

Is it Fear? Emotions Undergirding Group Conflict Attitudes

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Abstract

This paper examines the emotions driving contemporary racial threat attitudes (group conflict opinions) among Whites. Scholars have argued that this threat is situated in fear because of Blacks attempt to chip away at the stratification system. My position is that fear is not the primary emotion on which contemporary racial threat attitudes are built. In two experiments (local sample and a national adult sample) I induce fear or anger utilizing an apolitical task. The two studies reveal strong support that fear is not linked to perceptions of competitive racial threat.

Keywords: Racial threat, emotions, public opinion, affirmative action

Among pundits and the lay public, policies such as affirmative action or any government-spending program directed at Blacks are often accompanied with discussions of fear. This feeling is usually driven by the threat of resource redistribution.¹ The group position perspective, is one of several approaches that is used to explain Whites' racial policy opinions (Blumer 1958; Bobo 1983). Proponents of group position theory argue that racial prejudice is a consequence of Whites' concern that Blacks will take away resources from Whites (Blumer 1958; Bobo 1983; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). It is presumed that resource threats produce fear among Whites because Blacks are viewed as (potentially) undermining social structures and hierarchies that benefit Whites (Key 1949; Blumer 1958; Blalock 1961). Fear's role in the racial threat literature has been assumed but never empirically examined. This paper explores whether fear is linked to, and can trigger, group conflict attitudes described by group position theory.

There is good reason to suspect that fear undergirds racial threat. Key (1949) states, Whites in the Southern Black belt "feared the possibility of Negro control of city, county, and other local governments. Throughout, whites in such areas have furnished the main strength of the movement to keep the Negro out of politics" (pg. 652). After emancipation, there was concern about Black suffrage and the political changes it would bring. The end of slavery eliminated Whites' most effective method of control of Blacks. For the first time in American history Blacks were inserted into the political system. Twelve million newly freed Blacks had to be integrated into society (Wood 1970). Whites, particularly in the South, felt threatened by what a Black voting block would

¹ Fear is also discussed in terms of stereotypes of violence and safety (Cottrell and Neuberg 2005). My focus is on fear's link to threats to economic and political resources and not other attitude dimensions like violence.

mean to White supremacy. Just as perceptions of racial threat were in all likelihood linked to fear in the period following emancipation, some now presume that this feeling continues to map onto contemporary visions of racial threat. Blumer (1958) argued that “fear is an emotional recoil from the endangering of group position” (pg. 4). More specifically, “[t]he remaining feeling essential to racial prejudice is a fear or apprehension that the subordinate racial group is threatening, or will threaten, the position of the dominant group” (pg. 6).

Despite its presumed role in the group position theory, it is possible that fear is not the primary emotion undergirding contemporary racial threat attitudes. The change in the racial discourse after the civil rights movement (Mendelberg 2001; Kinder and Sanders 1996) and the appraisals that lead to experiencing fear (Smith and Ellsworth 1985; Lerner and Keltner 2001) suggest fear may not occur very often in White’s mind when thinking about Blacks threat to their social status. This mainly occurs because Whites believe to have some *control* over the direction of racial policies when resources are involved. Based on appraisal theory, control undermines the experience of fear and instead contributes to the feeling of anger (Lerner and Keltner 2001). It is loss of control that is necessary in order to generate the emotion of fear (Smith and Ellsworth 1985).

Perceptions of racial threat may be less about losing resources to Blacks than they are about perceptions of deservingness. Whites may perceive that Blacks vying for economic and political mobility as undeserving (Sears and Kinder 1971; Sears and Kinder 1985). An aspect of the group position perspective is that Blacks are culturally inferior and are not entitled to Whites’ resources (Blumer 1955; Bobo and Kluegel 1997). Blumer (1958) states that “the subordinate race is an alien and fundamentally different

stock” and “the dominant group of being naturally superior or better” (pg. 4). It is possible that Whites may be angry, not fearful that Blacks are competing for political and economic resources when such improvements are thought to be undeserved.

Most scholars in the racial policy opinion literature including the group position perspective mischaracterize the structure of racial attitudes by treating all negative emotions as synonymous. Typically, a simple valence approach of emotion is used to explain support for racial policies. The instrument of choice is feeling thermometers, which are rather crude measures of emotion (Sears 1988). Although, negative emotions are central to this literature few have investigated whether these emotions have independent effects. Bobo and Taun (2006) state “[t]here is a powerful socioemotional component to the sense of group position” (pg. 42) and “[p]rejudice is most directly expressed in the form of negative stereotypes and negative feelings or affect” (pg. 107). Emotions are important but exactly how is less understood.

In this paper, I argue that fear is not the primary emotion driving group conflict attitudes because Whites perceive to have some control over how resources are redistributed. Instead, anger drives group conflict attitudes because Blacks are thought of as undeserving. The purpose of this paper is to identify the emotion that motivates perceptions of competitive racial threat. Blumer encourages such an examination, stating “there is a need to identify the feelings which make up racial prejudice – to see how they fit together and how they are supported by other psychological elements” (1958, pg. 3). The psychological mechanism I use to examine the connection between emotion and group conflict attitudes is priming. Research has shown that racial cues activate Whites’ racial predispositions (Mendelberg 2001: Valentino, Hutchings and White 2002). I argue

that emotions may underlie the group priming effect, thereby determining the conditions under which group conflict attitudes will or will not appear (Bowers 1981). Similar to racial priming, my expectation is that anger should bring group conflict attitudes to mind. On the other hand, I expect that fear and group conflict attitudes are detached in memory, where triggering fear makes it harder to recall these attitudes. As a result, fear should depress the effect of group conflict because the two objects are disconnected in memory (Bowers et al. 1978; Fiske and Linkville 1980). Therefore, anger and fear should push group conflict attitudes in opposite directions - anger boosting the impact of group conflict attitudes on racial policy opinion while fear suppresses the effect of group conflict.

Appraisals Underlying Group Conflict Attitudes

After emancipation, racial threat was situated in the concern over the impact of Blacks' freedom on Whites' lives. Institutional barriers such as the poll tax, White primaries and literacy tests were created to disenfranchise Blacks and preserve White dominance. Key (1949) states, "[to] them, a single Negro vote threatened the entire caste system" (pg. 649). Giles and Hertz (1994) conceptualize racial threat as "relationships between groups as a function of their competitive positions in political, economic, and social arenas. This competition is conceptualized as contextually conditioned" (pg. 317). The racial threat hypothesis, which presumes conflict over resources, is measured as the percent of Blacks in a respondent's county of residence. Giles and colleagues found that this contextual variable predicted opposition to racial policy opinion and registration rates of Democrats and Republicans (Giles and Evans 1986; Giles and Hertz 1994).

For Blumer (1958) racial threat is not only captured in actual conflict over resources, but is also attitudinal in nature. He argues that there are four elements to racial prejudice; 1) feelings of superiority; 2) belief that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien; 3) belief in a proprietary claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage; 4) fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race (pg. 4). The proponents of this theory contend that racism stems from resource conflicts between groups and relies on the social stratification system that distinguishes between dominant and subordinate groups.

My focus is on group conflict a concept that developed out of the group position model - a person's perception of threat grounded in a perceived zero-sum competition with racial out-groups for scarce social resources (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Kaufmann 2004; Bobo and Taun 2006). Bobo and Hutchings (1996) found that Whites' perception of Blacks as competitive threats for social resources was based upon racial prejudice and racial alienation (or the sense that Whites as a group have not received sufficient benefits in society). Bobo and colleagues found that group conflict attitudes predict opposition to busing (Bobo 1983), affirmative action (Bobo 2000) and Native American Treaty Rights (Bobo and Taun 2006).

The appraisal theory of emotion offers a reason to suspect that fear is not integral to group conflict attitudes. Based on the theory, threats can produce either fear or anger, depending on how people appraise the source of the threat and their ability to deal with it (Lazarus 1991; Lerner and Keltner 2001; Smith and Ellsworth 1985; Huddy, Feldman and Cassese 2007). Therefore, particular appraisal patterns determine which emotion an individual experiences. Consciousness is an important feature of this process, because

socially consequential emotions are triggered by an individual's evaluation of the relationship between themselves and their environment. There are two types of appraisals. Primary appraisals first determine whether an encounter is congruent with a goal or goals and then determine whether we experience a positive or negative emotion. Next, secondary appraisals enable us to differentiate between particular emotions. These appraisals result in the apportioning of blame and credit and also determine coping potential, level of certainty/uncertainty, sense of control and future expectancy (Lazarus 1991; Lerner and Keltner 2001; Smith and Ellsworth 1985).

Fear's appraisal pattern consists of a perceived lack of control and uncertainty about the outcome. In other words, if someone is threatened and uncertain of the outcome and there is a lack of control that affects coping capacity, then fear is the expected emotion. Smith and Ellsworth (1985) found a strong relationship between fear and loss of control and uncertainty. Lerner and Keltner (2001) also found that loss of control mediated the effect between fear and risk aversive choices. I argue that these appraisals do not translate into Whites' present negative thoughts about Blacks. This occurs because Whites expect to have a fair amount of control over the direction of race-based policies.² Assessment of affirmative action provides an appropriate example for investigating whether the appraisals that generate fear drive contemporary racial threat attitudes. Whites may well believe they have some control over the outcome of the contemporary affirmative action debate. A state-by-state strategy to end affirmative action engineered by Ward Connerly, an African American businessman from California,

² I expect the perception of control not to vary by socio-demographic characteristics or the racial context. Whites belief of entitlement and superiority suggest no matter their status they perceive to have some control over race-based policies (Sidanius and Pratto 1999).

has achieved substantial success. Affirmative action has been eliminated in several states (Michigan, California, Nebraska and Washington) through ballot initiative. This success perceived by Whites may engender or reinforce sentiments of control and certainty.

Kinder and Reeder (1975) found evidence consistent with this proposition, where control served as an organized attitude dimension among Whites but not Blacks. Their findings imply that Whites perceive to have control over the course of their lives more so than Blacks.³

Additionally, affirmative action has elements of zero-sum competition: Blacks' opportunities via college admission and hiring may come at the "expense" of Whites. As a result, this policy could be framed in a way that draws on Whites' fears. Gamson and Modigliani (1985), however, did not find frames centering on fear to be prevalent in contemporary discourse. Looking at television coverage, news magazines and cartoons they found affirmative action was framed mostly as "no preferential treatment", "reverse discrimination" and "unfair advantage".⁴ These frames suggest affirmative action may be rooted in anger rather than fear because Blacks are presented as getting undeserved advantages.

The changing nature of racial discourse in America suggests that fear's impact, if indeed it was present in the past, has subsided. Mendelberg (2001) discusses the evolution of racial appeals emanating from social and political elites from a norm of

³ Control was directed at life in general and not racial policies.

⁴ The no preferential treatment frame focuses on whether the policy is going to allocate rewards based in part on an individual's race or ethnicity. Reverse discrimination is predominantly framed as whether the policy is going to sacrifice individual rights in order to advance the well being of some ethnic or racial groups. Undeserving advantage is mostly presented as some specially approved groups (Blacks) are going to be given advantages they have not earned and do not deserve (Gamson and Modigliani 1985).

racial inequality to one of racial equality. Immediately after emancipation, racial appeals in the political domain focused heavily on racial inequality by evoking several negative emotional reactions. For instance, she states “the content of racial appeals during the nineteenth century was remarkably constant across campaigns. It drew on deeply rooted stereotypes, fears and resentments, and enduring notion of racial inferiority” (pg. 29). Mendelberg gives good reason to suspect that fear underlay racial threat attitudes during the time when the norm of racial inequality dominated. This connection is evident in her discussion of the issue of sexuality⁵. “Often the myth that black men had designs on white women had overtones of illicit power and violent threat. Sexual retribution by black men became a salient worry during times when whites’ control over blacks seemed more tenuous or when blacks made political gains” (pg. 31). She further claims “[t]he rise of social Darwinism after the 1830s brought a great deal of anxiety about the reproductive consequences of the sexual mixing of races” and “[t]he worry about violence committed by African Americans and about their work ethic sharpened as the free black population grew in the early decades of the nineteenth century” (pg. 31). These sentiments may reflect fear, or they may provide an excuse for moral outrage and the expression of anger and brutality against Black people in general. This paper is unable to decipher which emotion undergirded racial threat attitudes during this period. Nevertheless, I am able to address which emotions drive contemporary racial threat attitudes.

The change in racial discourse, from explicit racial appeals to implicit racial appeals, is attributed to the civil rights movement (Mendelberg 2001; Kinder and Sanders

⁵ The issue of inter-racial marriage may evoke another emotion: disgust. Perhaps, disgust is experienced if Whites believe Blacks are biologically inferior.

1996). The post-civil rights movement norm in America no longer tolerates open forms of bigotry. Racial appeals that emphasized the threat of miscegenation or Black political participation are no longer accepted. These attitudes that may have been tied to fear in the past have dissipated from American discourse and are now regarded as a violation of the American Creed (Mendelberg 2001).

Contemporary racial appeals often emphasize the unfair privileges Blacks receive and the threat to Whites' jobs and educational opportunities. The rhetoric of contemporary racial threat relies less on the threat of "race mixing" and a loss of control as a result of Blacks entering the political system and more on the taking away of Whites' deserved opportunities and rights (Bobo and Kluegel 1997, Bobo and Taun 2006; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Therefore, the discussion of race has transformed from Black inferiority to Black responsibility for Black failures, with little role for discrimination (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Mendelberg 2001; Bobo and Kluegel 1997). This suggests that perhaps, contemporary vision of racial threat relies on anger rather than fear.

To this point I have not fully considered another emotion presumed to be central in the racial policy opinion literature: Anger. According to appraisal theory, anger is experienced when a person is frustrated (or threatened), is certain who is responsible or blameworthy for the offense, and perceives to have control over the outcome (Lazarus 1991; Smith and Ellsworth 1985). Anger may drive group conflict attitudes because for many Whites' it is Blacks who are responsible for their lower status and they are consequently not entitled to a more elevated status unless they have earned it. Bobo and Kluegel (1997) suggest this, stating that Whites "blame blacks themselves for their poorer relative economic standing, seeing it as a function of perceived cultural

inferiority” (pg. 95). To determine the validity of this statement, I investigate whether anger undergirds group conflict opinions. If the threat of losing resources can be attributed to Blacks responsibility for their failures then anger should be linked to this belief system.

Psychological Mechanism Linking Emotions to Group Conflict Attitudes

My theory contends that priming is the psychological mechanism underlying the connection between emotions and group conflict attitudes. Bower’s (1981) associative network theory clearly illuminates emotions’ role in the priming process. His model is based on state-dependent memory where events learned in one emotional state are recalled better when one is put back into that same emotional state. He finds evidence for the state dependent effect for both recall of words and actual personal events. In a mood induction experiment, Bower’s subjects recorded emotional events daily in a diary for a week. After a week, participants were randomly assigned to a pleasant or unpleasant mood induction and then asked to recall events from their diary. Respondents in the pleasant condition recalled more pleasant experiences and participants in the unpleasant condition recalled more unpleasant experiences.

I apply the same logic of state dependent memory to the linkage between specific emotions and group conflict attitudes. If these attitudes are linked to a specific emotional state, then similar emotional episodes at a later point in time may activate these same attitudes from memory. If anger is the dominant emotion undergirding group conflict attitudes then they should be primed when the linked emotion is experienced. This prediction is similar to the standard racial priming hypothesis (Mendelberg 2001; Valentino, Hutchings and White 2002; White 2007). The emotion is linked to racial

schemas in memory, so the experience of the emotion – independent of thoughts about politics or race – can bring the racial attitude to memory. If fear is disconnected from the racial attitude in memory, then the expectation is that recall actually suffers. Bower (1981) states “[m]emories acquired in one state are accessible mainly in that state but are ‘dissociated’ or not available for recall in an alternate state” (pg. 130).

My position is that fear should suppress the activation of group conflict attitudes from memory. Bower, Monterio, and Giligan (1978) find evidence that supports this expectation. They tested for state dependent learning, by having subjects learn one list of words in a happy mood and another list in a sad mood. They later tested for recall when the subject was in the same or opposite mood. When moods matched for the learning and recall stages, it was coined the minimal interference group (i.e., List A-happy, List B-sad and Recall A-happy). When the recall mood did not match the learning mood the group was referred to as the maximum interference group (i.e., List A-happy, List B-sad and Recall A-sad). The control group consisted of the emotion being constant across learning both lists and recall (i.e., List A-happy, List B-happy and Recall A-happy). The prediction is that recall should be greater under the minimal rather than the maximum interference group and that the control condition should be somewhere in between. This is exactly what they found. Subjects who learned List A in a happy mood and had to recall List A in a sad mood (maximum interference group) did worse than the control and maximum interference groups because “the recall mood evokes memories of the wrong List B rather than the target List A” (Bower’s 1981, pg. 131). My expectation is for a similar effect to occur, fear should evoke memories of a different list and not group

conflict attitudes. The ability to access group conflict attitudes suffers under the state of fear because the two nodes are not learned together in memory.

Hypotheses

H₁: The experience of fear, independent of thoughts about politics and race, depresses the effect of group conflict attitudes on racial policy preferences.

H₂: The experience of anger, independent of thoughts about politics and race, primes group conflict attitudes and boosts their impact on racial policy opinions.

I utilize two experiments to determine whether anger or fear is central to group conflict attitudes. The first experiment employs a college student sample conducted at a large Mid-western university. The second experiment employs an adult national sample and was conducted in order to replicate and extend the findings from the first study.

Study 1

Participants and Overview

The study was conducted in a computer lab at a large Mid-western university from May 17 to May 31 of 2007. The total sample size consists of 288 participants. Since the analysis only pertains to Whites, the sample reduces to 182. The sample was mainly comprised of college students. As a result, there is little variation in education (73 percent completed some college) and age (80 percent are 22 or under). Gender is evenly split (48 percent women), but Republicans (20 percent) are underrepresented. The random assignment of subjects to condition was successful: there were no significant differences across cells of the design in the proportion of these socio-demographic and partisan variables. Therefore, any differences in the post-stimulus dependent measures can be

attributed to the manipulation and not to other factors (Shadish, Cook and Campbell 1979). The sample does not permit strong inferences about the levels of racial animus in society, or overall levels of support for racial policies.

Procedure

Subjects were recruited with flyers in the downtown district, at local businesses and in university office buildings. Respondents were informed that they would receive \$10 for answering questions about media habits and current events. Once in the lab, subjects were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (*anger, anxiety or control*) and then led to a cubicle where they interacted solely with the computer in order to minimize the potential for interviewer bias. The pre-test questionnaire included racial and general attitude measures, more specifically, group conflict, ideology and partisanship. After completing pre-test measures, respondents were informed that they had finished study one and were now taking a second study unrelated to the first. This second study was presented as collecting information on media consumption and policy opinions. This was done to *minimize* the priming of racial attitudes, while still measuring them in the pre-test. After participants completed a battery of 10 media consumption questions, they were randomly assigned to conditions intended to induce the emotions of anger and anxiety; or to a control group, where subjects thought about things that made them feel relaxed.⁶

The prediction is that emotion in general, not tied to any particular object (i.e. Blacks), will trigger group conflict attitudes. Most studies of emotion ask about emotional reactions to political or racial targets (as in “how much does affirmative action/presidential candidate make you feel angry/anxious”). The problem with using these items is that it is

⁶ The question wording and coding procedures are in Appendix 1.

difficult to know whether the emotion or the semantic political/racial content is driving any effect. Therefore, this study employed an induction procedure free of political and/or racial content. Subjects were asked via the computer to respond to the following query⁷:

"Now we would like you to describe in general things that make you feel (ANGRY/ANXIOUS). Please describe how you felt as vividly and in as much detail as possible. Examples of things that have made some people feel (ANGRY/ANXIOUS) are problems: they have in their life, with their partner, the weather and the commute to work. It is okay if you don't remember all the details, just be specific about what exactly it was that made you (ANGRY/ANXIOUS) and what it felt like to be (ANGRY/ANXIOUS). If you can, write your description so that someone reading it might even feel (ANGRY/ANXIOUS). Take a few minutes to write out your answer".⁸

The response length was unrestricted and subjects were encouraged to take a few minutes to write down anything in general that made them feel the emotion. After the induction, subjects completed a post-test questionnaire that included racial and general policy measures as well as thermometer ratings.

Results

⁷ For the relaxed condition, subjects responded to the following query "Now we would like you to describe in general things that make you feel relaxed. Please describe how you felt as vividly and in as much detail as possible. It is okay if you don't remember all the details, just be specific about what exactly it was that made you relaxed and what it felt like to be relaxed. If you can, write your description so that someone reading it might even feel relaxed. Take a few minutes to write out your answer."

⁸ The language of the manipulation might bias against anxiety because it tells respondents to focus on the past rather than the future. In the second study, I modify the language to represent the future and find no differences between the two.

A manipulation check was used to determine if the induction procedure was successful. Coders were asked to select the dominant emotion expressed in the responses, and how intensely that emotion was expressed (scale ranged from 0-1, 0=none, .5=some and 1=extreme).⁹ Table 1 indicates participants in the anger condition expressed anger but no fear relative to the control group. Respondents in the anxiety condition expressed a high degree of fear and hardly any anger relative to the control condition.¹⁰ These results indicate that the induction independently produces anger and fear. Participants discussed events in their personal lives that could reasonably be assumed to produce the intended emotion. No respondent was unable to supply content that corresponded to a given emotion.

[Insert Table 1 Here]

My expectation is that anger will prime group conflict attitudes and boost their impact on racial policy opinions, while fear is predicted to have a depressive effect. As a result, the interactions between anger and group conflict should be positive whereas fear and group conflict should be negative. Three racial policies were examined; *affirmative action*, *government assistance to Blacks* and *government aid to Blacks*. These policies are perceived to redirect resources from Whites to Blacks. If fear has a priming effect in any policy domain, then it should be with these issues (Bobo and Kluegel 1997). In Table 2, for the three racial policies, the interactions between anger and group conflict attitudes are insignificant. Anger does not boost the impact of group conflict attitudes on racial policy

⁹The Cronbach's alpha reveals a high level of reliability across the two coders – anger (.95) and anxiety (.94).

¹⁰ I treat fear and anxiety as interchangeable. Some classify these concepts as distinguishable and would expect respondents to interpret them differently (Ohman 2000). However, the findings from Study 2 reveals that subjects interpret fear and anxiety similarly.

opinion relative to the control condition. Focusing on the second row, supporting hypothesis 1, the interaction between fear and group conflict attitudes is negative and significant for affirmative action, government assistance to Blacks and government aid to Blacks. Furthermore, looking at the F-statistic for government aid to Blacks, the effect for fear is statistically different from anger. I created a scale of racial policy opinion by summing responses to all 3 items. The items scale nicely (Cronbach's alpha=.78). In column 4, I find fear to depress the effect of group conflict attitudes on *all racial policies*.

[Insert Table 2 Here]

In summary, anger in comparison to the control group did not boost the impact of group conflict attitudes on racial policy opinions. Instead, fear depresses the impact of group conflict attitudes on racial policy opinions. The most racially threatened Whites, when experiencing fear, suppress their opposition to race redistribution the most in comparison to the control group, where the slope remains relatively flat. These results illustrate that fear and group conflict attitudes are disconnected in memory. Nevertheless, more empirical research and consideration is required.

A limitation of Study 1 is that the sample consists of college students, where there is little variation along important economic and geographical indicators. Racial threat is considered to be substantial in Southern states where there is a long history of racial conflict (Keys 1949). It may also be suspected that racial threat is present among low-income Whites that fear losing valuable resources to Blacks. If fear activates group conflict attitudes from memory it should present itself in these two groups. The threat of Blacks vying for economic and political resources may have not been fully realized by respondents in the college sample. A stronger test is to replicate the findings on a national

adult sample (more variation on key demographic variables). The next study enables me to determine whether the negative effect of fear on group conflict attitudes is consistent.

Study 2

Participants and Overview

Study 2 conducts an experiment on a nationally representative sample to test whether anger or fear primes group conflict attitudes. The study was collected through Polimetrix, an Internet survey company, from April 21 to April 30, 2008. Polimetrix uses a matching technique to produce a nationally representative sample. Respondents were matched to the national population on gender, age, race, education, party identification and political interest. The total sample size was 181 Whites.¹¹ There was good variation on age (26-percent were 18-34; 38-percent 35-54; 36-percent were 55 and over), gender (48-percent female) and education (43-percent high school degree or less; 30-percent some college; 18-percent college graduate). An over-sample of the South was included to examine if fear will boost the impact of group conflict attitudes. As a result of the oversample, the sample was more likely to identify as Republican (49-percent) and conservative (49-percent).¹² The random assignment of subjects to conditions was successful: there were no significant differences across cells of the design in the proportion of socio-demographic or partisan variables.

¹¹ Seven subjects were dropped from the analysis because they failed to follow proper instructions. None of the results changed substantively if these respondents are included in the analysis.

¹² I do not weight back to known population parameters since my main concern in the experiment is the estimate of mean differences between conditions. The weights are randomly distributed across cells of the design, and my inferences do not change when they are employed.

The experiment was conducted in two waves. It was designed to measure the primed dimension in a pretest far enough in advance that it is unlikely to remain salient by the time the individual is exposed to the stimulus in the second wave.¹³ I employed the pretest measurement technique, measuring the primed dimensions (racial attitudes) at least 7 days before subjects were exposed to the stimulus. The first wave consisted of racial and general attitudes measures, i.e., group conflict attitudes, ideology and partisanship. Seven days later, respondents participated in Wave 2, which consisted of the manipulation followed by measures of racial policy opinions.¹⁴

Experimental Manipulation

The emotion-induction manipulation utilized two techniques common in psychological studies of emotion (Bower 1981; Lerner and Keltner 2001; Ekman 1993). Subjects were asked to recall and focus on events, people, or occurrences that led them to experience a given emotion, while viewing an image of a person with a facial expression corresponding to that emotion.¹⁵ The reason for giving the written and visual stimuli simultaneously is to ensure respondents experience distinct negative emotions (i.e., anger,

¹³ This design has a potential drawback of its own, related to biased mortality between the first and second waves. If some respondents (say, racially conservative ones) were turned off by the measures of racial attitudes in the pre-test, they might have been more likely to opt out of the second wave. This effect could dampen priming effects if these respondents would have been more reactive to the emotional stimulus. Fortunately, the mortality rate was equivalent across conditions. There was a re-contact success rate of 60-percent, and there were no biases across conditions on variables such as partisanship, education and gender.

¹⁴ Exact question wording and coding procedures are in Appendix 1.

¹⁵ The facial expression images were of the same middle age White women. The pictures are drawn from Ekman's archive of emotional expressions (Ekman 1976). Each picture was judged to determine the emotion that best described each photograph. Eighty eight percent of respondents judged the fear expression correctly and 100-percent judged the anger expression correctly.

and fear). Facial expressions have been shown to trigger the same emotion in the viewer (Ekman 1993). Subjects were asked via the computer to respond to the following query¹⁶:

"Here is a picture of someone who is (**ANGRY/AFRAID**). We would like you to describe in general things that make you feel like the person in the picture. It is okay if you don't remember all the details, just be specific about what exactly it is that makes you (**ANGRY/AFRAID**) and what it feels like to be (**ANGRY/AFRIAD**). Please describe the events that make you feel the **MOST (ANGRY/AFRAID)**, these experiences could have occurred in the past or will happen in the future. If you can, write your description so that someone reading it might even feel (**ANGRY/AFRAID**)."

Note this technique does not focus the respondent's attention on politics in general or race in particular and is, therefore, a very precise and conservative examination of the emotional foundations of group conflict attitudes. The images used in the induction procedure can be viewed in Appendix 2. The response length was unrestricted but subjects were told to take a few minutes to write down anything in general that made them feel the intended emotion. After the induction, subjects completed a post-test questionnaire that included a variety of policy-opinion measures.

Results

¹⁶ For the relaxed condition there was no facial expression, subjects responded to the following query "Now we would like you to describe in general things that make you feel **RELAXED**. It is okay if you don't remember all the details, just be specific about what exactly it is that makes you **RELAXED** and what it feels like to be **RELAXED**. Please describe the events that make you feel the **MOST RELAXED**, these experiences could have occurred in the past or will happen in the future. If you can, write your description so that someone reading it might even feel **RELAXED**."

First, a manipulation check was conducted to determine if the induction procedure operated as expected. The coding procedure mirrors Study 1.¹⁷ The results of the manipulation check are presented in Table 3. As expected, participants in the anger condition expressed significantly more intense anger than those in the control (relaxed) condition. Respondents in the fear condition expressed much more fear, but not more anger relative to the control group. These results indicate that the induction performed as intended.

One purpose of this study is to replicate the findings from Study 1 on a national adult sample. The dependent variables examined were opinions about *affirmative action*, *government assistance to Blacks*, *government aid to Blacks* and a summary scale of *all racial policies*. Table 4 shows that the direction of the coefficients is consistent with the findings from Study 1, where the interaction between fear and group conflict attitudes is consistently negative across the four policy measures. It appears that again fear depresses the effect of group conflict. The benefit of this study is it allows for a stronger test of racial threat hypothesis. Supporters of the racial threat perspective expect fear's impact to be strongest in areas where there is a high concentration of Blacks, particularly in the South (Key 1949). Perhaps when considering respondents who reside in Southern states, a positive linkage will emerge between fear and group conflict attitudes.¹⁸ To determine

¹⁷ The Cronbach's Alpha reveals a high level of reliability across the two coders – anger (.85), fear (.93)

¹⁸ The Southern states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, D. C., Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

whether this is the case, the sample is split in half and only Southern residents are analyzed.¹⁹

[Insert Table 3 and 4 Here]

Looking at Table 5, the interaction between fear and group conflict is negative and statistically significant among Southern residents. The F-statistic shows that fear is statistically different from anger for government assistance to Blacks and all racial policies. These results are consistent with the previous study, and demonstrate that fear does not bring forth group conflict attitudes from memory. Figure 1 illustrates these effects. The figure shows the marginal effect of each emotion on (all) racial policy opinions as group conflict changes. The figure displays a 95% confidence interval around the marginal effect of the treatment conditions. As previously stated, fear significantly depresses the effect of group conflict on racial policy opinions compared to the anger and control conditions. For respondents who score at the lowest level on the group conflict measure, fear causes little movement in racial policy opinions. At higher levels of the group conflict scale, fear suppresses opposition to racial policies. The point at which the effect is significantly larger than that of the anger group is around the mean of the group conflict scale.

[Insert Table 5 and Figure 1]

Another group where fear is suspected to have a positive impact is among low-income Whites. Table 6 looks at respondents whose median household income is equal to or less than \$49,000.²⁰ Column 2 shows that fear significantly depresses the effect of group conflict on government assistance to Blacks, government aid to Blacks and all racial

¹⁹ For non-southern residents none of the interactions were significant.

²⁰ The effect of income disappears among respondents that make over \$49,000.

policies. The F-statistic reveals that fear is statistically different from anger across the four policy measures. Figure 2 mirrors the effects in Figure 1.

[Insert Table 6 and Figure 2]

In summary, I find that inducing anger does not boost the impact of group conflict attitudes on racial policy preferences. As expected fear depressed the effect of group conflict on racial policy opinion in both studies, although in study 2 these effects were concentrated among Southerners and low-income Whites. It is especially telling that this pattern is most reflected among groups (South and low-income) where fear is assumed to be most prevalent. This is strong evidence that racial conflict is not attributable to fear even when the context varies. Two different populations and points in time have produced a consistent finding – fear and group conflict attitudes are not linked in memory.

The theory of affective intelligence possibly offers an alternative explanation for fear's depressive effect on group conflict attitudes (Marcus, Neuman and Mackeun 2000). This theory argues that the *surveillance* system monitors for threatening and novel stimuli, which interrupt habitual routine and leads to engaged thought.²¹ Fear signals that the environment is novel and threatening and prompts greater attention. Empirical evidence suggests that fear decreases people's reliance on partisanship (habitual behavior) and refocuses attention on candidate qualities and policy preferences (Brader 2006; Marcus et al. 2000). Perhaps this process explains fear's depressive effect on group conflict attitudes, in that fear decouples reliance on habitual behavior (group conflict attitudes). If that argument is correct then a similar effect should occur in examining ideology, another

²¹ The theory actually suggests two systems that manage people's decisions and behaviors. The *disposition* system is responsible for controlling the flow of habitual behavior. Enthusiasm manages this system in informing us that everything is running according to plan.

habitual behavior. The results did not support this expectation. Fear only depressed the effect of group conflict attitudes, and not ideology.²²

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper set out to explore the underlying emotional foundation of group conflict attitudes. The main findings from this paper are summarized as follows: inducing fear in subjects depresses rather than enhances the association between group conflict attitudes and racial policy opinions, while inducing anger generally has no effect. These results raise doubt about fear's role in the group position perspective. The threat of Blacks taking away resources from Whites is not associated with fear. When fear is evoked, group conflict attitudes appear to have been far from Whites' minds.

Counter to my prediction, anger did not prime group conflict attitudes. Perhaps, an explanation for these non-results is that the effect of anger appears when the attitude clearly involves blame and responsibility. For example, anger may activate other concepts developed out of the group position perspective, like laissez-faire racism and social dominance because they explicitly capture beliefs pertaining to superiority and deservingness (Bobo and Kluegel 1997; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Although anger did not activate group conflict, I found that the effect of fear was statistically different from anger. In other words, anger and fear are not interchangeable. The evidence suggests that anger and fear have different roles to play in shaping Whites' racial policy preferences .

The role of fear may emerge in other attitude domains like crime and punishment. Maybe attitudes toward violence and safety are awakened when fear is aroused. This

²² These results are available upon request.

question is beyond the scope of the paper, but further research is needed to determine if fear may prime the dimension of crime and violence and boost its impact on racial policy opinion. Another possibility is that the presence of fear as a component of racial prejudice lays dormant. This may occur because fear has been mostly absent from the racial dialogue over the past 40 years. Therefore, in the future, fear can drive racial conservatism if a frame that includes loss of control becomes dominant and is injected into the racial policy opinion debate.

Appendix 1: Scale/Index Construction

(Question wording is the same across the two studies)

Anger and *Fear* are dummy variables, where 1=if they were in the treatment condition and 0= if they were in the “relaxed” condition.

Group Conflict comprised of four measures and was recoded onto a 0-1 scale, where the higher values correspond to endorsement of symbolic racism. Four items were additively scaled. Response options for each question ranged from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. The specific items are; 1) More good jobs for Blacks means fewer good jobs for members of other groups; 2) The more influence Blacks have in local politics, the less influence members of other groups will have in local politics; 3) As more good housing and neighborhoods go to Blacks, there will be fewer good houses and neighborhoods for members of other groups; 4) Many Blacks have been trying to get ahead economically at the expense of other groups.

Ideology is coded onto a 0-1 scale, where the higher values correspond to identifying as strong conservative. The measures were based on a two-item skip pattern. 1) “We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. On a 7-point scale, where 1 is very liberal and 7 is very conservative, where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?” 2) If respondent enters 8 “haven't thought much about this” then they get “If you had to choose, would you consider yourself a liberal, a moderate or a conservative?”

Affirmative action additively combined two items. The variable ranges from 0-1, where the higher value corresponds to affirmative action does discriminate against Whites. The response options for each question ranged from “very likely” to “not very likely”. The

specific items are; 1)” What do you think the chances are these days that a White person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified Black person gets one instead”; 2) “What do you think the chances are these days that a White person won't get admitted to a college or university program while an equally or less qualified Black person gets admitted instead?”

Government assistance to Blacks ranges from 0-1, where the higher value corresponds to opposition to government assistance to Blacks. The following item was used: “Some people think that Blacks have been discriminated against for so long that the government has a special obligation to help improve their living standards. Others believe that the government should not be giving special treatment to Blacks.”

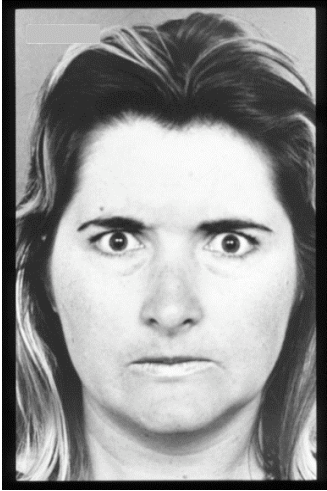
Government aid to Blacks ranges from 0-1, where the higher value corresponds to opposition to government aid to Blacks. The following item was used: “Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of Blacks. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help Blacks because they should help themselves.”

All Racial Policies ranges from 0-1, where the higher value corresponds with the more conservative response. The measure is a combination of *Affirmative Action*, *Government assistance to Blacks*, and *Government aid to Blacks*.

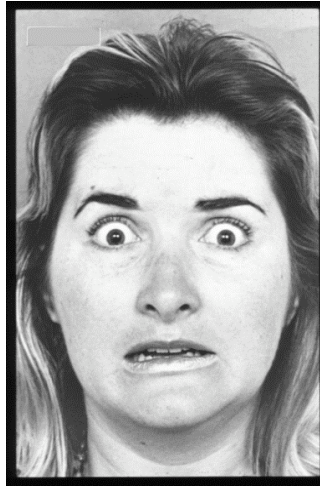
Income is coded onto a 0-1 scale, where the higher value corresponds to highest income bracket.

Education is coded onto a 0-1 scale, where the higher value corresponds to post-graduate degree.

Appendix 2. Facial Expressions Used in Emotion Induction Task



Anger Condition



Fear Condition

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Table 1 Manipulation Check

	Intensity of Anger Expressed β (s.e.)	Intensity of Fear Expressed β (s.e.)
Anger Condition	.61*** (.03)	00 (.03)
Fear Condition	.01 (.03)	.60*** (.03)
Constant	00 (.02)	.02 (.02)
N	178	178

* $p \leq .1$ (two-tailed test) ** $p \leq .05$ (two-tailed test) *** $p \leq .001$

(two-tailed test)

Note: Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients and the standard errors are in parentheses.

**Table 2 Priming Group Conflict Attitudes via Emotion
(College Sample)**

	Affirmative Action	Government Assistance to Blacks	Government Aid to Blacks	All Racial Policies
	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Anger*Group Conflict	-.28 (.24)	-.15 (.20)	.06 (.19)	-.16 (.16)
Fear*Group Conflict	-.41* (.23)	-.41** (.19)	-.31* (.18)	-.40** (.15)
Anger Condition	.03 (.08)	.07 (.07)	-.02 (.06)	.04 (.06)
Fear Condition	.06 (.08)	.03 (.07)	.05 (.07)	.05 (.06)
Group Conflict	.67*** (.17)	.55*** (.14)	.35** (.13)	.56*** (.11)
Ideology	.19* (.10)	.47*** (.09)	.46*** (.08)	.38*** (.07)
Constant	.14** (.07)	.24** (.06)	.28*** (.05)	.21 (.05)
F- Statistic	(.30)	(1.67)	(3.98)**	(2.31)
N	145	147	148	140

* $p \leq .1$ (two-tailed test) ** $p \leq .05$ (two-tailed test) *** $p \leq .001$

(two-tailed test)

Note: Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients and the standard errors are in parentheses.

Table 3 Manipulation Check

	Intensity of Anger Expressed β (s.e.)	Intensity of Fear Expressed β (s.e.)
Anger Condition	.51*** (.04)	.01 (.03)
Fear Condition	.03 (.04)	.48*** (.03)
Constant	.01 (.03)	.00 (.02)
N	181	181

* $p \leq .1$ (two-tailed test) ** $p \leq .05$ (two-tailed test) *** $p \leq .001$
(two-tailed test)

Note: Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients and the standard errors are in parentheses.

**Table 4 Priming Group Conflict Attitudes via Emotion
(Full Sample)**

	Affirmative Action	Government Assistance to Blacks	Government Aid to Blacks	All Racial Policies
	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Anger*Group Conflict	.11 (.26)	-.09 (.21)	-.11 (.19)	-.05 (.18)
Fear*Group Conflict	-.11 (.24)	-.34* (.20)	-.31* (.18)	-.24 (.17)
Anger Condition	.09 (.11)	.07 (.09)	.06 (.08)	.09 (.08)
Fear Condition	.07 (.10)	.13 (.08)	.18** (.08)	.12* (.07)
Group Conflict	.46** (.18)	.28*** (.14)	.40*** (.13)	.38** (.12)
Ideology	.33*** (.10)	.36*** (.07)	.34*** (.07)	.35*** (.07)
Income	.00 (.10)	.05 (.08)	.14** (.07)	.03 (.07)
Education	-.01 (.10)	-.07 (.04)	-.14** (.04)	-.08 (.07)
Constant	.12 (.11)	.47*** (.08)	.29*** (.09)	.34*** (.07)
N	145	163	167	145

* $p \leq .1$ (two-tailed test) ** $p \leq .05$ (two-tailed test) *** $p \leq .001$

(two-tailed test)

Note: Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients and the standard errors are in parentheses.

**Table 5 Priming Group Conflict Attitudes via Emotion
(Only Southern Residents)**

	Affirmative Action	Government Assistance to Blacks	Government Aid to Blacks	All Racial Policies
	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Anger*Group Conflict	-.17 (.44)	-.24 (.34)	-.01 (.28)	-.14 (.27)
Fear*Group Conflict	-.45 (.37)	-.68** (.28)	-.63** (.25)	-.58** (.22)
Anger Condition	.25 (.19)	.15 (.15)	.00 (.13)	.13 (.12)
Fear Condition	.20 (.16)	.23* (.12)	.27** (.11)	.25** (.10)
Group Conflict	.49 (.29)	.35 (.23)	.52** (.20)	.46** (.17)
Ideology	.44** (.16)	.37** (.11)	.38*** (.10)	.37*** (.09)
Income	-.02 (.16)	.03 (.11)	.25** (.09)	.03 (.10)
Education	-.09 (.14)	-.12 (.10)	-.16* (.09)	-.12 (.08)
Constant	.15 (.17)	.49*** (.12)	.28** (.10)	.35*** (.10)
F Statistic	(.46)	(1.99)	(5.20)**	(3.23)*
N	69	76	77	69

* $p \leq .1$ (two-tailed test) ** $p \leq .05$ (two-tailed test) *** $p \leq .001$

(two-tailed test)

Note: Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients and the standard errors are in parentheses.

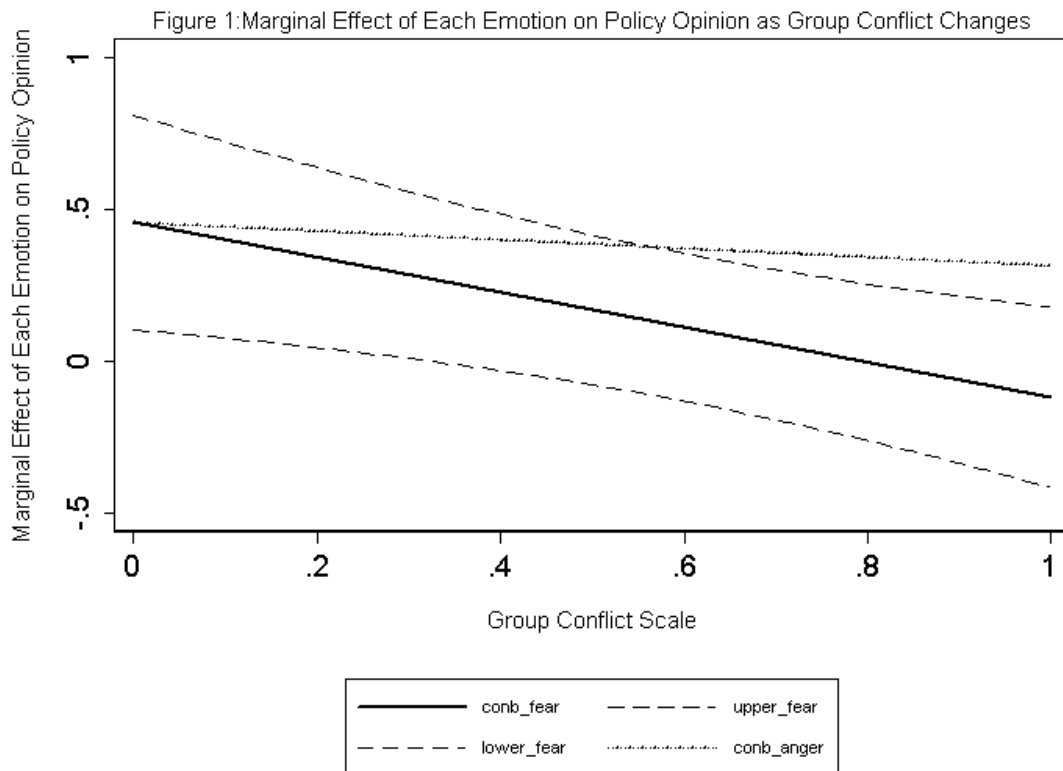
**Table 6 Priming Group Conflict Attitudes via Emotion
(Income equal to or less than 49,000)**

	Affirmative Action	Government Assistance to Blacks	Government Aid to Blacks	All Racial Policies
	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)	B (s.e.)
Anger*Group Conflict	.51 (.32)	.07 (.26)	.02 (.25)	.22 (.21)
Fear*Group Conflict	-.25 (.32)	-.46* (.26)	-.69** (.25)	-.44** (.21)
Anger Condition	-.08 (.16)	.10 (.12)	.05 (.11)	.02 (.10)
Fear Condition	.09 (.16)	.25** (.12)	.34** (.12)	.22** (.10)
Group Conflict	.34 (.25)	.31* (.17)	.44** (.16)	.34** (.14)
Ideology	.51*** (.14)	.41*** (.11)	.38*** (.10)	.44** (.09)
Education	-.21 (.16)	-.10 (.12)	-.13 (.12)	-.17 (.10)
Constant	.15 (.13)	.40*** (.10)	.39*** (.09)	.33*** (.08)
F-Statistic	(4.69)**	(3.41)*	(6.68)**	(8.35)**
N	72	81	82	72

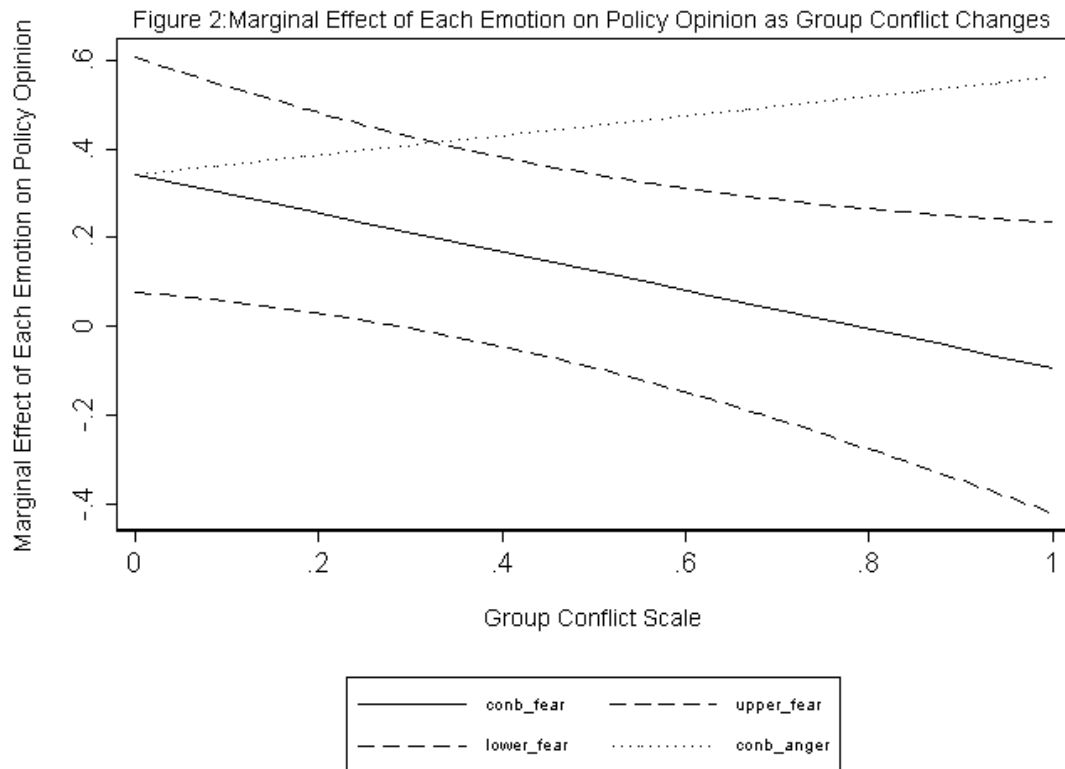
* $p \leq .1$ (two-tailed test) ** $p \leq .05$ (two-tailed test) *** $p \leq .001$

(two-tailed test)

Note: Entries are unstandardized OLS regression coefficients and the standard errors are in parentheses.



Note: The figure is derived from the results in Table 5. The graph is the marginal of each emotion on all racial policy opinions. The *solid* black line represents the fear condition and the *short dashes* represent its corresponding confidence intervals. The *dots* represent the anger condition.



Note: The figure is derived from the results in Table 6. The graph is the marginal of each emotion on all racial policy opinions. The *solid* black line represents the fear condition and the *short dashes* represent its corresponding confidence intervals. The *dots* represent the anger condition.