

Which Way(s) Does It Flow? Reassessing Solidarity's Influence on Policy Support With Panel Data on 3,398 Asian, Black, Latino, and Multiracial Adults in the U.S.

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Growing evidence indicates solidarity between people of color (PoC) is reliably associated with greater support for policies involving Black (*affirmative action*), Latino (*undocumented immigration*), and Asian (*high-skilled immigration*) people. Yet doubts remain about this pattern's direction due to overreliance on cross-sectional data. Leveraging a three-wave panel of U.S. Asian, Black, Latino, and Multiracial adults (2023 – 2024), we find that present changes in solidarity increase later support for affirmative action and undocumented immigration, but not high-skilled immigration. We find no evidence that policy support drives PoC solidarity in return. Post-hoc analyses suggest the unexpected pattern for high-skilled immigration is partly affected by weaker news coverage of this issue across our panel. We discuss implications for ongoing research on U.S. inter-minority politics.

As the U.S. racially diversifies, the question of how various people of color (PoC) unify to reach shared political goals is gaining new traction (Wilkinson 2015; Benjamin 2017; Chan and Jasso 2023). This urgency is driven by a key lesson from decades of research—namely, that the typical outcomes in inter-minority relations are conflict and occasional violence—but much less commonly, cooperation (McClain and Karnig 1990; McClain et al. 2007; McClain et al. 2011).

Against this backdrop, growing evidence suggests solidarity forges political unity among Black Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and other racially stigmatized groups (Pérez et al. 2024). More specifically, elevated levels of PoC solidarity correlate significantly with greater Black support for pro-Latino and pro-Asian policies. Similarly, higher solidarity levels among Latino and Asian adults are positively associated with stronger support for pro-Black policies and policies related to other racially stigmatized groups (Pérez et al. 2023; Eidgahy and Pérez 2023; Rogbeer et al. 2025; see also Cortland et al. 2017; Sirin et al. 2021).

This research operationalizes support for pro-outgroup policies with policy proposals that strongly implicate specific racially stigmatized outgroups (Winter 2008; Pérez 2021), including support for *affirmative action* (implicating Black people), flexible policies toward *unauthorized immigration* (implicating Latinos), and expansive policies for *high-skilled immigrants* (implicating Asian people) (Pérez 2021). Careful analyses of cross-sectional surveys establish that the relationship between solidarity and policy support operates in substantively similar ways across African American, Asian American, Latino, and Multiracial adults (Engelhardt et al. 2025), with greater solidarity

motivating all PoC to support policies that affect a subgroup within the mega-category, *people of color*. This highlights this mega-group's coherence and the ability of these uniquely stigmatized groups (Zou and Cheryan 2017) to imagine themselves as emblematic of, and interchangeable with, the PoC category in particular settings, which aligns neatly with classic intergroup research (Turner et al. 1987).

Still, while 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 never directly manipulated in surveys *and* experiments (Pérez et al. 2025). Consider that all available solidarity experiments measure, rather than manipulate, this variable's downstream political effects (Rogbeer et al. 2025). Just as critically, current work cannot determine whether PoC solidarity boosts support for pro-outgroup policies, whether support for pro-outgroup policies increases solidarity levels, or whether both pathways are viable (Osborne and Little 2024). Clarifying this matter can settle whether solidarity's political impacts are bidirectional, with major theoretical implications for this literature.

We report new evidence on PoC solidarity's link to support for pro-outgroup policies by leveraging three waves of survey data from the American Multiracial Panel Study (AMPS), which yielded large samples of African American, Asian American, Latino, and Multiracial adults ($N=3,402$) (Goldman et al. 2025). Using these data, we estimate random intercept cross-lagged panel models (RI-CLPMs), which decouple stable *between-person* differences in our variables from changing *within-person* dynamics in these constructs, which is our focus (Osborne and Little 2024). By design, this

approach also yields results that are robust to time-invariant confounders (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender) (Rohrer and Murayama 2024), placing claims about solidarity's causal impacts on firmer ground than existing cross-sectional evidence.

Our panel analyses reveal that prior increases in PoC solidarity reliably increase future support for pro-Black (affirmative action) and pro-Latino (undocumented immigration) policies, but not pro-Asian (high-skilled immigration) policies. This last finding contradicts prior work (Pérez et al. 2025) and was unexpected. Furthermore, in no instance do we find evidence of reverse relations from policy support to PoC solidarity, which reaffirms prior correlational and experimental evidence in this domain. Finally, *post-hoc* analyses suggest the unexpected pattern for high-skilled immigration might be shaped, in part, by weaker news coverage of this issue across our panel's duration. We discuss our findings implications for inferences about solidarity's effects on PoC politics.

PoC Solidarity Over Time

Existing work establishes that higher solidarity levels are significantly correlated with greater support for policies involving racially stigmatized groups, a pattern that operates uniformly across the subgroups comprising the mega-category, *people of color*, including Asian, Black, Latino, MENA, and Multiracial adults (Eidgahy and Pérez 2024; Rogbeer et al. 2025). In principle, this pattern could also emerge and mature over time—i.e., it might be theoretically *dynamic*. Yet previous studies on solidarity's influence on policy support estimate these associations cross-sectionally and contemporaneously,

preventing more rigorous tests of possible reverse relations from policy support to solidarity – a theoretically novel possibility (Cortland et al. 2017; Pérez et al. 2025).

In addition, prior cross-sectional analyses cannot rule out that any linkages 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 (Osborne and 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 – i.e., some PoC have durably high versus durably low solidarity levels (Engelhardt et al. 2025). These are distinct from within-person changes in these variables that a dynamic look at solidarity and policy support is interested in (Osborne and Little 2024), but that cross-sectional studies of PoC solidarity cannot disentangle.

Taking a longitudinal view of solidarity therefore positions researchers to more directly appraise the dynamics behind PoC solidarity and policy support, while establishing the temporal primacy of the former and minimizing confounding threats. Alas, a longitudinal angle lets one theorize about within-person processes that are crucial to PoC solidarity's evolution, but which have been overlooked due to methodological limitations. Accordingly, we evaluate two hypotheses.

First, consistent with prior work on solidarity's political influence (Pérez et al. 2025), we predict that over time, systematic departures from one's average solidarity level will reliably affect their average future support for pro-outgroup policies. That is, we expect that independently of stable between-person differences in PoC solidarity, a

present shift from one's average solidarity level will predict subsequent increases in one's average support for pro-outgroup policies (H1) (Osborne and Little 2024).

Second, we consider whether current support for pro-outgroup policies significantly boosts *later* levels of PoC solidarity? Available solidarity studies indicate that it is relatively difficult to induce solidarity across a diverse swath of people of color (Pérez et al. 2025) because of their unique and variegated experiences with racial discrimination, which facilitates competitive intergroup comparisons rather than unity (Turner et al. 1987; Zou and Cheryan 2017). However, a heightened sense of shared discrimination is known to boost solidarity levels among PoC via a *similarity principle*, where an ingroup's experiences with discrimination resonate with those experienced by an outgroup (Cortland et al. 2017). The idea is that similarity in experiences, tastes, opinions, and interests induce likeability between variegated others. This implies that similarity in issue preferences could, in principle, also catalyze PoC solidarity, which is a novel but untested perspective that dovetails neatly with current theorizing (Pérez et al. 2025). Thus, we predict that present increases in policy support impact future solidarity (H2b).

The 2023-2024 American Multiracial Panel Study (AMPS)

We test our predictions by drawing on three survey waves ($N = 3,402$) from the 2023-2024 American Multiracial Panel Study (AMPS), which interviewed large samples of African American, Asian American, Latino, and Multiracial adults. We gathered these data in June 2023, December 2023, and August 2024 in partnership with YouGov, which uses propensity score matching to build representative samples of target

populations from an extensive U.S. respondent panel. YouGov samples generally approximate target populations on key census metrics (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 $n = 364$). Across waves, respondents were 51 years old on average, 56% were female, and 39% held a bachelor's degree or more. 16% and 36% of the sample consists of second- and third-generation immigrants, respectively.

Our primary variables are PoC solidarity and support for pro-outgroup policies in the realms of affirmative action, unauthorized immigration, and high-skilled immigration. We operationalize PoC solidarity with three (3) previously validated items, which operate equivalently across these diverse populations (Engelhardt et al. 2025). Respondents used a scale from 1-strongly agree to 5-strongly disagree to complete three items: 1) "The problems of Black, Latino, Asian, and other people of color are similar enough for them to be allies;" 2) I feel solidarity with people of color, which include Black, Asian, and Latino people; and 3) What happens to people of color in this country has something to do with what happens in my life as a [Black, Asian,

Latino, OR multiracial] person.” We leave these items in their raw metric, code them in a pro-solidarity direction, and scale them ($\alpha_{w1} = .807$) ($M_{w1} = 3.423$, $SD_{w1} = 1.025$).

We gauge support for affirmative action with replies to an item running from 1-strongly favor to 5-strongly oppose: 1) “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 keep replies in their raw metric and code them so that higher values reflect stronger policy support ($M_{w1} = 2.919$, $SD_{w1} = 1.433$).

We tap support for flexible policy toward unauthorized immigrants with an item on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) (Pérez 2021): “Renewing temporary relief from deportation for undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children?” Replies range from 1-strongly favor to 5-strongly oppose, which we rescale so that higher values reflect more support for this pro-Latino policy ($M_{w1} = 3.497$, $SD_{w1} = 1.355$).

Next, we capture support for high-skilled immigration with two previously validated items (Pérez 2021) on the same 5-point scale: 1) “Expanding the number of visas available to legal immigrants who wish to enter the United States?”; and 2) “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?” We scale this item pair so that higher values reflect more policy support ($r = .571$, $M_{w1} = 3.566$, $SD_{w1} = 1.089$).

Finally, we adjust our models for respondent variation in their race/ethnicity, age, college education, gender, and immigrant generation. Critically, we include

respondents' degree of identity as Black, Latino, Asian, or Multiracial, which correlates with policy support among PoC (Pérez 2021). We tap identity strength with three validated statements (Engelhardt et al. 2025) on a 1-to-5 strongly (dis)agree scale: a) "The fact that I am [Black, Latino, Asian, OR Multiracial] is an important part of my identity"; b) "Being [Black, Latino, Asian, OR Multiracial] is an important part of how I see myself"; and c) "I often think about the fact that I am [Black, Latino, Asian, OR Multiracial]." We leave replies in their raw metric and scale them so that higher values reflect stronger identity ($\alpha=.812$, $M=3.805$, $SD=1.013$).

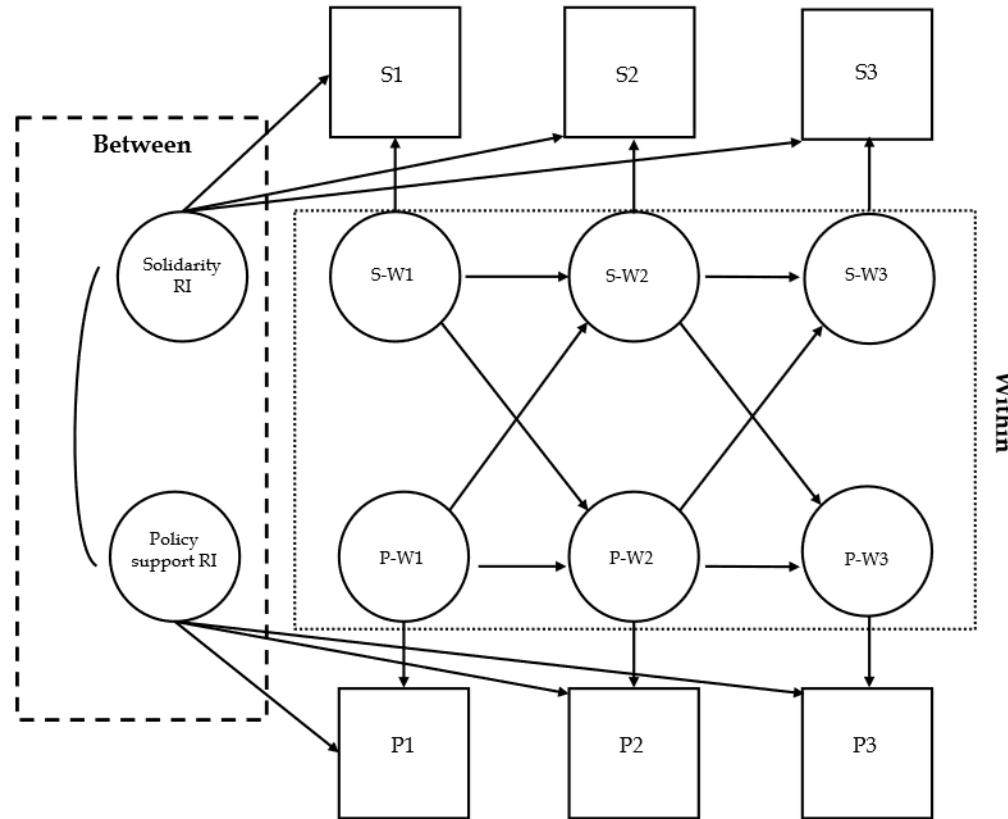
Random Intercept Cross-Lagged Panel Models (RI-CLPMs)

With three survey waves, four populations, and three issues, we estimate a trio of random intercept cross-lagged panel models (RI-CLPMs), which decouple stable between-person differences in variables from within-person dynamics in these constructs (Osborne and Little 2024). This approach is preferable to simpler cross-lagged models when seeking to isolate within-person dynamics, which are conflated with between-person differences in traditional cross-lagged models. RI-CLPMs are also prized for their ability to a) better establish the temporal primacy of one variable over another; and b) better account for the inertia in each variable via lags. These advantages place causal inferences about solidarity's effects on sturdier ground relative to prior cross-sectional studies (Rohrer and Murayama 2023). We estimate these models in a full information maximum likelihood (FIML) framework, which efficiently uses all available data without discarding list-wise or case-wise deleted responses, thereby yielding unbiased parameters and minimizing false positives (Little 2024).

The random intercepts (RI) in our RI-CLPMs capture stable between-person differences in solidarity and policy support. These are durable orderings of people from low to high on these variables, which traditional cross-lagged panel models analyze (Little 2024). 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 (plus our covariates). 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). This is consistent with empirical work establishing 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. 2025). Nonetheless, our RI-CLPMs include racial/ethnic identity strength and several demographic covariates to further increase confidence in any yielded results. These covariates predict levels of each focal variable (i.e., solidarity and policy support).

Figure 2 provides visual intuition for our models. The key quantities in RI-CLPMs are its auto-regressive (AR) and cross-lagged (CL) effects. 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 one variable (e.g., solidarity) produces a future deviation in another variable (e.g., 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 parsimony's sake, 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.

Results

Table 2 reports the main path coefficients from this within-person process over time, with separate models for each policy domain. 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 (Little 2024). These patterns lend credence to the model estimates.

First, we find that the random intercepts for PoC solidarity and each policy scale are substantively and positively associated, as expected ($r_{\text{affirmative action}} = .464, p < .001$; $r_{\text{undocumented}} = .516, p < .001$; $r_{\text{high-skill}} = .468, p < .001$) (Pérez et al. 2024a). These correlations reflect the connections binding stable between-person differences in solidarity with support for each policy domain. Next, we observe some 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 is consistent with theorizing about Black, Latino, Asian, and Multiracial adults' position within the PoC mega-category (Pérez 2021). This pattern also arises in between-person differences on policy support, reaffirming Black adults' role as the most progressive PoC subgroup (Rogbeer et al. 2025). However, except for racial identity strength and dummy variables indicating racial/ethnic classification, most of our covariates (e.g., gender, education) are unassociated or negligibly correlated with between-group differences in solidarity and policy support.

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

Outcome	Predictor $t-1$	B (SE)
Affirmative action	---	
	Affirmative action	.041 (.046)
	PoC solidarity	.090 (.040)
PoC solidarity	---	
	PoC solidarity	.076 (.047)
	Affirmative action	.063 (.036)
CFI/TLI: .999/.993	RMSEA: .014, CI [.000, .030]	SRMR: .016
Undocumented immigration	---	
	Undocumented immigration	-.016 (.048)
	PoC solidarity	.099 (.041)
PoC solidarity	---	
	PoC solidarity	.081 (.046)
	Undocumented immigration	.058 (.038)
CFI/TLI: 1.000/.994	RMSEA: .013, CI [.000, .024]	SRMR: .009
High-skilled immigration	---	
	High-skilled immigration	.063 (.050)
	PoC solidarity	-.063 (.042)
PoC solidarity	---	
	PoC solidarity	.066 (.042)
	High-skilled immigration	-.044 (.041)
CFI/TLI: .999/.983	RMSEA: .023, CI [.009, .037]	SRMR: .008

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).

Second, we examine within-person dynamics in the relation between solidarity and policy support over time. We find evidence aligning with our first prediction (H1) on two out of our three issue domains. Specifically, we observe 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 a current increase in an individual's trait solidarity level persists as an increase in future support for affirmative action (.090, SE = .040, $p < .022$). We find weak evidence of a reverse relationship from prior support for affirmative action to future expressions of solidarity (.063, SE = .036, $p > .080$).

We find a set of substantively similar results for support concerning flexible policies toward undocumented immigrants. Here, present levels of PoC solidarity are positively and significantly associated with future support for DACA, which strongly implicates Latinos (Pérez 2021). The coefficient for lagged solidarity implies that a rise in a person's current solidarity level persists into the future as an increase in support for DACA (.099, SE = .041, $p < .016$). Again, we find no evidence of a reverse relationship from prior support for undocumented immigrants to future expressions of solidarity (.058, SE = .038, $p < .127$).

In turn, 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 other two policy realms, we find that previous PoC solidarity levels are unrelated to support for high-skilled immigration (-.063, SE = .042, $p < .134$). This pattern is

inconsistent with our hypotheses and diverges from previously published evidence (Pérez et al. 2025). Exploratory, *post-hoc* analyses (A.2) provisionally suggest this null pattern might be partly shaped by the weaker salience of news coverage about high-skill immigration during our panel's span. This cautions researchers to pay closer attention to issue salience as a possible moderator of the connections between PoC solidarity and support for pro-outgroup policies in future work.

Implications

Our results provide a pair of new insights on U.S. inter-minority politics. One lesson is that policy issues which implicate specific PoC do not appear to grow PoC solidarity levels. That is, we uncover no evidence that support for pro-outgroup policies affect solidarity levels. This unidirectional influence reaffirms existing work and suggests that it is likely ineffective to raise the salience of group-specific issues to catalyze solidarity. A better approach here, our results indicate, is to systematically focus PoC's attention on clear and resonant justifications for why they should unify around political objectives, consistent with prior work using a *similarity principle* (Cortland et al. 2017; Pérez et al. 2025). These justifications can be both positive (shared histories) or negative (e.g., shared discrimination). Here, we see opinion leaders playing a substantial role in generating and harnessing PoC solidarity for political ends.

Our results also put inferences about solidarity's causal effects on sturdier footing. In existing work, solidarity's influence on policy support occurs contemporaneously, implying *immediate* solidarity effects. In contrast, our findings suggest that another, non-mutually exclusive path to solidarity is evolutionary. 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 gradually influence mass politics.

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