. Path analyses for race/ethnicity, life experiences, and group empathy. Path coefficients estimated using structural equation modeling, adjusting for survey-sampling weights and stratification, and controlling for all sociodemographics included in Table 3. “AA” denotes African Americans and “L” denotes Latinos. Anglo respondents constitute the baseline category. The unmediated path (*path c*) shown in parentheses. Significant at † $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ level, two-tailed.

may be present. Also interesting, the negative coefficient on income becomes statistically significant in this full model, suggesting empathy may decline with income, all else equal. Age, though a significant predictor of empathy in Model 1, cannot be mediated by life experiences because its impact is not diminished when we control for life experiences. Personal experience of discrimination, as well as the quality and quantity of intergroup contact, remain significant predictors of group empathy in the fully specified model.

As a preliminary test of our mediation hypotheses, we conduct path analyses with generalized structural equation modeling (GSEM), adjusting for survey sampling weights and stratification. We thus explore how life experiences mediate sociodemographic factors (specifically race/ethnicity, education, and gender) that were found to be powerful predictors of empathy in Model 1 but were further diminished when life experiences were included in the omnibus model (Model 3). Since we have only a cross-sectional observational design, structural equations modeling cannot conclusively rule out all other theoretically plausible causal models. With these data, we can only make the more modest claim that our results are not inconsistent with the causal story we propose.

We first estimate the effect of each demographic characteristic on (1) personal experience of discrimination, (2) contact quality, (3) contact quantity, and (4) economic competition as our mediators (*path a*) and then estimate the effect of each of these factors on group empathy while controlling for each demographic factor (*path b*). Finally, we estimate the direct effect of each demographic factor on group empathy while controlling for these factors (*path c'*) and compare it to its coefficient in the unmediated model (*path c*). Each model also controls for all the other variables in the omnibus model presented in Table 3. After obtaining path coefficients, we test the significance of indirect effects using a bootstrap procedure that yields bias-corrected confidence intervals.

Figure 1 displays the mediating role life experiences play regarding the impact of racial/ethnic background on empathy. We see that both African Americans and Latinos report significantly more experience with discrimination than Anglos and that experience significantly boosts group empathy.

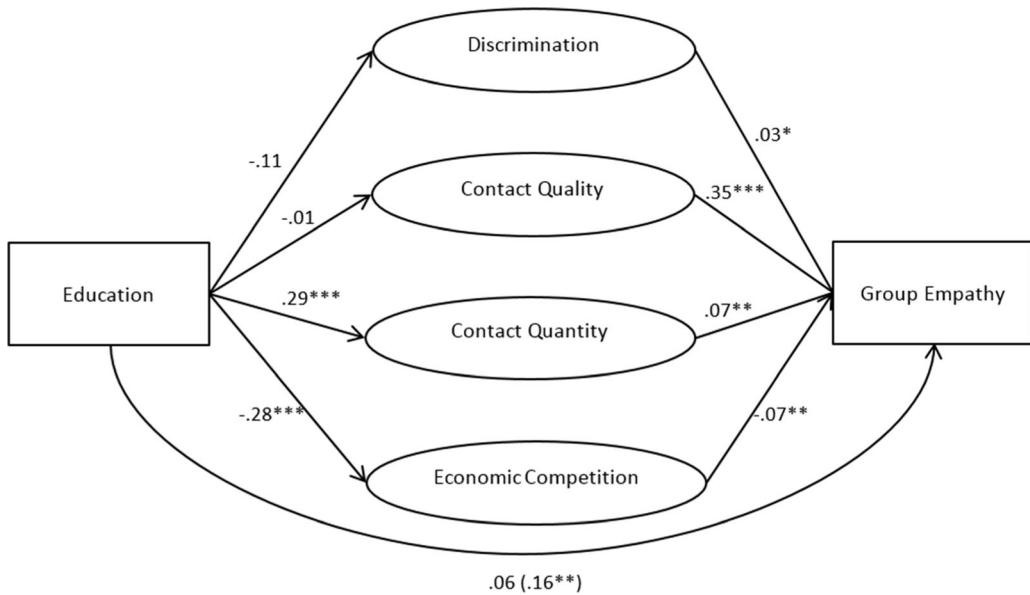


Figure 2. Path analyses for education, life experiences, and group empathy. Path coefficients estimated using structural equation modeling, adjusting for survey-sampling weights and stratification, and controlling for all sociodemographics included in Table 3. The unmediated path (*path c*) shown in parentheses. Significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ level, two-tailed.

The quantity of contact also seems to drive some of the empathy differences between African Americans and Anglos, but the same is not true for Latinos. Surprisingly, perhaps, the quality of the contact between these groups does not explain racial/ethnic group differences in empathy. We also see that Latinos are somewhat less likely than Anglos to perceive themselves in direct economic competition with other groups, and this helps boost their empathy for outgroups since the link between competition and empathy is negative. In general, these results suggest the roots of group empathy lay at least partially in the typical life experiences of individuals from various racial/ethnic groups. That said, while somewhat reduced in magnitude, the direct path between race/ethnicity and group empathy remains significant for both African Americans and Latinos after controlling for life experiences. Therefore, other forces must be at work as well to explain the group-empathy differences we find.

Figure 2 displays the same path analyses as before, but with education as the distal predictor. Education does not influence perceptions of discrimination or contact quality, but it does strongly boost contact quantity and reduces the sense that groups are in economic conflict. These life experiences for the highly educated in turn powerfully boost empathy. Because education brings people into contact with diverse groups, it may help individuals develop the complex cognitive and affective representations necessary to empathize with others while also reducing perceived economic conflict.

Finally, Figure 3 displays the results of our path analysis for gender as the distal predictor. Overall, women display significantly higher levels of group empathy than men. They also report lower levels of perceived economic competition with other groups. Notably, gender differences are still quite significant even after taking these mediating paths into consideration. The causal antecedents of gender differences in group empathy therefore require further attention.

In sum, these results confirm our expectation that social-group differences in empathy spring at least in part from the distinct life experiences of group members (H2c). Since African Americans and Latinos are more likely to grow up experiencing discrimination, they are more likely to identify it

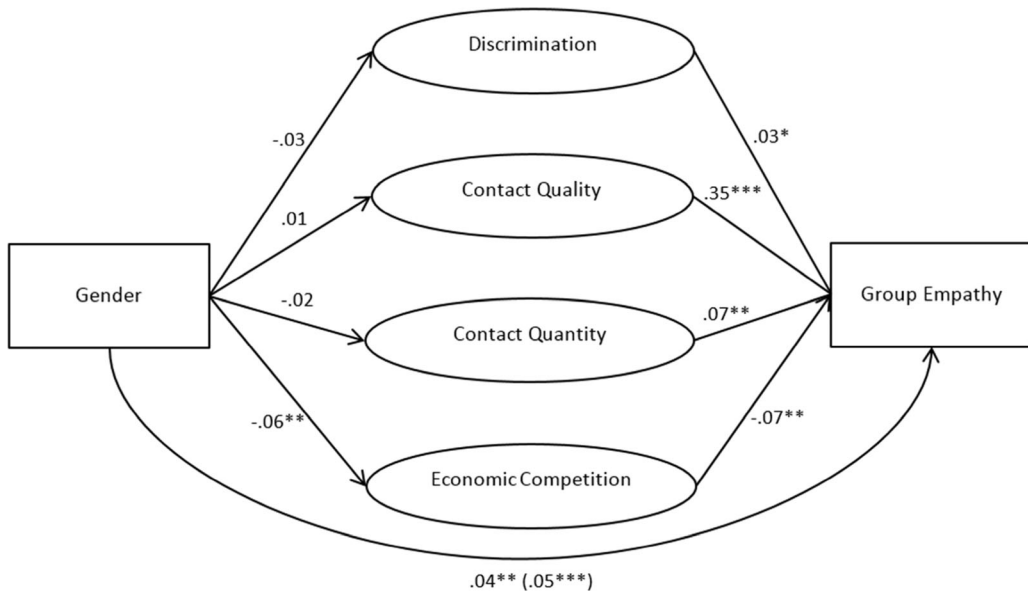


Figure 3. Path analyses for gender, life experiences, and group empathy. Path coefficients estimated using structural equation modeling, adjusting for survey-sampling weights and stratification, and controlling for all sociodemographics included in Table 3. The unmediated path (*path c*) shown in parentheses. Significant at $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$ level, two-tailed.

when it is happening to someone from another group. As the diversity of contact increases for the most educated, their empathy also grows. Of course, while other causal relationships could produce the correlations we observe here, these results provide a foundation for future work to explore the socialization processes that may lead to variation in group empathy.

Minority Differences: Higher Empathy for Outgroups or Antipathy Toward the Majority?

We further explore the link between race/ethnicity and group empathy by conducting multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) with Bonferroni correction for post hoc multiple comparisons of group means, while controlling for all other sociodemographic factors included in our previous models. The results are presented in Table 4. African Americans and Latinos report higher levels of empathy than do Anglos toward a wide variety of outgroups, including African Americans, Arabs, Latinos, Catholics, Muslims, and undocumented immigrants. African Americans express higher empathy for Jews in our sample than do both Anglos and Latinos, and all three groups are similarly empathic toward Protestants.

Importantly, Latino and African American respondents do not differ from Anglo respondents in their empathy toward Anglos. This suggests that group empathy is not simply a measure of ingroup preference among Anglos or a measure of outgroup antipathy among African Americans and Latinos toward Anglos. Of course, one would expect each group's empathy score for their own group to be higher than that for other groups. This is especially true for African Americans, who score .80 in their empathy toward African Americans. But African Americans also express nearly the same level of empathy toward Latinos (.62) as Latinos do for their own group (.66). Additionally, African Americans (.43) and Latinos (.42) express as much empathy toward Anglos as Anglos do for their own group (.43). These results are in line with Mathur et al.'s (2010) findings (based on the fMRI of neural

Table 4. Racial/Ethnic Differences in Group Empathy

	Anglos		African Americans		Latinos	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
General Group Empathy	.55	(.01)	.60***	(.01)	.59**	(.01)
Empathy for Anglos	.43	(.01)	.43	(.01)	.42	(.01)
Empathy for African Americans	.43	(.01)	.80***	(.01)	.51***	(.01)
Empathy for Arabs	.34	(.01)	.50***	(.01)	.41***	(.01)
Empathy for Latinos	.42	(.01)	.62***	(.01)	.66***	(.01)
Empathy for Catholics	.46	(.01)	.51*	(.01)	.48*	(.01)
Empathy for Jews	.44	(.01)	.49**	(.01)	.42	(.01)
Empathy for Muslims	.33	(.01)	.51***	(.01)	.38**	(.01)
Empathy for Protestants	.47	(.01)	.47	(.01)	.44	(.01)
Empathy for Undocumented Immigrants	.34	(.01)	.51***	(.01)	.50***	(.01)
<i>N</i>	627		605		546	

Note. Estimated group means calculated using MANCOVA with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons and controlling for key sociodemographic factors. The stars denote which group means for African Americans and Latinos are statistically distinct from those for Anglos. Significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ level, two-tailed.

activity) demonstrating that while African Americans tend to respond with empathy to the pain of ingroup members, this does not dampen their empathy toward outgroup targets.

If the GEI simply taps ingroup identification or outgroup animosity, we would also expect a *negative* correlation between ingroup versus outgroup empathy. This should be especially true for African Americans and Latinos, who might see Anglos as the major source of discrimination toward their group. However, our theory suggests that group empathy is acquired early in life and then applied generally to outgroups. Therefore, we would expect African Americans and Latinos who empathize with their own group should also be more likely to empathize with Anglos (and other groups). This is exactly what we find. First, regarding the pooled responses across all three respondent racial/ethnic groups, the average correlation of empathy for all targeted groups is positive and large ($r = .55$). The average correlation between ingroup empathy and empathy for all outgroups is .52 for Anglos, .39 for African Americans, and .51 for Latinos. African Americans who empathize with their own group are also significantly more likely to empathize with Anglos, and the pattern holds for Latinos. There are in fact no negative correlations between ingroup and outgroup empathy for any of the groups we studied.

How About Linked Fate?

Perhaps African Americans and Latinos feel a sense of linked fate with other minority groups, and this drives our findings rather than the empathy process we describe. To address this possibility, we conducted another survey via Knowledge Networks with a separate pool of 621 randomly selected participants (with oversamples of African Americans and Latinos) that included a measure of linked fate. Specifically, we asked respondents: “When you hear that something good or bad happens to each of the following groups, to what extent do you feel that your life is similarly affected by the fate of each group?”

The results demonstrate that African Americans and Latinos feel *no more linked fate* toward other minority groups than they do toward Anglos (see Figure 4). We also examined the correlations between (1) *ingroup*-linked fate and *outgroup* empathy and (2) *outgroup*-linked fate and *outgroup* empathy observed among minority respondents. Both sets of analyses employing Fisher’s Z transformations with 95% confidence intervals demonstrate that the correlations between linked fate and empathy for Anglos are not statistically different from correlations between linked fate and empathy for minority

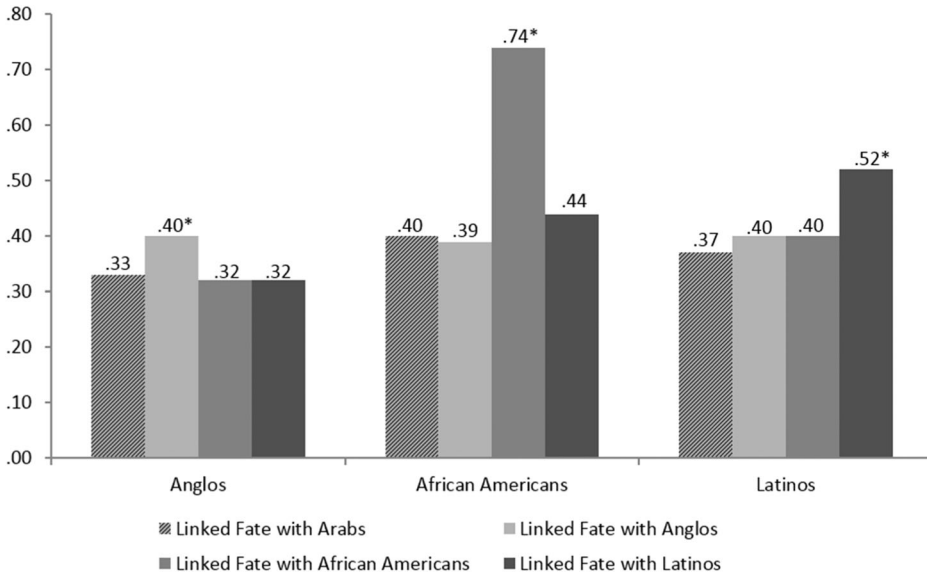


Figure 4. Ingroup- and outgroup-linked fate. Estimated group means calculated using ANCOVA. Covariates are age, education, gender, ideology, income, metropolitan residence, and religion. The stars denote which means are statistically distinct from the others (based on multivariate tests of means). Significant at $*p < .05$ level, two-tailed.

outgroups observed among African American and Latino respondents (see Figures 5 and 6). These results suggest that group empathy differs from linked fate both conceptually and empirically.

Political Consequences of Group Empathy

Next we examine the consequences of group empathy regarding *policy opinions* and *political action*. If empathy is acquired at a young age, it should condition policy views and political behavior across a number of domains. For policy consequences, we focus on two dimensions: (1) attitudes toward undocumented immigrants and (2) the trade-off between civil liberties and national security with regard to terrorism. For political action, we examine the effect of group empathy on (1) volunteerism to help outgroups and (2) rallying behavior to defend minority group rights. Our goal is to provide a strict test of the GEI’s impact on these domains, so we control for a host of other group-relevant and general political predispositions including SDO, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, ideology, and party identification. Furthermore, we test to see if the GEI holds up as a predictor of these dimensions even after we control for the life experiences and sociodemographic correlates examined above.

To measure views about undocumented immigrants, we adopted a scale developed by Hetherington and Weiler (2009) that presents respondents with a pair of statements about undocumented immigrants and asks them which statement comes closer to their own point of view. Statement A asserts that “Undocumented immigrants are lawbreakers, plain and simple, and Congress needs to pass laws that make them pay for breaking the law.” Statement B states “Undocumented immigrants often come to the United States to make a better life for their families. Even if they technically violate the law, we need to give them some way of making it here.” Respondents chose which statement is closer to their view and how strongly they felt that way (from *somewhat strongly* to *very strongly*). Based on responses to this question, we built an ordinal measure for which higher values indicate favorable attitudes toward undocumented immigrants.

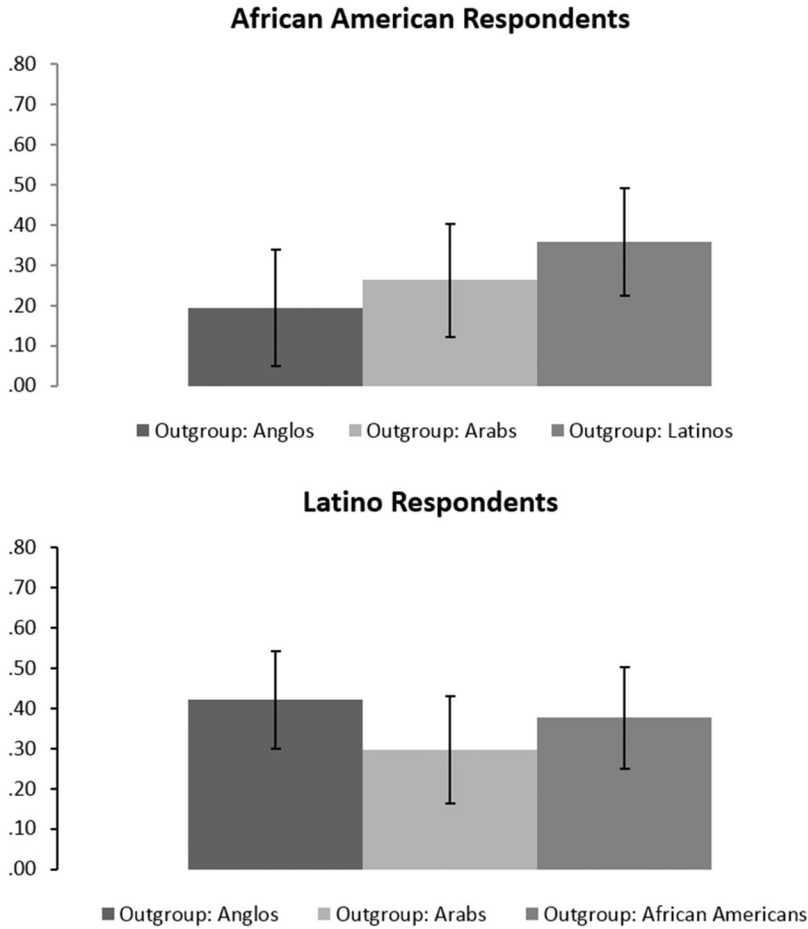


Figure 5. Correlation between *ingroup*-linked fate and *outgroup* empathy among minority respondents (Fisher’s Z transformations with 95% confidence intervals).

Table 5 displays the results of our ordered logistic regression analysis of attitudes about undocumented immigrants. We predicted that group empathy would boost positive attitudes about immigrants. To gauge the magnitude of these effects, we simulate changes in predicted probabilities for various outcomes of our dependent variable at different levels of group empathy while keeping the other variables in our model at their observed values. The probability of “very strongly” supporting undocumented immigrants is 9% if we set group empathy at its minimum level. It doubles to 18% when group empathy is maximized.

As for other predispositions, SDO has a significant and negative effect on positive attitudes toward immigrants, and the effect is even larger than empathy. The stronger one identifies as a liberal or a Democrat, the more positive one’s views are toward undocumented immigrants. Authoritarianism and ethnocentrism, on the other hand, are not significantly related to attitudes about immigrants. These results hold even with controls for life experiences and sociodemographics. This is reassuring, because it further suggests that group empathy’s downstream consequences are not simply a function of other differences between groups.

We observe a similar pattern regarding the link between group empathy and opinions about trading civil liberties for increased national security in dealing with terrorism threat. To measure opinions

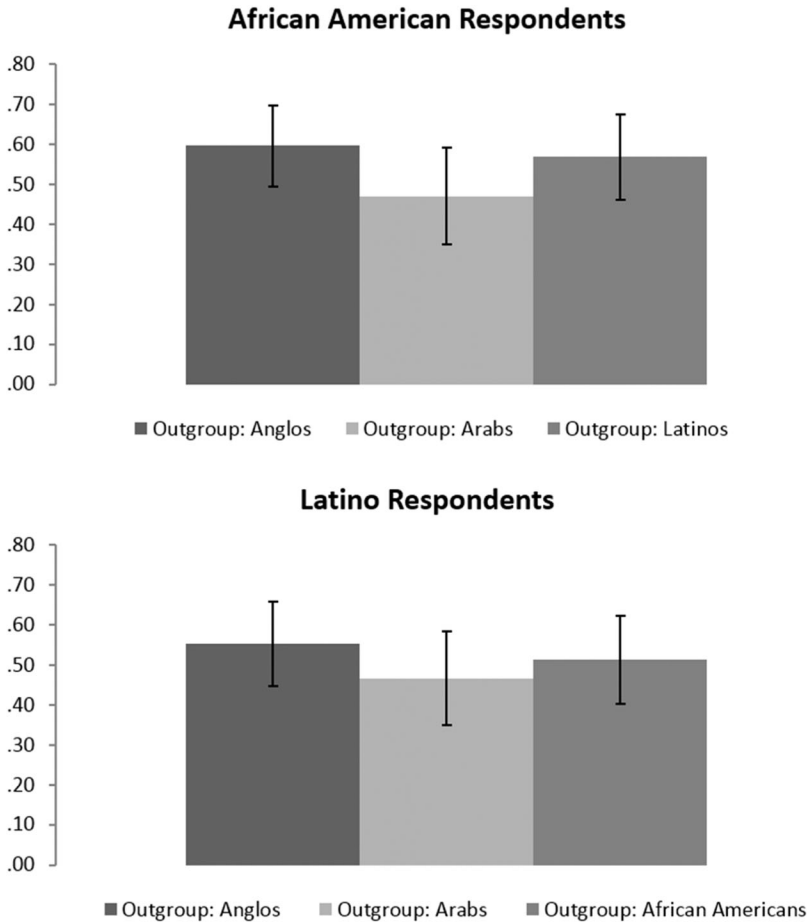


Figure 6. Correlation between linked fate with and empathy for *outgroups* among minority respondents (Fisher’s Z transformations with 95% confidence intervals).

about this policy trade-off, we asked respondents a battery of terrorism-related questions, which included the following: “When it comes to the issue of national security, how concerned are you about the possibility of a violation of civil rights and liberties?” The response options ranged from “not at all concerned” to “very concerned” on a 5-point scale. The GEI is powerfully associated with a concern for violations of civil rights and liberties in order to protect national security. Moving from the lowest to highest level of group empathy more than doubles the probability of being concerned about civil liberties (from 19 to 46%).

In contrast, SDO, authoritarianism, ideology, and party identification are unrelated to the trade-off between civil liberties and national security. Interestingly, the effect of ethnocentrism is positive for civil liberties concerns. This may be because people who are ethnocentric are likely to be concerned about their *own* groups’ civil rights and liberties being violated. These results hold, once again, even when controlling for life experiences and sociodemographic influences. This suggests that empathy is a very powerful and consistent predictor of how people balance between civil liberties and national security concerns.

Finally, we examine the link between group empathy and political action in the forms of outgroup-oriented volunteerism and rally attendance. The survey instructed respondents to “Imagine

Table 5. The Link Between Group Empathy and Policy Opinion

	Attitudes About Undocumented Immigrants		Attitudes About Civil Liberties–National Security Trade-Off	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
<i>Predispositions</i>				
Group Empathy	1.46***	(.42)	1.50***	(.45)
SDO	−2.23***	(.46)	−.58	(.47)
Authoritarianism	−.06	(.25)	−.47	(.25)
Ethnocentrism	−.93	(.54)	1.27*	(.57)
Ideology	.84*	(.36)	−.57	(.33)
Party Identification	1.11***	(.28)	.01	(.24)
<i>Life Experiences</i>				
Discrimination	−.03	(.20)	.16	(.22)
Contact Quality	−.29	(.40)	.26	(.48)
Contact Quantity	−.49	(.27)	.84**	(.29)
Economic Competition	−.26	(.29)	.15	(.28)
<i>Sociodemographics</i>				
African Americans	.26	(.18)	.08	(.18)
Latinos	1.00***	(.20)	.08	(.18)
Age	.11	(.36)	−.38	(.35)
Education	.85	(.62)	−.66	(.57)
Female	.04	(.14)	.28*	(.14)
Income	−.11	(.32)	−.24	(.33)
Metropolitan Residence	.40*	(.19)	−.27	(.21)
Catholic	.20	(.17)	−.17	(.17)
Household Size	.11	(.47)	.03	(.44)
N	1682		1693	

Note. Coefficients estimated using ordered logistic regression and adjusting for survey-sampling weights and stratification. Significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ level, two-tailed.

someone asked you to volunteer to clean up a neighborhood in a dangerous part of town where most of the residents were from a racial or ethnic group different than yours. How likely would you be to agree to do that?” We also asked respondents how likely they were to attend a rally to protest discrimination levied against another racial/ethnic group. The response options for both items ranged from “not likely at all” to “extremely likely” on a 5-point scale.

The results presented in Table 6 demonstrate that group empathy may powerfully mobilize civic participation. Empathy is in fact the strongest predictor of both political action measures. Only 2% of those lowest in group empathy are predicted to volunteer to clean up a neighborhood other than their own, but this climbs to 66% when empathy is at its maximum. Similarly, the predicted probability for being very likely to attend a rally in defense of an outgroup is less than 5% when group empathy is set to its minimum but rises to over 28% for those high in group empathy. Among other psychological and political predispositions, only ideology has a significant effect on volunteerism; the more liberal one identifies, the higher the likelihood of volunteering to help outgroups. Regarding rallying behavior, SDO has a significant and negative effect, while the effects of authoritarianism and ethnocentrism are insignificant. Liberals are also somewhat more likely to attend a rally in support of an outgroup, once the other predispositions are controlled. The results again hold despite controls for key life experiences and sociodemographics. Overall, these findings strongly corroborate Hypothesis 3.

Our final hypothesis suggests that, as a group-centric measure, the GEI should be a much better predictor of policy opinions and political behavior than the IRI, which focuses on interpersonal empathy. Individual-level empathy should be a weaker predictor of policy opinions because many policy issues—particularly those like immigration, affirmative action, and social welfare—are perceived as

Table 6. The Link Between Group Empathy and Political Action

	Volunteerism to Help Other Groups		Rallying to Defend the Rights of Other Groups	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Predispositions				
Group Empathy	3.74***	(.47)	2.41***	(.49)
SDO	-.40	(.46)	-1.17**	(.42)
Authoritarianism	.25	(.25)	-.21	(.25)
Ethnocentrism	-.13	(.58)	-.66	(.52)
Ideology	.93**	(.35)	.87*	(.37)
Party Identification	-.28	(.26)	.28	(.27)
Life Experiences				
Discrimination	.18	(.21)	.28	(.20)
Contact Quality	.83*	(.41)	.42	(.42)
Contact Quantity	.56	(.28)	.10	(.25)
Economic Competition	-.37	(.26)	.16	(.27)
Sociodemographics				
African Americans	-.08	(.19)	.56**	(.19)
Latinos	.08	(.19)	.20	(.19)
Age	-.39	(.30)	-.72*	(.34)
Education	-.33	(.52)	-1.15	(.60)
Female	-.31*	(.14)	-.12	(.15)
Income	.16	(.29)	-.12	(.31)
Metropolitan Residence	.18	(.18)	-.24	(.21)
Catholic	-.22	(.18)	.08	(.18)
Household Size	.02	(.44)	.33	(.43)
N	1700		1687	

Note. Coefficients estimated using ordered logistic regression and adjusting for survey-sampling weights and stratification. Significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ level, two-tailed.

allocating rights and resources between social groups rather than between individuals. This expectation aligns well with a long line of scholarship that considers group ties as a powerful lens useful for making sense of the political world and as a primary focal point to shape one's political interests and demands (e.g., Brady & Sniderman, 1985; Dawson, 1994; Sanchez, 2006; see also Transue, 2007).

To test this hypothesis, we conducted an additional survey with 300 participants recruited from the Mechanical Turk interface. A randomly selected half of these participants were asked a set of questions that included the GEI. The other half were asked the same questions except we swapped the GEI out for the IRI.³ We then measured attitudes about punitive immigration policies with the following question: "How strongly do you support or oppose immigration policies aimed at capturing and deporting undocumented immigrants?" (ranging from "strongly support" to "strongly oppose").

Results of an ordered logistic regression analyses, displayed in Table 7, indicate that the GEI is indeed a far more powerful predictor of opposition to punitive immigration policies than is the IRI, even after controlling for key sociodemographic factors, partisanship, and ideology. Moving from the minimum to maximum level of group empathy led to a 52% decrease in the likelihood of "very strongly" supporting punitive immigration policies. On the other hand, the IRI was not significantly linked to this policy attitude. These findings further suggest that the GEI is not simply tapping into individual-level empathy but is linked to the ability to see the world from the perspective of an out-group, even one that is in competition with the ingroup.

³ Moving forward, scholars might also pursue a within-groups design by asking the same respondents to answer *both* the GEI and IRI to more directly compare the performance of the two measures at the individual level.

Table 7. Comparative Effects of the Group Empathy Index (GEI) and Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) on Opposition to Punitive Immigration Policies

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Group Empathy Index	3.01***	(.75)		
Interpersonal Reactivity Index			.54	(.66)
Partisanship	.45	(1.01)	.66	(.85)
Ideology	4.39***	(1.09)	3.89***	(.97)
Age	-2.47**	(.83)	-1.68*	(.75)
Gender (Female)	.50	(.33)	.31	(.31)
Education	.83	(.80)	.55	(.76)
Income	-1.19	(.70)	-.02	(.64)
Minority race/ethnicity	-.20	(.40)	.57	(.37)
Religion (Catholic)	.14	(.44)	-.58	(.51)
N	150		150	

Note. Coefficients estimated using ordered logistic regression. Significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ level, two-tailed.

Conclusion

In this study, we explored the measurement properties of a new indicator of group empathy. The Group Empathy Index (GEI) modifies the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) to measure empathy for broad social categories at the group level rather than at the individual level. The GEI is a reliable and valid indicator of the concept of group empathy. The GEI is not redundant with other group predispositions including ethnocentrism and social dominance, nor with personality styles like authoritarianism. We also found significant differences in group-empathy levels between people from different races and ethnicities, genders, educational strata, and age groups. These differences are often linked to key life experience such as the experience of discrimination, the quality and quantity of contact with members of other social groups, and perceived economic competition between groups. Finally, we found that group empathy powerfully and independently predicts policy views on immigration and national security and shapes political action.

It has long been noted that media depictions of various minorities may prime and reinforce negative stereotypes about such groups. Criminalizing depictions of undocumented immigrants is one example (e.g., Chavez, 2008). The construction of Arabs as hostile and violent after the attacks of 9/11 is another (e.g., Merskin, 2004). Very little work has been done, however, to see how such portrayals are received by minority versus majority groups in our society. Based on our findings, we would expect much different reactions conditioned by the distinct life experiences of minority groups, particularly vis-à-vis discrimination.

We also demonstrated that our results are not explained by antipathy for Anglos among minority groups. If this were the case, African Americans and Latinos should report significantly *lower* levels of empathy toward Anglos than Anglos do for their own group. This is not what we find. To the contrary, African Americans and Latinos have as much empathy for Anglos as Anglos themselves do. This is consistent with our notion that empathy is learned at an early age and is applied generally and rather automatically based on one's context and life experiences. Empathic reactions to others in distress will be the default reaction for such people.

We thus expect group empathy to be relatively weak only when relevant socialization processes did not occur. Many Anglos, for instance, may not grow up experiencing significant discrimination on the basis of their race. On average, though certainly not for every member of the group, Anglos might not be as sensitive to the plight of groups experiencing unfair treatment in society. The resulting

variation in empathy toward social groups other than one's own may thus have powerful political consequences, as the observational results suggest.

Additional research is needed, of course, to examine how and when group empathy is acquired during one's lifespan. Our research design is not suited for longitudinally tracking socialization processes, since it is a one-shot observational design and our sample does not include adolescents. Of course, studying socialization processes directly among young people is challenging, especially since no existing panel studies explicitly tap group empathy. Even a short panel design among adolescents with variation in their experiences with group-based discrimination could help trace the development of this dimension in a far more direct way. Finally, if our theory about the important role of group empathy is correct, these processes should occur not only among Americans but around the world. Expanding the current inquiry in these directions is a worthy endeavor.

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