

**What Can Issue Salience Teach Us About Inter-Minority Solidarity?
News and Panel Evidence on People of Color During the 2024 Presidential Campaign**

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Accumulating evidence reveals that solidarity between people of color is strongly associated with support for policies involving African Americans (*affirmative action*), Latinos (*undocumented immigration*), and Asian Americans (*high-skilled immigration*). Yet doubts remain about the direction of this relationship and whether it is conditioned by varied issue salience. We evaluate these links between inter-minority solidarity and policy support in the context of the 2024 U.S. presidential election. Using monthly newspaper data, Study 1 shows that during the 2024 election campaign the volume of news coverage on undocumented immigration and affirmative action was substantial while coverage about high-skilled immigration was minimal, suggesting solidarity's positive effects on policy support should emerge on those two salient issues. Guided by this insight, Study 2 leverages a three-wave panel survey of Asian, Black, Latino, and Multiracial adults overlapping with the 2024 campaign. We find that prior changes in a person's level of solidarity with people of color are positively related to their future support for affirmative action and undocumented immigration (but not high-skilled immigration), with no reverse patterns from policy support to solidarity. We synthesize these results with current insights about inter-minority politics and highlight new areas for future investigation.

As the U.S. continues diversifying racially and ethnically, the question of how various people of color (PoC) unify to reach shared political goals has gained renewed importance (e.g., Wilkinson 2015; Benjamin 2017; Merseth 2018; Chan and Jasso 2023). This sense of urgency is driven by one major lesson from more than three decades of research, namely, that the usual outcome in inter-minority relations is one of tension, conflict, and occasional violence – but much less commonly, cooperation (e.g., McClain and Karnig 1990; Meier et al. 2004; McClain et al. 2007; McClain et al. 2011).

New evidence suggests solidarity between people of color is a possible driver of political cooperation between African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and other racially stigmatized outgroups. Here, political psychologists are finding that elevated levels of PoC solidarity are positively and reliably correlated with Black adults' support for pro-Latino and pro-Asian policies. Moreover, higher solidarity levels among Latino and Asian adults are positively associated with their support for pro-Black policies and policies related to other racially stigmatized outgroups (Pérez et al. 2023a; Pérez et al. 2023b; Eidgahy and Pérez 2023; Pérez et al. 2024; Kim et al. 2025; Rogbeer et al. 2025; see also Cortland et al. 2017; Craig and Richeson 2012; Sirin et al. 2021).

This research operationalizes support for pro-outgroup policies with short scales of proposals that target specific racially stigmatized outgroups (Winter 2008; Pérez 2021): support for *affirmative action* (targeting Black people), support for flexible policies toward *unauthorized immigration* (targeting Latinos), and support for expansive policies related to *high-skilled immigrants* (targeting Asian people). Careful analyses of cross-sectional surveys with Asian, Black, Latino, and Multiracial adults show that the

relationship between solidarity and policy support operates in a substantively similar way across African American, Asian American, Latino, and Multiracial adults (Engelhardt et al. 2025; Pérez et al. 2025). That is, higher solidarity levels impel all people of color to support, at comparable strength, policies that affect a subgroup within the mega-category, *people of color*. This underscores the coherence of the mega-group, *people of color*, and the ability of these uniquely stigmatized groups (Zou and Cheryan 2017) to imagine themselves as fully emblematic of, and interchangeable with, this category in specific settings – an insight aligning neatly with classic research on the emergence and internal operation of ingroups more generally (Turner et al. 1987).

We revisit this connection between PoC solidarity and support for policies involving a racially stigmatized outgroup to yield new insights about U.S. inter-minority politics. Although cross-sectional work finds a strong correlation between PoC solidarity and support for pro-outgroup policies ($d \sim .79$), this association is highly vulnerable to confounding because solidarity's effects are not manipulated. Moreover, existing work on solidarity's political influence cannot determine whether this variable causally increases support for pro-outgroup policies, whether support for pro-outgroup policies causally increases solidarity levels, or both (Cole and Maxwell 2003). Clarifying this matter can help settle whether solidarity's political impacts are unidirectional, bidirectional, or both, with major theoretical implications for this literature.

In addition, we observe that the policy issues used in prior investigations of solidarity's effects are selected by researchers (Pérez 2021). Yet in mass politics, issue agendas are endogenous to debates between political elites, which means the salience of

issues—including those related to PoC—vary naturally and systematically (e.g., O’Neill 2024; Egan 2013; Valentino et al. 2013; Baumgartner and Jones 2009; Sniderman and Theriault 2004; Carmines and Stimson 1989). This raises a key question: to what extent does solidarity’s positive impact on support for pro-outgroup policies emerge in “real world” politics, where citizens’ attention is trained on some policy issues but not others? Evidence of solidarity’s real-life effects would extend our theoretical understanding of this key variable, while addressing an important phenomenon (i.e., inter-minority politics) with new, practical insights (Tropp 2025).

We report new evidence on PoC solidarity’s relationship with support for pro-outgroup policies and how it is affected by issue salience. Study 1 analyzes the prominence of affirmative action, undocumented immigration, and high-skilled immigration in public discourse during the 2024 U.S. presidential campaign (cf. Haynes, Merolla, and Ramakrishnan 2016). Descriptively, we find that month-to-month, major newspapers (i.e., *New York Times*, *L.A. Times*, *Wall Street Journal*) produced significantly more news coverage about undocumented immigration and affirmative action compared to high-skilled immigration, which makes the former issue pair more chronically salient on average (cf. Valentino et al. 2011).

Study 2 builds on this insight by evaluating whether solidarity’s positive association with policy support emerges only in policy domains that are highly visible in public discourse. We analyze three waves of the American Multiracial Panel Study (AMPS) with large national samples of African American, Asian American, Latino, and Multiracial respondents (N=3,402) (Goldman, Huo, Nteta, Pérez, and Tropp 2025). We

analyze these data using a random intercept cross-lagged panel model (RI-CLPM), which decouples stable between-person differences in our variables from changing within-person dynamics in these same constructs, which is what we are interested in (Osborne and Sibley 2020; Hamaker et al. 2015). This approach also has the advantage of yielding results that are robust to time-invariant confounders (e.g., race/ethnicity of respondent, age, gender) (Rohrer and Murayama 2024), which places claims about solidarity's influence on policy support on firmer ground. We discover that prior increases in PoC solidarity reliably boost future support for pro-outgroup policies, but only in issue domains that were highly salient during the 2024 campaign (i.e., affirmative action, undocumented immigration). We find no evidence of reverse relationships from policy support to PoC solidarity. We conclude by discussing how these findings resolve previous theoretical and methodological impasses, while opening new lines of inquiry into solidarity's political effects in inter-minority settings.

Two Challenges, One Solution: PoC Solidarity from a Longitudinal Perspective

Published work reveals that higher solidarity levels among Black, Asian, Latino, and Multiracial adults are reliably and positively correlated with support for policy issues involving racially stigmatized outgroups (Pérez et al. 2024), such as affirmative action (Black people), undocumented immigration (Latino people), and high-skilled immigration (Asian people). By design, these studies set the issue options for participants, artificially holding constant variation in issue salience. Thus, to what degree do solidarity's effects on these issues emerge in real-life political campaigns?

Various scholars find systematic variability in issue salience across many mass publics, including the U.S. (e.g., Lenz 2012; Baumgartner and Jones 2009; Vavreck 2009) – a dynamic that arises endogenously from elite debates over what issues to highlight and how (e.g., Egan 2013; Chong and Druckman 2010; Sniderman and Theriault 2004). This process defines and publicizes, via news media, some policy issues at the expense of others that remain poorly defined and anemically disseminated (Lippmann 1922). This process is known to produce *agenda-setting* effects (Kinder and Iyengar 1987), where those issues that news media consistently highlight and report on become a higher priority in the mass public. The psychological mechanism behind these effects is priming, which makes specific mental contents accessible to people (e.g., Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997; Nelson and Oxley 1999).

Systematic variation in agenda-setting means some political issues will be more “top-of-mind” for people than other issues (Zaller 1992; Tourangeau et al. 2000), encouraging individuals to integrate what they know about these issues into their judgments of policy proposals in those domains. For example, Valentino, Brader, and Jardina (2013) find that immigration news coverage systematically highlights Latinos above other stigmatized groups, such as Asians and Muslims (see also Haynes, Merolla, and Ramakrishnan 2016). This higher salience of Latinos manifests in the greater weight that White adults assign to their negative attitudes toward Latinos when judging immigration policies (Brader et al. 2008; Pérez 2016; Ramirez and Peterson 2020).

Adapting these insights to PoC solidarity, we anticipate (H1a) reliable and meaningful variation in the salience of policy issues that prior work construes as highly

relevant to people of color: affirmative action, undocumented immigration, and high-skilled immigration (Pérez et al. 2024; Kim et al. 2025). That is, we anticipate that some of the policy issues in this set will be more salient than the others, which should affect the relationship between solidarity and policy support. Specifically, we hypothesize that out of these three issues, news media will give more systematic attention to undocumented immigration and affirmative action over high-skilled immigration (H1b). This prediction is grounded in work illustrating the regular focus of Democrats and Republicans on culture war issues (O'Neill 2024), which includes undocumented immigration (Abrajano and Hajnal 2016) and affirmative action (Gilens, Sniderman, and Kuklinski 1998), but high-skilled immigration less so.

A second challenge in solidarity research is whether this variable is unidirectionally related to support for policies involving racially stigmatized outgroups. Existing work establishes that higher levels of solidarity between *people of color* are significantly correlated with greater support for policies involving racially stigmatized groups. This relationship operates uniformly across the various subgroups comprising the mega-category, *people of color*, including Asian, Black, Latino, MENA, and Multiracial adults (Pérez et al. 2024b; Eidgahy and Pérez 2023; Chin et al. 2020). In principle, this relationship emerges and matures over time—in a word, it is theoretically *dynamic*. Yet previous studies on solidarity's influence on policy support estimate the associations between these variables in cross-sectional samples, which assess these connections contemporaneously, rather than longitudinally (Rohrer et al. 2022). This

prevents tests of whether a reverse relation also arises between these variables, from policy support to solidarity – which would yield new theoretical knowledge.

The cross-sectional nature of prior research on PoC solidarity also means it cannot rule out that any relationship between solidarity and policy support is confounded by third variables that are unobserved and/or unmeasured. One source of confounding simply involves prior levels of solidarity and policy support (e.g. Rohrer et al. 2022; Little 2024), which current research cannot address. Compounding this challenge is the fact that variables like solidarity and policy support are characterized by stable between-person differences – that is to say, some PoC have durably high versus durably low solidarity levels (e.g., Pérez et al. 2025). These are distinct from the within-person changes in these variables that a dynamic look at solidarity and policy support is mainly interested in (Osborne and Little 2024; Osborne and Sibley 2020), but that cross-sectional studies of PoC solidarity cannot speak to directly.

Taking a longitudinal view of solidarity therefore positions researchers to better appraise the dynamics behind PoC solidarity and policy support, while establishing the temporal primacy of the former and minimizing the threat of confounding. Alas, a longitudinal angle lets scholars theorize about within-person processes that are crucial to the development and maintenance of PoC solidarity, but which have been overlooked due to methodological limitations. Indeed, if we think of solidarity as evolving across a campaign, where issue salience varies organically, then we can yield two additional and critical hypotheses about solidarity.

First, consistent with prior work on solidarity's political influence (Kim et al. 2025), we hypothesize that over time, systematic departures from one's average solidarity level will reliably affect their average future support for pro-outgroup policies (H2a). In other words, we expect that independently of stable between-person differences in PoC solidarity (Pérez et al. 2025), a previous shift from one's average solidarity level will feed forward to predict a future increase in one's average support for pro-outgroup policies (Osborne and Little 2024).

Second, we anticipate that these longitudinal, within-person effects will be moderated by issue salience (H2b). Previous solidarity studies indicate that it is relatively difficult to heighten this variable across a diverse swath of people of color (Pérez et al. 2024a), in part, because of their unique and variegated experiences with racial discrimination, which facilitates competitive, intergroup comparisons rather than automatic unity (Tajfel and Turner 1986; Zou and Cheryan 2017; Kim 2024). Thus, the greater salience of some issues over others should convey the broad importance of those issues to all people of color, since one of its component subgroups is involved. In this way, issues involving PoC serve as a focal point for PoC to coordinate politically when the issue is more visible in public discourse, thus galvanizing all people of color.

Third, in line with current interpretations of solidarity's links to policy support (Kim et al. 2025), we predict that within-person changes in solidarity will affect support for salient policy issues affecting people of color – but within-person increases in policy support should not loop back to increase PoC solidarity levels (H2c) This hypothesis is a direct test of a key alternative pattern that has been overlooked by prior work,

namely, that support for pro-outgroup policies might also impact future PoC solidarity. Shining new light on this matter can clarify whether solidarity and policy support display bi-directional influence, which would amend current understandings of solidarity's role in PoC politics. Table 1 below displays all our hypotheses.

Table 1. Hypotheses About Issue Salience and Solidarity's Political Effects on Support for Pro-PoC Policies

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|-------|--|
| (H1a) | Issue domains used to assess solidarity's effects – affirmative action, undocumented immigration, and high-skilled immigration – will have varied salience in public discourse. |
| (H1b) | Compared to high-skilled immigration, affirmative action and undocumented immigration will be more prominent in mainstream news coverage. |
| (H2a) | Prior within-person increases in solidarity will predict subsequent within-person increases in support for pro-outgroup policies, net of stable between-person differences. |
| (H2b) | Increases in solidarity will have positive effects on support for pro-outgroup policy on PoC issues that are more prominent in mainstream news coverage (i.e., undocumented immigration and affirmative action). |
| (H2c) | Within-person changes in solidarity will affect support for salient policy issues affecting PoC – but within-person increases in policy support will not affect one's solidarity levels. |

Overview of Research

Our claims about solidarity's political effects hinge on the notion of issue salience and how it might condition PoC solidarity's relation to support for pro-outgroup policies. Thus, we first evaluate our pair of descriptive hypotheses (H1a – H1b) about the volume and focus of news coverage on the three major issues that researchers use to assess solidarity effects in existing work: affirmative action, undocumented immigration, and high-skilled immigration. As de Kadt and Gryzmala-Busse (2025) note, careful descriptive work like this “asks relevant and important questions about

‘how the world is or was’ and provides answers that are useful through well-calibrated and meaningful analyses.” For our part, Study 1 evaluates the degree to which the salience of affirmative action, undocumented immigration, and high-skilled immigration in news coverage vary in ways that can directly inform predictions for the longitudinal, within-person relationships between PoC solidarity and policy support.

Study 2 capitalizes on our descriptive results by using three (3) waves of longitudinal survey data to estimate whether, net of stable between-person differences in solidarity and support for policies in these domains, we observe within-person changes in PoC solidarity affecting changes in policy support, but not vice versa (Osborne and Little 2024; Osborne and Sibley 2020) – a set of propositions we expect to be present on policy issues that are more prominent in public discourse.

Study 1: Tracking the Salience of PoC Issues in the 2024 Presidential Campaign

This study is a content analysis of newspaper coverage of three policy domains typically associated with people of color – affirmative action, undocumented immigration, and high-skilled immigration (Pérez 2021). To gather stories from an ideologically broad set of newspapers, we collected news articles from *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. We retrieved news articles from *The New York Times* via Nexis Uni, and articles from *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Los Angeles Times* through ProQuest.¹ We tailored search terms for each issue area to maximize the retrieval of substantively relevant articles and minimize unrelated

¹ ProQuest was used to access *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Los Angeles Times*, as they were unavailable in Nexis Uni.

content. For affirmative action, we used the keywords “affirmative action OR diversity.” To capture coverage of undocumented immigration, we searched for stories containing “(undocumented OR unauthorized OR illegal) AND immigration.” To isolate coverage of high-skilled immigration, we employed the terms “(legal AND immigration) or (H1-B AND visa).” Here, we manually inspected articles to ensure minimal overlap with topics or themes related to undocumented immigration.

The first author retrieved a total of $N = 4,162$ news articles from these papers for the period spanning January 2024 through December 2024, which coincides with the 2024 presidential campaign. These efforts yielded $n = 1,296$ stories on affirmative action (31%), $n = 2,603$ on undocumented immigration (62%), and $n = 263$ on high-skilled immigration (6%). Next, the first author selected a random 20% of these stories to yield a more manageable, but representative, analytic sample of $N = 831$. The first author coded articles along four dimensions: 1) **Groups mentioned**: all explicitly referenced racial groups were recorded (1 = Black, 2 = Latino, 3 = Asian American; 0 = none). When multiple groups appeared, they were coded together (e.g., “1, 3” if both Black and Asian Americans were mentioned). 2) **Multiple groups mentioned**: articles mentioning two or more of these racial groups were coded as 1, and 0 otherwise.² 3) **Valence**: articles were coded as positive (1), neutral (0), or negative (-1).³ (4) **Prejudice**:

² Intra-ethnic distinctions were not coded as separate groups. For example, references to “Mexicans” and “Guatemalans” were classified under a single category (Latinos) rather than as distinct groups.

³ Each article’s overall valence was coded by identifying its dominant emotional or evaluative tone: *negative* (harm, danger, wrongdoing), *neutral* (descriptive or fact-based), or *positive* (hope, success, progress).

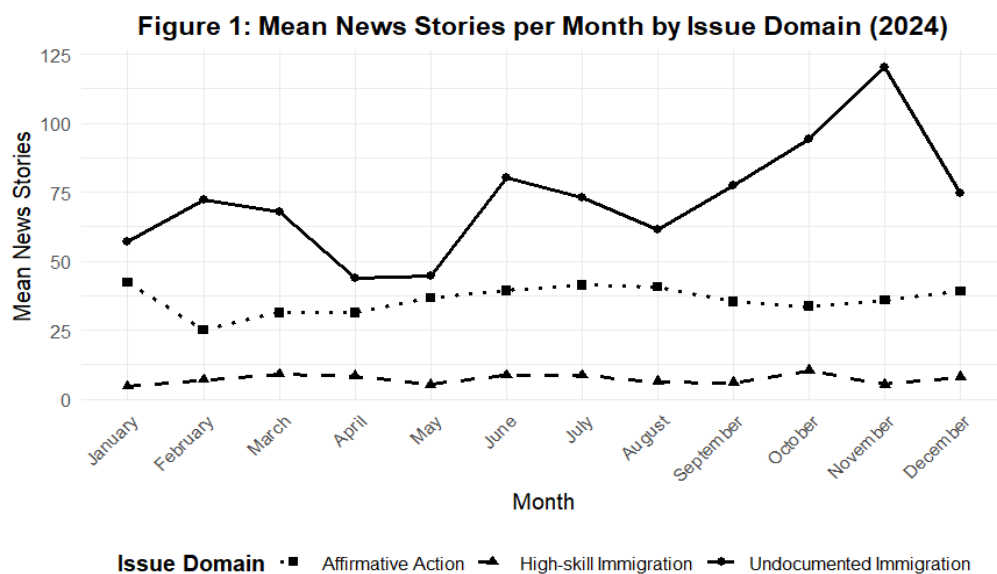
articles were coded as 1 if they contained explicit or implicit discriminatory language, xenophobic attitudes, or exclusionary framing toward these groups, 0 otherwise.⁴

Study 1's Results

Our content analysis reveals clear variation in the salience of these three issue domains, which supports (H1a). This can be visually appreciated in figure 1, which depicts the average number of monthly news stories, across all three newspapers, on undocumented immigration, affirmative action, and high-skilled immigration throughout 2024. While all three issue domains received some coverage during this campaign, the domains of undocumented immigration and affirmative action, far and away, produced more news stories across this period. Specifically, coverage of undocumented immigration consistently dominated the other two issue domains, dramatically outpacing high-skilled immigration, in particular. Whereas undocumented immigration was generally covered in fifty (50) stories or more per month, the average number of monthly news stories on high-skilled immigration generally did not produce more than fifteen (15) stories per month. In turn, while affirmative action received less coverage than undocumented immigration, this issue domain also received substantially more coverage than high-skilled immigration. Indeed, affirmative action generally yielded more than thirty-five (35) news stories per month; more than double the average number for high-skilled immigration. Together, these patterns indicate that

⁴ Articles were coded for the presence of prejudice, defined as explicit or implicit references to racism, xenophobia, or discrimination, particularly toward Latinos, Blacks, or Asians. An article was coded as 1 if it referenced practices such as racial profiling, hate crimes, or discriminatory treatment, or if it implied bias through descriptions of unequal treatment or animus.

out of these three issue domains, undocumented immigration and affirmative action were the more prominent ones in public discourse throughout the 2024 election year.



We find that 49% of stories on undocumented immigration, 62% on affirmative action, and 55% on high-skilled immigration referenced prejudice toward Black, Latino, or Asian individuals.⁵ This is important because prior work highlights a sense of shared discrimination as a key determinant of PoC solidarity (Pérez et al. 2024). These references to prejudice were either explicit or implied. *Explicit* mentions of prejudice directly referenced discriminatory language, policies, or acts, such as racial slurs, hate crimes, or exclusionary rhetoric. For example, stories quoting politicians who described immigrants as “criminals” or who championed discriminatory policies were coded as explicitly prejudiced. In turn, *implied* prejudice captured more subtle cues – often embedded in narrative framing or emphasis – that conveyed group-based threat or

⁵ While prejudice appeared in 55 percent of the stories on high-skill immigration, it is important to note that this topic was not prominently covered across mainstream media outlets.

delegitimized racial equity without overtly invoking racism. This included repeated associations between undocumented immigrants and criminality or narratives framing affirmative action as inherently unjust to Whites, even when racism was not directly named. Since a sense of shared discrimination is known to increase PoC solidarity (e.g., Kim et al. 2025; Rogbeer et al. 2025), indications of prejudice in stories prominently covered in mainstream media outlets, such as undocumented immigration and affirmative action, make such domains more likely to produce solidarity-to-policy support relationships anticipated by our remaining set of hypotheses.

The general valence of these stories puts this claim on sturdier ground. Coverage of undocumented immigration skewed overwhelmingly negative, with 66% of stories classified as negative, 28% as neutral, and 6% as positive. This imbalance aligns with prior research on negativity bias in immigration reporting (Brader et al. 2008; Valentino et al. 2013). This is key because negativity bias is held responsible for commanding people's attention to and engagement with political issues (Soroka 2014). In contrast, coverage of affirmative action was more evenly distributed: 32% negative, 39% neutral, and 24% positive, though negative stories still slightly outnumbered positive ones. Yet even here, the balance between negative and positive valence tilts in favor of the former. Finally, coverage of high-skilled immigration was limited and more mixed, with 41% neutral, 43% negative, and 16% positive. These distributions suggest that undocumented immigration and affirmative action are predominantly framed negatively, whereas high-skilled immigration receives less extensive coverage with more mixed valence.

These descriptive results illustrate how news media operate as sites of racialized meaning-making. Not only did coverage vary by valence; it also differed in the visibility of specific racial groups and the extent to which prejudice toward them was highlighted. These patterns suggest that media discourse plays a central role in making some issues stronger coordination points for inter-minority camaraderie to emerge in politics. We build on these insights next through Study 2.

Study 2: Temporal Links Between Solidarity and Issue Salience in the '24 Campaign

Having established the varied prominence of affirmative action, unauthorized immigration, and high-skilled immigration in news coverage throughout 2024, we next model the individual-level implications of these descriptive patterns for better grasping the interface between PoC solidarity and their support for pro-outgroup policies. Specifically, we expect that higher solidarity levels will significantly increase support for policy issues that were more salient across the '24 presidential campaign, with no reciprocal influence from issue opinions to solidarity levels (see table 1).

Data: The 2023-2024 American Multiracial Panel Study (AMPS)

Study 2's analyses draw on three waves of longitudinal survey data ($N = 3,402$) from the 2023-2024 American Multiracial Panel Study (AMPS), which is comprised of large samples of African American, Asian American, Latino, and Multiracial adults. These panel data were gathered in June 2023, December 2023, and August 2024 by YouGov, a leading survey firm that uses propensity score matching to build nationally representative samples of target populations from its extensive U.S. respondent panel.

These samples closely approximate target population(s) on key census metrics, making them higher quality in comparison to other opt-in online surveys (Schaffner 2011).

YouGov fielded Wave 1 of the AMPS between June 10 – 21, 2023, yielding large adult samples of African Americans ($n = 985$), Asian Americans ($n = 678$), Latino Americans ($n = 975$), and Multiracial Americans ($n = 764$). YouGov then reached 52-70% of wave 1 completes in each group, yielding smaller but still informative Wave 2 samples, gathered between November 17 and December 12, 2023 (African Americans $n = 514$, Asian Americans $n = 473$, Latinos $n = 531$, Multiracials $n = 469$). YouGov administered Wave 3 between July and August 2024, generating slightly smaller, but still statistically useful sample sizes (African Americans $n = 302$, Asian Americans $n = 345$, Latinos $n = 368$, Multiracials $n = 364$). For Waves 2-3, YouGov also supplemented re-contacts with fresh sample. Across all three waves, the average age of respondents was 51 years old, 56% were female, and 39% possessed at least a bachelor's degree or more. Finally, 16% and 36% of the sample consists of second generation and third-generation immigrants, respectively.

Our analyses use all 3 waves of survey data ($N=3,402$) in a full information maximum likelihood (FIML) framework. This approach efficiently uses all available data without discarding cases (e.g., via listwise or casewise deletion), which helps produce unbiased parameters and minimizes false positives (i.e., Type 1 errors) (Enders and Bandalos 2001; Osborne and Sibley 2020). Our principal variables are PoC solidarity and support for pro-outgroup policies in the domains of affirmative action, unauthorized immigration, and high-skilled immigration.

We operationalize PoC solidarity with three (3) previously validated items that operate equivalently across these diverse populations (Pérez et al. 2025). These items invite respondents to use a scale from 1-strongly agree to 5-strongly disagree to complete items like “The problems of Black, Latino, Asian, and other people of color are similar enough for them to be allies.” We code all three items in a pro-solidarity direction and combine them into an averaged index ($\alpha_{w1} = .807$) running from 1 – 5, with higher values indicating *more* solidarity ($M_{w1} = 3.423$, $SD_{w1} = 1.025$).

We operationalize support for affirmative action with one item on a scale from 1-strongly favor to 5-strongly oppose: “Allowing admissions officers to consider an applicant’s race or ethnicity, alongside factors such as an applicant’s high school grades, standardized test scores, and letters of recommendation, when evaluating students for admission into a college or university?” We recode replies so that higher values reflect stronger support for this policy measure ($M_{w1} = 2.919$, $SD_{w1} = 1.433$).

We also tap policy opinions toward unauthorized immigration with a single item: “Renewing temporary relief from deportation for undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children?”, with replies on a scale from 1-strongly favor to 5-strongly oppose. We also re-scale these responses to a 1 – 5 range so that higher values mean greater support for this policy toward undocumented immigrants ($M_{w1} = 3.497$, $SD_{w1} = 1.355$). In turn, we measure support for high-skilled immigration with two items, also completed on the same 5-point scale. The first in this pair is a generic statement about legal immigration, which prior work finds taps into support for high-skilled, Asian American immigration (Pérez 2021): “Expanding the number of visas available to

legal immigrants who wish to enter the United States?” The second item is more specific and asks about “Increasing the number of H1-B visas to allow U.S. companies to hire people to work in highly skilled occupations, such as engineering, computer programming, and high-technology?” (Malhotra et al. 2012). We average this item pair ($r = .571$) to build another index where higher values reflect greater support for this policy domain ($M_{w1} = 3.566$, $SD_{w1} = 1.089$).

Research Design

With three survey waves, four populations, and three issues with varied salience, we build a longitudinal model that directly tests the within-person dynamics between PoC solidarity and policy support. Specifically, we estimate a random intercept cross-lagged panel model (RI-CLPM), which decouples stable between-person differences in variables from within-person dynamics in these constructs (Osborne and Little 2024; Hamaker et al. 2015). This approach is preferred to simpler cross-lagged models when researchers are interested in isolating within-person dynamics, as we are here. RI-CLPMs are also prized for their ability to better a) establish the temporal primacy of one variable over another; and b) account for the inertia in each variable via lags of a construct—all of which place inferences about solidarity’s effects on sturdier ground relative to prior cross-sectional studies (Rohrer and Murayama 2023).

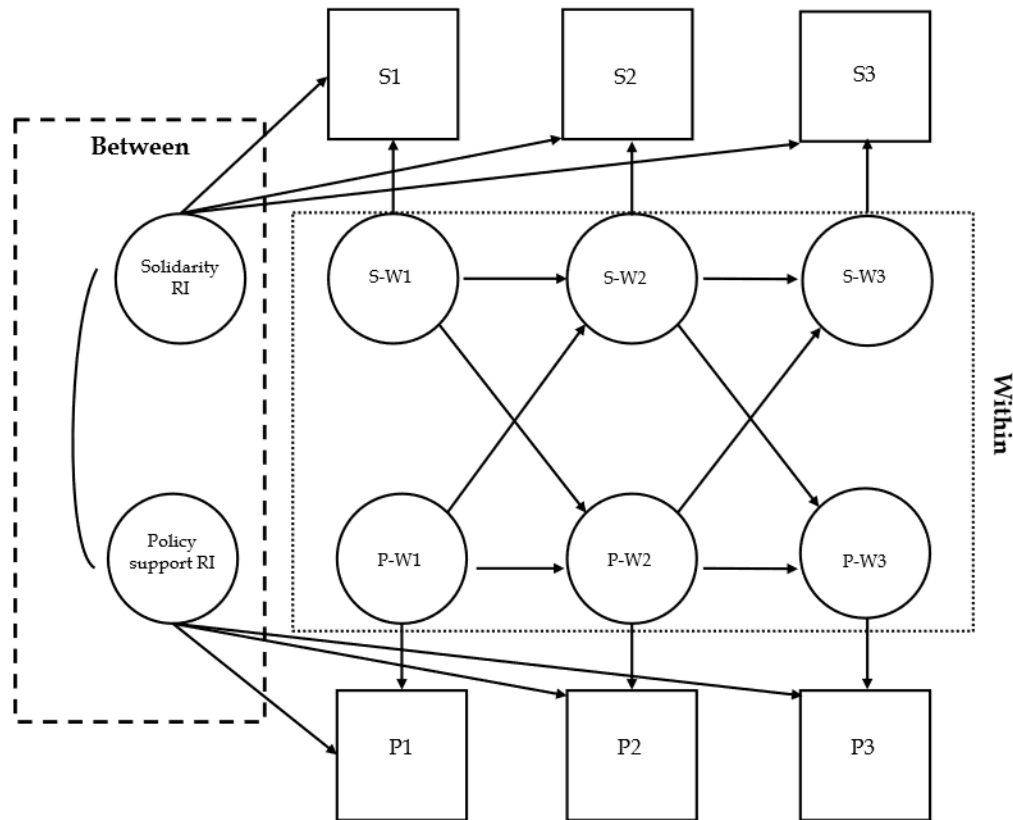
The random intercepts (RI) in our RI-CLPM capture between-person differences in solidarity and policy support. These are durable orderings of individuals from low to high on these constructs, which are the focus of traditional cross-lagged panel models (e.g., Engelhardt et al. 2025). This part of our model includes covariates to account for

heterogeneity in the levels of these between-person differences (i.e., race/ethnicity of respondent, age, college education, gender, immigrant generation).

In turn, the within-person dynamics we are interested in are captured by associations between solidarity and policy support, purged of between-person differences in these variables. This permits comparisons of individuals to themselves over time, which obviates controls for time-invariant covariates, akin to fixed-effects regressions (Osborne and Little 2024). The absence of covariates in this within-person process is further informed by theoretical insights showing that, despite the internal heterogeneity of the mega-category, *people of color*, its intra-group processes operate uniformly across subgroups, once initiated (Engelhardt et al. 2025; Pérez et al. 2024a).

Figure 2 provides readers with graphical intuition for our model. The key quantities in any RI-CLPM are the auto-regressive (AR) and cross-lagged (CL) effects from this model type. The AR parameters reflect *inertia* or the degree to which a deviation from a person's trait level in one of our variables (solidarity, policy support) carries over into a later assessment of that same variable. In turn, the CL parameters indicate the degree to which a deviation in, say, a person's trait solidarity level produces a future deviation in another variable, say, policy support. Our model also includes previous lags of each focal variable (i.e., solidarity, policy support). We report exact two-tailed *p*-values throughout.

Figure 2. Conceptual Overview of Basic Components in an RI-CLPM Model of PoC Solidarity and Policy Support



Note: For the sake of parsimony, the figure focuses on the key processes and main paths of interest (i.e., auto-regressive effects, cross-lagged effects). It also omits some correlations between both variables and error variances related to them. S = solidarity, P = policy support, W = wave, RI = random intercepts.

Study 2 Results:

Our RI-CLPM is meant to capture the longitudinal, within-person dynamics between solidarity and policy support, net of between-person differences and time-invariant covariates. Table 2 reports the main path coefficients from this within-person process over time, with separate models for each policy. These models display strong fit. Each model's CFI/TLI is at or near their maximum of 1.0 and its RMSEA is near its minimum of 0.00. Furthermore, the SRMR for each model suggests a trivial degree of model residuals (Brown 2015). These patterns lend credence to the model estimates.

First, the random intercepts for PoC solidarity and each policy scale are substantively and positively associated, as expected ($r_{\text{affirmative action}} = .471, p < .001$; $r_{\text{undocumented}} = .554, p < .01$; $r_{\text{high-skill}} = .521, p < .001$) (Pérez et al. 2024a). These correlations reflect the connections binding stable between-person differences in solidarity with support for each policy domain. Second, there is heterogeneity in these between-person differences, but not much. As (A.1) shows, Latino and Asian adults report less solidarity than Black adults: the prototypical *person of color* who defines this mega-group's beliefs (Engelhardt et al. 2025). This pattern also arises in between-person differences on policy support, reaffirming Black adults' role as the most progressive PoC subgroup (Pérez 2021). The remaining covariates (e.g., gender, education) are trivially related or unrelated to between-group differences in solidarity and policy support.

Table 2. Path Coefficients Reflecting the Associations Between PoC Solidarity and Support for Pro-Outgroup Policies

| Outcome | Predictor $t-1$ | B (SE) |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Affirmative action | --- | |
| | Affirmative action | .016 (.037) |
| | PoC solidarity | .082 (.039) |
| PoC solidarity | PoC solidarity | .052 (.043) |
| | Affirmative action | .039 (.037) |
| CFI/TLI: .998/.985 | RMSEA: .020, CI [.009, .031] | SRMR: .016 |
| Undocumented immigration | --- | |
| | Undocumented immigration | -.004 (.038) |
| | PoC solidarity | .090 (.040) |
| PoC solidarity | PoC solidarity | .044 (.042) |
| | Undocumented immigration | .046 (.038) |
| CFI/TLI: .999/.995 | RMSEA: .012, CI [.000, .024] | SRMR: .015 |
| High-skilled immigration | --- | |
| | High-skilled immigration | .072 (.042) |
| | PoC solidarity | -.084 (.039) |
| PoC solidarity | PoC solidarity | .045 (.042) |
| | High-skilled immigration | -.071 (.040) |
| CFI/TLI: .998/.988 | RMSEA: .019, CI [.008, .030] | SRMR: .016 |

Note: Coefficients and standard errors are from RI-CLPMs estimated via full information maximum likelihood (FIML) in Mplus software version 8.10. Coefficients have 1-point units across a 5-point scale. For each model, N=3,402. The RIs for each model are discussed in the text. The influence of between-person covariates are fully reported in (A.1)

Given these initial results, we turn to our core analysis of within-person dynamics in the relation between solidarity and policy support over time. Critically, we find the hypothesized patterns on the two issues that Study 1 established as being more salient in public discourse during 2024 (i.e., undocumented immigration, affirmative action). Specifically, we find that prior solidarity levels are positively and significantly associated with future support for affirmative action, controlling for prior levels of support for this outcome. The coefficient for lagged solidarity (in bold) means that an increase in an individual's trait solidarity level in a prior wave persists as an increase in future support for affirmative action (.082, SE = .039, $p < .035$). We find no evidence of a reverse relationship from prior support for affirmative action to future expressions of solidarity (.039, SE = .037, $p > .292$).

When we turn to the domain of undocumented immigration – which Study 1 indicated had the most salience in 2024 – we find a set of substantively similar results as those for affirmative action. Table 2 indicates that past levels of solidarity between people of color are positively and significantly associated with future support for flexible policy toward undocumented immigration. The coefficient for lagged solidarity implies that a rise in a person's trait solidarity level from a previous wave persists into the future as an increase in support for undocumented immigrants (.090, SE = .040, $p < .024$). And, again, we find no evidence of a reverse relationship from prior support for undocumented immigrants to future expressions of solidarity (.046, SE = .038, $p < .226$).

What occurs in the domain of high-skilled immigration, which was the least salient of these three issues across 2024? We find no relationship between previous

levels of support for high-skilled immigration and future levels of solidarity at the within-person level, suggesting no reverse relationship between these constructs. However, unlike our findings for the more prominent issues in news coverage, we find that higher solidarity in the past persists into the future as a *reduction* in support for high-skilled immigration ($-.084$, $SE = .039$, $p < .031$). Given that high-skilled immigration is the domain with the least salience in 2024 out of our trio of issues, this pattern implies that there is nothing “natural” or “easy” when it comes to people of color’s perspectives about issues implicating other racially stigmatized groups, such as high-skilled immigration. Indeed, without regular exposure to an issue as pertaining to people color – in this case, Asian Americans – this result suggests we are less likely to observe reliable positive effects from solidarity to support for policies that involve a specific community of color.

Summary and Implications

What have we learned from our pair of studies and what are its implications for ongoing research on inter-minority solidarity? We see our results as yielding three major conclusions, which we now discuss.

The first implication, we think, is that issue salience appears to affect whether we even observe a positive relationship between PoC solidarity and policy support.

Although a growing body of published research establishes clear and robust associations between PoC solidarity and support for policies that target specific people of color (e.g., Pérez et al. 2024), our results suggest that this positive relationship might emerge only on issues that are prominently covered in news coverage. Indeed, once we

consider variation in issue salience, we find that elevated PoC solidarity levels *do not* automatically guarantee that people of color will support policies that would benefit other racially stigmatized groups. Without consistent coverage that highlights the role of discrimination, it seems less likely that PoC solidarity will materialize into hearty support for policies that affect a subgroup within the mega-category, *people of color*. The primary lesson here, we think, is that solidarity's political effects are not simply a matter of priming this durable disposition (e.g., Engelhardt et al. 2025). Instead, the larger institutional structures that people of color embedded in – and, specifically, the news flows that surround them – provide a longer runway for this solidarity to mature and manifest in politics. This means that if we want to see more solidarity in U.S. politics, political elites and other opinion leaders must explain to PoC why certain issues are worthy of their time, attention, and investment (Benjamin 2017).

Another key lesson from our studies is that priming specific issues, such as affirmative action and undocumented immigration, do not appear to impact or grow PoC solidarity levels. Yet PoC solidarity does systematically shape support for policies associated with racial and ethnic minorities. This pattern suggests that prior research on solidarity's influence on policy support is unbiased, even if these studies use cross-sectional designs that concurrently appraise solidarity and support for pro-outgroup policies. That is because the direction of influence does, in fact, seem to run exclusively from solidarity to policy support, at least in the domains we examine. This has two benefits for researchers. In terms of theory, the finding of unidirectional influence suggests that in inter-minority politics, it is likely ineffective to raise the salience of

issues that imply people of color in the hopes of creating or bolstering solidarity levels. A better approach here, our work implies, is to systematically focus people of color's attention on specific issues and provide clear and resonant justifications for why they should support certain policies (i.e., they involve a community of color). This is another way of saying that opinion leaders play a substantial and underappreciated role in harnessing PoC solidarity.

Finally, our findings put solidarity's potentially causal influence on sturdier footing. In prior work, solidarity's influence on policy support occurs contemporaneously, implying *immediate* solidarity effects. In contrast, our findings here suggest that another, non-mutually exclusive path to solidarity is slower and more evolutionary in nature. By evaluating solidarity's influence across several months, we observed that some of the time, at least, heightening PoC solidarity is a gradual process that requires longer periods for it to evolve and eventually influence mass politics.

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