

**Gratitude Toward Outgroups: The Effect of Outgroup Gratitude on Outgroup Helping
via Outgroup Trust**

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Abstract

Helping behavior can be facilitated by many factors, such as gratitude. Research has found that gratitude expression would increase prosocial behavior in an interpersonal context, but not in an intergroup context. Therefore, we aim to find whether and how feelings of gratitude toward outgroups (outgroup gratitude) could promote willingness to help outgroups (outgroup helping). We hypothesize that outgroup gratitude expression would increase more outgroup helping than expression of gratitude in general (general gratitude). Additionally, we explore whether outgroup gratitude would facilitate more outgroup trust, and whether outgroup trust can explain the effect of outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping. In an online experiment on American participants who reside in the United States and are members of the Democratic Party, we measured their level of gratitude towards Republicans (outgroup gratitude) and outgroup trust on outgroup helping. The results showed that outgroup gratitude did not lead to outgroup help. Moreover, outgroup gratitude did not increase outgroup trust, hence outgroup trust did not have a mediator effect on the relationship. We believe that more research is needed to analyze the effect of outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping, which would expand our understanding of the concept behind gratitude on prosociality in intergroup context.

Keywords: outgroup gratitude, incidental gratitude, prosocial behavior, outgroup helping, outgroup trust

Gratitude Toward Outgroups: Effect of Outgroup Gratitude on Outgroup Helping via Outgroup Trust

Prosocial behavior towards others improves interpersonal relationships and reduces intergroup conflicts and group stereotypes (David- Alonge & Olugbenga, 2020; Dreu et al., 2022). One of the factors that is found to promote prosociality is gratitude (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Grant & Gino, 2010). Originating from the Latin words ‘*gratia*’ (benefit) and ‘*gratus*’ (pleasing), gratitude shows its role of generosity, gift, the act of giving and receiving, with no expectation for reciprocity (Emmons, 2007). Gratitude is described as an incidental emotion, which occurs from a prior unrelated event (e.g. being grateful in general about your daily life) (Gino & Schweitzer, 2008). In this paper, we will refer to gratitude as an incidental emotion.

Gratitude has many effects, such as increasing life satisfaction, one’s psychological and physical well- being, (Wood et al., 2008; Datu & Mateo, 2015; Emmons & McCullough, 2003) and is used as intervention to reduce dyadic conflicts (Matvienko-Sikar & Dockray, 2015; Dizon, 2020). More importantly, gratitude elicits prosocial behavior (Carlson et al., 1988; McCullough et al., 2002). Prosocial behavior is described as a behavior that aims to help or benefit others, with various motivations, which are voluntary acts of helping others without expecting rewards (Lim, 2012). According to McCullough and colleagues (2002), people who expressed more gratitude often showed higher willingness to help others than those who did not express gratitude. Bartlett and DeSteno (2006) found that people with high gratitude levels promote more costly prosocial behavior than when people with awareness of prosocial norms (such as reciprocity).

In contrast to interpersonal context, the effect of gratitude on prosociality is much weaker in intergroup settings. This strange occurrence is due to the presence of ingroup bias.

Ingroup bias (or ingroup favoritism) is the tendency to favor one's own group, its members and characteristics than the other groups (American Psychological Association, n.d.) which increases outgroup hostility, outgroup rejection and ingroup prosociality (Conzo et al., 2021). Although Ksenofontov (2020) found a way to reduce ingroup bias, he argued that gratitude expression in intergroup context can still reduce outgroup help. He found that the people from low-power group members (outgroups) who expressed gratitude towards high-power group members (ingroups), would show less willingness to help outgroups who protest against the high-power group members (outgroup helping).

In opposition, Rambaud and colleagues (2021) found that gratitude expression towards outgroups (outgroup gratitude) can facilitate helping outgroups (outgroup helping), but only when outgroups were viewed as warm and competent. That is, only participants who exhibit high levels of gratitude towards the outgroup, saw the outgroup as warm and competent, which increased their outgroup helping. But the participants who reported low levels of gratitude, did not perceive outgroups as warm and competent, hence leading to a reduction of outgroup helping. Furthermore, Whitaker (2021) explored the effect of general gratitude in ingroups and outgroups on outgroup helping. She found that general gratitude expression in outgroups increased outgroup helping more than in the ingroups. Nevertheless, the ingroup's gratitude expression was still able to facilitate outgroup helping. Therefore, we propose that outgroup gratitude, facilitated by ingroup members, can increase outgroup helping.

Outgroup Gratitude and Outgroup Helping

It is important to study the influence of outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping. Although this is the first research to focus on this effect towards outgroups, prior studies have focused on the indirect effect of gratitude on helping in an interpersonal and intergroup context.

In intergroup context, researchers have found that, encouraged by gratitude, cognitive appraisal (that is regulating one's emotions, such as having cognitive shifts on negative emotions towards outgroups), could increase outgroup helping (Bryan et al., 2018; Halperin & Gross, 2011). Bryan et al. (2018) found that people with high gratitude levels were able to shift their thoughts and emotions easier than those with low gratitude levels. Moreover, Halperin and Gross explained that the cognitive appraisal in people was able to influence their willingness to help outgroups. They found that when Israeli adults regulated their negative emotions during the war between Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they were more supportive towards innocent Palestinian citizens, and provided more helping aids towards the Palestinians (outgroup helping).

In interpersonal context, gratitude increased more outgroup helping behavior through forgiveness (Toussaint & Friedman, 2008; Berry et al., 2005; Garcia- Vazquez et al., 2019). Grateful people are less likely to respond with anger (McCullough et al., 2002) which is a trait that is fundamentally observed in forgiving people (Berry et al., 2005). Moreover, grateful people who had a higher level of forgiving others, were more likely to engage in prosocial bystander behavior (that is helping behavior towards victims of bullying, such as comforting and defending the victims) (Garcia- Vazques et al., 2019). Therefore, gratitude expression and forgiveness can elicit more prosocial behavior towards outgroups (that is the bullied victims).

From the above-mentioned studies, we believe that it is possible that outgroup gratitude towards outgroups can influence helping behavior towards outgroups. Hence, in our first hypothesis, we predict that outgroup gratitude induces outgroup helping. Although this topic has never been studied before, we also believe that there are other variables that can help explain this effect. We propose that outgroup trust, that is trust towards the outgroups, can act as a mediator between outgroup gratitude and outgroup helping.

Outgroup Trust

Outgroup trust is interpreted as trust across cultural identities, or trust in other people, with whom one does not share and recognize a common group identity (Gundelack, 2014, p.126). Examples of outgroup trust can be: trusting people with another nationality or religion. In the next paragraphs, we would like to elaborate why we believe outgroup trust can explain the relationship between outgroup gratitude and outgroup helping. However, since there is no prior research on this mediation effect on outgroup trust on gratitude and helping in intergroup context, we will investigate trust as a variable that is related to gratitude and prosociality from interpersonal and intergroup context.

Outgroup Gratitude and Outgroup Trust

Researchers have observed the role of trust on gratitude in interpersonal context (Chou et al., 2018; Yamamoto et al., 2022; Watkins, 2016). Chou and colleagues found that feelings of gratitude towards an organization (or service) would induce more trust level towards that organization (or service) They found that this effect was explained by integrity and social benefits (that are benefits that enhance familiarity, social support and occurs when customers show feelings of attachment towards the service provider (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Gwinner et al., 1998; Ruiz- Molina et al., 2009)). Not only did social benefits increase the gratitude level in customers towards the service, but because the customers were familiar with the service provider and its integrity, the customers showed higher trust level towards the service provider.

Furthermore, the absence of trust, which is a common trait of cynicism, could inhibit gratitude expression (Watkins, 2016; Fazal et al., 2017). Cynicism is defined as an attitude of disbelief in the sincerity of other's motives and actions (Chylinski & Chu, 2010) who do not believe in the trustworthiness of relationships with others (Graham, 1990). Watkins argues

that cynic people would not genuinely believe in the ‘goodness of the giver’ (McCullough et al., 2001; Watkins, 2014), hence are less likely to portray gratitude feelings. Furthermore, Drazkowski et al. (2017) tried to find whether gratitude would promote more trust facilitation towards strangers. The result showed that grateful participants would elicit higher levels of trust (giving more money to a stranger) because of experiencing more positive emotion compared to the control group. After understanding the role of trust on gratitude, we believe that outgroup gratitude can affect outgroup trust. Hence, we derive our second hypothesis, which predicts that outgroup gratitude can facilitate outgroup trust.

Outgroup Trust and Outgroup Prosocial Behavior

Prior research in intergroup context has shown that outgroup trust had an indirect effect on outgroup prosocial behavior which can be explained by positive emotions .intergroup contact, ingroup bias, (Cuadrado et al., 2019; Meleady & Seger, 2017; Tanaka & Camerer, 2015). Cuadrado and colleagues found that people from the Spanish majority groups (ingroups) who reported more outgroup trust towards Moroccan immigrant minority groups (outgroups), had more positive emotions towards the outgroup, hence were more willing to help outgroup immigrants (outgroup prosocial behavior). However, ingroups with low outgroup trust reported lower positive emotions towards outgroups, and were less likely to help outgroups.

Furthermore, Meleady and Segel (2016) showed how intergroup contact can explain outgroup trust effect on outgroup helping. They found that, unlike participants with low outgroup trust, participants with high outgroup trust were not only cooperating with the outgroups, but were more willing to engage in outgroup prosocial behavior. Tanaka and Camerer (2015) argued that as outgroup trust increased, not only did the ingroup bias drop, but the majority group (ingroup) had a higher willingness to facilitate with the minority group

(outgroup) than with its own members. Interestingly, Hughes et al. (2016) found that outgroup trust would influence outgroup prosociality level with the presence of time pressure. When participants had limited time, their level of automatic response was higher, hence their level of ingroup bias increased. This time pressure made them less prone to be motivated to do deliberate efforts (such as help outgroups).

From the above-mentioned studies, we understood the indirect effect of outgroup trust on outgroup helping. We propose that outgroup trust will not only be increased by outgroup gratitude, but it will also explain the relationship between outgroup gratitude and outgroup helping. Therefore, our third hypothesis predicts that outgroup trust acts as a mediator between outgroup gratitude and outgroup helping.

Present Study

Our goal is to investigate whether and why outgroup gratitude predicts helping behavior towards outgroups. We tested three hypotheses in this study. First, we hypothesized that compared to general gratitude (that is gratitude in general), outgroup gratitude promotes greater outgroup helping. In addition to that, we hypothesized that compared to general gratitude, outgroup gratitude facilitates higher levels of outgroup trust. Finally, we hypothesized that outgroup trust would mediate the relationship between outgroup gratitude and outgroup helping. That is, outgroup gratitude would elicit more willingness of trust towards the outgroup, which promotes more outgroup helping. In this study, we manipulate gratitude expression towards outgroups (independent variable), and we will see its effect on outgroup helping (dependent variable).

Method

Participants and Design

We recruited 250 American individuals who participated in the study in exchange for a total fee of \$0.90 in compensation. We conducted an online study via Academic Prolific and sampled people who reside in the United States, are American, and members of the Democratic Party (ingroup). We excluded 25 participants from the dataset, including those who indicated not to be Democrats, wrote that they were not thankful in general, or not thankful to the outgroup ($n = 11$, $n = 4$ and $n = 14$ respectively) (see Appendix). The final sample consisted of 225 Democrats (144 Females, 74 Males, 5 reported Others, and 2 preferred not to report their gender) ranging in age from 19 to 77 years ($M = 38.91$, $SD = 14.62$). Participants were randomly assigned to either an incidental gratitude condition or an outgroup gratitude condition ($n = 115$ and $n = 110$ respectively).

Procedure

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences at the University of Groningen (EC-BSS). Before participating in the study, participants were asked to read and give informed consent. In the first part of the study, they were asked to take part in a writing task. In the *incidental gratitude condition*, participants were asked: “We would like you to spend 2-3 minutes thinking and writing about things you are thankful for in your life in the United States. Please write down 4-5 things you are thankful for in your life (max. 100 words). For example, they could be related to your personal life, social life, professional life, culture, economy, country, or other domains.” In the *outgroup gratitude condition*, participants were asked: “We would like you to spend 2-3 minutes thinking and writing about things you are thankful for Republicans in the United States. Please write down 4-5 things you are thankful for Republicans (max. 100 words). For example, they could be related to your personal life, social life, professional life, culture, economy, country, or other domains.”

In the second part, they completed measures of emotions, emotions toward Republicans, trust toward Republicans, and other constructs that were not relevant to the hypotheses of this study. Then, they filled out a measure of helping intentions toward Republicans, and finally provided some socio-demographic information (gender, age, and political affiliation). At the end of the study, they were debriefed and thanked.

Measures

Manipulation Checks

We assessed whether participants experienced gratitude in general, and gratitude toward the outgroup. To measure feelings of gratitude in general, participants indicated how they were feeling at that moment: “Appreciative”, “Thankful”, “Grateful” ($\alpha = .966$). We additionally measured other positive and negative emotions to counterbalance the number of positive and negative items. For the positive emotions in general, participants indicated how they were feeling at that moment: “Enthusiastic”, “Happy” ($r = .783$). For the negative emotions in general, participants indicated how they were feeling at that moment: “Sad”, “Angry”, “Guilty”, “Embarrassed”, “Ashamed”, “Outraged”, “Disgusted” ($\alpha = .881$). All answers were reported on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much).

To measure feelings of gratitude toward the outgroup, participants indicated their feelings toward members of the Republican party: “As a Democrat, I feel thankful for Republicans”, “As a Democrat, I feel appreciative of Republicans” ($r = .940$). We also additionally measured other negative emotions to counterbalance the number of positive and negative items. Participants indicated their feelings toward members of the Republican party. That is, as a Democrat I feel “Embarrassed by Republicans”, “Fearful of Republicans”, “Angry at Republicans”, “Outraged by Republicans”. and “Ashamed of Republicans” ($\alpha = .898$). All answers were reported on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much).

Outgroup Trust

As mentioned above, outgroup trust may also play a role in the link outgroup gratitude- prosocial behavior. We took an item from the Generalized Trust Scale- English translation (Yamagishi and Kosugi, 1999), that showed an internal validity of $r = .704$. We will adapt Yamagishi and Kosugi scale on Democrats and their trust level towards Republicans. For example, the participants will be asked the following item: “In general, I feel Republicans can be trusted.” They will have to answer this question on a 7-item scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). We also put a reversed item on trust in the questionnaire: “I feel Republicans cannot be trusted.”

Outgroup Helping

To measure outgroup helping behavior, we created three subscales that capture different levels of helping behavior toward Republicans (support a movement, sign a petition, donate money). For the support a movement subscale, participants indicated their willingness to “Support a gender equality (MeToo) movement organized by members of the Republican party.”, “Support a racial equality (Black Lives Matter) movement organized by members of the Republican Party.”, “Support a climate change movement organized by members of the Republican Party.” ($\alpha = .898$). For the sign a petition subscale, participants indicated their willingness to: “Sign a petition, started by members of the Republican Party, that protects religious freedom.”, “Sign a petition, started by members of the Republican Party, that supports removal of statues of historical figures.”, “Sign a petition, started by members of the Republican Party, to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day.”, “Sign a petition, started by members of the Republican Party, that supports abortion rights in a Republican community.”, ($\alpha = .796$). For the donate money subscale, participants indicated their willingness to: “Donate money to a church that promotes same-gender marriage in a Republican community.”, “Donate money to a Republican movement that supports gun

control regulations.”, “Donate money to a charity organization, led by members of the Republican Party, that supports victims of gun violence and their families.”, ($\alpha = .879$). We averaged all items and created a composite score for outgroup helping, ($\alpha = .905$).

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Descriptive statistics and zero- order correlation for all study variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Coefficient of All Study Variables in Incidental and Outgroup Condition

Variables	<i>n</i>	Incidental gratitude condition <i>M (SD)</i>	Outgroup gratitude condition <i>M (SD)</i>	1	2	3	4
1. General gratitude	225	5.59 (1.41)	2.99 (2.00)	1			
2. Outgroup gratitude	225	1.67 (1.07)	1.89 (1.29)	.352**	1		
3. Outgroup helping	225	4.13 (1.46)	4.16 (1.63)	.165*	.085	1	
4. Outgroup trust	225	3.87 (0.47)	3.72 (0.63)	.075	-.127	.041	1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed); * $p < 0.05$ level (2-tailed)

Manipulation Checks

We first checked whether participants experienced gratitude in general (general gratitude) across conditions. A one-sample t test showed that participants reported to be grateful in general ($M = 4.317$, $SD = 2.156$) which was significantly different from the scale

midpoint, $t(224) = 2.206$, $p = .028$. An independent samples t test showed that participants in the incidental gratitude condition reported higher general gratitude ($M = 5.589$, $SD = 1.407$) than those in the outgroup gratitude condition ($M = 2.988$, $SD = 1.988$), $\beta = .165$, $t(223) = 11.327$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.505$, 95% CI [2.144, 3.057].

Regarding feelings of outgroup gratitude toward the outgroup, a one-sample t -test showed that participants reported low levels of grateful toward the outgroup ($M = 1.776$, $SD = 1.189$) which was significantly different from the scale midpoint, $t(224) = -28.074$, $p < .001$. An independent samples t test showed that participants in the outgroup gratitude condition did not report significantly higher gratitude toward the outgroup ($M = 1.891$, $SD = 1.295$) than those in the incidental gratitude condition ($M = 1.665$, $SD = 1.071$), $\beta = .085$, $t(223) = -1.427$, $p = .155$, $d = .190$, 95% CI [-.537, .086]. This suggests that our outgroup gratitude manipulation was not successful. However, participants still reported enhanced feelings of gratitude in general across conditions¹.

Hypothesis Testing

One regression analysis indicated that there was non significant effect of outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping, $t(223) = -.135$, $p = .89$, 95% CI [-.43, .38]. Participants in the outgroup gratitude condition were slightly more willing to help the outgroup ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.64$) than those in the incidental gratitude condition ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.46$). From this nonsignificant difference between conditions, we can conclude that we did not find evidence to support our first hypothesis.

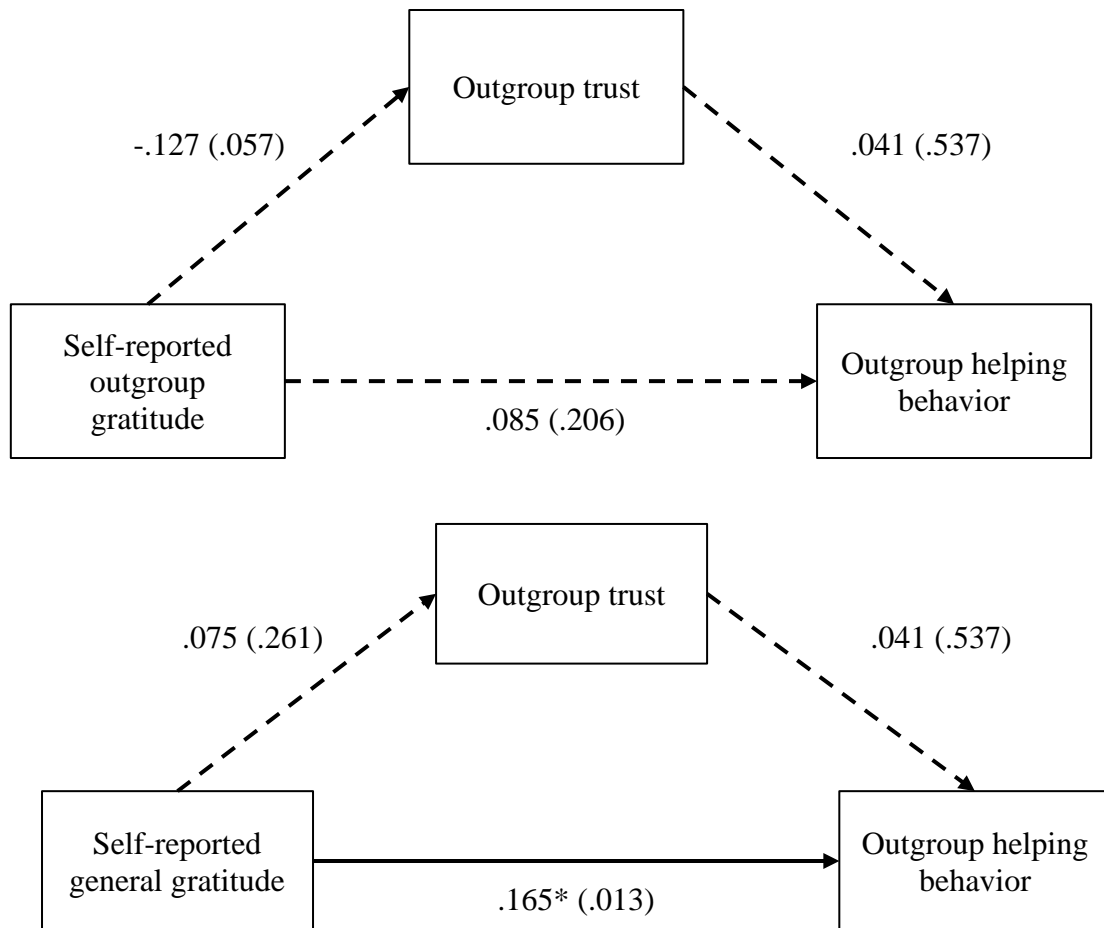
¹ We additionally tested whether positive and negative emotions in general and toward the outgroup differed across conditions. We found that participants reported higher negative emotions toward the outgroup and higher emotions in general, in the outgroup gratitude condition ($M = 4.756$, $SD = 1.803$; $M = 2.150$, $SD = 1.355$, respectively) than in the incidental gratitude condition ($M = 5.245$, $SD = 1.502$; $M = 1.398$, $SD = .704$, respectively), $t(223) = 2.213$, $p = .028$, $t(223) = -5.254$, $p < .001$, respectively. There was higher positive emotions in general in the incidental condition ($M = 5.146$, $SD = 1.328$) than in the outgroup condition ($M = 3.002$, $SD = 1.838$), $t(223) = 10.063$, $p < .001$.

Another regression analysis showed that there was non significant effect of outgroup gratitude on outgroup trust, $t(223) = -1.427, p = .155, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.538, .086]$. The level of outgroup trust in the incidental condition was slightly higher ($M = 3.87, SD = .47$) than in the outgroup gratitude condition ($M = 3.72, SD = .63$). Therefore, our data did not find support for our second hypothesis. Since we could not find any significant evidence for outgroup gratitude on outgroup trust, we did not run additional analyses to test the third hypothesis.

However, we additionally explored correlations between self-reported outgroup gratitude and outgroup trust and outgroup helping. We found that self-reported *outgroup* gratitude was not significantly correlated with outgroup helping ($r = .085, p = .206$) and outgroup trust ($r = -.127, p = .057$). Moreover, self-reported *general* gratitude was significantly and positively correlated with outgroup helping ($r = .165, p = .013$), but not with outgroup trust ($r = .075, p = .261$). Furthermore, there was a non-significant correlation between outgroup trust and outgroup helping ($r = .041, p = .537$). Although not significantly correlated, we found that the self-reported *outgroup* gratitude had a higher, but negative correlation with outgroup trust than self-reported *incidental* gratitude with outgroup trust ($r = -.127, p = .057; r = .075, p = .261$ respectively) (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Pearson Correlation Coefficient for the Relationship of All Study Variables



Note: * $p < 0.05$ level (2-tailed)

Discussion

The goal in this paper is to investigate whether and why gratitude towards outgroups would influence prosocial behavior towards outgroups. We expected that outgroup gratitude expression would elicit more outgroup help (than general gratitude expression), outgroup gratitude would increase outgroup trust, and outgroup trust would explain the effect between our independent and dependent variables. However, we did not find support for any of our hypotheses. Outgroup gratitude did not promote outgroup helping, nor did it increase outgroup trust. Despite the nonsignificant results, our findings could also contribute to the literature on gratitude and helping towards outgroups, and in intergroups context.

Theoretical Implications

We acknowledge that our data did not provide us any significant results to support our hypotheses. We believe there was no effect on outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping because of the following reasons.

First, one reason for the non significant effect in our first hypothesis was because the outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping in our outgroup gratitude condition was almost the same as the effect in the incidental gratitude condition. Although there was still some level of outgroup gratitude expressed in both conditions, feelings of thankfulness towards Republicans in the outgroup gratitude condition did not promote higher outgroup helping than in the incidental gratitude condition. This result was unexpected since we aimed to find higher outgroup helping in the outgroup gratitude condition. Similar to our first hypothesis, Rambaud et al. (2021) found that people who expressed outgroup gratitude were able to facilitate more outgroup helping, but only if outgroups were viewed as warm and competent. In three conditions, Rambaud and colleagues compared feelings of general gratitude, outgroup gratitude and no gratitude expression on outgroup helping, and concluded that only the outgroup gratitude condition was able to facilitate positive outgroup perception, which promoted outgroup helping. Although our study did not find a significant effect, we believe further research can investigate whether there can be a significant effect of outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping. Perhaps there might be a significant effect in the presence of positive outgroup perception (i.e. seeing outgroups as warm, competent), but more research is needed for us to infer this matter.

Second, the unexpected results of our study can also be due to the fact that both conditions expressed higher general gratitude expressions than outgroup gratitude expressions on outgroup helping. That is general gratitude had more impact on outgroup helping than outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping. Whitaker (2021) agreed that ingroups who expressed gratitude in general were willing to help outgroups, but Rambaud et al. (2021) argued that

outgroup gratitude can still promote outgroup helping. Furthermore, interpersonal studies were able to find significant evidence on the effect of general gratitude on prosocial behavior (McCullough et al., 2001; Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006), but our data was still able to show some level of increase of outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping. In short, we acknowledge that our study found non-significant effect on our independent variable on the dependent variable. Future researchers should investigate more in depth the effect of outgroup gratitude and general gratitude on outgroup helping behavior. We believe that this knowledge can contribute to literature on gratitude and helping in intergroup context.

Third, the reason for having non significant results of outgroup gratitude on outgroup trust is because outgroup gratitude condition showed slightly lower levels of outgroup trust than incidental gratitude condition. We expected to have the opposite result, that is participants with gratitude feelings towards Republicans would show more trust towards the Republicans than those with general gratitude feelings. Similar to our second hypothesis, Chou et al. (2018) agreed that expressing gratitude towards an organization (or service) would induce more trust level towards that organization (or service). They concluded that as people felt thankful towards the service provider for having social support, they were more familiar with the service provider, making them show more trust level towards the service provider. In opposition, Drazkowski et al. (2017) argued that people with general gratitude expressions trusted strangers more than those with no general gratitude expressions. That is, thinking of gratitude in general would increase more trust towards outgroups. But one limitation in the study of Drazkowski and colleagues was that they did not find whether gratitude expression, specifically towards strangers, would increase the levels of trust towards strangers. In short, we acknowledge that our study showed no significant effect on outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping. Since the topic of outgroup gratitude on outgroup trust has never been

investigated before, we believe that more research is needed to understand this effect in intergroup context.

Limitations and Further Research

This study has some limitations that should be considered. First, although our study is the first to look into the effect of outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping, we believe that our manipulation check might have affected our results. A manipulation check was needed to see the effectiveness of the manipulation in our experiment, that is to collect construct validity of our independent variable (Hoewe, 2017; Morling, 2015, p. 296). However, there was a problem because we have little knowledge whether the outgroup gratitude manipulation did not work on outgroup helping due to the technicality (that is where to place the question of our independent variable in our study) or due to the way we measured our manipulation. Therefore, future research can help us reduce this problem of manipulation check by replicating the study, or by adding a control condition (that is a ‘no gratitude’ condition). Replication studies will help us understand whether our mistake was due to the displacement of the manipulation or the manipulation measurement, and help us have more control on the manipulation. While control groups would help us explain the manipulation on the dependent variable better. For example, Rambaud et al. (2021) found that there was higher outgroup helping behavior in the outgroup gratitude condition than in the control condition. Therefore, by having a ‘no gratitude’ condition, Rambaud and colleagues were able to see better the effect of their independent variable on the dependent variable. Hence, we assume that having a ‘no gratitude’ control condition in our study, we could have seen how well outgroup gratitude explains outgroup helping. However, more research is needed for us to make this assumption.

Second, although our study took only five minutes, the participants experienced some time pressure when being asked to express gratitude toward the Republicans. This is a problem since the short limited time could have affected the participants' responses on our manipulation, hence affecting our results. Interestingly, time pressure makes ingroups more likely to engage in automatic cognitive processes, leading to reducing the deliberate cognitive responses to help outgroups (Hughes et al., 2016). Simply said, the time pressure would make Democrats think of less gratitude feelings towards Republicans, and would have more increased stereotypical and biased views towards the Republicans. We assume that by controlling the time on the writing task, we could have found better significant results between our independent and dependent variables. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that our study duration was too short, which could have influenced the participants' responses. We believe that future research can focus on controlling the study duration better, so the data would be less affected by other third variables (i.e. time pressure).

Third, although our experiment had a large sample size and participants were randomly assigned in both gratitude conditions, we believe we had insignificant results due to a specific normative response by the ingroups towards outgroups (that is ingroup norms) (Crandall & Stangor, 2005). This is a problem since the ingroup's norms inform ingroups how to view and behave towards outgroups, altering ingroup's perception and behavior towards outgroups (Crandall & Stangor). Simply said, we believe the normative response in the ingroups could have affected our results. Moreover, Moore-Berg and colleagues (2020) agreed that due to the consistent and persistent bias (especially the strong polarization and dehumanization) between the two political parties, Democrats (ingroups) would respond according to what the Democratic norm towards Republicans is, which is to continue viewing Republicans negatively. Thus, we believe that the predisposition ingroup norm on the ingroups towards the Republicans could have affected the ingroup's responses, hence

affecting our results. Interestingly, Chambers and Melnyk (2006) found that Democrats would have more negative views towards Republicans (i.e. hate, distrust), especially when Democrats are asked to agree on the rival's opinion, which contradicts with their core beliefs. Hence, we assume that by asking the Democrats to engage in outgroup prosocial behavior that goes against the Democratic's core principles (i.e. donating money to a Republican movement that supports gun control regulation), the Democrats would elicit more negative, polarized views towards the Republicans, hence show less outgroup helping behavior. In short, we believe that normative responses towards outgroups could have influenced our whole study. To avoid these types of responses, further research can investigate the effect of outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping in a less polarized intergroup conflict. However, more research is needed for us to have this inferences.

We acknowledge that our study has flaws, and we believe that future research can learn from our mistakes and conduct more accurate, valid and reliable research. Although there is always room for improvement, we believe that our research can be beneficial to literature on outgroup gratitude, outgroup trust and outgroup helping.

Conclusion

The effect of outgroup gratitude on helping outgroup members might be essential to create and maintain intergroup relations and reduce ingroup bias. However, outgroup gratitude did not promote outgroup helping as expected, outgroup gratitude did not increase outgroup trust, hence outgroup trust did not explain the effect of our independent and dependent variables. Although there might be some third variables that affected our results, we believe that our study contributed to research on outgroup gratitude, outgroup trust and outgroup helping. Further research is needed for better cumulative understanding on the effect of outgroup gratitude on outgroup helping behavior. We believe that our study can reduce

ingroup bias, where ingroups can see outgroups in a more positive light. Perhaps, it can lead us one step closer to improving intergroup relationships.

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Appendix

Excluded Participants from the Experiment Because They Did Not Meet the Criteria

<i>n</i>	Responses of participants who did not express outgroup gratitude
1	Truthfully, I have very little to thank Republicans for. Especially in office. They are party over country. Not only are they hypocrites, they outwardly lie to their constituents. Republicans pass legislation that inherently jeopardizes the lives of millions. Whether it's pertaining to womens rights, gay rights, police brutality, healthcare, etc.
2	They do many silly things that I can make fun of later. Some of them have invented useful things. They give me something to argue about. They can create a competitive environment.
3	One thing I am thankful for is that I was taught to stand for what I believe in regardless of the backlash. My Republican parents taught me that. Another thing I am thankful for is how I was taught to go with my gut. Most of the time, though my instincts do not line up with Republican stances, learning to go with my gut has proven to be the right thing to do. One other thing I am thankful for is hearing a different perspective and letting it hone my own. Lastly, I am thankful that I barely ever have to guess at a Republican's stance. They almost always will tell it loud and proud.
4	obeying the constitution protecting are children from harm keeping our country fighting the fascists
5	My boss is a Republican, I'm thankful for her not the group in general. I think most of them are rude and cruel and selfish. My boss is none of those things but she still loves trump
6	Im not sure what I would be grateful towards republicans. I dont really know what they do for us.
7	I'm thankful for republicans being honest about who they are so I never have to date one. Why would anyone ever be thankful for republicans? I have republicans in my family, so I guess I'm grateful I have them, but not because they are republicans. I don't resonate with republican policy at all.
8	I'm not sure I can think of anything I'm thankful for that I can contribute to Republicans.
9	I honestly cannot think of a single thing I am thankful to republicans for. They are responsible for the daily attacks on right of women and members of the LGBTQIA community. They have destroyed this country and emboldened the worst of our society.
10	I have zero affiliation with the Republican party, and generally despise that whole institution. The only sort of right leaning political opinion I have is that I support people's right to bear arms, but even in that regard I don't agree with most Republicans on how that should manifest itself in the real world. So, in short, I am not at all thankful for Republicans and I think the party does vastly more harm than good.
11	I have nothing I am thankful for Republicans. Period. No questions. Asking to be thankful for Republicans is not the best survey subject I can think of. To sum up I am not grateful for anything related to Republicans. Any party that supports Donald Trump is to be banned.
12	I genuinely do not feel thankful for Republicans, especially today with the leaked opinion draft from the Supreme Court that Republicans have stacked with an anti-choice, anti-female majority opposed to abortion rights and reproductive rights. I can't think of how to thank them for the Trump administration being allowed to go uncharged for inciting sedition and rioting at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 nor for politicizing COVID-19 instead of uniting our country to take care of each other and reduce its spread.
13	I didn't realize until 2016 just how corrupt and cruel they are when it comes to democracy. They don't believe in democracy where the majority rules. They are all about money and power. They

	care nothing about anyone but themselves.
14	I am thankful that their racism and homophobia is on display and out in the open so we can see that there is still a lot of work to do. Before Trump we felt smug thinking we had finally conquered racism. Thanks to the Trump administration we now know that at least half of the country are racist and all of them are Republicans.
15	I am not thankful for Republicans. They have been actively trying to take away my rights for years. They are greedy and trying to make women be seen as less than men. They try to blame liberals for cancel culture but tried to cancel Starbucks over Christmas cups.
16	I am not thankful for anything that Republicans do. I dislike them but I am thankful for them because they are ridiculous and easy to make fun of and I can get a good laugh out of them sometimes, I guess. They use the color red and red is a nice color. They also use the elephant which is my favorite animal. Republicans have a lot of money and give their money and connections to their children so they won't will always be set for life.
17	I am not really thankful for Republicans. I think most of them are vile creatures. The Republican party has made a fool out of themselves by supporting Donald Trump and his ridiculous antics. I wish their party had a major overhaul and stepped up to their jobs.
18	I am grateful for nothing that has come from republicans. I can not think of one single tiny thing that republicans have done for this country. Instead, I can think of a million things that Republicans have done to mess up this country and will continue to do so if they have the chance. Republicans are the worst human beings to walk the planet and I say this knowing child rapists and serial killers breathe the same air as them. I would not piss down the throat of a republican if it was on fire. They are privileged, white, garbage monsters who want to stay rich and keep the poor, poor. They are obsessed with money and have the audacity to shield themselves with religion when they are far from any holyness in their personal lives.
19	Honestly, there's nothing recent that I'm thankful towards Republicans for. I can only think back to decades ago when Republicans pushed a strong work ethic, but that was also during a time where hard work was properly rewarded. Now a days, that mentality merely leads to exploitation by large corporations and employers. Republicans like to advocate for personal liberty and rights, but their recent policies have all been aimed at removing rights.
20	1) My mother works at a dry cleaners located in a very upscale residential building in downtown Chicago. One of her clients is Republican (he gave us a yearly calendar from the Reagan Foundation, which he donates to). He is a very kind man, and he is one of my mother's most loyal customers. We appreciate his business. 2) I remember there were two pro-Bush Republicans in my American history class during junior year of high school. They were both very nice, even though I found their political beliefs disturbing. 3) Honestly, I don't have many more examples because I do not have a lot of Republican friends/people in my life.
21	- My friend Jack - My Grandma - The person who threw his shoes at George Bush - That's all I can come up with, sorry