

'They Were Just Like Us, and They Lost Everything'

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The Atlantic:

According to Jamil Zaki, assistant professor of psychology and the director of the Stanford Social Neuroscience Laboratory, even though empathy is a fundamental human emotion, people are not exactly wired for a globalized response. “When we evolved, we were in small groups of interdependent individuals, so the people that you would run into and subsequently empathize with were probably family or extended family,” he explained. “And nowadays, we’re given the unprecedented opportunity to empathize, reach out to and help, not just the people who are right around us, but people all around the world.

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As David Desteno wrote for *The Atlantic* last summer, a recent study from the University of Michigan found, based on empathy assessments of 13,000 college students between 1979 and 2009, that “levels of compassion and empathy are lower now than at any time in the past 30 years, and perhaps most alarming, they are declining at an increasing rate.”

Read the whole story: [*The Atlantic*](#)