Reductions in goal-directed cognition as a consequence of being the target of empathy

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Abstract

Although empathy is widely promoted as a beneficial practice across both intergroup and

interpersonal contexts, the implications of being the target of empathy for the target's own

psychological state are unclear. Three experiments examined how being the target of empathy

affects goal-directed cognition outcomes related to a psychological sense of power, namely, the

ability to maintain goal focus and readiness to ask for more in negotiations. We reasoned that

because individuals typically empathize with others they perceive as disadvantaged and needing

support, trying to empathize would raise individuals up in terms of such outcomes at the same

time as it pushed the targets of their empathy down in a complementary fashion. Results were

consistent with these predictions across intergroup and intragroup interaction. The findings thus

suggest that individuals' efforts to empathize can undermine the targets of their empathy in a

subtle manner by hindering their ability to pursue their goals.

KEYWORDS: Empathy; Goal Pursuit; Executive Function; Intergroup Interaction; Target of

Empathy

Trying to empathize with someone else is generally considered to be a prosocial act with uniformly positive consequences for the target. And indeed, although there are circumstances in which the opposite is true, research indicates that individuals often react more favorably to another person when they are trying to empathize with him or her, as compared to when they are not (see Vorauer, 2013). Accordingly, empathy is widely promoted as a beneficial practice across both intergroup and interpersonal contexts.

But what does being the target of empathy actually do to the target's psychological state? Although it may seem reasonable enough to assume that an individual on the receiving end of an interaction partner's empathy will be better off for it, very little experimental research has actually probed the target's own reactions: Most often the target is not even really there. For example, he or she might be represented by a photograph or transcript. Yet it is critical to know how interventions and strategies designed to improve social relations affect all parties involved.

Moreover, research in which targets are present has tended to focus on affective outcomes such as feelings of happiness or attitude favorability (e.g., Bruneau & Saxe, 2012; Vorauer, Martens, & Sasaki, 2009). There are a host of other equally – if not more – important outcomes to consider that may not necessarily coincide with positive emotions and attitudes. In particular, individuals often try to empathize with others who are perceived as somehow disadvantaged – perhaps by virtue of being the victim of a negative event, confronted with an obstacle or limitation, or belonging to a stigmatized group. In this light it seems especially pressing to examine how being the target of empathy affects outcomes related to targets' psychological sense of power, most notably their readiness and ability to act on and pursue their goals and be agentic.

The present three experiments were designed to answer this question. Our main hypothesis was that being the target of empathy would be disempowering, in the sense that it would undermine the extent to which targets evidenced different types of goal-directed cognition that have been shown to be related to a psychological sense of power.

The basis for this prediction was twofold. First consider how the act of empathizing is apt to affect the person doing the empathizing ("actors"). Because individuals typically empathize with others who are perceived to be in need of support and help (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978; Morelli, Lieberman, & Zaki, 2015; Perry, Hendler, & Shamay-Tsoory, 2012; Stotland, 1969), trying to empathize with a target should activate a script or relationship schema (Baldwin, 1992) in which actors are powerful agents who are in a position to provide assistance and valued emotional or material resources to the target, if they so choose.

Next consider the target's experience. Because power tends to be complementary, with one person's greater power being linked to an interaction partner's lesser power (see, e.g., Kraus & Mendes, 2014; Tiedens & Fragale, 2003), increases in actors' psychological sense of power should be accompanied by decreases in targets' psychological sense of power. In short, to the extent that power is on some level transparent, whatever raises actors up should essentially serve to push targets down. A link between power and objectification of social targets (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008) may exacerbate this pattern. Notably, we predict that by virtue of setting these dynamics in motion the act of empathizing will instantiate a hierarchy even in situations where one does not initially exist, such as in exchanges between peers where the target is not obviously worse off than the actor in terms of hardship or distress.

Indeed, a key goal of the current investigations was to address the effects of empathy in the kinds of interaction situations that individuals frequently experience in their everyday lives,

in which feelings and problems are disclosed but there is no specific "emergency" incident

requiring help. Certainly previous investigations have demonstrated that receiving help from

someone else can pose a threat to self-esteem or self-worth (e.g., Fisher, Nadler, & Whitcher-

Alagna, 1982; Halabi, Nadler, & Dovidio, 2011) and researchers have argued that helping can

constitute a means through which groups establish or challenge dominance in intergroup contexts

(e.g., Nadler, 2002). However, according to our theoretical analysis the mere effort to empathize

– independent of prosocial action – should be sufficient to affect power dynamics.

In each of the current studies, actors' mindset (empathic or not) was manipulated prior to

a face-to-face exchange with a target. In line with the idea that "power's cues and consequences

do not have to be conscious for its profound influence on basic psychological and interpersonal

processes to emerge" (Smith & Galinsky, 2010, p. 918), our dependent measures centered on two

types of goal-directed cognition outcomes that have been shown to be tied to a psychological

sense of power that is not necessarily consciously experienced. In particular, research has

revealed that a psychological sense of power is connected to the ability to exert executive control

to maintain goal focus (Smith, Jostmann, Galinsky, & van Dijk, 2008) and readiness to ask for

more in negotiations (Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007). Notably, by examining more than

one outcome, we allowed for the possibility that the predicted complementarity might occur

across different outcomes.

Various controls were included to address potential alternative patterns of results and

underlying mechanisms. Most notably, it seemed possible that empathy might reduce rather than

enhance actors' sense of power. Why might this happen? Trying to empathize involves trying to

carefully imagine and feel close to another person's feelings, which could prompt local and

concrete information processing, especially in comparison to trying to remain objective and

detached, the usual control condition in empathy research and the current studies. Relative to

distant and abstract ways of thinking, local and concrete information processing is associated

with a lower psychological sense of power and reduced goal pursuit (Magee & Smith, 2013).

Accordingly, we included measures of abstract information processing in each study to assess

whether trying to empathize might be disempowering for actors by virtue of leading them to

think in close and concrete rather than distant and abstract ways. In addition, measures of explicit

power perceptions were administered on an exploratory basis and helping behavior was coded so

that its role in accounting for any effects on goal-directed cognition could be assessed.

Our first two studies centered on intergroup exchanges in which a dominant group

member tried to empathize with a minority group member. There were two main reasons for this.

First, we were particularly interested in examining the dynamics of this type of situation because

of how frequently empathy is recommended in intergroup contexts, especially to dominant group

members. Second, the predicted pattern of effects – whereby the act of trying to empathize

enhances goal-directed cognition, whereas being on the receiving end of another's efforts to

empathize reduces it – seems perhaps especially problematic over the longer term when it serves

to reinforce pre-existing group-based differences in status and power. In our view, then,

understanding the effects of empathy in this case is critical in its own right.

However, our theorizing about the negative effects of empathy on targets' goal-directed

cognition is most fundamentally based on people's general association of empathy with power

hierarchy, that is, social scripts dictating that empathy is typically directed toward those who are

worse off, often because of a specific temporary hardship. This is a general association that

should be activated in any social context. Thus, just as the predicted effects should not require

the target to actually be experiencing extreme distress or the enactment of helping behavior, the

predicted effects should not be specific to intergroup exchanges. Accordingly, Study 3 included

both intragroup and intergroup exchanges so as to demonstrate the generalizability of the effects

obtained.

Study 1

Study 1 provided an initial test of our hypothesis that actors who tried to empathize with

an interaction partner would evidence higher levels of goal-directed cognition than would those

who tried to be objective, whereas targets of empathy would evidence lower levels of goal-

directed cognition than targets of objectivity: We predicted that actors' mindset (empathic or

objective) would have directly opposite implications for actors versus targets, such that Actor

Mindset X Role interaction effects would be evident on the different types of goal-directed

cognition that we assessed.

Method

For each experiment in this paper, we report how we determined our sample size, all data

exclusions, all manipulations, and all measures in the study. All measures not reported in the

main text are reported in the *Supplemental Materials*, along with the results they yielded. As

well, in each study pair members had completed a survey containing demographic questions,

were previously unacquainted, completed the study in exchange for partial course credit or

$15.00, and were assigned to pairs on the basis of scheduling convenience. In each study we ran

as many pairs as we could until no further participants from the target minority ethnic group

were available for that academic year.

Participants

Participants were 38 same-sex pairs of introductory psychology students (68.4% female),

each including one Canadian with a White/European ethnic background and one Canadian with a

Chinese ethnic background; this number does not include pairs for which data were missing for one or more entire measures (one pair here).[1] Fifty-five percent of Chinese Canadian participants were born in Canada; Chinese participants' immigrant status did not vary across condition ($F <$ 1). Only five Chinese participants had English as a first language (two in the Empathy and three in the Objective condition). The White member of each pair (the "actor") was randomly assigned to receive the Empathic or Objective instructions prior to the discussion with their partner (the "target").

Procedure

Pair members were assigned to wait for the White female experimenter in different locations and were kept separate from one another at all times except for the discussion and debriefing. As a cover story, the experimenter told participants that the researchers were interested in "how reasoning and judgment vary across social versus non-social contexts." Accordingly, they and their partner would discuss their thoughts, experiences, and opinions on a number of different topics and would also do some judgment and decision-making tasks on their own. Only after their arrival were participants told that the researchers were particularly interested in social contexts involving members of different ethnic groups and that they had been paired with a partner whose ethnic background was different from their own.

The experimenter then delivered the manipulation to the actor. Although the present research does not examine issues relevant to altruism, we modeled our manipulation on Batson et al.'s (1997) classic procedure because it is the most frequently used and has also been implemented in a variety of contexts not involving extreme target distress (see Vorauer, 2013, for a review). Phrases that varied according to the manipulation are in brackets, with the Empathic instructions italicized.

After the discussion you will be asked to answer a number of questions about it. We have found that people are better able to answer these questions if they try to [take an objective perspective toward the other participant during the discussion/ *imagine how the other participant feels about the events and experiences that he/she describes and to imagine how these events and experiences have affected his/her life*]. Try [not to get caught up in how he/she feels; just remain objective and detached/ *to feel the full impact of the experiences that he/she has had and how he/she feels as a result*]. So please do everything you can during the discussion to [be objective/ *imagine how the other participant feels*].

Targets received no instructions about how to approach the discussion and were unaware that

actors had received such instructions.

The experimenter then brought the pair members together and gave them a list of

discussion topics, which included positive and negative academic and social experiences,

opinions about social issues (capital punishment and euthanasia), career goals, employment

experiences, and relationships with family members.[2] Participants were left alone for the 12-

minute discussion that was audiotaped with their knowledge.

Dependent Measures

Immediately after the discussion pair members were separated to complete the dependent

measures, having been assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

Goal-Directed Cognition. Participants then completed measures of goal-directed

cognition. We selected the measures on the basis of a review of the power literature, where we

identified goal-directed cognition outcomes examined in isolation that have been shown to be

tied to a psychological sense of power.

Willingness to ask for more in negotiation was measured by a hypothetical airport

scenario (Magee et al., 2007) in which participants indicated how likely they would be to ask for

increased compensation in exchange for giving up their seat on a plane. All closed-ended

measures used a 7-point response scale unless otherwise noted and higher numbers reflected stronger endorsement.

Ability to exert executive control to maintain goal focus was assessed with a majority-congruent Stroop task (Kane & Engle, 2003). This task required participants to indicate the color in which a word or letter string appeared; on the 24 incongruent trials the color name appeared in a color other than its semantic meaning, whereas on the 96 congruent trials the color name appeared in a color that matched its semantic meaning. Smith et al. (2008) used this task to index individuals' ability to remember, initiate, and act on the goal of reporting ink color even when most of the time they can arrive at the correct answer simply by reading the word. Accurate responses on the incongruent trials reflect better ability to maintain goal focus. To control for general accuracy, an index of relative accuracy on incongruent trials was created by computing the average number of accurate responses on incongruent trials and subtracting from this value the average number of accurate responses on congruent trials.

Abstract Information Processing. Abstract information processing was assessed via the Rosch (1975) categorization task used by Smith and Trope (2006). This task involves rating (1 = *definitely does not belong to the category*; 10 = *definitely does belong to the category*) the extent to which a series of items (e.g., pants, bracelet) belong to a higher order category (e.g., clothing); as in Smith and Trope (2006), each set was comprised of six weak exemplars and twelve moderate and strong exemplars and ratings of 6 or higher indicated inclusion in the category. Participants completed this task for clothing, food, and vehicles. An index of relative inclusion of weak exemplars was created by computing the average number of weak exemplars included and subtracting from this value the average number of moderate and strong exemplars included (to control for any response bias toward generally higher ratings).

Perceptions of Power and Control. Participants rated how *powerful*, *strong*, *influential*, and *effective* they currently felt (α = .84) and also made parallel ratings of their interaction partner's power (α = .78). Participants also completed a four-item scale assessing their perceptions of which person was mostly in control of the interaction, scored so that higher scores reflect the sense that they were more in control (α = .86). Participants were thanked and fully debriefed at the end of the study.

Helping Behavior. Two coders blind to mindset condition reviewed the recordings and counted helping behaviors. These were quite rare but when they did occur they generally involved expressing understanding, making supportive comments, and giving advice. Because the exchanges were audiotaped these judgments had to be made at the pair level; coders' judgments (r = .42, p = .010) were averaged together.

Results

As preliminary analyses across the three studies revealed no evidence that sex moderated any effects of the mindset manipulation, and sex did not vary according to experimental conditions (Fs < 1), it is not discussed further.

Goal-Directed Cognition

We examined each of the goal-directed cognition outcomes in a 2 (Role: Actor vs. Target) x 2 (Actor Mindset: Empathic vs. Objective) repeated-measures ANOVA with pairs as the unit of analysis; the first and second factors were within- and between-pairs respectively.

Asking for More in Negotiation. The analysis of asking for more in negotiation yielded a significant Actor Mindset X Role interaction, $F(1, 36)$ = 12.12, p = .001, η_p^2 = 0.252 (see Figure 1). Simple effects analyses indicated that actors who were trying to empathize showed nonsignificantly greater readiness to ask for more than did actors who were trying to be

objective, $F(1, 67.16) = 2.67$, $p = .107$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.069$, and that targets of empathy showed less

readiness to ask for more than did targets of objectivity, $F(1, 67.16) = 6.63$, $p = .012$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.156$.

Further, actors who tried to empathize with their interaction partner showed greater readiness

than their partner to ask for more, $F(1, 36) = 8.53$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = 0. 192$; the opposite was true

for actors trying to be objective, $F(1, 36) = 4.23$, $p = .047$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.105$.[3] There were no other

effects.

Figure 1. Actors' and Targets' Scores on Asking for More in Negotiation as a Function of

Actors' Mindset Condition (Study 1). Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Maintaining Goal Focus. The analysis of maintaining goal focus yielded a marginal

Actor Mindset X Role interaction, $F(1, 36) = 2.77$, $p = .1045$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.072$ (see Figure 2). Simple

effects analyses indicated that actors who were trying to empathize evidenced marginally greater

ability to maintain goal focus than did actors who were trying to be objective, $F(1, 62.17) = 3.43$,

$p = .069$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.087$; the comparison between targets of empathy and targets of objectivity was

not significant, $F(1, 67.16) = 0.00$, $p = .986$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.000$. The effects for role within the empathic

and objective conditions were not significant, $F(1, 67.16) = 0.41$, $p = .524$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.012$, and $F(1,$

$67.16) = 2.72$, $p = .108$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.071$, respectively. There were no other effects.

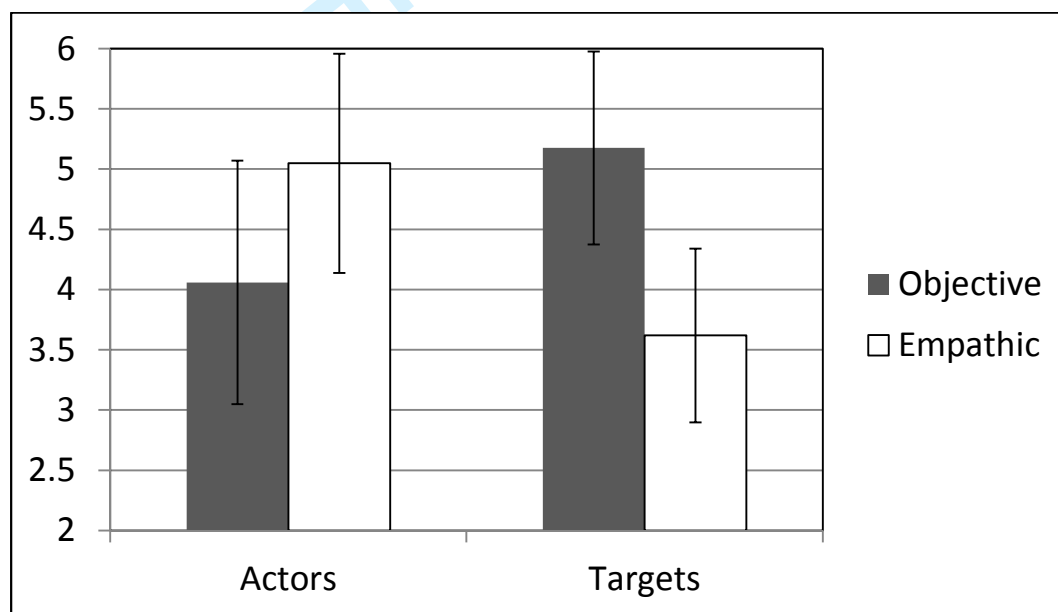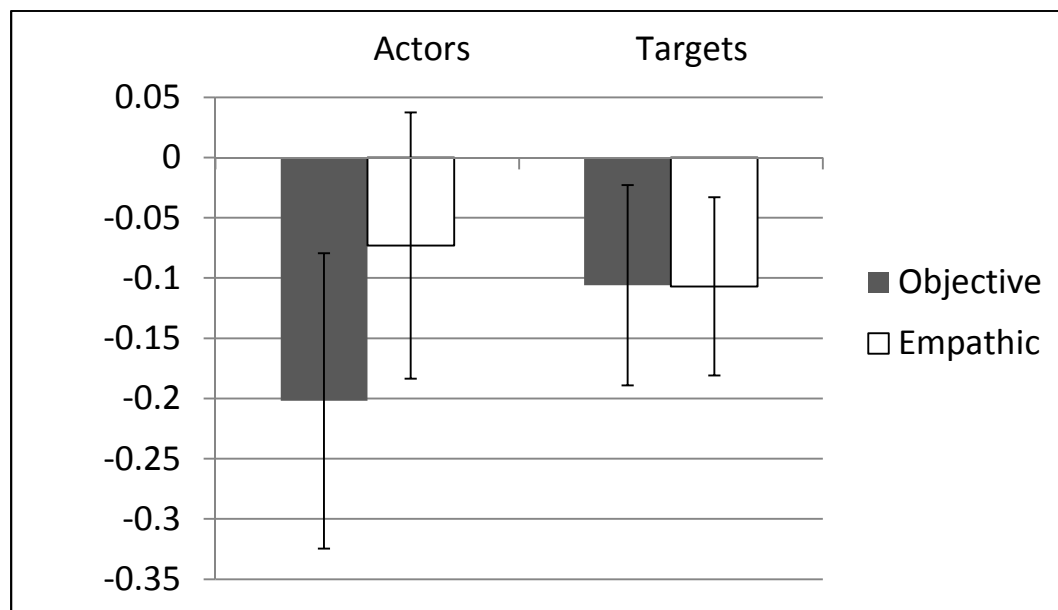*Figure 2*. Actors' and Targets' Scores on Maintaining Goal Focus as a Function of Actors'

Mindset Condition (Study 1). Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Abstract Information Processing

Actors' relative inclusion scores from the categorization task were analyzed in a one-way

ANOVA. Contrary to the idea that empathizing might be disempowering for actors as a function

of reducing their propensity to engage in abstract information processing, there was no effect of

mindset, $F(1, 36) = 0.125$, $p = .726$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.003$, overall $M = -0.56$, $SD = 0.26$.

Perceptions of Power and Control

Participants' perceptions of their own and their interaction partner's power were analyzed

in a repeated-measures ANOVA parallel to the one described above that included judgment type

(i.e., self vs. other) as an additional within-pairs factor. Results indicated an Actor Mindset X Role interaction, $F(1, 36) = 5.75$, $p = .022$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.138$. Actors in the empathic condition perceived self and other on average as more powerful ($M = 5.11$, $SE = 0.14$) than did their partner ($M = 4.49$, $SE = 0.17$), $F(1, 36) = 10.28$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.222$, whereas the same was not true in the objective condition, Ms = 4.67 ($SE = 0.15$) and 4.74 ($SE = 0.19$) respectively, $F(1, 36) = 0.117$, $p = .734$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.003$. There were no other effects involving mindset. The analysis of perceptions of control, which followed the same format but did not include a judgment type factor, yielded no significant effects involving mindset. The results for explicit measures across all three studies are considered together in the General Discussion.

Helping Behavior

Likely because the context did not present clear helping opportunities and the appropriateness of direct help was unclear, helping behaviors were rare ($M = 0.419$, $SD = 0.607$ across both pair members throughout the 12-minute discussion) and did not vary significantly or marginally by condition. Mediation analyses were thus precluded.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 were generally in line with hypotheses. On both of the goal-directed cognition outcomes, asking for more and ability to maintain goal focus, the predicted Actor Mindset X Role interaction was significant or marginal, and the patterns of means were consistent with the idea that individuals who try to empathize with an interaction partner enjoy enhancements in goal-directed cognition at the same time as the targets of their empathy suffer decrements. However, the interaction effect on ability to maintain goal focus was marginal, as were some of the simple effects tests conducted to probe the interactions. As the strength of the effects on the two goal-directed cognition outcomes and of the various simple effects tests vary

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across Studies 1, 2 and 3, we reserve discussion of this issue until later in the paper where we

conduct a meta-analysis across all three studies.

There was no evidence in support of the alternative possibility that the act of empathizing

might be disempowering for actors as a function of reducing their propensity to engage in

abstract information processing. There was also no evidence that the effects were contingent on

helping behavior, although the need to assess such behavior at the pair level likely reduced the

sensitivity of our analysis here.

Study 2

Study 2 was designed to replicate and extend Study 1 by ruling out an account for the

effects obtained in terms of simple distraction. Conceivably, when individuals try to imagine the

thoughts and feelings experienced by an interaction partner during a social exchange, on some

level they retreat from the exchange itself and become preoccupied with their own imaginings.

Their inattention and preoccupation might disempower their interaction partner; conceivably,

being distracted from the exchange could even fuel their own sense of power if they draw

inferences from their own inattention to their partner. To test this possibility we added a third

condition in which actors were asked to hold an eight-digit number in their mind during the

exchange (Gilbert & Hixon, 1991).

Method

Participants

Participants were 59 same-sex pairs of introductory psychology students (49.2% female),

each including one White Canadian and one Chinese Canadian; this number does not include

pairs for which data were missing for one or more entire measures (one pair here), two pairs in

which it was discovered that pair members were previously acquainted, or one pair in which it

was discovered that one pair member had participated in a similar study in our lab. Forty-five

percent of Chinese Canadian participants were born in Canada; Chinese participants' immigrant

status did not vary across condition ($F < 1$). Only nine Chinese participants had English as a first

language (three per condition). The White member of each pair (the "actor") was randomly

assigned to receive the Empathic, Objective, or Distracted condition prior to the discussion with

their partner (the "target").

Procedure

The procedure was the same as in Study 1 except for the addition of the Distracted

condition, in which actors received the following instructions:

> One of the judgment tasks that we are interested in examining in this research centers on
> people's ability to perform two dissimilar tasks at the same time. In this case the two
> tasks are conversing with someone else while remembering newly learned information .
> So, I am going to tell you an eight-digit number and ask you to hold it in your mind so
> that you are able to recall it later on, after your discussion: 84756903 So please work
> hard to remember this number so that you can recall it after the discussion.

In addition, the discussion was videotaped instead of audiotaped, again with participants'

knowledge.[4]

Dependent Measures

The dependent measures were the same as in Study 1, except that an item from Magee et

al. (2007) asking participants about how likely they would be to negotiate the price of a new car

was added and combined with the airport scenario to better index willingness to ask for more in

negotiation. As well, an additional measure of abstract information processing was included, an

18-item version of Vallacher and Wegner's (1989) behavior identification form. For each item,

participants were presented with a behavior along with two different descriptions that varied in

terms of whether they represented relatively abstract or concrete construals of the behavior.

Participants selected the description they believed most accurately described the behavior.

Responses were coded so that higher scores reflected more abstract construals. Finally, because

the discussions were videotaped we were able to focus specifically on actors' helping behaviors

in this study.

Results

Goal-Directed Cognition

Each goal-directed cognition outcome was examined in a 2 (Role: Actor vs. Target) x 3

(Actor Mindset: Empathic vs. Objective vs. Distracted) repeated-measures ANOVA with pairs as

the unit of analysis; role was within-pairs and actor mindset was between-pairs.

Asking for More in Negotiation. The analysis of asking for more in negotiation yielded a

significant Actor Mindset X Role interaction, $F(2, 56) = 3.22$, $p = .047$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.103$ (see Figure

3). Simple effects analyses revealed that actors who were trying to empathize showed a greater

readiness to ask for more than did actors in the objective and distracted conditions combined,

$F(1, 111.61) = 5.28$, $p = .024$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.087$; for targets this comparison was not significant, $F(1,$

$111.61) = 0.54$, $p = .465$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.010$. Actors who tried to empathize with their interaction

partner evidenced marginally greater willingness to ask for more than did their partner, $F(1, 56)$

$= 3.65$, $p = .061$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.061$, whereas no such effect was evident in the distracted condition, $F(1,$

$56) = 0.004$, $p = .950$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.000$; in the objective condition there was a marginal reversal of the

effect, $F(1, 56) = 2.81$, $p = .099$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.048$.

Figure 3. Actors' and Targets' Scores on Asking for More in Negotiation as a Function of

Actors' Mindset Condition (Study 2). Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Maintaining Goal Focus. The analysis of maintaining goal focus yielded a marginal

Actor Mindset X Role interaction, $F(2, 56) = 3.19$, $p = .052$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.100$ (see Figure 4). Simple

effects analyses revealed that targets of empathy showed lower ability to maintain goal focus

than did targets in the objective and distracted conditions combined, $F(1, 111.99) = 6.44$, $p =$

$.012$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.113$; for actors this comparison was not significant, $F(1, 111.99) = 0.56$, $p = .458$,

$\eta_p^2 = 0.014$. Actors who tried to empathize with their interaction partner showed greater ability to

maintain goal focus than did their partner, $F(1, 56) = 6.22$, $p = .016$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.102$, whereas no

such effect was evident in the distracted or objective condition, $F(1, 56) = 0.05$, $p = .820$, $\eta_p^2 =$

0.000, and $F(1, 56) = 0.89$, $p = .350$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.016$, respectively.

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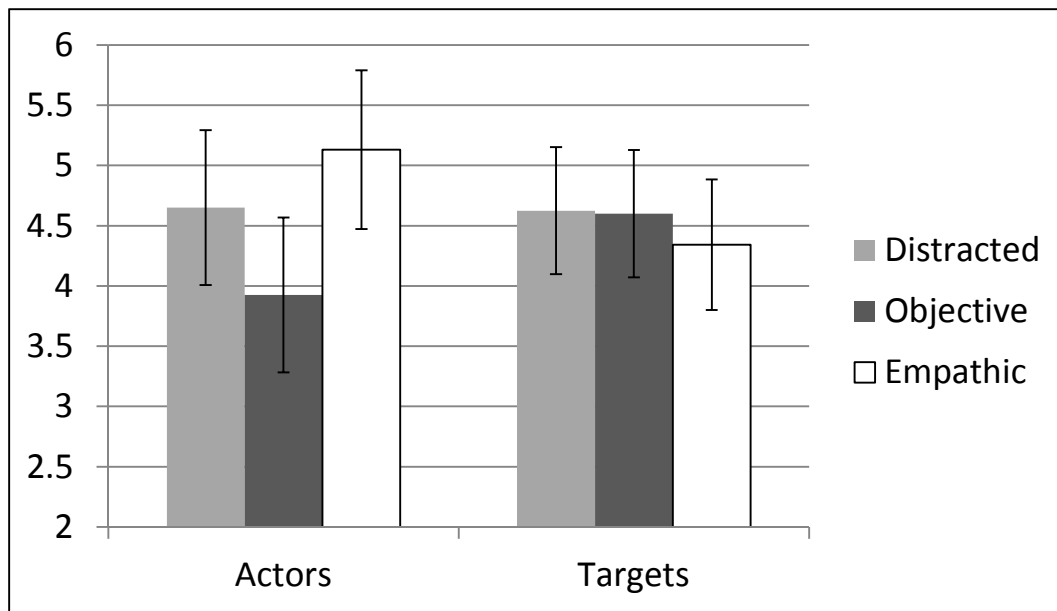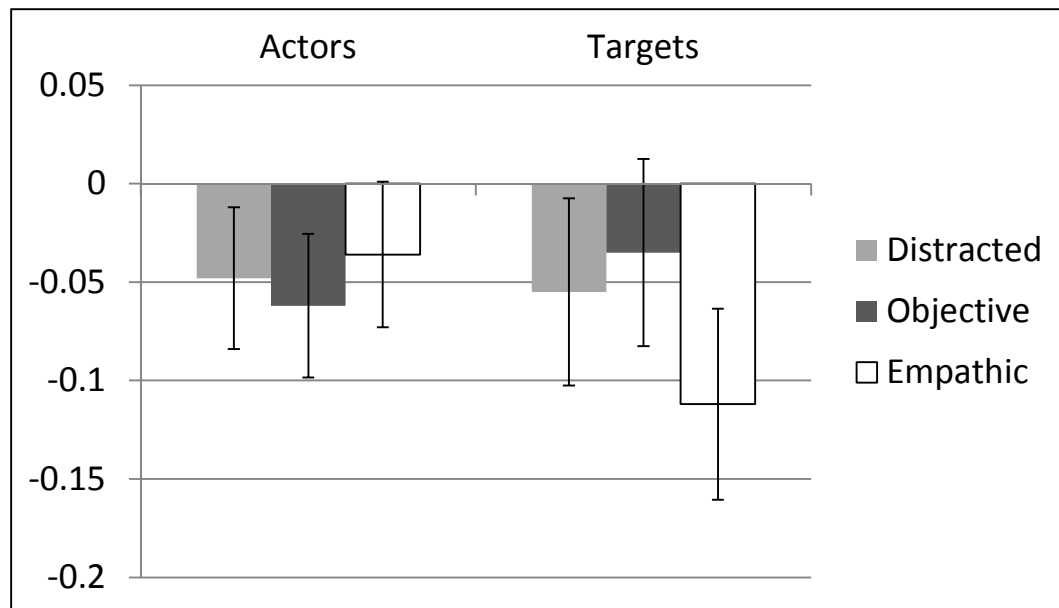*Figure 4*. Actors' and Targets' Scores on Maintaining Goal Focus as a Function of Actors' Mindset Condition (Study 2). Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Abstract Information Processing

When actors' relative inclusion scores from the categorization task were entered into a one-way ANOVA there was no significant or marginal effect of actor mindset. However, the analysis of abstract construal yielded an overall main effect of actor mindset, $F(2, 56) = 3.47$, $p = .038$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.110$, whereby actors who tried to empathize evidenced *higher* scores than did actors in the objective condition, respective Ms= 0.76 ($SE = 0.04$) and 0.61 ($SE = 0.04$), $t(56) = 2.61$, $p = .012$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.108$, and marginally higher scores than did actors in the distracted condition, $M = -0.67$ ($SE = 0.04$), $t(56) = 1.67$, $p = .100$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.048$.

Perceptions of Power and Control

Analyses of participants' perceptions of power and control yielded no significant effects involving mindset.

Helping Behavior

Once again helping behaviors were rare ($M = 0.237$, $SD = 0.429$ over the entire 12-minute discussion for actors) and did not vary significantly or marginally by condition.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 replicate and extend the findings from Study 1. The predicted Actor Mindset X Role interaction was evident on both of the goal-directed cognition outcomes, and the patterns of means were broadly consistent with the idea that at the same time as trying to empathize with an interaction partner brings individuals up, these efforts to empathize serve to bring the target of their empathy down. Once again there was no evidence in support of the alternative possibility that the act of empathizing might be disempowering for actors as a function of reducing their propensity to engage in abstract information processing. Indeed, for reasons that are not clear the effect on abstract construal ran in the opposite direction. As well, once again there was also no evidence that the effects were contingent on helping behavior. As the results were the same for Study 3 we do not discuss helping behavior further until the General Discussion.

Finally, the results were inconsistent with a distraction account for the negative effect of actors' efforts to empathize on targets' goal-directed cognition: For asking for more and ability to maintain goal focus, actors in the empathic condition scored marginally or significantly higher than targets, an effect that was completely absent in both the distracted and objective conditions.

Study 3

Study 3 was designed to demonstrate that the pattern of effects we obtained in Studies 1 and 2 is not specific to intergroup contexts. Accordingly, both intergroup and intragroup pairs were included.

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Method

Participants

Participants were 111 same-sex pairs of introductory psychology students (68.5% female); this number does not include pairs for which data were missing for one or more entire measures (two pairs here), one pair who did not follow the correct discussion procedures, or one pair in which it was discovered that one pair member had participated in a similar study in our lab. Fifty-seven pairs included two White Canadians (intragroup pairs) and fifty-four pairs included either one White Canadian and one Black Canadian or one White Canadian and one Filipino Canadian (intergroup pairs). There were originally two studies, one with White-White (22) and White-Filipino (23) pairs (Study 3a), and one with White-White (35) and White-Black (31) pairs (Study 3b). As the procedures and measures were virtually identical (any exceptions are noted below) and analyses of our key dependent measures including study as a factor indicated no effects for this variable (nor did it qualify any of the effects on our corollary measures), the two studies are combined together to increase statistical power.

Twenty percent of ethnic minority participants were born in Canada and most of them (64.8%) had English as a first language; their immigrant status did not vary across mindset condition, nor did whether they had English as a first language (Fs < 1). The White member of each intergroup pair and a randomly selected member of each intragroup pair (the "actors") were randomly assigned to the receive the Empathic or Objective instructions prior to the discussion with their partner (the "targets").

Procedure

The procedure was the same as in Study 2 except that there was no Distracted condition and in Study 3b the White experimenter made no mention to participants of the researchers being

particularly interested in social contexts involving members of different ethnic groups or of their

partner's ethnicity. In Study 3a the experimenter was male and participants were audiotaped; in

Study 3b the experimenter was female and participants were videotaped.

Dependent Measures

The dependent measures were the same as in Study 2, except that the behavior

identification form was not included.

Results

Goal-Directed Cognition

Each goal-directed cognition outcome was examined in a 2 (Role: Actor vs. Target) x 2

(Actor Mindset: Empathic vs. Objective) x 2 (Pair Type: Intragroup vs. Intergroup) repeated-

measures ANOVA with pairs as the unit of analysis; the first factor was within-pairs and the

remaining factors were between-pairs.

Asking for More in Negotiation. The analysis of asking for more in negotiation yielded a

significant Actor Mindset X Role interaction, $F(1, 107) = 11.55$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.097$ (see

Figure 5). Simple effects analyses revealed that targets of empathy exhibited less readiness to ask

for more than did targets of objectivity, $F(1, 213.95) = 12.04$, $p = .0006$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.101$; the effect

for actors was in the other direction but not significant, $F(1, 213.95) = 1.88$, $p = .173$, $\eta_p^2 =$

0.017. Actors who tried to be objective exhibited less willingness to ask for more than did their

partners, $F(1, 107) = 18.75$, $p = .00003$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.149$; this effect was nonsignificantly reversed in

the empathic condition, $F(1, 107) = 0.18$, $p = .670$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.002$. There were no other significant

or marginal effects. Notably, the Actor Mindset X Role interaction was not qualified by whether

pairs were intragroup or intergroup in nature, three-way interaction $F(1, 107) = 0.616$, $p = .434$,

$\eta_p^2 = 0.006$.

Reductions in goal-directed cognition   23

Figure 5. Actors' and Targets' Scores on Asking for More in Negotiation as a Function of

Actors' Mindset Condition (Study 3). Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Maintaining Goal Focus. The analysis of maintaining goal focus yielded a marginal

Actor Mindset X Role interaction, $F(1, 107) = 3.52$, $p = .063$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.032$ (see Figure 6). Simple

effects analyses indicated that actors who were trying to empathize showed marginally greater

ability to maintain goal focus than did actors who were trying to be objective, $F(1, 213.80) =$

2.67, $p = .104$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.025$; for targets the effect was in the opposite direction but not significant,

$F(1, 213.80) = 1.14$, $p = .287$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.011$. Actors who tried to be objective exhibited marginally

lower ability to maintain goal focus than did their partners, $F(1, 107) = 2.82$, $p = .096$, $\eta_p^2 =$

0.027; this effect was nonsignificantly reversed in the empathic condition, $F(1, 107) = 0.82$, $p =$

$.368$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.008$. There were no other significant or marginal effects. Notably, the Actor

Mindset X Role interaction was not qualified by whether pairs were intragroup or intergroup in

nature, three-way interaction $F(1, 107) = 0.160$, $p = .690$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.001$.
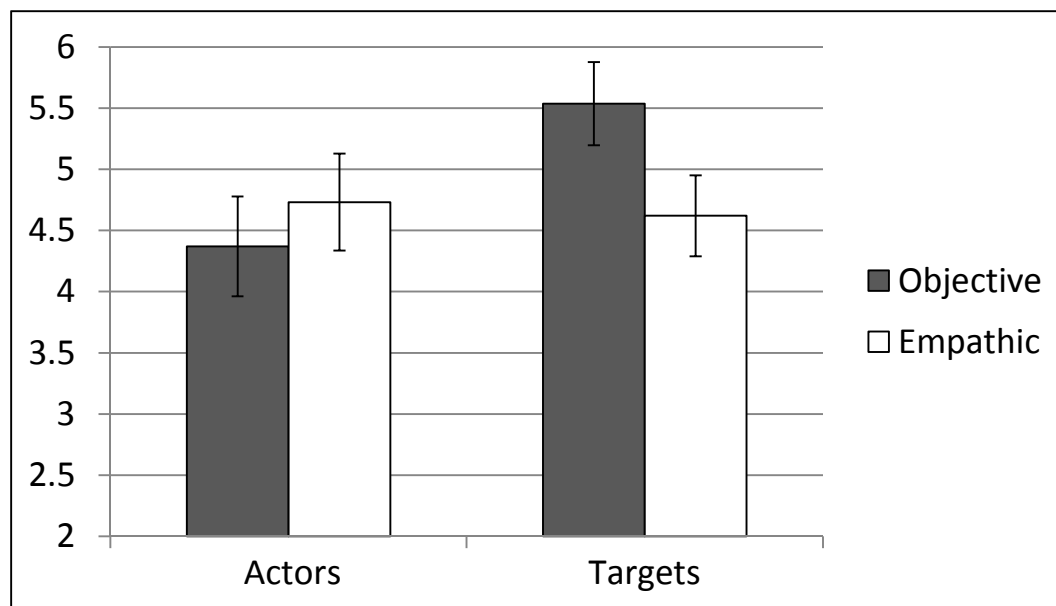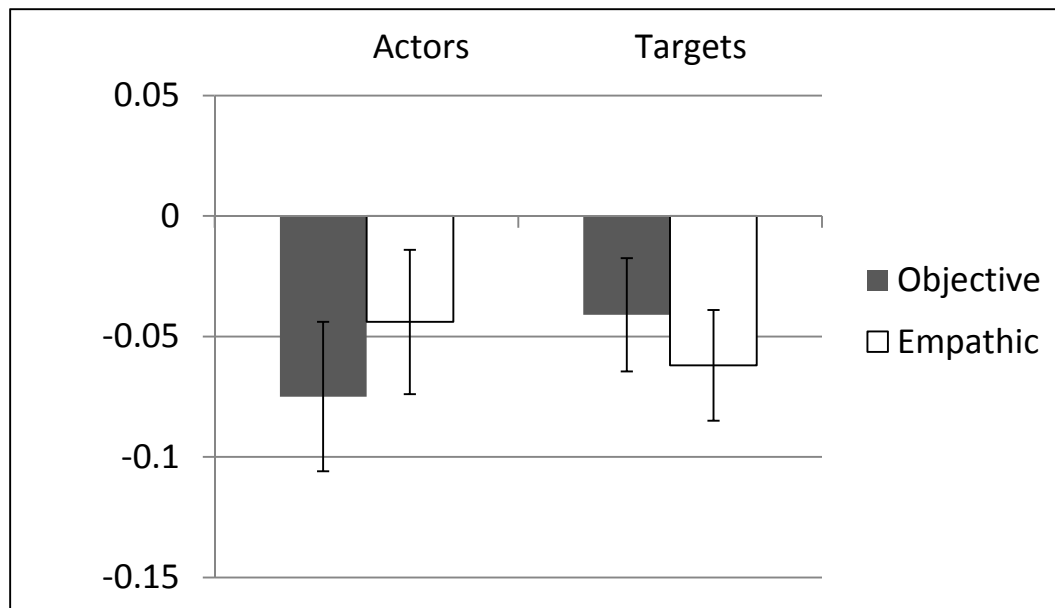
Figure 6. Actors' and Targets' Scores on Ability to Maintain Goal Focus as a Function of

Actors' Mindset Condition (Study 3). Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Abstract Information Processing

　　　　　Analysis of actors' relative inclusion scores yielded no significant or marginal effects,

overall M = -0.58, SD = 0.16. Once again, then, there was no evidence that the act of

empathizing reduced actors' propensity to engage in abstract information processing.

Perceptions of Power and Control

　　　　　Analysis of participants' perceptions of their own and their interaction partner's power

yielded an Actor Mindset X Pair Type X Judgment Type interaction, $F(1, 107)$ = 5.22, p = .024,

η_p^2 = 0.047, which was difficult to interpret: Ratings of own power in the objective condition

were higher in the intergroup (M = 4.87, SE = 0.13) than intragroup condition (M = 4.42, SE =

0.13), $F(1, 177.22)$ = 6.27, p = .013, η_p^2 = 0.055, whereas there was no significant pair type

effect in the other cells (Ms ranged from 4.72 to 5.04). There was also a main effect whereby

power perceptions were generally elevated in the intergroup ($M = 4.87$, $SE = 0.08$) relative to the intragroup condition ($M = 4.65$, $SE = 0.07$), $F(1, 107) = 4.43$, $p = .038$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.040$, which was qualified by the aforementioned interaction. The analysis of control perceptions yielded no significant effects.

Discussion

The results of Study 3 replicate and extend those obtained in Studies 1 and 2. Once again the predicted Actor Mindset X Role interaction was significant or marginal for both of the goal-directed cognition outcomes, suggesting that individuals' efforts to empathize with an interaction partner have negative implications for the target at the same time as the implications for themselves run in the opposite direction. Further, confirming that the dynamics uncovered here reflect a general phenomenon not specific to intergroup contexts, the extent to which this key pattern was evident was not moderated by whether empathic efforts occurred in the context of intergroup or intragroup interaction.

Meta-Analyses

The results of Studies 1 to 3 were generally consistent with our hypotheses. In each study the predicted Actor Mindset X Role interaction was significant or marginal for asking for more and ability to maintain goal focus, and the patterns of means for each of these types of goal-directed cognition were in line with the idea that trying to empathize with a target raises individuals up at the same time as it pushes targets down. However, the interaction effect on ability to maintain goal focus was marginal and the locus of the simple effects driving the interaction varied across outcomes and studies. Accordingly, to establish the overall pattern of results, we conducted meta-analyses across all three studies for each of the goal-directed cognition outcome measures.

We conducted these analyses according to Rosenthal's (1991) procedures for combining results across studies, weighting the effects according to the sample size of each study. In Study 2 we used the comparison between empathy and objective and distracted conditions combined so as to be able to specify the predicted direction of the effects. Results indicated that the effects of actor mindset on actors and targets were significant both for asking for more and for ability to maintain goal focus, using two-tailed significance tests. Specifically, for asking for more, $z =$ 2.60 ($p = .010$) and 3.93 ($p = .00008$) for the positive effect of actor mindset on actors and the negative effect of actor mindset on targets respectively. For ability to maintain goal focus, $z =$ 2.23 ($p = .026$) and 2.03 ($p = .043$) for the positive effect of actor mindset on actors and the negative effect of actor mindset on targets respectively. Across the full set of data collected, then, the predicted pattern of effects was evident on both goal-directed cognition outcomes for actors and targets.

General Discussion

When individuals try to empathize with another person, what are the implications for that person's psychological state likely to be? The present results indicate that a key potential consequence of being the target of empathy is a reduction in readiness to ask for more and ability to maintain goal focus. Across three experiments involving both intergroup and intragroup interaction we found that individuals who were on the receiving end of another person's efforts to be empathic evidenced a decrease in these two different types of goal-directed cognition, at the same time as the person doing the empathizing evidenced a boost in these outcomes.

There was some inconsistency in the results across studies, with significant mindset effects being evident for targets' readiness to ask for more in Studies 1 and 3 but for their ability to maintain goal focus in Study 2, and significant or marginal mindset effects being evident for

actors' readiness to ask for more in Study 2 but for their ability to maintain goal focus in Studies 1 and 3. However, results of a meta-analysis combining the results of all three studies together indicated that actors' efforts to be empathic had a significant overall negative effect on each of these outcomes for targets, whereas trying to be empathic instead had a significant overall effect in the opposite, positive, direction on each of these outcomes for actors.

These findings represent a step toward more fully understanding the implications of being on the receiving end of another person's efforts to empathize. Yet limitations and unanswered questions need to be acknowledged.

Disconnections

First, our reference to the concept of power hinges on its connection to the goal-directed cognition outcomes that we examined rather than on any definitive, direct measurement. Indeed, in line with the idea that the effects of power can be nonconscious (Smith & Galinsky, 2010) and a broader literature on the complex associations between implicit and explicit constructs (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006), the explicit power measures that we administered did not show the same pattern as the goal-directed cognition outcomes and yielded inconsistent results across studies. However, although the results from the explicit measures leave some questions open, they do give rise to the clear take-away point that being the target of another person's efforts to empathize can prompt shifts in targets' goal-directed cognition that are not accompanied by parallel shifts in their explicit perceptions of their own power.

Further along these lines, although we did not necessarily expect the goal-directed cognition outcomes to be strongly related to each other, especially in light of little shared method variance, we were surprised in our analyses to find no significant or marginal relation between them in any of our studies, all $|r|$s ≤ .055. To our knowledge, in research to date the different

types of goal-directed cognition outcomes that have been shown to be related to power have been

examined in isolation rather than together in the same study. The current data suggest that

although the outcomes may all be sensitive to increases and decreases in power, they do not

necessarily move together. Indeed there would seem to be situational factors (yet to be

determined) that guide the particular outcome on which power is manifest in any given context.

Complementarity with Respect to Outcome as well as Direction?

Perusal of the strength of the various simple effects across the studies reveals an

intriguing pattern, whereby the simple effects of actor mindset on actors versus targets tend to be

stronger on different outcomes. For example, in Study 2 the effect of actor mindset was clearest

for actors on willingness to ask for more whereas for targets it was clearest on ability to maintain

goal focus; similar patterns were evident in Studies 1 and 3. This pattern raises the possibility

that in basically affiliative contexts such as those examined in the present research, default

pressures toward behavioral mimicry might render complementarity with respect to the exact

same cognitive outcomes harder to detect: Much as has been shown to occur with behaviors such

as face-rubbing or foot-shaking (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999), there may have been a baseline

tendency for individuals to mimic distinct behaviors associated with asking for more versus goal

focus (whatever those may be) that needed to be overridden in order for the predicted

complementary pattern to be evident. As a result there might have been more room for directly

opposite implications of actor empathy for actors' versus targets' goal-directed cognition to arise

with respect to different outcomes. Of course, this analysis is highly speculative and does not

account for why the locus of the effect for actors varied across studies. In particular, it is also

possible that sampling error contributed to the inconsistencies. Certainly the meta-analyses

indicate that across the larger data set provided by the three studies combined all of the mindset

simple effects were significant.

Despite the fact that the results for actors' and targets' goal-directed cognition followed

the predicted complementary pattern, most clearly at the meta-analytic level, many questions

remain about underlying process. Particularly in light of the fact that (as predicted) there was no

evidence that the effects were contingent on helping behavior, the specific verbal or nonverbal

behaviors through which actors' efforts to be empathic translated into reduced goal-directed

cognition for targets remain to be identified. We suspect that empathizing leads individuals to

exhibit behavior suggestive of power and dominance that then triggers submissive behavior and

concomitant cognition in targets. However, it is also possible that the act of empathizing gives

rise to broadly kind and solicitous behaviors that, while not constituting helping behavior per se,

nonetheless communicate expectations about neediness or vulnerability to targets, to which

targets then assimilate Moreover, helping behavior may play a more important role in contexts in

which there are clearer opportunities to provide concrete help.

Role Effects within Mindset Condition

Questions also arise from the fact that across the studies actors trying to be objective

generally tended to evidence lower goal-directed cognition scores than targets. How can this

pattern be explained? It is possible that trying to remain objective and avoid responding to the

target's feelings was disempowering because suppressing spontaneous empathic reactions to

problems the targets disclosed during the discussion made actors' lower power position relative

to the experimenter salient or required cognitive effort that directly interfered with goal-directed

cognition. However, the study procedures were designed to orient actors and targets on each

other rather than the experimenter and often trying to empathize also involves cognitive effort

(see Schumann, Zaki, & Dweck, 2014). In our view, then, the most likely explanation lies in the fact that irrespective of their experimental condition, all actors were given instructions about how to approach the discussion, whereas targets were not. Being instructed what to do might have had a general dampening effect on actors' psychological sense of power. Regardless, the distinct implications of the content of the particular instructions that actors received remain clear.

Generalizability to Other Contexts and Forms of Empathy

Although the disempowering effects of being the target of empathy were demonstrated across a range of targets (i.e., those with a Chinese, Black, Filipino, or White/European ethnic background), the empathizers in these studies always had a White/European ethnic background. This is a general category that encompasses many more specific identities and accounts for the majority of the student population at the university where these studies were conducted. The findings as they stand are thus broadly applicable. Nonetheless it will be important in future research to probe the generalizability of the effects demonstrated here to cases where the empathizer belongs to an ethnic minority group. It would be of particular interest to examine situations in which a minority group member tries to empathize with a dominant group member, and where empathy thus suggests a power relationship that runs counter to chronic status differences between groups in broader society: Possibly empathy most readily invokes a situational power differential when it reinforces an ingoing status difference based on group membership or other factors (as in our intergroup pairs) or in the absence of an ingoing status difference (as in our intragroup pairs).

Further, although we obtained similar effects across intergroup and intragroup pairs in the current research, which focused on individual-level goal-directed cognition outcomes, for other types of outcomes effects might emerge that are unique to intergroup contexts. For example,

sensitivity to intergroup power dynamics might lead individuals' experience within an intergroup interaction to have downstream implications for their explicit or implicit sense of their group's social standing, perhaps especially when the interaction centers on intergroup issues.

In addition, future research could profitably examine the effects of empathy on goal-directed cognition in cases where the target is experiencing an extreme stressor or hardship. It is possible that extreme target distress sets the stage for levels of empathic concern sufficient to counteract (or exacerbate) the power dynamics that we have identified here. Regardless, the fact that we obtained the predicted complementary pattern on power-relevant cognitive outcomes in a paradigm that was originally designed to elicit empathic concern, altruistic motivation, and self-other merging would seem to speak to the strength of the power dynamics triggered by efforts to empathize.

Finally, the current results set the stage for investigations probing whether there are alternative versions of empathy that might have positive rather than negative implications for targets' goal-directed cognition. For example, although empathy and perspective-taking are overlapping constructs that often have similar effects, this is not always the case. Because perspective-taking involves a more cognitive effort to appreciate another person's point of view and individuals often engage in perspective-taking in order to better predict how higher power others will treat them, perspective-taking could potentially instantiate a power hierarchy in which perspective-takers are instead in a lower power position relative to targets.

Conclusion

The present research reveals that individuals on the receiving end of another's efforts to empathize may experience negative consequences such as less willingness to ask for more in negotiation and more difficulty maintaining goal focus, at the same time as the empathizer

enjoys benefits in terms of a boost in goal-directed cognition. Especially in situations where

empathy is motivated by perceived disadvantage, challenge, or hardship, such outcomes are

problematic. Moreover, in the intergroup arena, dominant group members' efforts to empathize

seem apt to undermine minority group members in a subtle and pernicious manner by hindering

their performance and ability to pursue their goals, thereby perpetuating rather than reducing

inequalities in society.

Footnotes

1. In all studies, participants were required to have indicated birthplace and first language and White participants were required to have lived in Canada for at least 5 years. As the datasets containing this information were generally unavailable prior to participation, implementing these selection criteria involved dropping seven pairs from Study 2 and seven pairs from Study 3.

2. We anticipated that our discussion topics would lead to the disclosure of moderate levels of distress typical of those that apt to arise in everyday life, such that our results would speak to the likely effects of empathy in real world situations. To assess this empirically two coders blind to mindset condition reviewed the recordings from all studies and counted the problems mentioned (rs between their judgments ranged from .56 to .83). At least one problem was mentioned by 79.8 % of pairs, $M = 1.69$ per pair. Some were serious, such as failing courses, feeling bullied or rejected, depression, accidents, relationship break-ups, friends committing suicide, or parental death, cancer, divorce, or abusiveness. More mundane problems such as difficulty making friends, school- and work-related stress, and missing parents were frequently mentioned. Analyses testing whether the number of problems disclosed varied according to mindset or pair type, at the pair level or for actors and targets separately (possible in Study 2 and 3b only), yielded no significant effects. There were no role effects in Study 2 (ps ≤ .369), but in Study 3b Black targets disclosed more problems ($M = 1.08$, $SE = 0.16$) than White actors ($M = 0.70$, $SE = 0.15$) in intergroup pairs, $F(1, 58) = 6.22$, $p = .016$, whereas there was no actor-target difference in intragroup pairs, respective Ms = 0.94 ($SE = 0.14$) and 0.85 ($SE = 0.15$), $F < 1$, interaction $F(1, 58) = 5.14$, $p = 027$.

3. Overall error terms and degrees of freedom for simple effects analyses and effect size calculations were computed according to Howell's (1987) formulae for between-within designs.

4. Due to experimenter error, pairs were initially given a different set of discussion topics than in

Study 1, one centering exclusively on social issues (e.g., euthanasia, abortion). Upon discovering

this error we decided to randomly assign remaining pairs to receive the same topics as in Study 1

or this set focused on social issues. When this variable is included as a factor in analyses it was

not associated with any significant effects and hence is not discussed further.

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MANIPULATIONS

These are reported directly in the paper.

MEASURES

STUDY ONE

Thought-Listing

Note: Your responses to this questionnaire will be kept completely confidential: They are coded by participant number rather than name, and your partner will NOT have access to your responses.

Please take two minutes to describe the main thoughts that were on your mind during your discussion with the other participant: What were you thinking about? You can write in point-form if you like.

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Questionnaire

Note: Your responses to all questions will be kept completely confidential: They are coded by participant number rather than name, and the other participant in this session will NOT have access to your responses.

It is important that you complete the questions in the order in which they appear. Please do not look ahead to upcoming questions, or go back and change answers to previous questions.

Please respond to the following items in terms of how you are feeling *right now, in the present moment*. In each please circle appropriate number.

Right now…

1. If I wanted something, I would go all-out to get it.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*

2. If I thought something unpleasant was about to happen, I would get pretty "worked up."

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*

3. If I got something I wanted, I would feel excited and energized.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*

4. If I saw a chance to get something I wanted, I would move on it right away.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*

5. I am worried about making mistakes.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*

Right now…

6. If I was doing well at something, I would love to keep at it.

<div style="text-align:center">
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*
</div>

7. I would go out of my way to get things I want.

<div style="text-align:center">
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*
</div>

8. Criticism or scolding would hurt me quite a bit.

<div style="text-align:center">
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*
</div>

9. If I saw an opportunity to get something I like, I would get excited right away.

<div style="text-align:center">
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*
</div>

10. I would feel pretty worried or upset if I thought that somebody was angry at me.

<div style="text-align:center">
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*
</div>

11. Even if something bad was about to happen to me, I would not be nervous or afraid.

<div style="text-align:center">
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*
</div>

12. I would feel worried if I thought I had done poorly at something.

<div style="text-align:center">
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Strongly Disagree   *Strongly Agree*
</div>

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We now ask you to do a categorization task. For each of the following categories, please rate the extent to which specific items below it belongs to that category by writing the appropriate number in the blank.

Use the following 10-point rating scale:

1 = definitely does not belong to the category
2
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5 = does not belong to the category, but it is very similar to members of that category
6 = does belong to the category, but is not a very good example of it
7
8
9
10 = definitely does belong to the category

Category = vehicle

___1. car   ___7. truck   ___13. sled

___2. airplane   ___8. bus   ___14. scooter

___3. wagon   ___9. bike   ___15. taxi

___4. elevator   ___10. feet   ___16. horse

___5. rowboat   ___11. skateboard   ___17. rocket

___6. cart   ___12. train   ___18. van

CATEGORY = vegetable

___1. pea	___7. lettuce	___13. seaweed
___2. mushroom	___8. avocado	___14. kale
___3. radishes	___9. carrot	___15. green beans
___4. corn	___10. peanut	___16. sweet potato
___5. onions	___11. spinach	___17. pumpkin
___6. rice	___12. garlic	___18. dandelion

Use the following 10-point rating scale:

1 = definitely does not belong to the category
2
3
4
5 = does not belong to the category, but is very similar to members of that category
6 = does belong to the category, but is not a very good example of it
7
8
9
10 = definitely does belong to the category

CATEGORY = clothing

___1. pants	___7. sweater	___13. bathrobe
___2. cane	___8. shirt	___14. socks
___3. bracelet	___9. boots	___15. purse
___4. skirt	___10. dress	___16. scarf
___5. gloves	___11. sandals	___17. watch
___6. ring	___12. necklace	___18. blouse

Now we ask you to do some judgment and decision-making tasks. For each item please circle the appropriate number.

1. Imagine you are at the airport and the airline announces that the flight you are scheduled to take is overbooked. You are interested in possibly volunteering and ask what type of compensation the airline is offering. The airline representative says that you will receive a $300 voucher for relinquishing your seat. You notice that not many other people have offered to be bumped off this flight. How likely are you to ask for a voucher of greater value and/or amenities like an upgrade to first class?

<div align="center">

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all Likely						Extremely likely

</div>

2. You are a member of a three-person debate team and you are in the provincial finals. It has been a long and grueling season and you find yourself in the final round. The protocol of the final round is that each team's name is put into a hat and one name is drawn from the hate. The team who name is drawn gets to decide whether to go first or second. Your team's name is drawn. The other two members of your team are in disagreement over whether to go first or second. One wishes to go first and the other thinks it is better to go second. The person who wants to go first thinks it is best because it allows your team to frame the debate. The other person thinks going second is better because it allows you to rebut specific arguments the other side makes. The choice of whether your team goes first or second is up to you. Please indicate what you would choose by circling one of the following two options:

   a) make the first argument (i.e., go first)

   b) make the rebuttal argument (i.e., go second)

3. Imagine that the university is giving fellowships to do a 1-month internship. You decided to apply to a fellowship. The deadline to submit applications is 3 months from now. You have the application form that you need to send out. When would you most want to send the application form?

<div align="center">

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
today								the day before it is due

</div>

4. Imagine that each month the university organizes one workshop focusing on different job possibilities associated with your university major. You plan to attend one of these workshops, and you can choose one of the workshops offered. When do you most want to attend?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	next week								in 6 months

5. Imagine that classes started and you have to fill out a questionnaire to update information and give it to the students' officer. The deadline is in two months. When do you want to do the questionnaire?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	today								the day before it is due

6. Imagine that four months from now you need to leave the place where you currently live. You are looking for a new apartment and know several people interested in your current place. When would you move to the new apartment?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	today								in four months

We now ask about your feelings about yourself, the other participant, and the discussion. In each case please circle the appropriate number.

I currently perceive myself to be:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all powerful						extremely powerful

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all strong						extremely strong

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all effective						extremely effective

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all influential						extremely influential

I currently perceive the other participant to be:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all powerful						extremely powerful

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all strong						extremely strong

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all effective						extremely effective

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all influential						extremely influential

1
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60

During my discussion with the other participant, it seemed that:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

I was mostly in control of the discussion   the other participant was mostly in control of the discussion

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

I exerted the most influence on how the discussion went   the other participant exerted the most influence on how the discussion went

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

the course of the discussion mostly depended on what I said and did   the course of the discussion mostly depended on what other participant said and did

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

I was mostly "in charge"   the other participant was mostly "in charge"

Right now, I believe that the other participant:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

does not like me at all   likes me very much

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

does not feel at all warm toward me   feels very warm toward me

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

does not respect me at all   respects me very much

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

does not admire me at all   admires me very much

Right now, I:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

do not like
the other participant
at all

like the other
participant
very much

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

do not feel at all
warm toward
the other participant

feel very warm
toward
the other participant

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Do not respect
the other participant
at all

respect
the other participant
very much

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

do not admire the
other participant at all

admire the
other participant very much

At this point we are interested in "checking in" with you in terms of your understanding of what this study is about. Sometimes when students take part in studies, they form their own ideas about what the researchers might be looking at. Do you have any ideas about what we might be interested in, aside from what has already been explained to you? Please outline any thoughts that you have about this in the space provided below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is English your first language? (circle one)   Yes   No

If No, how would you rate your English language skills?

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Very Weak   *Very Strong*

STUDY TWO
SAME AS STUDY ONE, WITH DELETIONS + NEW ITEMS:

2. You are buying a new car. How likely would you be to negotiate the price?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all Likely						Extremely Likely

Behavior Perception

Any behavior can be identified in many ways. For example, the same behavior might described as "typing a paper," "pushing keys," or "expressing thoughts." We are interested in your current personal preferences for how a number of different behaviors should be described. On the following pages you will find several different behaviors listed. After each behavior will be two choices of different ways in which the behavior might be identified. Here is an example:

Attending class
      a. sitting in a chair
      b. looking at the blackboard

Your task is to choose the identification, *a* or *b*, that best describes the behavior for you. Simply select the bubble next to the identification statement that you pick. Please select only one alternative for each pair. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers. Preferences for the different behavior descriptions are simply variable, and we are interested in what you currently perceive to be the best descriptions: Choose the description that you personally believe is more appropriate right now, in the present moment.

1. Making a list
      a. getting organized
      b. writing things down

2. Reading
      a. following lines of print
      b. gaining knowledge

3. Washing clothes
      a. removing odors from clothes
      b. putting clothes into the machine

4. Picking an apple
      a. getting something to eat
      b. pulling an apple off a branch

5. Chopping down a tree
      a. wielding an axe
      b. getting firewood

6. Measuring a room for carpeting
    a. getting ready to remodel
    b. using a yardstick

7. Painting a room
    a. applying brush strokes
    b. making the room look fresh

8. Paying the rent
    a. maintaining a place to live
    b. writing a check

9. Locking a door
    a. putting a key in the lock
    b. securing the house

10. Voting
    a. influencing the election
    b. marking a ballot

11. Filling out a personality test
    a. answering questions
    b. revealing what you are like

12. Toothbrushing
    a. preventing tooth decay
    b. moving a brush around in one's mouth

13. Taking a test
    a. answering questions
    b. showing one's knowledge

14. Greeting someone
    a. saying hello
    b. showing friendliness

15. Eating
    a. getting nutrition
    b. chewing and swallowing

16. Growing a garden
    a. planting seeds
    b. getting fresh vegetables

17. Having a cavity filled
   a. protecting your teeth
   b. going to the dentist

18. Pushing a doorbell
   a. moving a finger
   b. seeing if someone's home

Right now, at the current moment, I have high self-esteem.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not very true of me						very true of me

STUDY THREE
SAME AS STUDY TWO, WITH DELETIONS + NEW ITEMS:

Had you ever met the other participant before the session today? Circle one: Yes   No

If Yes, please explain how well you know each other:

_____

3A

There are many people who believe that different groups enjoy different amounts of social status and power in this society. You may not believe this for yourself, but if you had to rate your own ethnic group as such people see them, how would you do so? Please circle the appropriate number.

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
     Very   Very
 Low Status   High Status

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
     Very   Very
 Low Power   High Power

3B

    Now we ask about your current perceptions regarding the standing of your own ethnic group in society. In each case please circle the appropriate number.

Your Ethnic Group:

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7
  not at all   extremely
  powerful   powerful

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7
  not at all   extremely
  strong   strong

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7
not at all   extremely
effective   effective

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7
not at all   extremely
influential   influential

Right now, in the current moment …

1. I would participate in a rally demanding new government policies specifically designed to improve the position of ethnic minorities within Canada.

                1   2   3   4   5   6   7
           Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree

2. I would take action to reduce economic and social disparities between ethnic groups in Canada.

                1   2   3   4   5   6   7
           Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree

3. I would forward an online petition to establish a law demanding minimum quotas for ethnic minorities in leading positions.

                1   2   3   4   5   6   7
           Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree

4. I would act against racism in general.

                1   2   3   4   5   6   7
           Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree

In view of how labor-intensive each of these studies were and difficulties surrounding participant recruitment, we included corollary measures in each of the studies to make the most of data collection and help inform our future research plans in this area. The additional measures are explained below.

Additional Measures

Study 1

Impressions and Metaperceptions. Participants in Study 1 also responded to four items (*like, felt warm toward, respect, admire*) assessing their feelings toward their partner ($\alpha = .89$) and four parallel metaperceptual items assessing how they thought that their partner felt toward them ($\alpha = .78$). These judgments were analyzed in 2 (Role: Actor vs. Target) x 2 (Actor Mindset: Empathic vs. Objective) x 2 (Judgment Type: Impression vs. Metaperception) repeated-measures ANOVA with pairs as the unit of analysis; all factors were within-pairs except for Actor Mindset. This analysis yielded only a significant effect of Judgment Type, $F(1, 36) = 65.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.646$, whereby individuals felt more positively toward their partner ($M = 5.57$, $SE = 0.12$) than they thought that their partner felt toward them ($M = 4.82$, $SE = 0.09$). There was also a nonsignificant Role X Mindset interaction, $F(1, 36) = 2.27$, $p = .141$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.059$, whereby actors' impressions and metaperceptions were marginally more positive in the empathic ($M = 5.46$, $SE = 0.15$) as compared to the objective condition ($M = 5.03$, $SE = 0.16$), $F(1, 64.48) = 3.43$, $p = .070$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.087$, whereas there was no similar effect for targets, respective Ms= 5.16 ($SE = 0.16$) and 5.13 ($SE = 0.18$), $F(1, 64.48) = 0.015$, $p = .903$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.000$.

Relative Behavioral Approach. In addition, behavioral approach orientation was assessed with a modified version of Carver and White's (1994) scale assessing dispositional behavioral approach and inhibition system (BAS and BIS) sensitivities. To capture participants' current

feelings rather than general dispositions, we slightly re-worded the items (see Lammers,

Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008, for a similar adaptation) and shortened the measure to 12

items by excluding the fun-seeking items and items that were difficult to re-word to capture a

transient state. So as to derive one measure of this construct, we computed a relative behavioral

approach score by reverse-scoring the BIS items and combining the BAS and BIS items together

(see Lammers et al., 2008; Smith & Bargh, 2008; $\alpha = .47$). A 2 (Role: Actor vs. Target) x 2

(Actor Mindset: Empathic vs. Objective) repeated-measures ANOVA yielded no significant or

marginal effects.

Readiness to Get Started. Readiness to get started was measured by five hypothetical

scenarios ($\alpha = .48$) in which participants indicated how soon they would start on goals such as

applying for a university fellowship (Guinote, 2007). A 2 (Role: Actor vs. Target) x 2 (Actor

Mindset: Empathic vs. Objective) repeated-measures ANOVA yielded no significant or marginal

effects.

Open-Ended Thought-Listing. Immediately before completing the dependent measures,

participants in all studies completed an open-ended thought-listing task that involved spending

two minutes listing the thoughts that were on their mind during the discussion. In each study, an

index of explicit goal focus was computed by counting the total number of words related to goal

focus and pursuit that appeared in participants' responses. The words were selected to parallel the

constructs assessed by the measures of goal-directed cognition and were obtained by consulting a

thesaurus for synonyms for *goal*, *achieve*, *strive*, *pursue*, and *focus*, screening out obscure words

or words with multiple or alternative meanings (e.g., *end*, *realize*, *meet*, *fix*, *shadow*), and

repeating the process for the words generated. The specific words generated were *goal*, *aim*,

purpose, motive, *achieve, accomplish, succeed, get, find, obtain, attain, acquire, take, strive, try,*

attempt, endeavor, effort, initiative, work, *pursue, track, focus, pay attention*, and *concentrate*;

also included were references to thinking *mainly*, *primarily*, *mostly* or *a lot* about something. All

forms of the words were counted regardless of context, with the exception that those that

appeared in sentences in which the partner was the subject (i.e., the acting agent) were not

included because they referred to the partner's goal pursuit. The word count was conducted by a

coder blind to condition.

Actors' Explicit Goal Focus. We analyzed actors' explicit goal focus scores in a one-way

ANOVA. Results yielded a mindset effect whereby actors' thought-listing protocols included

more words reflective of explicit goal focus when they were empathizing rather than trying to

remain objective, *M*s = 0.91 (*SE* = 0.20) and 0.29 (*SE* = 0.23) respectively, $F(1, 36) = 4.02$, $p =$

.052, $\eta_p^2 = 0.101$.

Study 2

Impressions and Metaperceptions. Participants in Study 2 responded to the same

metaperception and impression items described above for Study 1. The analysis, parallel to that

conducted in Study 1, yielded a Role X Actor Mindset X Judgment Type interaction, $F(2, 56) =$

4.21, $p = .020$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.131$. Simple effects analyses revealed that across all cells individuals felt

more positively toward their partner than they thought that their partner felt toward them, except

for targets in the distracted condition, $F(1, 56) = 2.77$, $p = .102$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.047$, *M*s = 5.15 (*SE* =

0.22) and 4.88 (*SE* = 0.18) respectively. There was also a main effect for Judgment Type, $F(1,$

56) = 132.69, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.703$, that was qualified by the aforementioned three-way

interaction.

Self-Esteem. Participants in this study also responded to a single item assessing self-esteem ("Right now, at the current moment, I have high self-esteem"). Analysis of this measure yielded no significant effects.

Actors' Explicit Goal Focus. As in Study 1, we analyzed actors' explicit goal focus scores in a one-way ANOVA, here comparing the empathy condition to the objective and distracted conditions combined. Results yielded a mindset effect whereby actors' thought-listing protocols included more words reflective of explicit goal focus when they were trying to empathize ($M = 1.32$) rather than remain objective ($M = 0.70$) or remember the 8-digit number ($M = 0.75$), $F(1, 57) = 4.41$, $p = .040$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.072$.

Study 3

Choice Task. Toward the end of Study 3b, after the Stroop had been completed, the experimenter noted that there was time to fit in one more task and asked participants whether they wanted to be the one to choose the task or if they preferred for the other participant to choose. Responses to this question were coded 1 for self and 0 for other. The 2 (Role: Actor vs. Target) x 2 (Actor Mindset: Empathic vs. Objective) x 2 (Pair Type: Intragroup vs. Intergroup) repeated-measures ANOVA yielded no significant or marginal effects for this measure.

Impressions and Metaperceptions. Participants in Study 3 responded to the same metaperception and impression items described above for Studies 1 and 2. The analysis, parallel to that conducted in Study 1, yielded only a significant effect of Judgment Type, $F(1, 107) = 329.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.755$, whereby individuals felt more positively toward their partner ($M = 5.67$, $SE = 0.06$) than they thought that their partner felt toward them ($M = 4.76$, $SE = 0.05$). There was also a marginal Role X Mindset interaction, $F(1, 107) = 3.03$, $p = .085$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.028$, whereby actors' impressions and metaperceptions were generally more positive in the empathic

(M = 5.41, SE = 0.10) as compared to the objective condition (M = 5.10, SE = 0.10), F(1, 212.10) = 5.09, p = .025, η_p^2 = 0.045, whereas there was no similar effect for targets, respective Ms = 5.18 (SE = 0.09) and 5.17 (SE = 0.09), F(1, 212.10) = 0.008, p = .929, η_p^2 = 0.000. Participants also responded to the same self-esteem item as in Study 2. Analysis of this measure yielded a main effect whereby self-esteem was generally higher in the empathic (M = 5.11, SE = 0.14) as compared to objective (M = 4.72, SE = 0.14) condition, F(1, 107) = 3.81, p = .053, η_p^2 = 0.034.

Explicit Group Power Perceptions. In addition, the explicit power measures were expanded to include questions assessing participants' perceptions of their ethnic group's power. Somewhat different measures were included in Studies 3a and 3b but in each study participants answered one item directly asking about their perceptions of their own ethnic group's power. Because different response scales were used in each case responses were standardized. The 2 (Role: Actor vs. Target) x 2 (Actor Mindset: Empathic vs. Objective) x 2 (Pair Type: Intragroup vs. Intergroup) repeated-measures ANOVA yielded a Role x Pair Type interaction, F(1, 107) = 13.26, p < .001, η_p^2 = 0.110. Simple effects analyses indicated no effect of pair type on actors' (who were always White) perceptions of their group's power, intragroup M = 0.02 (SE = 0.13) and intergroup M = -0.02 (SE = 0.14), F(1, 211.01) = 0.060, p = .811, η_p^2 = 0.001. In contrast, for targets the effect of pair type was substantial, intragroup M = 0.45 (SE = 0.12) and intergroup M = -0.47 (SE = 0.12), F(1, 211.01) = 25.78, p < .001, η_p^2 = 0.194. There were no other effects apart from a main effect of pair type that was qualified by the aforementioned interaction, F(1, 107) = 12.66, p = .001, η_p^2 = 0.106.

Additional Measures. A four-item measure assessing readiness to act against racism (e.g., "Right now, in the current moment, I would act against racism in general"; α = .83), which yielded no effects, was also administered in Study 3b, along with a new measure of implicit

group-power associations that was included to pilot test the measure and aid in its development

for use in future studies.

Actors' Explicit Goal Focus. In this study actors' explicit goal focus scores did not vary

significantly or marginally according to mindset (or pair type) condition.

Discussion Recordings

Finally, we coded the audio and videotaped discussions across all of the studies in an

effort to identify behavioral mediators of the effects obtained, to no avail. Additional details

regarding our coding procedures and results are available from the first author.

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