Testing the Stability and Temporal Order of PoC *Identity* and PoC *Solidarity*:
New Evidence from a Survey Panel of Asian, Black, Latino, and Multiracial Adults[*]

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Abstract

Two crucial variables in the study of people of color (PoC) are *identity* and *solidarity*. Present work construes *identity* as more stable than *solidarity*, with *identity* shifting *solidarity* between PoC. However, this view rests on cross-sectional evidence, limiting researchers' ability to formally appraise these key variables' stability and sequence. We report the first longitudinal evidence on these matters by leveraging a unique two-wave survey of Asian, Black, Latino, and Multiracial adults. First, contrary current conceptualizations, we find PoC *solidarity* is as stable as PoC *identity*, suggesting two alternate but durable sources of political unity among these groups. Second, consistent with present conceptualizations, we show PoC *identity* is associated with shifts in *solidarity*, but not vice versa. Third, we offer evidence that the dynamics between these variables holds uniformly across different PoC subgroups, highlighting this mega-group's coherence and political relevance. We conclude by discussing our results' implications for U.S. inter-minority politics.

Word Count: 8,649

The "people of color" concept is part of the zeitgeist today, but is it…trying to conjure up a collectivity that doesn't exist?

                       -Sandy Banks, African American, *L.A. Times* Columnist

Only one person with one voice, but a perspective that cuts to the heart of the matter. How meaningful is the category, *people of color*? Beginning in the late 1980s, Black and mainstream media began using this label to describe Black and non-Black racial minorities, with the goal of highlighting the shared racial oppression that many non-White individuals continue to experience at the hands of structural racism in the United States (Pérez 2021; Starr 2023). Use of this label implies that Black, Asian, Latino, Multiracial, and other non-White people identify collectively with each other and feel a strong sense of camaraderie and commitment to one another (e.g., Chan and Jasso 2023; Sirin, Valentino, and Villalobos 2022; Davenport 2018; Masuoka 2017; McClain and Johnson Carew 2017). But given the enormous heterogeneity and unique histories of these groups (e.g., Kim 2023; García and Sanchez 2021; Carter 2019; Zou and Cheryan 2017; Masuoka and Junn 2013), how realistic is it to assume that they identify as *people of color* and feel solidarity between themselves? Answering this question can help clarify what we can expect in terms of inter-minority politics in a racially diversifying U.S.

The leading perspective on this matter suggests that many non-Whites do, in fact, identify as *people of color*, independently of their identification with their specific racial or ethnic group (e.g., Black, Latino, Asian, etc.). Using large national surveys (Pérez 2021), research uncovers meaningful variation in identification as *people of color*, or PoC ID, among Black, Asian, and Latino adults. When members of these non-White

populations answer PoC ID survey items, their responses can be ordered from lower to higher levels of this attachment, with greater PoC ID levels influencing several political attitudes, including support for policies that benefit specific racial and ethnic minorities. The challenge here, however, is that this evidence is cross-sectional, leaving social scientists in the dark about how durable PoC ID is beyond its expression in one survey at one point in time. Indeed, survey researchers have long taught us that survey respondents will obligingly answer questions posed to them, even if they have never thought deeply about a query's content (Schwarz 2007; Tourangeau, Rips, and Rasinski, 2000; Zaller 1992; Schuman and Presser 1980). One small study (N = 109) does find a remarkable degree of stability in PoC ID (test-retest correlation = .76) in a sample of Latino and Asian undergraduates who were surveyed twice about this identity seven months apart (Pérez 2021). Yet doubts remain about how generalizable this result is beyond a narrow slice of undergraduate students at one elite university (Sears 1986).

Studies on PoC solidarity, which are more extensive, are vulnerable to similar critiques, as well as others that are particular to this variable. Drawing on large-N surveys of Black, Asian, Latino, and Multiracial adults, recent work reveals that PoC solidarity is conceptually and empirically distinct from PoC ID (Pérez, Goldman, Huo, Nteta, and Tropp 2024). Whereas PoC ID is viewed as a durable predisposition that sharpens individuals' sensitivity to intergroup stimuli (e.g., threats to the ingroup), PoC solidarity is treated as a more malleable and context-driven factor in inter-minority politics that facilitates coordination between ingroup members (Leach, van Zomeren, Zebel, Vliek, Pennekamp, Doosje, Ouwekerk, and Spears 2008; see also Sellers, Rowley,

Chavous, Shelton, and Smith 1997). Evidence supporting this characterization suggests that higher PoC ID levels are associated with stronger PoC solidarity levels. In turn, higher solidarity levels are associated with greater Black, Asian, Latino and Multiracial support for policies benefitting racially minoritized groups who are not their own (Pérez 2021; see also Merseth 2018; Sirin et al. 2021; Chan and Jasso 2023). Again, however, the cross-sectional nature of this evidence raises questions about whether these associations are unidirectional and how both concepts interface, exactly. To address this, some scholars have manipulated PoC ID by heightening a sense of shared discrimination between racially minoritized groups. This manipulation applies control over the theorized sequence between PoC ID and PoC solidarity, suggesting that shared discrimination reliably increases solidarity levels (for a meta-analysis, see Pérez, Vicuña, and Ramos 2023; see also Cortland, Craig, Shapiro, Richeson, Neel, and Goldstein 2017). Still, even with experimental control, one cannot rule out that PoC solidarity also influences PoC ID, which would suggest more complex feedback dynamics between these major variables.

Our paper clarifies these matters by producing the first longitudinal evidence on the stability and temporal order of identity and solidarity between *people of color*. Using the 2023 American Multiracial Panel Study (AMPS), we leverage the extensive measures of these variables (3 items per concept), the temporal structure of these data (2 survey waves), the multiple populations it covers (Black, Asian, Latino, and Multiracial adults), and the large sample sizes of these groups (N=2,026). We report three major findings.

First, in contrast to prior conceptualization and evidence, we find that PoC ID *and* PoC solidarity display a remarkable degree of stability, suggesting both variables are meaningful, deep-seated, and wholly capable of affecting downstream outcomes on their own. This stability clarifies the nature of these concepts, highlights them as plausible causal forces in intergroup relations (subject to further investigation), and facilitates the interpretation of differences in estimated correlations across cross-sectional surveys (e.g., Converse 1964; Engelhardt 2019; Krosnick and Petty 1995; Miller 2000; Tesler 2015). Second, consistent with current theorizing about these variables, a set of cross-lagged panel models suggests that current PoC ID levels predict future PoC solidarity levels (e.g., Engelhardt 2021; Finkel 1995), but present PoC solidarity does not predict future PoC ID. This reaffirms available evidence and extends it by using an alternate design that is less vulnerable to the limitations of cross-sectional evidence on which this literature strongly rests. Finally, we discover that these patterns operate uniformly across PoC groups, which includes Black, Asian, Latino, and Multiracial adults. Notwithstanding the rich heterogeneity between populations of color, the stability of PoC ID and PoC solidarity—and the temporal influence from one to the other—is statistically and substantively similar across Black, Asian, Latino, and Multiracial adults in all but one instance. This further underlines the coherence and relevance of the category, *people of color*, to American politics. It also broadens our knowledge of *people of color* by generating insights into Multiracial adults, who are typically not theorized about or included in surveys of PoC (cf. Davenport 2018;

Masuoka 2017). We discuss our results' implications for ongoing research on U.S. inter-minority politics in a racially diversifying mass public.

The Current View of PoC ID and PoC Solidarity: A Social Identity Theory Approach

Existing knowledge about PoC ID and PoC solidarity draws on insights from social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel 1981) and its offshoot, self-categorization theory (SCT) (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell 1987). Accordingly, PoC ID and PoC solidarity are construed as related but distinct variables in the identity-to-politics link (Lee 2008), with PoC ID influencing PoC solidarity, but not vice versa (Huddy 2013; Doosje, Spears, and Ellemers 2002; Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 1997).

Extant work teaches us that mega-groups (e.g., *Americans*) are often defined by specific subgroups within them (i.e., Whites) (Devos and Banaji 2005; Danbold and Huo 2015). Because these superordinate categories, as they are formally known, encapsulate many subgroups, it is common for one of them to define the shared category by projecting its values and norms onto it (Hornsey and Hogg 2000; Waldzus, Mummendey, and Wenzel 2004; Wenzel, Waldzus, and Steffens 2017; see Wenzel, Mummendey, and Waldzus 2007 for a review). This means there is often significant variation in the degree to which ingroup members view themselves as prototypical reflections of a shared category. Here, research finds that Black adults see themselves as defining the category, *people of color*, with Latino and Asian adults agreeing with this perspective and viewing themselves as less prototypical PoC (Chin, Mártir, Huo, and Pérez 2023).

Conceptually, a person's degree of identification with an ingroup, like PoC, reflects how central that category is to one's sense of self (Ethier and Deaux 1994; Ellemers et al. 1997; Ellemers and Jetten 2013). The more central a category is to individuals, the more "sensitive to ingroup…and intergroup events" they are (Leach et al. 2008: 147). This implies that the centrality of an ingroup identity is a crystallized precursor to downstream activity in and for that ingroup, even if all group identities vary from context to context (Turner et al. 1987). As Ellemers, Doosje and Spears (1997: 618) articulate, "strength of ingroup identification can be seen as an important cause of people's inclination to engage in…intergroup behavior." Indeed, before one commits to and invests in group-based activity, one must know who the group is, what it stands for, and how important it is to oneself, which are core functions of any identity (Hogg 2005). From this angle, then, PoC ID is hypothesized to be a highly *stable* disposition that sharpens attention toward opinions and actions involving this ingroup ($H0_1$), with cross-sectional evidence supporting this view (Pérez et al. 2024). One observable implication of this claim is that people's reports of PoC ID over time should be highly correlated ($r \geq .75$). We treat this as our first null hypothesis.

In contrast to PoC ID, present work construes solidarity as a malleable consequence of identifying as a *person of color* (e.g., Cortland et al. 2017; Pérez, Vicuña, Ramos, Phan, Solano, and Tillett 2023). Solidarity reflects psychological commitment to an ingroup, which entails behavioral coordination with fellow members (Leach et al. 2008: 147), with this collective behavior occurring downstream of solidarity. Thus, one can view solidarity as a catalyst behind group consciousness (Chong and Rogers

2005)—i.e., the politicized sense that collective action is *the* way to remedy an ingroup's disadvantaged status in society (Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk 1981; McClain, Johnson Carew, Walton, and Watts 2009; Sanchez and Vargas 2016).

Nevertheless, existing work also teaches us that solidarity-based action is generally sporadic, hard to sustain, and often unsuccessful (Olson 1965; Ostrom 2010; van Zomeren 2013). As a result, solidarity is highly variable because it is personally costly (i.e., in terms of time, resources, and sense of efficacy) (van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears 2008) and contextually dependent on the salience of an ingroup identity (i.e., the same ingroup is not always relevant) (Turner et al. 1987). For applied researchers, this makes it imperative to maximize the correspondence between available measures of solidarity (which are sparse) and the type of individuals engaged in it (e.g., Black, Asian, and Latino people) (Chong and Rogers 2005; McClain et al. 2009).

Given these insights, some political psychologists construe solidarity as "softer" and less stable than ingroup identification (Pérez et al. 2024) because it is highly dependent on the intergroup context: who is the outgroup (Tajfel 1981); how are they a threat to the ingroup (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 1999); and what menu of options exist to minimize or eliminate that threat (Tajfel and Turner 1986)? This situation-specific aspect of solidarity implies it is the outcome of antecedent influences (Converse 1964; Krosnick and Petty 1995; Tesler 2015), suggesting it will often operate as a mediating variable between PoC ID and political opinions and behaviors (Hayes 2022). Consistent with this conceptualization, available research finds that higher PoC ID levels are, in fact, highly associated with higher PoC solidarity levels. In turn, higher

PoC solidarity levels are strongly correlated with support for pro-Black, pro-Asian, and

pro-Latino policies. These patterns emerge across Black, Asian, Latino, and Multiracial

individuals (Pérez et al. 2024). Based on this evidence, then, PoC solidarity is

hypothesized to follow from PoC identity, which is our second null hypothesis ($H0_2$).

[Table 1 About Here]

Finally, previous empirical work finds that both PoC ID and PoC solidarity hold

similar meaning for Black, Asian, Latino, and Multiracial members of this mega-group

(Pérez et al. 2024; Pérez et al. 2023). This uniform meaning extends to the performance

of these constructs in explaining policy preferences among *people of color*. Indeed,

observational evidence reveals that despite some variability in the interrelationships

between these variables, the influence of these constructs on public opinion among PoC

is statistically and substantively comparable, suggesting that the underlying dynamics

between these variables operate uniformly among various *people of color*. Thus, our third

null hypothesis ($H0_3$) is that, despite the heterogeneity between these groups, the

underlying processes connecting PoC ID and PoC solidarity should be substantively

similar across PoC subgroups, further highlighting the coherence and shared meaning

of this mega-category. Table 1 summarizes these standing hypotheses about the

stability and linkages between PoC identity and solidarity.

An Alternative Conceptualization of PoC ID and PoC Solidarity That Also Draws on Social Identity Theory

Notwithstanding our previous discussion, an alternate reading of the social

identity theory literature produces three alternative, but untested, hypotheses about

PoC ID and PoC solidarity—each implying a different conceptualization that is more nuanced but just as coherent as the existing one (see table 1). In this revised conceptualization, solidarity is also a highly stable construct, capable of influencing other outcomes (e.g., policy support), including levels of PoC ID. One clue for this alternative perspective comes from psychometric analyses of identity, solidarity, and other group-level constructs, such as satisfaction with one's ingroup (Leach et al. 2008). This research conceptualizes identity and solidarity as highly related but distinct components of people's cognitive and behavioral investment in an ingroup (Brown 2007; Bollen 1989), akin to the way that patriotism and nationalism are distinct reflections of identifying with one's nation, each with different action tendencies (Huddy and Khatib 2007). By measuring these group-level constructs with three items each across three categories (i.e., university students, Dutch people, Europeans), Leach et al. (2008) find that identity and solidarity are strong but distinct reflections of self-investment in one's ingroup(s). This overlap suggests "cousin" concepts that share some similar attributes, including their levels of over-time stability.

Another clue lending credence to the high stability of PoC *solidarity* and *identity* comes from structural features of U.S. racial politics. Racial designations are an institutionally privileged characteristic of U.S. politics, which means that racial and ethnic identities are salient features of national politics, especially among *people of color*. This salience is driven by institutions like the U.S. Census (which highlight and collect data on race and ethnicity) (Mora 2014; Nobles 2000); the winner-take-all system of most U.S. elections (where candidates for office amass support by mobilizing voters

across racial/ethnic identities) (Benjamin 2017; Wilkinson 2015); and the agenda-setting influence of mass media in politics (which regularly covers stories implicating *people of color*, e.g., police shootings) (Reny and Newman 2021; McIlwain and Caliendo 2011). This suggests that even if some non-White individuals do not identify strongly as PoC (e.g., perhaps because they consider themselves less prototypical) (Chin et al. 2023), the present context features structural forces that regularly encourage the formation and expression of solidarity between them to achieve shared civic ends, including political coalitions between them (e.g., for a meta-analysis, see Pérez, Vicuña, and Ramos 2023; see also Chan and Jasso 2023; Cortland et al. 2017; Sirin et al. 2021; Benjamin 2017; Merseth 2018; Wilkinson 2015). Together, these insights imply that solidarity is more stable than prior work indicates, thus exhibiting a key characteristic of a crystallized, strong attitude that influences weaker opinions and promotes attitude-consistent behaviors (Conserve 1964; Krosnick and Petty 1995; Tesler 2015). This yields a competing hypothesis (H1$_1$), namely, that PoC *solidarity* and *identity* are both stable constructs in the present U.S. political environment.

What about the temporal order between PoC ID and PoC solidarity? Insight into these dynamics comes to us from considering the internal structure of the mega-group, *people of color*, and the cognitive arrangement of various non-White groups within it (Pérez 2021). All ingroups can be viewed as normal distributions of members characterized by specific attributes (Turner et al. 1987; Chandra 2012), including superordinate groups (Gaertner, Mann, and Dovidio 1989; Transue 2007). This means all ingroups (e.g., *people of color*) have a central tendency and variance around it. This

central tendency is reflected by an ingroup's prototype—the average ingroup member who most clearly embodies the defining attributes of the ingroup (e.g., Danbold and Huo 2015).

Existing evidence indicates that both Black and non-Black individuals view African Americans as the prototypical *person of color*, with Latinos as less prototypical, and Asian Americans even less prototypical still (Chin et al. 2023; Pérez 2021). This arrangement between the "average" PoC and its "standard deviations" means that one's position within this ingroup has implications for how strongly one identifies as a *person of color* (Wenzel, Mummendey, and Waldzus 2007). Specifically, it suggests that even if one does not (yet) strongly identify as a *person of color*, solidarity with PoC might be a more direct path to engagement with this group, with possible downstream influence on how strongly one identifies with the group itself. For example, Democratic candidates' mobilization of PoC across many national elections provides opportunities for solidarity-building between these groups, as evidenced by Jesse Jackson's 1984 and 1988 campaigns for the Democratic presidential nomination, and Barack Obama's 2008 and 2012 (re-) election campaigns for president (e.g., Tate 1991; Schickler 2016; Rosenfeld 2018). Such alliance-building between *people of color* may influence the formation of PoC ID among non-White populations. This raises the untested prospect of feedback dynamics, where PoC ID follows from PoC solidarity, but PoC solidarity also follows from PoC ID. This is our second alternative hypothesis (H1$_2$).

Finally, the variation in self-perceptions of PoC prototypicality described above should encourage social scientists to further consider heterogenous processes between

PoC ID and PoC solidarity. For example, prototypicality perceptions among Black, Asian, and Latino adults (Chin et al. 2023) can amplify or weaken the degree to which PoC become politically engaged based on their levels of PoC ID and other proximate concepts, such as solidarity. This suggests the possibility that intra-group processes involving PoC ID and PoC solidarity might vary significantly among PoC subgroups, with Black adults displaying stronger dynamics than non-Black minorities, such as Asian Americans and Latinos. This would be consistent with the diverse and unique histories, struggles, and social stations of *people of color* (Zou and Cheryan 2017; Masuoka and Junn 2013). Our third prediction, then, is this: the temporal dynamics between PoC ID and PoC solidarity are stronger for PoC who are African American than PoC who are not African American (H1$_3$). Table 1 catalogs all three of these alternative hypotheses.

Data: The 2023 American Multiracial Panel Study (AMPS)

We test all six hypotheses about the stability and interface between PoC identification and PoC solidarity by drawing on Waves 1 and 2 in the 2023 American Multiracial Panel Study (AMPS). We gathered these unique longitudinal data between June 2023 and December 2023 through YouGov, which uses propensity score matching to build nationally representative samples of target populations from its extensive U.S. respondent panel. Because these samples closely approximate target populations on key census metrics, they are considered higher quality in comparison to other opt-in online survey platforms. Wave 1 was fielded June 10 – 21, 2023 among large adult samples of African Americans (*n* = 985), Asian Americans (*n* = 678), Latino Americans (*n* = 975),

Multiracial Americans (*n* = 764), and White Americans (*n* = 1,000), for a total N = 4,402.

YouGov reached 52-70% of wave 1 completes in each group, yielding smaller but still

informative Wave 2 samples (Black Americans *n* = 514, Asian Americans *n* = 474,

Latinos *n* = 562, Multiracials *n* = 476, and White Americans *n* = 695) between Nov. 17

and Dec. 12, 2023. Our analyses use these panel samples of Black, Asian, Latino, and

Multiracial adults (*n* = 2,026) and adjust for attrition across waves by using survey

weights constructed by YouGov for this purpose.

Within this 18-20 minute survey, the AMPS fielded a six-item battery expressly

designed to capture PoC identification and PoC solidarity, respectively. All six items

were statements answered on a scale from 1-strongly agree to 5-strongly disagree. The

wording for all six items and their intended construct is provided in Table 2. In

principle, each set of three items reflects its anticipated concept. All three items

designed to capture PoC identification reference the centrality of the category, *people of*

color, to an individual's sense of self, thus reflecting "the salience and importance of

ingroup membership," as stipulated by Leach et al. (2008: 147). In contrast, all three

solidarity measures are designed to capture the sense of camaraderie and perceived

common fate that this construct is theorized to reflect (e.g., Dawson 1994). This aligns

with Leach et al.'s (2008: 147) view of solidarity as "investment of the self in coordinated

activity with those to whom one feels committed." Prior work has validated these six

items to ensure they capture PoC ID and PoC solidarity in a comparable way across

Black, Asian, Latino and Multiracial adults (i.e., measurement invariance; see Pérez et

al. 2024). This insight allows us to focus squarely on investigating the stability and sequence of both constructs.

[Table 2 About Here]

Result 1: PoC ID and PoC Solidarity are *Both* Highly Stable

We first consider each orientation's stability. By capturing responses to construct items 5-6 months apart, we are well situated to tackle this substantively. Time spans of several weeks may provide evidence of stability but over a time frame that is less useful for understanding the persistence of orientations if changes in them occur at longer lags. Evaluations across several years, in contrast, may suggest orientations less stable than they might otherwise be if intervening events encourage people to change their attitudes. While half a year is still an arbitrary designation for appropriate time lag, we believe it provides a useful benchmark to assess the extent to which the constructs exhibit the sorts of stability indicative of more crystallized, stronger attitudes (Krosnick and Petty 1995). Our view of PoC ID and PoC solidarity requires stability evidence for periods longer than a few weeks, but as aspects of people's self-concepts we also do not view them as impervious to change, making time spans of several years inappropriate given that world events and life-cycle effects are expected to produce systematic influence on group identity strength and solidarity (e.g., Verkuyten, Yogeeswaran, Zubielevitch, Lilly, Vanderklei, Osborne, and Sibley 2024).

We estimate stability by appraising the correlations between a construct across both waves of survey data. We do this in two ways. Our first approach sums the relevant 3-item sets for identity and solidarity to create additive scales in each wave that

we then correlate. This assumes that averaging across items eliminates random measurement error, but does nothing about systematic measurement error (Brown 2007; Bollen 1989).

Our second effort corrects for both random and systematic measurement error via structural equation model (SEM). Here, we model two latent variables, one in each wave, freely estimating item parameters but fixing them to equality across waves. This ensures the relationship between a scale item and a latent construct (e.g., PoC ID) is consistent over time, while purging the latent variable of random measurement error.

To address systematic error, we estimate correlated errors between the same scale item across waves to account for response patterns unrelated to a latent variable. Further, because all items are on agree-disagree scales, we correct for acquiescence bias by estimating a method factor (Bollen 1989). We do this by estimating a third latent variable on which all our identity and solidarity items load across waves—as well as two items, present in both waves, which also use agree-disagree scales, but whose content is unrelated to group identity and solidarity. These steps help define this acquiescent-responding dimension (Watson 1992).

[1] We identify this method factor by fixing the loadings for the 6 PoC orientation items and 4 supplementary agree-disagree items to 1, which assumes that response bias affects each item similarly given their shared response scale (Savalei and Falk 2014). We

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[1] These items ask: "In general, it feels like most people in this country can be trusted." and "Overall, it feels like most people in this country trust each other."

then constrain the method factor's correlation with the substantive factors to 0 to facilitate estimation.

Table 3 reports these uncorrected and corrected stability estimates first for the full sample and then disaggregated across groups.[2] Both orientations, we find, exhibit high temporal stability, which is consistent with $H1_1$, but inconsistent with $H0_1$ (cf. Bartels 1993). In this way, they exhibit stability that is characteristic of orientations that are more likely to shift weakly held judgments and guide responses to external stimuli (e.g., Tesler 2015). Critically, we discover that in our full sample, identity's estimated stability is over 20% greater than solidarity's (p<.05), which underlines its potential primacy in the dynamics between both variables (Converse 1964), as predicted by ($H0_2$). Ultimately, both of our approaches lead to the same substantive conclusion, but there is a clear benefit to assessing the stabilities of PoC ID and PoC solidarity net of random and systematic errors.

The remaining columns focus on specific groups, with patterns here largely aligning with the results from our full sample, except in two cases. First, PoC solidarity among Multiracial adults does not exhibit meaningful stability, with an error-corrected correlation of .01 disconfirming ($H1_1$) in this group. Second, among Asian American

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[2] The group-specific estimates from the SEM approach constrain item parameters to equality not just across waves but also across groups to ensure the latent variable means the same thing. This aligns with prior work establishing the measurement equivalence of these items across these groups (Pérez et al 2024).

adults, we find PoC solidarity exhibits greater stability than PoC ID, but this difference is not statistically significant (p>.10). Moreover, comparing PoC ID and PoC solidarity across groups, we find that PoC ID's error-corrected stability does not reliably differ between African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos, but is reliably larger for Multiracials compared to all others (largest p = .003). In turn, solidarity's stability is reliably greater for Asian Americans compared to African Americans (p = .003) but not Latinos (p = .275). Finally, while estimated stability is likewise greater for Latinos compared to African Americans, this difference is not statistically significant (p = .115).

[Table 3 About Here]

Result 2: PoC Solidarity Follows From PoC ID, But Not Vice Versa

We next evaluate the temporal order between PoC ID and PoC solidarity by using a cross-lagged panel model (e.g., Engelhardt 2021; Finkel 1995). This approach considers whether average scores on a construct measured at time one (T_1) predict average scores on another construct at time two (T_2) *after* accounting for individuals' initial (T_1) scores on this downstream construct.

We selected cross-lagged models because they let us consider both temporal sequence and dynamics by estimating connections between variables across waves (Zyphur, Voelkle, Tay, Allison, Preacher, Zhang, Hamaker, Shamsollahi, Pierides, Koval, and Diener 2019). But because our analysis uses two waves and not three, we emphasize that we cannot separate out how much stable trait-like differences in PoC ID and PoC solidarity vs. state-like within-person fluctuations matter for any temporal connection (Hamaker, Kuiper, and Grasman 2015), which precludes clearer causal

inferences (Miller 2000). Questions about causal identification notwithstanding, our present interest is more general: in our data, does PoC solidarity shift to become more congruent with PoC ID over time, as $H0_2$ proposes, or do they influence each other, as $H1_2$ suggests? Our two-wave model allows robust tests of these longitudinal hypotheses (Miller 2000), even if some threats to confounding from time-invariant individual differences remain (which we address further below) (Zyphur et al 2019; Hamaker 2023).

We estimate our cross-lagged model within an SEM framework, building on the model correcting for measurement error used in the stability analysis. Using the same items as before, we again estimate latent variables for PoC identity, PoC solidarity, and a shared method factor. We then specify two linear regressions in the same model. The first one predicts PoC ID in wave 2 with PoC ID and PoC solidarity in wave 1, while the second one relates the same predictors to PoC solidarity in wave 2. We also estimate correlations between identity and solidarity within-wave to make explicit that these are related concepts (McArdle 2009).

Figure 1 visualizes the estimated relationships from this model. The parameter estimates are interpretable as standardized regression coefficients and visualized on the paths between the T_1 and T_2 constructs. These results provide clearer support for $H0_2$ over $H1_2$. Specifically, we find that PoC ID measured in June 2023 positively predicts PoC solidarity measured in Nov./Dec. 2023 after accounting for individuals' initial levels of PoC solidarity (p=.004). This is a sizeable relationship, placing above the 75th percentile in an empirical distribution of cross-lagged effects (Orth, Meier, Bühler,

Dapp, Krauss, Messerli, and Robins 2022). While we also find that PoC solidarity

positively predicts future PoC ID, the estimate is moderate (only the 35-40th percentile)

and imprecise (p=.100). At least in the roughly six-month period captured by these data,

identity temporally precedes solidarity, with no clear relationship the other way. In the

conclusion, we explain how the temporal dynamics observed here (i.e., PoC ID more

likely temporally precedes PoC solidarity) help scholars theoretically and empirically in

the study of inter-minority politics in the U.S.

[Figure 1 About Here]

We next probe whether these relationships are similar between Black and non-

Black PoC (as H0$_3$ supposes) or whether they differ across groups in significant ways

(consistent with H1$_3$). Suggestive of potential differences, Black Americans score higher

on both PoC ID (T$_1$: m = 0.75, sd = 0.24; T$_2$: m = 0.76, sd = 0.24) and PoC solidarity (T$_1$: m

= 0.69, sd = 0.23; T$_2$: m = 0.68, sd = 0.24) than non-Black PoC (ID: T$_1$: m = 0.57, sd = 0.32;

T$_2$: m = 0.58, sd = 0.29. Solidarity T$_1$: m = 0.60, sd = 0.26; T$_2$: m = 0.61, sd = 0.25).[3] Our

tests here are especially important given that we observed two potential minor

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[3] Latino (T$_1$: m = 0.58; T$_2$: m = 0.58) and Asian Americans (T$_1$: m = 0.60; T$_2$: m = 0.61)

likely score higher on PoC ID than Multiracial Americans (T$_1$: m = 0.47; T$_2$: m = 0.52)

(largest p = .08). Similarly, Multiracial Americans (T$_1$: m = 0.52; T$_2$: m = 0.53) may lag

behind Latino (T$_1$: m = 0.62; T$_2$: m = 0.61) and Asian Americans (T$_1$: m = 0.58; T$_2$: m =

0.59) in expressed PoC solidarity, though the gap with Asian Americans is imprecise

(T$_1$: p = 0.118; T$_2$ p = 0.049).

exceptions to the temporal primacy of PoC ID over PoC solidarity when considering

attitude stability (Converse 1964; Miller 2000). Thus, it is plausible that the temporal

dynamics between both variables differ significantly across groups.

     We test these alternatives by comparing two competing models. First, we

estimate a model consistent with H1$_3$, suggesting that the longitudinal dynamics

between PoC ID and PoC solidarity are significantly different for Black and non-Black

PoC. This relies on a SEM that fixes the measurement parameters for PoC ID and

solidarity to equality across groups (i.e., Black and non-Black PoC), but allows

structural parameters to vary by estimating separate regression slopes and covariances

between the latent variables for each group (H1$_3$). We then estimated a second model

that fixes the slopes and covariances to equality across groups, making explicit the

assumption that the dynamics between both variables are statistically the same across

groups (H0$_3$). We focus on whether our constrained model fits the data worse than the

unconstrained model. If it does, then we have evidence for intergroup heterogeneity,

consistent with H1$_3$. But, if our constrained model fits the data as well as, or better than,

the unconstrained model, we will have evidence for intergroup uniformity, suggesting

these dynamics operate similarly across PoC as H0$_3$ anticipates.

[Table 4 About Here]

Table 4 reports fit information for these models using standard SEM

benchmarks. The unconstrained model that separately estimates structural parameters

for each group displays a reasonable fit according to CFI and RMSEA, although some

evidence of partial misfit is apparent with the SRMR (Kline 2023).[4] Constraining

regression slopes and covariances of the various latent variables to equality results in

improved model fit. In this constrained model, the CFI increases and RMSEA decreases.

The decline in RMSEA is particularly informative, since this fit statistic favors more

parsimonious models. The model χ^2_{scaled} likewise decreases, and a likelihood ratio test

using a Satorra-Bentler (2001) correction does not reject the null hypothesis of similar fit

(p = .202). Only the slight increase in an already low SRMR—which captures the

average residual correlations unexplained by a model—suggests these model

constraints are unwarranted. Given that our constrained model rests purely on

theoretically motivated parameters without estimating sample-specific error

correlations, we view this discrepancy in SRMRs as negligible.

Ultimately, the fact that our constrained model's fit does not significantly

deteriorate overall, and in fact generally improves, offers clear evidence against (H1[3])

and favors (H0[3]). This leads us to conclude that the temporal dynamics between PoC ID

and PoC solidarity are statistically and substantively the same across Black and non-

Black people of color.[5]

Considering Alternative Explanations

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[4] CFI values closer to 1 and SRMR and RMSEA values closer to 0 denote better fit.
[5] In fact, model fit continues to improve after imposing additional constraints that move

the multi-group model as close as possible to the pooled model in Figure 1, providing

additional support for homogenous dynamics across groups.

In this section, we round out our analyses by addressing three possible objections to them: 1) the analyses assume, but do not test, longitudinal measurement equivalence for the PoC ID and PoC solidarity measures; 2) the analyses are observational and still susceptible to confounding, including from time-invariant individual characteristics; and 3) the analyses assume the temporal link between PoC ID and PoC solidarity does not depend on a greater sense of political awareness.

Supplementary analyses in the online appendix establish several points. First, we find support for longitudinal measurement equivalence for both PoC ID and PoC solidarity for African American, Asian American, Latino, and Multiracial adults (pgs. 2-3). Specifically, we find that our reported measurement models—which suppose that scale items relate similarly to our latent variables across waves 1 and 2—fit the data just as well as models that freely estimate these parameters across waves. This implies that respondents interpret our survey items the same way across both waves, which means our cross-lagged models are unlikely driven by measurement artifacts.

Second, adding control variables to our reported models does not change our primary results. An important alternative to PoC ID predicting PoC solidarity is racial ID. Racial ID and PoC ID correlate (Pérez 2021), so perhaps the results are driven by a different identity. Similarly, political variables like partisan or ideological self-identification could matter if we are correct that structural features of U.S. politics contribute to PoC ID or PoC solidarity. Or, we might have omitted important background characteristics like general political interest, sex, age, education, or generational status. Results reported in the online appendix indicate that including

these variables as controls does not alter our substantive results (pgs. 4-5). The estimated cross-lagged effect of PoC solidarity (T_1) on PoC ID (T_2) remains small and insignificant ($\hat{\beta}$=.04, p=.186). The cross-lagged effect of PoC ID (T_1) on PoC solidarity (T_2) increases in magnitude and remains precisely estimated ($\hat{\beta}$=.18, p=.001).

Lastly, a close reading of our arguments about the link between PoC ID and PoC solidarity implicates an important individual difference in these connections: political awareness. Not only does the identity-to-politics link require an awareness of shared goals and interests to link group membership to politics (Lee 2008; Jones 2023); this awareness might also condition the connection between the importance one places on being a *person of color* and subsequent changes in PoC solidarity. We assess this by dividing our sample into respondents below, at, or above the median score in political interest, indexed by a question asking how often one pays attention to social and political affairs (1 = Hardly at all, 4 = Most of the time). While such a test might better approximate awareness with political knowledge items (Zaller 1992), the AMPS lacks such questions, which are also often difficult to calibrate across racialized groups (Abrajano 2015; Pérez 2015), so we proceed accordingly (see also Jones 2023).

Here, our first model allows the regression slopes and latent covariances to vary across terciles of political interest while the second model constrains these parameters to equality. In results reported in the online appendix we find that the model constraining the structural parameters to equality across groups does not fit the data worse than the unconstrained model, thus supporting the inference of similar dynamics across political interest levels (pgs. 6-7).

In summary, then, the evidence supporting (H0$_2$) — i.e., that PoC ID (T$_1$) contributes to PoC solidarity (T$_2$) but not the reverse — is not reducible to changes in what we are measuring and key omitted variables. Nor is this pattern limited to the subset of PoC most attuned to politics and this mega-group's social standing.

Summary and Implications

With the continued growth in the racial and ethnic diversity of the United States, many political scientists and social psychologists have turned their attention toward better understanding the political relations between various "minority" groups, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Multiracial adults (e.g., Sirin et al. 2021; Davenport 2018; Benjamin 2017; Cortland et al. 2017; Masuoka 2017; Wilkinson 2015). Within this extensive literature, PoC identity and PoC solidarity have received unique attention (Pérez et al. 2023; Pérez 2021; see also Sirin et al. 2020; Cortland et al. 2017). Scholars have found that these two variables are crucial to the formation of coalitions between these sundry non-White populations. Nonetheless, these efforts have relied on cross-sectional research designs, leaving researchers uncertain about the stability of these important constructs; the temporal dynamics between them; and the extent to which the interrelationships vary significantly (or not) across *people of color*.

Our efforts have provided some clarity on these three points by leveraging a unique panel survey of Black, Asian, Latino, and Multiracial adults, the 2023 AMPS. Using these rich data, we pitted two pairs of hypotheses—six in total—against each other and found robust and consistent evidence for the following. First, in contrast to

prior work (Pérez et al. 2024), we find that PoC *solidarity* is just as stable (if not more so)
as PoC *identity*. Previous efforts construed *solidarity* as less stable than *identity* on the
grounds that the former is more strongly context-driven (Pérez, Vicuña, and Ramos
2023; Leach et al. 2008). However, as our earlier theoretical discussion implied, some
contexts might be more chronically salient than others, including political settings that
may encourage positive inter-minority relations and interactions (Benjamin 2017;
Wilkinson 2015; Kaufman 2004).

Understanding construct stability offers key evidence on the nature of an
orientation. Greater stability implies stronger attitudes that are more likely to influence
other belief system elements and guide behaviors (Converse 1964; Krosnick and Petty
1995). This is not to say that these orientations never change. Rather, knowing they
persist to a large degree over a several-month period increases confidence about a
construct's nature and helps us better interpret empirical results about them.

In the online appendix we show that, cross-sectionally, PoC solidarity strongly
predicts policy and presidential "horse race" preferences in both AMPS waves, but its
estimated coefficient changes depending on whether we look at wave 1 or wave 2 (pgs.
8-15). Knowing now that PoC solidarity is a stable orientation helps us better judge
whether these different cross-sectional relationships arise from one of three scenarios: 1)
fluctuations in the independent variable that align it with the dependent variable, 2)
fluctuations in the dependent variable that align it with the independent variable, or 3)
both (see, e.g., Engelhardt 2019).

Our evidence on the temporal stability of PoC solidarity suggests our results reflect scenario 2, while raising doubts that these findings fit with scenario 1 or 3 above (Converse 1964; Miller 2000; Tesler 2015). Although cross-sectional surveys, which are typical of much public opinion research, are relatively weak instruments for adjudicating between these three scenarios (see Lenz 2012; Tesler 2015), the stability evidence we report in this paper can bolster scholars' cross-sectional analyses of PoC's political opinions.

One explanation for the greater observed stability of PoC solidarity are the relatively high levels of Democratic partisan identification among Black (White and Laird 2020), Latino (Abrajano and Alvarez 2010; Hopkins, Kaiser, Pérez, Hagá, Ramos, and Zarate 2019), and Asian (Wong, Ramakrishnan, Lee, and Junn 2011; Chan, Kim, and Leung 2022) adults—which range from robust to overwhelmingly strong. Specifically, whereas more than 80% of Black adults self-identify as Democrats (White and Laird 2020), roughly 60% of Latinos and Asian Americans do also (Garcia and Sanchez 2022; Wong et al. 2011). We raise this point because, unlike the Republican party, Democrats must galvanize and mobilize the support of Black, Latino, and Asian adults across the board—efforts which generally encourage and sustain political coalitions between these groups based on shared policy agendas (Benjamin 2017; Kaufman 2004).

From this perspective, the contemporary Democratic party serves as one crucible for solidarity between *people of color*, with recent electoral cycles allowing members of these groups to "rehearse" working together (see especially the 2012 and 2020 presidential campaigns). One implication is that these regular efforts have created a

stable reservoir of solidarity between PoC, as we have observed. And, the fact that it appears to be at present a highly stable construct further suggests that solidarity levels between PoC are consistently high. This means that when analysts observe heightened PoC solidarity, it is not because politicians are riding a "wave" of increasing solidarity. More likely, it is because politicians have tapped into a profound wellspring of camaraderie between PoC that has accumulated as *people of color* work with each other politically in the context of partisan politics.

Of course, our findings about solidarity, while new and revealing, might appear to be in tension with how the 2024 presidential campaign unfolded among people of color (e.g., Robertson and Tesler 2024; Sides and Velez 2024). The 2024 presidential campaign witnessed an electoral contest between Kamala Harris, a multiracial Democratic woman, and Donald Trump, a White and racially hostile Republican man. With a campaign like this one, it would be reasonable to anticipate overwhelming numbers of PoC to enthusiastically support Kamala Harris and propel her to victory. Yet, what actually transpired was tepid PoC enthusiasm for Democratic candidate Harris, with lower turnout levels among them compared to previous presidential elections and noticeable drifts in some PoC toward the Republican candidate (e.g., Kronenberg 2024; Sanders 2024). Where in this election, then, was the solidarity between people of color that we have carefully documented in this paper?

Our answer is that the deep reservoir of PoC solidarity was there, as evidenced by its remarkable overtime stability at the start of this presidential cycle (see table 3)-- but it was left largely untapped. In principle, this latent wellspring of camaraderie

between PoC could have helped the candidate Harris, but her campaign, it should be noted, kept race-centered discourse at a minimum, believing that a strong emphasis on threats to democracy would be enough to energize voters of color while minimizing defections from White voters (Stephens-Dougan 2020).

And here, it is important to revisit one of the core insights about relations between PoC, which we highlighted at the beginning of our paper. The default mode of relations between PoC is one of tension and suspicion, which means that any political unity between them must be *intentionally* catalyzed by encouraging them to see themselves as part of the same "team." Simply having a deep reservoir of solidarity is insufficient for Democrats to benefit from it. They must—like any other political actor— work to capitalize and harness it toward clear political ends, such as bolstering support for a Democratic candidate (e.g., Leighley 2001; Jacobson 2015). In fact, consistent with this, there is evidence from three large-scale experiments conducted prior to 2024's election day that heightening a sense of shared discrimination between African American, Asian American, and Latino adults heightened their sense of solidarity, which was strongly associated with a planned vote for Kamala Harris over Donald Trump (Pérez 2025). Going forward, the lesson is that the stability and prevalence of PoC solidarity favors the Democratic party, but its political influence is something that candidates from that party have to actively tap into and channel.

Consistent with current work, we have provided stronger evidence in favor of the proposed temporal sequence between PoC ID and PoC solidarity. Specifically, we found that PoC ID might influence PoC solidarity over time, with the latter coming into

alignment with the former, but the reverse pattern does not emerge. This result is important for at least three reasons. Previous efforts have shown that solidarity is catalyzed by producing a strong sense of shared discrimination between *people of color*, which effectively manipulates PoC ID (e.g., Cortland et al. 2017). This manipulation, however, originates with researchers — it is a proposition that may not hold in the rough-and-tumble world of American politics, raising questions about its external validity (McDermott 2013) and psychological realism (Aronson, Wilson, and Brewer 1998). Our finding on the sequencing of PoC ID and PoC solidarity reveals that this hypothesized ordering of these variables — from identity to solidarity — is one that also emerges organically in more "naturalistic" settings, like our survey panel, which overlapped with U.S. presidential politics. This puts the proposed model of inter-minority politics (where PoC ID shifts PoC solidarity) on more solid footing.

In turn, the fact that we found negligible evidence that PoC ID follows from PoC solidarity raises interesting questions about how, exactly, non-White individuals learn to self-identify as *people of color*. Prior to yielding our evidence on the temporal sequencing of these two important variables, the theoretical possibility existed that regular investment in solidarity-based efforts between non-White groups gradually develops and strengthens their self-identification as PoC (Zou and Cheryan 2017; Pérez 2021). That possibility seems less likely now given our evidence. Consequently, other prospects become more tantalizing, including the role that partisan mobilization and polarization might play in leading some non-Whites to gradually identify as *people of color*.

Third, better understanding the temporal linkages between variables better

situates scholars to explain empirical results. The same models reported in the online

appendix that we discussed regarding PoC solidarity's predictive capacity frequently

offer no evidence for an association between PoC ID and policy and presidential "horse

race" preferences (pgs. 8-15). This is a potentially puzzling result in light of existing

evidence surrounding PoC ID's political effects (Pérez 2021) and PoC ID's greater

relative stability (Converse 1964). It could mean that prior evidence for PoC ID's

influence was confounded and produced by omitted variable bias, or we have

controlled for a mediator and thus suppressed PoC ID's association (Hayes 2022).

Understanding that PoC ID in our data appears to temporally precede PoC solidarity

suggests including both in the same statistical model means we are controlling for a

mediator. Consistent with this, models removing PoC solidarity return estimated

associations for PoC ID like those found in existing work (pgs. 8-15). Our evidence on

the linkage between PoC ID and PoC solidarity thus strengthens scholars' ability to

interpret statistical results and think about proper model specification in light of theory.

We close out our paper by turning to the uniform dynamics we generally

observed across our PoC samples and what it implies about our understanding of the

category, *people of color*. Research into the unique histories and politics of African

Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and other non-White groups provide needed

nuance and perspective (Kim 2023; Garcia Bedolla and Hossam 2021; Garcia and

Sanchez 2022; McClain and Johnson Carew 2017; Dawson 1994; Takaki 1989). This

storehouse of scholarship allows us to recognize and appreciate the various social,

economic, and political differences between these groups. But there is also a benefit to looking for commonalities *across* these groups, we think. By hypothesizing about and finding evidence for uniform dynamics across *people of color*, we have yielded insight into its internal composition and operation. As our theoretical discussion made clear, the category, *people of color*, is a mega-group. This means its meaningfulness rests on the absorption of various non-White individuals who display the attributes necessary for membership (progressive politics, belief in systemic racism, etc.) (Pérez 2021; see also Chandra 2012; Turner et al. 1987). Thus, when we talk about *people of color*, we are referring to a self-contained entity with its own internal dynamics — similar to how we think of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos as each having their own internal dynamics.

Of course, this finding of uniform dynamics does not negate the particulars of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and other non-Whites. Instead, it implies that the category, *people of color*, is a relevant, meaningful, and impactful assemblage of individuals which has an influence on mass politics *at times*. The coherence of these dynamics, we rush to add, does not suggest that they cannot vary (or be moderated) by other third variables (e.g., context, etc.). It does, however, provide new and clear evidence that the category, *people of color*, is a meaningful collectivity that exists and can be called to political action under specific circumstances.

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Table 1. Null and Alternative Hypotheses about PoC ID and PoC Solidarity

	Null hypotheses	Alternative hypotheses
$H0_1$	PoC ID is *stable*; PoC solidarity is *unstable.*	---
$H0_2$	PoC solidarity follows from PoC ID (but not vice versa).	---
$H0_3$	PoC ID/PoC solidarity dynamics operate uniformly across PoC.	---
$H1_1$	---	PoC *identity* and *solidarity* are both stable.
$H1_2$	---	PoC ID follows from PoC solidarity (and vice versa).
$H1_3$	---	PoC ID/PoC solidarity dynamics are stronger for Black than non-Black PoC.

Table 2. Question Wording for PoC Identification and Solidarity Items

PoC identification	PoC solidarity
1. The fact that I am a person of color is an important part of my identity (*Important ID*).	4. I feel solidarity with people of color, which include Black, Asian, and Latino people (*Feel bond*).
2. Being a person of color is an important part of how I see myself (*See myself*).	5. The problems of Black, Latino, Asian, and other people of color are similar enough for them to be allies (*See allies*).
3. I often think about the fact that I am a person of color (*Think about*).	6. What happens to people of color in this country has something to do with what happens in my life as a [Black, Asian, Latino, multiracial] person (*Common fate*).

Note: All items were answered on a scale from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. Items were embedded in the 2023 AMPS. For convenience, brief item labels are provided parenthetically in italics.

Table 3. Stability Estimates for PoC Identity and Solidarity

	Full sample	Asian	Black	Latino	Multiracial
Identity	.73 (.77)	.69 (.71)	.68 (.72)	.71 (.73)	.77 (.87)
Solidarity	.60 (.71)	.74 (.80)	.63 (.56)	.64 (.70)	.16 (.01)

Note: Test-retest correlations. Numbers in parenthesis are error-corrected correlations from a SEM correcting for random and systematic error. Analyses weighted.
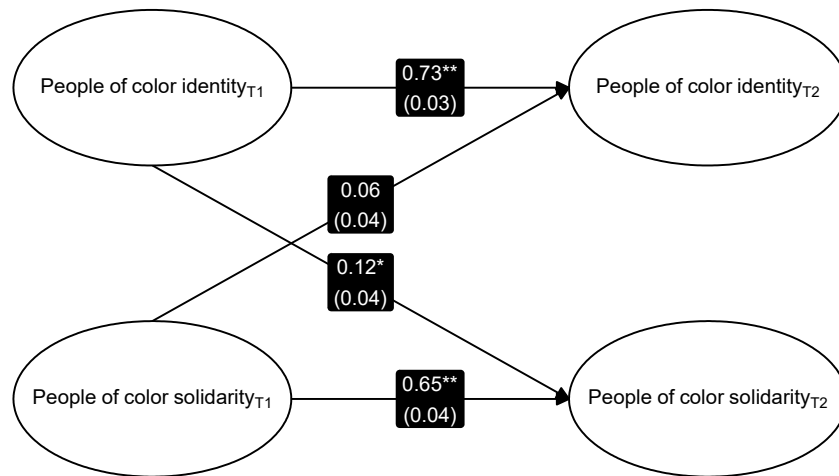
Figure 1. Parameter Estimates from Cross-Lagged Panel Model of PoC Identity and PoC Solidarity. Standardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Model fit: χ^2_{scaled} (DF) = 524.27 (121); CFI = .99; SRMR = .06; RMSEA [90% CI] = 0.04 [0.04, 0.05]. †p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01. Method factor estimated but not presented. Analysis weighted.

Table 4: Model Fit Comparison of Group Heterogeneity vs. Homogeneity in Temporal Relationships between PoC ID and Solidarity

	χ^2_{scaled} (DF)	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA (90% CI)
Unconstrained	1508.12 (268)	.97	.07	.07 (.07, .07)
Constrained	1390.60 (274)	.97	.07	.06 (.06, .07)

Note: Model fit statistics from cross-lagged panel models with different parameter constraints. Constrained model sets regression slopes and latent variable covariances to equality between Black and non-Black PoC.