Understanding people who are different is about connection.

Interpersonal Valence of Ethnocultural Empathy

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INTRODUCTION

- Ethnocultural empathy involves feeling for others who are culturally, ethnically, and/or racially different.
- Levels of ethnocultural empathy differ across racial and ethnic groups, with minoritized groups having higher levels than majority groups.
- Less clear is whether the interpersonal meaning of ethnocultural empathy differs.
- Having been historically misunderstood, for marginalized racial/ethnic groups, ethnocultural empathy may be associated with greater connection.
- Understanding this can offer insight on how to enhance connection, and thereby bridge social divides.
- One tool that is useful in understanding interpersonal valence is the interpersonal circumplex (IPC).
- The IPC plots overt and covert interpersonal behavior across two axes: warmth and dominance.
- We might expect that for marginalized racial/ethnic groups, ethnocultural empathy would have a warmer connection than for non-marginalized groups.
- The purpose of this poster was to examine this.

METHODS

- Participants were 443 workers on MTurk (see Table 1).
- Measures: Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy, Revised Interpersonal Adjectives Scales.

RESULTS

- Correlations between ethnocultural empathy and IPC subscales were on average medium-sized ($r_{mean} = |.23|$).
- Across race, ethnocultural empathy projected into the warm area of the IPC, although for Native Americans it projected warm-dominant (see Figure 1).
- Across ethnicity, the projection was less specific and less warm for Latinx relative to non-Latinx people (Figure 2).

DISCUSSION

- In general, ethnocultural empathy was associated with warmth, although this differed by race/ethnicity.
- The warm-dominant projection of ethnocultural empathy for Native Americans may reflect a more agentic sense of communal behavior.
- We might understand the comparatively cooler projection of ethnocultural empathy in Latinx group in terms of familismo.
- Specifically, familismo may entail prioritizing connection to family over empathy for others.