More and more, ethnic and racial groups are challenging the black-white dichotomy that has historically characterized race relations in the United States. In an increasingly multiracial/multiethnic society, the question of racial and/or ethnic cooperation is an important aspect of the larger American political process. This study examines what attitudes will lead to increased support for coalition building between Black and Latinos. The research questions are: what are the attitudes that are likely to produce strong coalitions between Latinos and Black? Conversely, what attitudinal barriers stand in the way of potential multiethnic coalitions? There are four sets of limitations that could affect support for coalition building: perceived competition, societal constraints that serve to pit minorities against each other, lack of agreement on issues, and differential perceptions of coalitions.
Using regression and structural equation modeling, this study looks at each group of limitations in detail in order to understand the characteristics of people who succumb to the limitation compared to those who would not. After an analysis of these three groups of limitations at the individual level, they are tested at a macro level to determine if that is how the actual respondents see the variables as fitting together.

This research identified several trends. Perhaps the most important finding emphasizes the difference between these two groups. While the same “stuff” matters to each group, it matters in different ways. Additionally, this study illustrates that the way previous research has thought about how these different variables fit together may be flawed and quite different in the real world. Another finding is the effect of the diverse experiences not only of both groups, but also of the subgroups within each group that contribute to various attitudes on coalition building. One of the most consistent findings of this study is the role of education and employment in influencing minority group attitudes.

In general, this data indicates that Latinos and Blacks do not see high levels of competition with each other but are more likely to perceive competition with Whites, which indicates that the limitation of competition is not likely to be a widespread barrier to coalition building. Moreover, this study finds that the effect of contact differs and the circumstance of that contact affects how it affects attitudes toward the other group. Identity, linked fate, and stereotypes all serve to decrease tolerance for Latinos toward Blacks. In terms of issue agreement, it appears that the type of issue does matter in terms of how much commonality there is between the two groups, but also that it depends on which factors you look at. From this data, it does not appear that differences in issue positions are driven by perceptions of scarcity, (as suggested in the previous research), but that support or opposition of particular issues align with broader support trends based on ideology and partisanship.