To Connect is to Be Influenced: What Determines a Third-party's Forgiveness Attitudes to Conflicting Groups' Violent Partisan Members

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Masi Noor[1]

Sohela Nazneen[2]

Liverpool John Moores University[1]

University of Dhaka[2]

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Correspondence address: Masi Noor (PhD). Liverpool John Moores University, School of Natural Science & Psychology, Tom Reilly Building, Room 3.20, Byrom Street, L3 3AF, Liverpool, UK, Email: masi.noor1@gmail.com

Abstract

The present research sought to answer the question of what determines an uninvolved third party's forgiveness attitudes to conflicting groups' violent partisan members. Specifically, Bangladeshi participants read a fictitious interview with a radicalized Palestinian who declared his intention to avenge himself against Israelis for his personal and collective plight by carrying out a suicide bombing attack. Findings revealed that an empathy manipulation (high empathy = other focused or low empathy = objective focused) influenced participants' forgiveness attitudes towards the radicalized Palestinian such that in the high empathy condition participants were more forgiving of the target than participants in the low empathy condition. Moreover, while the strength of their religious identification (Islam) played no significant role, participants' tendency to attribute the target's decision to situational factors fully mediated the effects of empathy on forgiveness.

Key words: third party, empathy, forgiveness, situational attributions, partisan group member

To connect is to be influenced: What determines a third-party's forgiveness attitudes to conflicting groups' violent partisan members?

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view… Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it." Atticus in To Kill A Mocking Bird

As important as it is for conflicting groups to manage each other's perceptions of the conflict, it is equally essential for them to manage third parties' perceptions of the conflict. It has been argued that maintaining a positive image of one's group in the eyes of third parties can translate into potential moral and material types of support, which are invaluable resources for conflicting groups (Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012). To illustrate the impact of such support, third-party interventions tend to increase the likelihood of the supported group achieving victory militarily (Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, & Joyce, 2008). Recent research also suggests that third parties can in fact escalate conflicts through reproducing conflict narratives that display increased bias in moral framing, attributions for the conflict and even quests for revenge (Lee, Gelfand, & Kashima, 2014). Given these diverse ways through which third parties can contribute to conflicts and to those directly involved in them, it is therefore important to study what influences third parties' reactions to conflicting parties and their actions.

We know that third parties are far from dispassionate, objective observers of those directly involved in conflicts (Blader, Wiesenfeld, Fortin, & Wheeler-Smith, 2013). This is true even for conflicts that are taking place thousands of miles away from third parties. To illustrate, an episode of heightened violence between Israel and Palestine in the Middle East triggering a myriad of third parties' reactions is one of

many instances in which individuals who are not directly affected by a conflict develop strong attitudes towards the conflicting groups. What might determine these third parties' attitudes? Currently, the psychological literature on multi-party dynamics can only provide limited answers to this question, because it mainly relies on research that was conducted either on actual conflicting parties or on parties who belonged to the second and third generation of the original conflict (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008; Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008; Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). Moreover, what we know about the content and determinants of uninvolved third parties' responses is predominantly derived from research conducted on interpersonal conflicts, rather than intergroup conflict (Blader, Wiesenfeld, Fortin, & Wheeler-Smith, 2013; Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006; Green, Burnette, & Davis, 2008).

The current research aims to address these limitations by focusing on a third-party (Bengalis in Bangladesh) that is located literally thousands of miles away from the actual conflict setting (Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East). Below we report an experiment which examined the influence of the social emotion of empathy, which is known as one of the most expedient routes to bonding with another person's feelings and views (Batson, 1998).

Empathy: To Connect Is To Be Influenced

According to the social emotional model of congruence (Wiesenfeld, Rothman, & Wheeler-Smith, 2010), emotions that are felt in response to other individuals' experiences are key to enabling observers to bond with them. One such emotion is *empathy*. Through the mechanism of mentally representing another person's feelings and perceptions empathy allows observers to imagine the mentalized

target's reactions to a specific event, as if the observers were walking in the person's shoes. Consequently, this mental representation facilitates shaping the observers' own evaluation of the event. Finally, social emotions have also been known to determine whether the observer's reactions toward the event will be aligned to those of the mentally represented (Blader et al., 2010; Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Leach & Tiedens, 2004). For these reasons, we opted to focus on empathy in our research.

Empathy for a Violent Target

Over the past decades, considerable research has detailed the nature and consequences of empathy for responses to others, especially by Batson and his collaborators (Batson, 2014; Batson, 1998; Stürmer, Snyder, Kropp, & Siem, 2006; Vescio et al., 2003). Through experimental work these researchers have demonstrated that empathy for someone in need is associated with positive thought and prosocial behaviour toward that person. Specifically, feelings of empathy (including sympathy, compassion, and warmth) tend to lead to an increased valuing of the welfare of the person for whom empathy is experienced (Batson, Turk, Shaw, & Klein, 1995).

While the research agenda by Batson and colleagues has been productive and insightful, the typical research paradigm utilized by these researchers has been one in which the target of empathy was characterized as passive, needy, vulnerable and of no threat to others. Even in the case of convicted murderers (Batson et al., 1997), who could arguably be conceived of as a source of threat to the public, at no point in the bogus interview did the murderer issue a threat to the safety of others in society. In fact, the target murderer was presented as remorseful and safely imprisoned. Thus, our research is among the first to test whether the positive impact of empathy that are so well-known through the volumes of research reports can be replicated for a target who displays intentions to cause severe harm to individuals of another group.

Forgiveness

Given a central discourse between groups involved in conflict revolves around justice concerns (Bar-Tal, 2007), – i.e., whether the violence of one side of the conflict against the other side was justified – we theorised that this discourse would be also salient among third parties. Justice research has assessed third parties' justice concerns in terms of their willingness to punish individuals who were portrayed as norm-violators (e.g., Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004; Schiller, Baumarten, & Knoch, 2014). However, we argue that justice concerns go beyond the assignment of punishment regimes and can include more positive psychological outcomes. One such outcome is *forgiveness*.

Forgiveness is commonly defined as a decreased motivation to retaliate against or avoid an offender which simultaneously is present with an increased motivation to reconcile with the offender despite the harmful act (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 997). The forgiveness literature, both at the interpersonal and intergroup levels, has rapidly grown over the last decade (Hewstone et al., 2004; McCullough et al., 1997; Noor, 2016 & in press; Noor, Branscombe, & Hewstone, 2015; Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008; Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008; Shnabel et al., 2013; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). Despite such growth, we are aware of only one research paper that has examined the role of third parties' forgiveness with a specific focus on interpersonal conflicts (Green et al., 2008). The researchers found that generally third parties were less forgiving than parties who were directly affected by the conflict, and this effect was mediated by attributions about the offender's intentions and responsibility for the offence. Green and colleagues' research is insightful in that they highlight the challenge of forgiveness among third parties. We argue that at the intergroup level third parties may be faced with a similar challenge

when considering to forgive conflicting groups members. This is because thinking of someone who has violated some important social norms and then considering appropriate punishment for him/her may be psychologically less effortful than being faced with the same norm-violator and considering to forgive him/her. To our knowledge, the present research is the first attempt to assess the impact of empathy on an uninvolved third party's motivation to forgive a radicalized member of a conflicting group.

Potential Underlying Mechanisms

Situational Attributions

Another goal of our research was to examine the mechanisms by which the effects of third party's empathy may be exerted on forgiveness. We particularly focused on two variables: *situational attributions* and *religious ingroup identification*. Past research on intergroup relations between White and Black Americans has highlighted the link between empathy and attributions. Generally, it has been found that empathy (taking another person's perspective) influences situational, but not dispositional, attributions about the mentalised target's actions (Vescio et al., 2003). Effectively, empathy overrides the actor-observer bias, which is the tendency to attribute own actions to situational factors while attributing those of other to their disposition (Jones & Nisbett, 1972). Moreover, through empathising with a target, a third party is likely to be motivated to take a novel and situationally focused view similar to the one of the mentalised target (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Finally, as a consequence of empathising contextually relevant knowledge structures may be activated, which may further serve as important reminders of the situational factors surrounding the target and their actions (Macrae, Bodenhausen, & Milne, 1995). Following this logic, we theorised that as a result of empathising with a radicalized

individual third parties will be more likely to consider the situational factors surrounding the radicalized individual and therefore will be making increased situational attributions about his decision to become a suicide bomber. In turn, we expected these attributions to motivate third parties to forgive the radicalized individual.

Ingroup Identification

Finally, in this study we also wanted to examine the degree to which the effects of empathy on forgiveness may be mediated by our participants' identification with Islam, which happened to overlap with the radicalized protagonist's religious affiliation, who was given a Muslim name (Saleem). Such salience of shared identity could trigger perceptions of similarity and familiarity. In fact, recent research has provided evidence in support of the impact of familiarity in that mere familiarity with another group was shown to lead to identifying with that group more, and, in turn, such identification increased third parties' prosocial behaviour toward that group (i.e. monetary donations) (Zagefka, Noor, & Brown, 2013). In sum, the present research examined whether empathy with a radicalized Muslim increased Bangladeshi participants' identification with Islam, which in turn may have influenced participants' willingness to forgive Saleem.

Overview of Hypotheses

In summary, the present work sought to answer the question of what determines a third party's forgiveness response toward a radicalized group member who, unlike previous benign targets used in empathy research, intends to become a suicide bomber and inflict indiscriminate harm against another group. Guided by the social emotional model of congruence (Blader et al., 2010), we hypothesised that the participants induced with high empathy would be more willing to forgive their target

of empathy than the participants in the low empathy condition. Finally, we examined the role of situational attribution and religious identification as two potentent mediators of the relationship between empathy and forgiveness.

Bangladeshi Context

Today, there are 135 million people living in Bangladesh, the majority of whom (over 88%) are Muslims, with significant Hindu, Buddhist and Christian minorities. Although it used to rely heavily on Western foreign aid, this trend has been reversed since the 1980s, from 80% to 18% (Moore, 2003). Given Bangladesh's turbulent and violent past as part of its liberation war against Pakistan, surprisingly only two incidents of suicide bombing have been officially recorded. The attacks took place between November and December 2005, killing 14 civilians and two police officers. These missions were carried out by Sunni extremists protesting against the secularisation of Bangladesh (Gambetta, 2005).

Thus, although not unfamiliar with the exposure and impact of suicide missions, Bangladesh provides a context of relatively *low* exposure to suicide bombing as compared with other contexts (e.g., Israel). Against this backdrop we conducted the current research.

The Study

Method

Participants. One hundred and twenty-two Bangladeshi students at the Dhaka University (60 men) took part in the experiment. The sample ranged in age from 19 to 28 years (M = 22.60, SD = 1.62). All participants were of Bengali nationality. Seven participants were excluded because their scores on the manipulation check scale indicated extreme scores in the opposite direction of the intended manipulation, hence raising concerns that they may not have followed the manipulation instructions[1]. The

final sample included 59 participants in the empathy condition and 56 participants in the objective condition. The majority of the remaining sample identified themselves as Muslims (108), while a small minority were Hindu (6) and only one participant identified as Christian.

Design and Procedure

The experiment was portrayed as a media study allegedly examining perceptions of different types of media outputs. All participants were exposed to the same bogus newspaper interview which revealed information about a 21 year-old suicide bomber in the Middle East. Participants read that Saleem's father, a taxi driver, had been killed at an Israeli checkpoint, which had set a turning point in his life. Since the death of the father, Saleem had joined an organisation which had offered him support and training to become a suicide bomber, and now he was just waiting for his call. The article further shed light on his motives for becoming a suicide bomber, which were mainly related to restoring his lost dignity, avoiding being a coward and freeing his people and land from the Israelis oppression. The protagonist concluded by highlighting that religion did not play any role in his decision and re-emphasised that it was mainly triggered by the killing of his father.

Manipulation of empathy. In order to manipulate empathy, we employed the instructions that were successfully used by previous researchers (Batson et al., 1997; Batson, Chermok, Hoyt, & Ortiz, 2007; Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007). Prior to reading the bogus article, participants read one of the two instructions. In the low empathy condition, half of the sample read: '*While you are reading this interview, try to take an objective perspective towards what is described. That is, try to not get caught up in how the person being interviewed feels; just remain objective and detached.*' The instruction for the high empathy condition was as follows: '..., *try to take the*

perspective of the person being interviewed. That is, try to imagine yourself in the person's shoes. Concentrate on trying to imagine what the person being interviewed is thinking and how he is feeling.'

Measures. After reading one of the above empathy instructions and the bogus interview, participants were asked to indicate their reactions to the interview by responding to a series of Likert-type statements using a 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale.

To assess the success of our manipulation of empathy, participants indicated the degree to which they were feeling a list of emotions toward Saleem (Batson et al., 1997). These included: *Concern, compassion, empathy, moved, sympathy, sorry, warm* (Cronbach's α = .75). Four items, adapted from previous research on interpersonal and intergroup forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1998; Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008), measured the degree to which participants were willing to forgive Saleem. These were: 'I can forgive Saleem for his actions,' 'I do not hold a grudge against Saleem,' 'I have no ill feelings towards Saleem,' and 'I resent Saleem for his behaviour (reverse coded).' The forgiveness scales formed adequately reliable scales (Cronbach's α = .70). Situational attributions were measured with 3 items: 'Saleem's decision to be a suicide bomber is a direct result of his circumstances,' 'Saleem's decision was brought about by his environment,' and 'Saleem's actions reflect the kind of situation he is in.' These items formed an adequately reliable scale (Cronbach's α = .76). After indicating which religious community they belonged to, participants responded to three items tapping their strength of identification with their religious community: 'I consider myself as belonging to the above community,' 'I feel strong ties to the above community and its people,' and 'I identity with the above

community' (adapted from Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade, & Williams, 1986). These items formed a reliable scale (Cronbach's α = .88).

Upon completion of the study, participants were thanked and thoroughly debriefed.

Results

Tables 1 and 2 provide a summary of the means, standard deviations and the bivariate correlations for all measured variables.

Manipulation check. As expected, the participants in the high empathy condition reported more empathy with the protagonist (M = 5.07) than the participants in the low empathy condition (M = 4.27), $F(1,113) = 15.68$, $p = .001$, *partial eta*^{2} = .122. Hence, the empathy instructions were successful in inducing different levels of empathy in our participants.

Main effects

Willingness to forgive. The central purpose of this study was to test whether empathy could influence third party participants' attitudes towards someone who harboured intentions to commit a suicide bombing against another group. It was expected that high (rather than low) empathy can produce more favourable attitudes even towards someone who intends to harm a vast number of people belonging to different group than the participants. Results showed that indeed the participants who were in the high empathy condition were more willing to forgive the suicide bomber (M = 5.22) than the participants who were in the low empathy condition (M = 4.53), $F(1,113) = 6.51$, $p = .012$, *partial eta*^{2} = .055.

Situational attributions. Further it was predicted that the participants in the high perspective condition would be more likely to attribute Saleem's decision to become a suicide bomber to his context than the participants in the low empathy

condition. As expected, findings revealed that the participants who were in the high empathy condition were making more situational attributions about Saleem's decision (M = 6.23) than the participants who were in the low empathy condition (M = 5.67), $F(1,113) = 5.92$, $p = .017$, *partial eta*^{2} = .050.

***Religious Identification*.** We also tested the impact of empathy on religious identification. Results revealed that empathy did not exert an effect on such identification, (high empathy condition M = 5.00 vs low empathy condition M = 5.60; $F(1,113) = 2.41$, $p = .12$, *partial eta*^{2} = .021[2].

Auxiliary Analysis. Because the majority of our participants were Muslims (93.91%) and could have potentially perceived a shared identity (i.e. Muslim) with our Palestinian protagonist, we explored the influence of religious identification on the relationships between empathy and forgiveness and between the former and situational attributions. Re-running the above analyses with religious identification as a covariate showed that religious identification failed to act as a significant covariate both in the relationship between empathy and forgiveness and in the relationship between empathy and attributions, $F(1,112) = 2.12$, $p = .148$, *partial eta*^{2} = .019 and $F(1,112) = .26$, $p = .609$, *partial eta*^{2} = .002, respectively.

Importantly, the effects of empathy on forgiveness and situational attributions remained significant even after controlling for the effects of religious identification, $p = .022$ and $p = .035$, respectively.

Mediation Analysis. The above findings highlight that empathy did not have an effect on religious identification. Moreover, religious identification did not act a significant covariate in the relationships between empathy and forgiveness and the former and attribution. Thus, these findings rule out the potential role of religious identification as a potential mediator.

By contrast, our results showed that empathy did impact situational attributions. In the next step, we examined whether the effect of empathy on forgiveness could be accounted for by participants' consideration of the social circumstances in which the protagonist was reported to find himself.

Using the PROCESS macro (Model 4) (Hayes, 2012), we tested a model with situational attribution as the mediator. Specifically, we tested the following sequences simultaneously: 1) The induction of empathy (independent variable) would increase participants' attributions of Saleem's decision due to his context, rather than his character. In turn, such situational attributions (mediator) would lead to increased forgiveness (dependent variable).

The results, presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, indicated that, as expected, empathy had a significant effect on the participants' situational attributions. In turn, these attributions had an effect on forgiveness. Moreover, the indirect effect of empathy was also significant (i.e. zero was not included in the 99% confidence interval, suggesting that the indirect effect significantly differed from zero). Finally, the direct effect of empathy intervention on forgiveness (i.e. the effect *not* mediated by situational attributions) was non-significant. That is, once the tendency to make situational attributions about Saleem was controlled for, empathy did not increase forgiveness (see Tables 3.1 & 3.2). In sum, these results suggest that situational attributions mediated fully the effects of empathy on forgiveness (full mediation).

Discussion

The present research asked the question of what influences a third party's reactions to a partisan members of conflicting groups. Following the logic of the social emotional model of congruence (Blader et al., 2010; 2014), we predicted and found that the classic empathy manipulation (e.g., Batons et al., 1997) was successful

in inducing a third party's participants with empathy for a partisan Palestinian group member, whose remedy to his personal and collective plight in the war against Israelis was to commit a suicide bombing attack. Importantly, our results provided evidence for the positive impact of empathy on participants' prosocial reactions. That is, participants induced with high empathy were more willing to forgive the suicide bomber and made more situational attributions about the protagonist's decision to become a suicide bomber than participants who were in the low empathy condition. Participants' religious ingroup identification was not affected by empathy. Our findings further revealed that the effects of empathy on forgiveness and situational attributions remained robust beyond and above the effect of participants' religious identification. Finally, evidence was found in support of situational attributions as a mediator of the relationship between participants' empathy and forgiveness

Theoretical implications

The current work's contributions to the literature were manifold. We were hardly able to locate a research paper that had specifically focused on truly uninvolved third parties and on the question of what might influence their reactions to partisan members of conflicting groups. The main bulk of the existing literature addressing similar issues has focused on parties who are either closely related to the conflicting parties or on parties who were directly affected by the conflict (e.g., Doosje et al., 1998; Shnabel et al., 2013). Moreover, past studies examining third-parties' reactions have primarily concentrated on interpersonal, rather than intergroup, conflicts (Blader et al., 2013; Eaton, et al., 2006; Green et al., 2008). Thus, to the best of our knowledge, the present research was among the first to examine what determined a truly uninvolved third party's reactions to conflicting groups, who were located thousands of miles away from the third party.

The current work made further theoretical and methodological contributions by focusing on empathy. Volumes of past research have studied empathy and its prosocial effects on helping those who were in need and portrayed as harmless and non-threating to others (Batson, 1998; 2014). However, no previous study had attempted to examine whether these effects would replicate when the harmless target is replaced with someone who is equally in a difficult situation (i.e., war) but crucially seeks solution to his personal and group's plight by choosing extreme violence (i.e., suicide bombing) against an outgroup responsible for the plight. Our research revealed that at least an uninvolved third party is able to empathize with such a target.

Another contribution of the current work relates to our focus on more positive justice outcomes. Past research on third parties' reactions toward norm-violators has predominantly focused on punitive outcomes (e.g., Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004, Schiller et al., 2014). Acknowledging the merits of this focus, we aimed to broaden it to the study of justice concerns that involve more positive, and perhaps psychologically more challenging and effortful, outcomes such as forgiveness. Our results speak in favour of the power of empathy, which was shown to impact positively the party's willingness to forgive the target.

Our analyses also revealed that our empathy manipulations did not affect participants' strength of religious identification, nor was religious identification a significant covariate in the relationship between empathy and forgiveness. Hence, these results boost our confidence that the observed effect of empathy on our third party's forgiveness was exerted by our empathy manipulation. In fact, to rule out the influence of identification, further analyses revealed that identification exerted neither main nor moderating effects on empathy, forgiveness and situation attributions ($p \geq$ 24). Admittedly, we acknowledge that these results regarding the role of identification

hold only for the current sample, which consisted of an opportunity sample. Thus the present study cannot rule out that there may exist more variability in religious identification among Bangladeshis with different consequences for their relationship between empathizing with a Muslim, violent target and their willingness to forgive him/her. Future research should address these issues by testing the present hypotheses in a nationally representative sample.

Limitations & Future Research Directions

Naturally, the current research is also limited in a number of ways, which can mainly be addressed by future research. One limitation of the present work was that it did not have access to the third party's pre-existing attitudes towards the conflicting groups in the Middle East. In the present study, we cannot rule out the influence of our participants' pre-existing favourable or unfavourable attitudes toward Palestinians and Israelis. That said, by ensuring that participants were randomly assigned to the different experimental conditions, we expect that any differences in pre-existing attitudes were evenly divided across conditions and therefore did not play a major impact on the current results. Another limitation of the current research is that it did not take the issue of differential power and status of the conflicting groups into account. It may be the case that because of the relatively low power and status of Palestinians as compared to Israelis, they might have been perceived as the 'underdog' group in the conflict and such perceptions, in turn, influenced our participants' reactions. However, given that we observed differences across the two experimental conditions, we argue that such power dynamics are likely to play a moderating, rather than a central, role.

Our research also raises questions concerning psychological processes that may be involved in radicalisation tendencies of third parties. Past research has studied

factors (e.g. perceived justice) that were found to be associated with radical belief systems (e.g. feelings of disconnect from society), which in turn predicted attitudes towards the use of violence between conflicting groups (Doosje, Loseman, & van den Bos, 2013). Our work hints at how third parties may become drawn to empathize with one group. Although we did not directly study the radicalisation phenomenon in this paper, our chosen variables such as willingness to make situational attributions about the target's decision to commit a suicide bombing attack and to forgive him do allow for extrapolations, at least, about the conditions under which third parties may accept such violence. Future research should examine the role of empathy as a potent route to recruiting third-party members to participate in the groups' violent conflict.

Conclusion

Third parties can contribute to other group's conflict and its evolution. As such, it is important to understand what influences third parties' reactions to those who are directly involved in the conflict. The present findings suggest that following the induction of empathy by ways of simple instructions can tilt a third party's attitudes towards forgiving a threatening, partisan target, because of the third party's consideration to the target's external circumstances.

Footnote

1. Note that prior to excluding participants with scores on the extreme ends of the manipulation check measure, which were in the opposite direction to the intended manipulation, mean differences on the main dependent variables were significant ($p > .05$). Removing these cases improved reliability but did not dramatically change the pattern of the original findings.
2. We also examined the potential impact of ingroup identification on our key variables. Results indicated that religious ingroup identification had neither main nor moderating effects on empathy, forgiveness, and situational attribution, (*ps* $\geq .24$).

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Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Measured Variables by Experimental Condition

	Experiment 1		
	Empathy Manipulation		
Variables	Overall *M*	Low *M*	High *M*
Empathy	4.68	4.27	5.07
SD	1.15	1.19	.96
Forgiveness	4.88	4.53	5.22
SD	1.50	1.61	1.31
Attribution	5.96	5.67	6.23
SD	1.25	1.50	.91
Identification	5.28	5.58	5.00
SD	2.01	1.86	2.11

Table 2. Bivariate Correlations of Measured Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Empathy	-	.36**	.36**	.07
2. Forgiveness		-	.39**	-17 +
3. Attributions		-	-	-.08
4. Identification				-

*Note. + p = .08; ** p = .01*

Table 3.1 Results of the mediation model: Empathy (IV) – situational attribution (mediator) – forgiveness (DV) path.

Predictors	*B*	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Situational Attribution				
Constant	5.12	.36	14.12	.0001
Empathy	.55	.23	2.43	.017
Forgiveness				
Constant	1.63	.68	2.40	.018
Situational Attribution	.43	.11	4.04	.0001
Empathy	.46	.26	1.75	.083

Table 3.2 Results of the mediation model: Direct and indirect Paths

Direct path			
Effect	*SE*	*t*	*p*
.46	.26	1.75	.083
Indirect path			
Effect	*Boot SE*	*LLCI*	*ULCI*
.24	.13	.006	.778

Note. N = 115 participants. Bootstrap samples = 5000

Direct path: Empathy -> Forgiveness, controlled for situational attributions.

Indirect path: Empathy -> mediator (Situational Attribution) -> Forgiveness.

LLCI = lower level of the bias-corrected 99% bootstrap confidence interval.

ULCI = upper level of the bias-corrected 99% bootstrap confidence interval.