

Research article

When extraordinary injustice leads to ordinary response: How perpetrator power and size of an injustice event affect bystander efficacy and collective action

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Abstract

Although bystanders can play an integral role in the process of social change, relatively few studies have examined the factors that influence bystander collective action. The present research explores the effect of perpetrator power on bystander efficacy and collective action, as well as the moderating role of impact of the injustice event. Across two experiments, bystanders perceived that collective action would be less effective and were less willing to engage in collective action when a high-power perpetrator engaged in injustice, compared with a low-power perpetrator. These effects were moderated by impact of the injustice event, such that the effects of power were especially present under conditions of large impact (many victims), compared with small impact (fewer victims). Whereas the effect of the interaction of perpetrator power and impact on bystander efficacy was explained by perceptions of normativity of the injustice event, the effect of the interaction on bystander collective action was explained by bystander efficacy. Implications for bystander collective action and social change are discussed. Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Justice may be blind, but she has very sophisticated listening devices.

Edgar Argo

Why do some instances of injustice elicit protest from bystanders, whereas other instances of injustice do not? What factors explain when injustice evokes, or fails to evoke, bystander action? Although a large body of work has explored action on behalf of one's own group (collective action), relatively less work has examined the factors that explain bystanders' action on behalf of others (bystander collective action; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009). In considering why some injustice elicits greater bystander action than others, the present work focuses on the effect of perpetrator power on bystander efficacy and bystander collective action, as well as the potential moderating role of impact of the injustice event (i.e., small vs. large). We suggest that perpetrator power can have a strong influence not only on bystander judgments' about the likely effectiveness of bystander action (bystander efficacy) but also on bystanders' willingness to engage in collective action (bystander collective action). Although people often believe they evaluate all injustice equally and blindly, consistent with the Argo quote, we argue that people have strong "listening devices," and perpetrator power is one such device that can bias and shape how bystanders respond to injustice. Integrating insights from Norm theory (Kahneman & Miller, 1986) and collective action research (van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012),

in the present work, we investigate whether perpetrator power directly influences how bystanders' view an injustice event (perceived normativity), bystander's beliefs regarding the difficulty of changing injustice, and bystanders' willingness to engage in bystander collective action. In addition, we explore whether the effects of perpetrator power on bystander responses are especially prevalent under conditions when the injustice has had a large impact (many victims), compared with when the injustice has had a small impact (fewer victims).

Much of the social psychological work on collective action has focused on action by members of disadvantaged (minority/low-status) groups working on behalf of their own group (collective action; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). In contrast to collective action on behalf of one's own group, in which actors have very clear interest or stakes (i.e., identity and resource motives; Klandermans, 1984), bystanders have less of a stake in engaging in collective action on behalf of others. Despite a large and diverse literature on collective action, however, there is less knowledge about the factors that shape bystander efficacy and bystander collective action (van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009). Bystanders, though, can play a critical role in changing injustice and creating social change, both in immediate contexts (e.g., emergency intervention; Levine, Prosser, Evans, & Reicher, 2005) and in distant or international contexts (e.g., charitable donations; Thomas, 2005), with many scholars suggesting the need for greater focus on

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transnational collective action (e.g., Tarrow, 2005). Seeking to fill this gap in the literature, the present research focuses first on the effect of perpetrator power on bystander efficacy and second on the effect of perpetrator power on bystander collective action. In seeking to understand the effect of perpetrator power on bystander efficacy, we explore the potential mediating role of perceptions of the normativity of the injustice event (descriptive norms). In addition, we examine the potential mediating role of bystander efficacy on the relation between perpetrator power and bystander collective action.

Perpetrator Power, Perceptions of Normativity of an Injustice Event, and Bystander Efficacy

Given the lack of immediate stakes or vested interest, bystanders may be especially responsive to cues that communicate whether bystander action is likely to be effective or successful. We expect that perpetrator power is one cue that bystanders use to determine whether bystander collective action is likely to be successful. Research demonstrates that perceivers are generally attuned to the power of a target (Snodgrass, Hecht, & Ploutz-Snyder, 1998), and powerful targets are also judged to be more agentic (Bruckmuller & Abele, 2010), have greater ability to influence others (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007), and are more likely to be perceived as difficult to change (Eaton, Majka, & Visser, 2008), compared with less powerful targets. For example, powerful targets are often viewed as “less persuadable” compared with less powerful targets (Eaton et al., 2008). Thus, there is evidence that people generally have a perception that it is difficult to change the behavior of high-power targets, which suggests that bystanders should feel less efficacious to change injustice perpetrated by the powerful, relative to the less powerful. In the context of bystander collective action, we hypothesize that perceptions of normativity are one factor that can help to explain why bystanders may feel less efficacious to change injustice perpetrated by the powerful. Thus, we are suggesting not only that bystanders are more likely to perceive injustice perpetrated by the powerful as more normative than injustice perpetrated by the less powerful but also that, in the context of bystander collective action, perceptions of the normativity of an injustice event serve as an antecedent to bystander efficacy.

To understand why individuals might view injustice perpetrated by the powerful as more normative than injustice perpetrated by the less powerful, we draw on Norm theory. Norm theory (Kahneman & Miller, 1986) suggests that category and event exemplars serve to create implicit assumptions, expectations, and cognitive norms. When people encounter new stimuli or events, they automatically compare the new events to past exemplars, implicit assumption, or expectations. Research on norm theory finds that new stimuli or events that match category exemplars are generally perceived as “normative” or “typical,” but events that do not match past exemplars are less likely to be perceived as normative (Kahneman & Miller, 1986). Thus, norm theory provides a framework for understanding how bystanders may go about judging the normativity of an injustice event, which is rooted in the extent to which the new event matches past exemplars. Of particular importance to the present work, history provides a diverse and

great number of exemplars of the powerful engaging in injustice, which norm theory would suggest should influence perceptions of the normativity of injustice perpetrated by the powerful.

Current events and history are filled with exemplars of powerful agents perpetrating large-scale injustice on many victims, such as indiscriminate killing of civilians by powerful leaders or nations (e.g., Nazi Germany; King Leopold of Belgium; The bombing of Dresden), or extensive harm perpetrated by powerful corporations or institutions (e.g., bank fraud of 2007 and 2008 that resulted in millions of people losing their savings during the world financial crisis) fraud resulting in the millions of people losing savings during the world financial crisis of 2007 and 2008). Beyond historical events, there is also a cognitive schema/script that links power and injustice (Fiske, 1993; Fragale, Overbeck, & Neale, 2011; Leung & Bond, 2004). This cognitive script, most famously represented by Lord Acton’s famous axiom, “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely,” provides a narrative account of how having power can cause people to become unjust. Norm theory would suggest that past exemplars, as well as common cognitive schemas such as Lord Acton’s axiom, have created a cognitive norm linking high power and unjust behavior. According to norm theory, to the extent a new event conforms to cognitive norms or expectations, it is more likely to be perceived as normative (Kahneman & Miller, 1986). Consistent with norm theory, we therefore expect that injustice perpetrated by a high-power target, which matches past exemplars, would be more likely to be viewed as normative relative to injustice perpetrated by a low-power target, which is less likely to match past exemplars. In line with this hypothesis, not only are the actions of the powerful often judged to be more normative compared with the actions of the less powerful (Pratto, Korchmaros, & Hegarty, 2007), but powerful targets are also more likely to be perceived as prone to abuse power, relative to those with less power (Lee-Chai & Bargh, 2001). Thus, both theory and research suggest that injustice perpetrated by the powerful should be more likely to be perceived as normative, relative to injustice perpetrated by the less powerful.

To the extent that an injustice event is viewed as normative, we expected bystanders to view bystander action as less likely to be effective. Cialdini’s focus theory of normative conduct (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990) provides an account of why perceiving an injustice event as normative should directly influence bystander efficacy. The theory distinguishes between *descriptive norms*, which refer to the perceived typicality or prevalence of a behavior (the norms of “is”), and *injunctive norms*, which refers to the perceived degree of social approval or disapproval for a behavior (the norms of “ought”; Cialdini et al., 1990). According to focus theory, descriptive norms provide information that is particularly relevant to the goal of behaving effectively (Cialdini et al., 1990). That is, descriptive norms motivate by providing evidence as to what is likely to be effective and correct behavior within a given context. For example, when descriptive norms suggest that many other people litter, people choose to litter *because* descriptive norms suggest littering behavior is the efficient, effective, and correct choice (Cialdini et al., 1990). We argue that descriptive norms serve the same function for bystanders. That is, the perceived normativity or typicality of an injustice event provides

bystanders with information about the likelihood that bystander action will be effective and efficient at changing an injustice. Thus, to the extent that an injustice event is perceived as atypical or less prevalent (low descriptive normativity), bystanders should be *more likely* to perceive that bystander action can be effective. Conversely, to the extent that an injustice event is perceived as typical or prevalent (high descriptive normativity), bystanders should be *less likely* to perceive that bystander action can be effective. Consistent with this hypothesis, a large body of work illustrates that perceived normativity is associated with efficacy (e.g., perceptions of control; Kraft, Rise, Sutton, & Roysamb, 2005; Terry & O'Leary, 1995).

To the extent that an event is perceived as normative or typical, it is often perceived as more difficult to change (Kahneman & Miller, 1986). Indeed, individuals often report lower efficacy to change behaviors that are perceived to be normative (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2003). More broadly, and particularly relevant to the context of bystander collective action, within contexts where a person is trying to help change others' behavior, people are especially likely to report low efficacy for descriptively normative or typical target behavior (e.g., changing a partner's habitual unhealthy behaviors; Rohrbaugh et al., 2001). Thus, focus theory of normative conduct and past research would suggest that perceptions of the normativity of an injustice event may serve as an antecedent to efficacy. In sum, we expected bystanders to report less efficacy in response to a high-power target perpetrating an injustice, compared with a low-power target, which would be explained (mediated) by perceptions of normativity of the injustice event.

Perpetrator Power, Bystander Efficacy, and Bystander Collective Action

Consistent with past work on collective action on behalf of one's own group (van Zomeren et al., 2012), we view efficacy as especially important to understanding collective action of bystanders. A large body of collective action work suggests that efficacy is a central and primary pathway to collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2012). Indeed, the greater a person's subjective belief that action can change or transform an injustice, the more likely he or she is to engage in collective action (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996). Drawing on this past research, we extend this theorizing to bystander collective action and thus would expect bystander's subjective beliefs that bystander action can change injustice to be directly related to willingness to engage in bystander collective action. More specifically, within the context of responses to powerful perpetrators of injustice, we expected bystanders to be less willing to engage in collective action in response to a high-power target, compared with a lower power target, which should be mediated by perceptions of the effectiveness of bystander action (bystander efficacy). In considering the effects of perpetrator power on bystander efficacy and bystander collective action, we also explored the potential of impact or size of the injustice event to moderate the effects of perpetrator power on bystander responses.

Impact of Injustice Event and Bystander Responses

We expect bystander responses to powerful perpetrators of injustice to be especially likely to be reduced under conditions

of large impact (many victims), relative to small impact (less victims). A large body of research in both psychology and behavioral economics illustrates that people are often much less responsive to events that have large impact (e.g., large number of victims), compared with events that have small impact (e.g., small number of victims; Jenni & Loewenstein, 1997; Kogut & Ritov, 2005; Small & Loewenstein, 2003). For example, participants' donated relatively less money to an organization described as working to "save millions", compared with when the organization was described as working to save "one person" (Small, Loewenstein, & Slovic, 2007). Indeed, bystanders often become "psychologically numb" to large numbers of victims, particularly when the victims are not a part of an in-group (Pratto & Glasford, 2008). Thus, there is evidence to suggest that to the extent that an injustice has had a large impact (many victims), bystanders should be less responsive to the injustice, relative to when an injustice has had a small impact (fewer victims). We expected these effects to carry over and be especially prevalent when a high-power target engages in injustice. Consistent with past work on "psychological numbing" in response to large impact, we hypothesized that bystanders may have differing emotional responses under conditions of large impact (many victims) versus small impact (fewer victims).

Past work suggests that emotions explain the disparity in how people respond to large (involving many victims) versus small-impact (involving a smaller number of victims) events. Participants experience less empathy when there are many victims (large impact), compared with when there is just one victim (small impact; Kogut & Ritov, 2005). Similarly, outrage has been shown to be especially important predictor of action on behalf of out-groups (Thomas & McGarty, 2009), but participants report less outrage in response to injustice involving a large number of victims, compared with when there is a small number of victims (Small & Loewenstein, 2005). Thus, although emotions are often critical to motivating action on behalf of others (Barrett & Salovey, 2002; Fetherstonhaugh, Slovic, Johnson, & Friedrich, 1997), affect is often reduced under conditions when there are many victims (large impact), relative to when there are fewer victims (small impact). We extend this line of theorizing to understand psychological responses to injustice perpetrated by the powerful and therefore expected a powerful perpetrator engaged in an injustice with a large impact (many victims) to elicit less empathy and outrage relative to other conditions.

OVERVIEW

The present research was designed to investigate the effect of perpetrator power on bystander efficacy and bystander collective action, as well as the potential moderating role of impact of the injustice event (small vs. large) on bystander responses. Across two experiments, we explore our hypotheses within the context of bystanders' responses to a nation killing innocent civilians (Experiment 1) and to an investment banking firm engaging in illegal financial crimes that cost families their life savings (Experiment 2).

EXPERIMENT 1

Participants in Experiment 1 were presented with a “news report” of a conflict between two fictional nations with differing power, in which the low- or high-power nation killed either one or many civilians. We expected bystanders to feel less efficacious to change injustice perpetrated by the powerful nation compared with the less powerful nation, which would be explained by perceptions of normativity of the injustice event. In addition, impact of the injustice event, as represented by number of victims, was expected to moderate the effects of perpetrator power on efficacy and bystander collective action, such that bystanders would be especially likely to report less efficacy and willingness to act under conditions of large impact (many victims), relative to small impact (fewer victims).

Method

Participants

Sixty undergraduate students (34 women and 26 men) were recruited via a research participation program at a US university and participated to fulfill one option of an introductory psychology course requirement. Forty-one percent of the sample self-identified as Latino/Hispanic, 31% as White, 12% as Black/African-American, 8% as Asian, and 8% as “Other.”

Design, Procedure, and Materials

Participants were randomly assigned to condition and individually completed questionnaires in a group setting. We used a 2 × 2 between-participants factorial design, manipulating the power of the perpetrator of the injustice (low vs. high), as represented by power of nation (Vandello, Michniewicz, & Goldschmied, 2011), and impact of the injustice event, operationalized as one versus many victims affected by the injustice (Kogut & Ritov, 2005).

After completing some filler items, all participants first read background information on a conflict between two fictional nations, Vyzkistan and Bakar (Vandello et al., 2011). The background information described the history of the conflict and power each group possessed. Participants were informed that Vyzkistan had controlled the Bakar territories for many years, but that the Bakar people had always considered themselves a distinct cultural group. Participants then read information about the power and resources of each group. Importantly, all participants received the same information regarding the relative power of each group, which was described in terms of relative group size, control of resources, and social network (support of larger community).¹ Vyzkistan, the high-power group, was described as “much larger and powerful,” and the

report also explained that Vyzkistan “...has a population of 15 million...has the support of other powerful nations in the international community...and a military budget of 16 billion dollars.” Conversely, Bakar, the lower power group, was described as “smaller and less powerful” and described Bakar as “small...has a population of 1.5 million...has less support among the international community...and does not have an official military budget, but it is believed to be 1 million dollars.” We used fictional groups to control for any bias that might be linked to the respective histories of real nations. These materials were modeled after past research that not only used the same two fictional nations to manipulate power, but also found equivalent results for studies using materials with fictional and actual nations (Vandello et al., 2011). All participants were then given a power manipulation check, which asked “Which group is more powerful?” and given the option to circle *Vyzkistan* or *Bakar*.²

After reading the background information, participants read one of four 1.5-page news reports, in which the low-power (Bakar) or high-power (Vyzkistan) group perpetrated unprovoked military action, with a small impact (one civilian death) or a large impact (5000 civilian deaths; Small et al., 2007). For example, in the *high power–small impact* condition, the news report read, in part, “A Vykistan rocket killed one Bakar woman ...The force of the blast demolished the home, scattered clothes and other household items.” The *low power–large impact* condition news report, for example, read, in part, “Bakar rocket killed more than 5,000 Vyzkistan people.... The force of the blasts demolished homes, scattering clothes and other household items.” Thus, across conditions, all participants read that unprovoked military force had resulted in loss of life but what varied was the power of the perpetrator and impact of the injustice event (number of victims). Finally, a manipulation check was included, such that participants were asked how many people died in the attack.

Participants then rated the extent to which the event was perceived as normative. Consistent with a focus on descriptive norms (Cialdini et al., 1990), this measure focused on the perceived typicality/prevalence of the injustice event, with two items assessing perceived normativity ($\alpha = .72$): “How typical do you perceive the event described to be?” (1 = *extremely atypical* to 7 = *extremely typical*) and “How normal would you say the actions described in the story are?” (1 = *extremely abnormal* to 7 = *extremely normal*). Next, participants rated their affective response “to the events described” on 1 (*does not apply at all*) to 7 (*applies very much*) scales. Interspersed items were averaged to create measures of outrage (*angry*, *outraged*, and *irritated*; $\alpha = .90$) and empathy (*empathy* and *sympathy*; $\alpha = .67$).

¹There are several definitions of power (Brauer & Bourhis, 2006; Fiske & Berdahl, 2007), including relative capacity to control resources (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003), degree to which outcomes depend on others (Fiske & Depret, 1996), or the capacity to direct other’s efforts towards a stated goal (Simon & Oakes, 2006). Some have argued there is “no single all inclusive definition of power possible or desirable” (Ng, 1980) and narrow definition of power can have drawbacks (Fiske & Depret, 1996). Drawing on past work that uses a multi-faceted definition of power (Pratto & Pitpitan, 2008), we utilized a broad definition of power that incorporates control of resources (Keltner et al., 2003), relative group size (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1984), and social network (i.e., support of others; Brass & Burkhardt, 1993).

²Pilot testing ($n = 30$) of the manipulation confirmed that individuals perceived differing power between conditions. An independent sample of participants were given either the low- or high-power materials (excluding the name of the fictitious country; e.g., “A nation’ has a population of 15 million”) and asked to respond to five items assessing perceived power of the nation ($\alpha = .95$): “The nation is powerful,” “The nation has control over resources,” “The nation has a great deal of influence over others,” “The nation’s outcomes are likely dependent on others” (r), and “The nation has influence” on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. Participants that received the high-power condition description perceived the nation to be more powerful ($M = 5.52$, $SD = 0.93$) than those receiving the low-power description ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.02$), $t(28) = 9.47$, $p < .001$.

Finally, efficacy to change injustice and bystander collective action was assessed. Participants read the following instructions prior to responding to the efficacy items: "We are interested in your beliefs regarding whether political action by observers outside the conflict, such as yourself, could help to prevent loss of life." Efficacy to change injustice was measured, interspersed among filler items, using two items (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*): "People working collectively can prevent loss of life" and "People working together can stop abuses like those described earlier" ($\alpha = .81$). After the efficacy measure, interspersed with filler items, participants were given a measure assessing willingness to engage in bystander collective action. More specifically, participants were asked to consider how likely they would be to engage in action to help victims like those described in the news report, on a 1 (*very unlikely*) to 7 (*very likely*) scale using three items ($\alpha = .87$): "Participate in a discussion meeting," "Sign a petition to raise money for food," and "Post flyers in my local neighborhood."

Results

Analyses confirmed the effectiveness of our manipulations. All participants correctly identified Vyzkistan as the more powerful nation and also identified the appropriate number of victims for the respective condition.

Perceived Normativity of the Injustice Event

To examine whether participants' perceptions of normativity of the injustice event differed by condition, a 2 (perpetrator power: low vs. high) \times 2 (impact: small vs. large) univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the normativity measure. The analyses revealed no effect for number of victims, $F(1, 56) = 1.82$, *ns*, but there was a main effect of perpetrator power, $F(1, 56) = 7.30$, $p = .009$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.11$. Participants were more likely to perceive the injustice event as normative when the perpetrator of the injustice was powerful ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.39$), compared with when the perpetrator was less powerful ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.16$). As expected, this effect, however, was qualified by the two-way interaction, $F(1, 56) = 29.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.33$. Simple effects tests revealed that when the perpetrator was powerful, participants were more likely to perceive the injustice event as normative when there was a large impact (i.e., many victims; $M = 5.56$, $SD = 0.79$), compared with when there was a small impact (i.e., just one victim; $M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.26$), $F(1, 56) = 20.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.44$. Conversely, when the perpetrator was less powerful, participants were significantly more likely to perceive the injustice as normative when there was a small impact (i.e., one victim; $M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.12$), compared with when there was a large impact (i.e., many victims; $M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.95$), $F(1, 56) = 8.24$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.23$.

Affective Responses

To examine participants' affective responses, a 2 (perpetrator power: low vs. high) \times 2 (impact: small vs. large) univariate ANOVA was conducted on outrage and empathy. The analysis for empathy revealed no effect of impact (number of victims),

nor was there a significant interaction, $F_s < 1$, *ns*. However, there was an effect of perpetrator power approaching significance, $F(1, 56) = 3.42$, $p = .07$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.05$. Injustice perpetrated by the less powerful perpetrator elicited slightly greater empathy ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.63$) than injustice perpetrated by the more powerful perpetrator ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.23$). The ANOVA on outrage revealed a significant main effect of perpetrator power, $F(1, 56) = 8.33$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.13$. Injustice perpetrated by the powerful elicited greater outrage ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.13$), than injustice perpetrated by the less powerful perpetrator ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.43$). There was, however, no significant effect of impact or two-way interaction, $F_s < 2.19$, *ns*.

Efficacy to Change Injustice and Bystander Collective Action

The ANOVA for efficacy revealed an effect approaching significance for perpetrator power, $F(1, 56) = 3.45$, $p = .06$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.058$. Participants reported less efficacy to change the injustice in response to a powerful perpetrator ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.49$), compared with when the injustice was perpetrated by a less powerful perpetrator ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.12$). There was also a main effect for impact, $F(1, 56) = 16.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.22$, such that participants reported less efficacy to change the injustice when there was a large impact (many victims; $M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.31$), compared with when there was a small impact (fewer victims; $M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.11$). As expected, these effects, however, were qualified by the two-way interaction, $F(1, 56) = 15.16$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.21$. Simple effects tests revealed that for the less powerful perpetrator, there were no differences on bystander efficacy based on impact (number of victims), $F < 1$. However, when a powerful perpetrator engaged in the injustice, participants were less likely to feel efficacious to change injustice when there was a large impact (many victims; $M = 1.76$, $SD = 0.103$), compared with when there was a small impact (fewer victims; $M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.134$), $F(1, 56) = 31.10$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.56$.

The effects for bystander collective action mirrored the results for efficacy. There was no effect of perpetrator power, $F(1, 56) = 2.38$, $p = .12$, but there was a significant main effect for impact, $F(1, 56) = 29.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.34$. Participants reported greater willingness to engage in bystander collective action when there was a small impact (one victim; $M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.151$), compared with when there was a large impact (many victims; $M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.16$). The effects were qualified by the two-way interaction, $F(1, 56) = 39.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.38$. Simple effects tests revealed that when injustice was perpetrated by a less powerful target, there were no differences between the impact conditions, $F < 1$, *ns*. However, when the injustice was perpetrated by powerful target, participants were less willing to engage in bystander collective action when there was a large impact (many victims; $M = 2.23$, $SD = 1.24$), compared with when there was a small impact (fewer victims; $M = 5.34$, $SD = 0.127$), $F(1, 56) = 60.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.56$.

Perpetrator Power \times Impact, Normativity of the Injustice Event, and Efficacy to Change Injustice

We expected perceptions of the normativity of injustice event to serve as an antecedent to bystander efficacy, such that

perceived normativity of the injustice event would mediate the effect of perpetrator power \times impact (the interaction term) on bystander efficacy. To investigate this hypothesis, a mediated moderation analysis was conducted (Muller, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2005), using a 5000 re-sample bootstrapping procedure (Hayes, 2012). There was support for partial mediation. Consistent with hypotheses, when perceived normativity of the injustice event was included as a mediator, the total effect of the perpetrator power \times impact interaction on efficacy was reduced (total effect = -0.40 , $p < .001$; to direct effect = -0.34 , $p = .04$). Perceptions of the normativity of the injustice event uniquely and significantly ($p = .04$) explained the relation between the perpetrator power \times impact interaction and bystander efficacy, point estimate of -0.1983 and a 95% bias corrected/accelerated interval between -0.4321 and -0.0127 .

Perpetrator Power \times Impact, Efficacy to Change Injustice, and Bystander Collective Action

A mediated moderation, with a 5000 re-sample bootstrapping procedure, was conducted to examine whether decreased efficacy explained the effect of perpetrator power and impact on bystander collective action. As hypothesized, the total effect of the perpetrator power \times impact interaction on bystander collective action was reduced (total effect = -0.52 , $p < .001$, to -0.34 , $p < .001$), when efficacy was included as a mediator. Efficacy, point estimate of -0.2802 and a 95% bias corrected/accelerated interval between $-0.55.23$ and -0.0951 , uniquely and significantly ($p < .001$) explained the relation between the interaction and bystander collective action (Figure 1).

Discussion

The results of Experiment 1 provide initial evidence that perpetrator power influences bystander responses to an injustice event. Participants reported relatively less efficacy and willingness to engage in bystander collective action when a high-power perpetrator engaged in injustice, compared with a lower power perpetrator. In addition, impact, as represented by number of victims, moderated these effects, such that efficacy and bystander collective action were especially low under conditions of large impact (many victims), compared with small impact (fewer victims). Experiment 1 also provides initial evidence of the importance of perceptions of normativity for bystander efficacy. Indeed, consistent with focus theory

of normative conduct (Cialdini et al., 1990), the results illustrate that perceptions of normativity of an injustice event (descriptive norms) may serve as a cue for bystanders regarding whether their action is likely to be effective. Finally, the results also complement research on action on behalf of one's own group (van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004) by showing that bystander efficacy is a pathway to bystander collective action.

EXPERIMENT 2

Experiment 2 was designed to extend the results of the first experiment in three ways. First, we sought to replicate the pattern of results within the context of an alternative injustice event. A conceptual replication, using a different injustice event, would provide convergent validity for our predictions. Therefore, in Experiment 2, we examined bystander responses to injustice within the context of financial crime. Second, we improved the power manipulation. In Experiment 1, power was manipulated via the relational power of two fictional groups. It is possible that some of the variance in responding was due to the particular names attached to the respective low- and high-power groups. Therefore, in Experiment 2, to control for any variance associated with the name of the perpetrator, we held the name of the perpetrator constant across conditions (power varied between conditions). Third, we used a more precise or specific measure to assess bystander collective action tendencies. Whereas in the first experiment, willingness to engage in bystander collective action was assessed via a more broad measure of collective action tendencies, in Experiment 2, the bystander collective action measure was tailored to the particular injustice context: willingness to support specific actions that would prevent financial crime (e.g., support greater financial regulations).

Experiment 2 varied power of a financial investment banking firm (low vs. high), as well as impact of the injustice event (number of families that lost their life savings). Thus, participants in Experiment 2 were presented with a news story of one family or many families losing their life savings as a result of illegal behavior of a low- or high-power investment bank. We expected to replicate the findings of Experiment 1: perpetrator power \times impact would affect bystander efficacy, which would be explained by perceptions of normativity. In addition, perpetrator power \times impact would affect bystanders' willingness to engage in collective action, which would be explained by bystander efficacy.

Method

Participants

One hundred and seventeen undergraduate students (67 women and 50 men) were recruited via a research participation program at a US university and participated to fulfill one option of an introductory psychology course requirement. Thirty-nine percent of the sample self-identified as Latino/Hispanic, 39% as White, 14% as Black or African-American, and 8% as Asian-American.

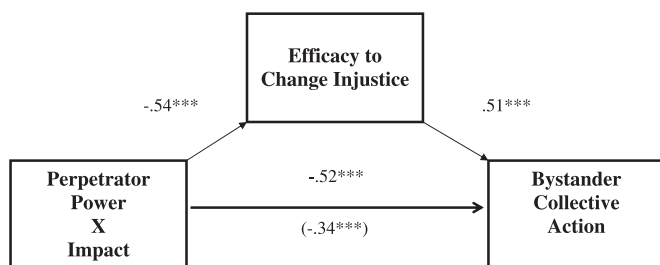


Figure 1. Experiment 1 mediated moderation analysis of the effect of perpetrator power \times impact (number of victims) on bystander collective action via efficacy. All coefficients are standardized. $p \leq .05$. $p < .01$. $***p < .001$

Design, Procedure, and Materials

Participants were randomly assigned to condition and individually completed questionnaires in a group setting. We used a 2 × 2 between-participants factorial design, manipulating the power of the perpetrator of the injustice (low vs. high) and impact of the injustice event (number of victims; one family vs. many families). Specifically, across conditions, all participants read that a (fictional) investment firm, *Point Acadia Capital Investment Management* (PACIM), had engaged in illegal risky loan lending to make a profit, but the power of the firm and impact (number of victims) varied across conditions.

Power of the investment firm was manipulated in the same fashion as Experiment 1. Half of the participants read a short description describing the investment firm as powerful. Specifically, the description read, in part

Point Acadia Capital Investment management (PACIM) is large, powerful, and very well connected to some of the biggest banks in the world, including Blackrock, Barclays, Goldman Sachs....because of it's size and network the company often has a large degree of influence over the business world, political affairs, and legislation related to banking.

Conversely, half of the participants read a short description describing the firm as relatively less powerful. The description read, in part,

Point Acadia Capital Investment management (PACIM) is small, not very powerful, and not connected to some of the biggest banks in the world, including Blackrock, Barclays, Goldman Sachs....because of it's size and small network the company often has very little influence over the business world, political affairs, and legislation related to banking.

Thus, all participants read about the same investment firm, but what varied was the degree of power of the firm. Participants were then given a power manipulation check, which asked "How would you describe the Point Acadia Investment Firm?" and given the option to circle "not at all powerful" or "very powerful."³

After reading the background information on the investment firm, participants read one of two news reports that described the consequences of the firm's illegal risky-loan practices, affecting either one family (small impact) or 10 000 families (large impact). Thus, half the participants read that the life savings of either one family or 10 000 families has been lost as a result of the firm's actions. The small-impact (one family) news report read, in part,

Point Acadia Capital Investment Management Firm recently sold a risky home loan to one impoverished family...there is

evidence that management practices purposively sold the risky loans in a confusing and illegal way to increase company profits....the family not only lost their life savings, but had to foreclose on their home....the family are homeless, children will no longer be able to attend the schools they grew up in, and the family has no economic future.

The other half of participants read that the firm's action had a large impact. Specifically, the large-impact (many families) news report read, in part,

Point Acadia Capital Investment Management Firm recently sold risky home loans to 10,000 impoverished families... there is evidence that management practices purposively sold the risky loans in a confusing and illegal way to increase company profits....the families not only lost their life savings, but had to foreclose on their homes....the families are homeless, children will no longer be able to attend the schools they grew up in, and the families have no economic future.

A manipulation check, on the following page, asked participants how many families were affected by the actions of Point Acadia investment management.

Perceived normativity of the event was next assessed. Participants rated the extent to which the event was perceived as normative using two items ($\alpha = .77$): "How typical do you perceive the event described to be?" (1 = *extremely atypical* to 7 = *extremely typical*) and "How normal would you say the actions described in the story are?" (1 = *extremely abnormal* to 7 = *extremely normal*). Next, participants rated their affective response "to the events described" on 1 (*does not apply at all*) to 7 (*applies very much*) scales. Interspersed items were averaged to create measures of outrage (*angry, outraged, and irritated*; $\alpha = .83$) and empathy (*empathy, sympathy, and compassion*; $\alpha = .70$).

Finally, bystander efficacy and willingness to engage in collective action were assessed. The efficacy instructions explained to participants that "We are interested in your beliefs regarding whether political action by bystanders can help to prevent risky and illegal behavior among investment firms, like the one described earlier." Efficacy to change injustice was measured using three items (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*): "People working collectively can help to prevent unjust actions by investment firms, like those described earlier," "Individuals working together can increase the chances of preventing fraud by investment firms," and "Bystanders collectively working together can help to prevent unjust actions by investment firms" ($\alpha = .79$). On the next page, interspersed with filler items, participants were given items assessing their willingness to engage in bystander collective action. Participants were asked to consider how likely they would be to engage in action to help prevent unjust actions by investment firms. Specifically, participants responded on a 1 (*very unlikely*) to 7 (*very likely*) scale to four bystander collective action items ($\alpha = .85$): "Participate in a demonstration for greater regulation of investment firms," "Participate in collective protest supporting greater financial regulations," "Sign a petition to increase awareness for the need for stricter laws," and "Help organize a rally supporting action against investment firms that have broken the law." All participants were then debriefed regarding deception that occurred in the study.

³Pilot testing ($n = 30$) of the power manipulation confirmed that PACIM was seen as more powerful in the high-power condition, compared with in the low-power condition. Between conditions, participants were given either the low- or high-power materials and asked to respond to five items assessing power ($\alpha = .93$): "PACIM is powerful," "PACIM has control over resources," "PACIM has a great deal of influence over others," "PACIM's outcomes are likely dependent on others" (r), and "PACIM has influence" on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. Participants perceived PACIM to have more power in the high-power condition ($M = 6.04$, $SD = 1.05$) than in the low-power condition ($M = 2.25$, $SD = 0.86$), $t(28) = 11.66$, $p < .001$.

Results

Preliminary analyses confirmed the effectiveness of our manipulations. All participants correctly identified the power of the investment firm and the number of victims in the respective conditions.

Perceived Normativity of the Injustice Event

To examine whether participants' perceptions of normativity differed by condition, a 2 (perpetrator power: low vs. high) \times 2 (impact: small vs. large) univariate ANOVA was conducted on the normativity measure. The analyses revealed a main effect of perpetrator power, $F(1, 113) = 13.635, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.10$. Participants were more likely to perceive the injustice as normative when a powerful perpetrator engaged in the injustice ($M = 3.63, SD = 1.01$), compared with when the injustice was perpetrated by a less powerful perpetrator ($M = 2.84, SD = 1.34$). There was also a main effect of impact, $F(1, 113) = 5.92, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = 0.05$. The injustice was perceived as more normative under conditions of large impact (many victims; $M = 3.46, SD = 1.40$), compared with under conditions of small impact (fewer victims; $M = 3.05, SD = 1.14$). As expected, these effects, however, were qualified by the two-way interaction, $F(1, 113) = 73.29, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.39$. Simple effects tests revealed that when the perpetrator of the injustice had low power, participants were more likely to perceive the event as normative under conditions of small impact ($M = 3.56, SD = 1.01$), compared with under conditions of large impact ($M = 2.16, SD = 1.24$), $F(1, 113) = 19.28, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.19$. Conversely, when the perpetrator of the injustice was high power, participants were more likely to view the injustice as normative under conditions of large impact ($M = 4.46, SD = 1.01$), compared with under conditions of small impact ($M = 2.59, SD = 0.78$), $F(1, 113) = 58.85, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.55$.

Affective Responses

To examine participants' affective responses, a 2 (perpetrator power: low vs. high) \times 2 (number of victims: one vs. many) univariate ANOVA was conducted on outrage and empathy. There was a main effect of perpetrator power for empathy, $F(1, 113) = 8.14, p = .005, \eta_p^2 = 0.06$. Participants reported greater empathy when the injustice was perpetrated by the powerful perpetrator ($M = 3.63, SD = 1.48$), compared with when the injustice was perpetrated by the less powerful perpetrator ($M = 2.91, SD = 1.23$). The analysis for outrage, though, revealed no effect for impact and no interaction, $F_s < 1, ns$. However, there was a main effect of perpetrator power for outrage, $F(1, 113) = 26.881, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.19$. When the injustice was perpetrated by a powerful perpetrator, participants reported greater outrage ($M = 3.92, SD = 0.70$) than when the injustice was perpetrated by a less powerful perpetrator ($M = 2.97, SD = 1.20$). There was, however, no significant effect for impact or the two-way interaction for outrage, $F_s < 1.30, ns$.

Efficacy to Change Injustice and Bystander Collective Action

The ANOVA for efficacy revealed no effect for perpetrator power, $F(1, 113) = 2.75, p = .10$, but there was a main effect

for impact, $F(1, 113) = 27.92, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.19$. Participants reported less efficacy under conditions of large impact ($M = 1.90, SD = 1.04$), compared with under conditions of small impact ($M = 2.76, SD = 1.03$). As expected, however, these effects were qualified by the two-way interaction, $F(1, 113) = 39.572, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.25$. Simple effects tests revealed that when a low-power perpetrator engaged in the injustice, there were no differences between the impact conditions, $F < 1$. However, when the high-power perpetrator engaged in the injustice, participants reported less efficacy under conditions of large impact (many victims; $M = 1.25, SD = 0.89$), compared with under conditions of small impact (fewer victims; $M = 3.16, SD = 1.15$), $F(1, 113) = 62.25, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.58$.

For bystander collective action, the analysis yielded a main effect approaching significance for perpetrator power, $F(1, 113) = 3.93, p = .05, \eta_p^2 = 0.03$. Participants were more willing to engage in bystander collective action in response to a powerful perpetrator ($M = 3.60, SD = 1.89$), than for a less powerful perpetrator ($M = 3.29, SD = 1.07$). There was also a main effect for impact, $F(1, 113) = 56.61, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.32$. Participants were less willing to engage in bystander collective action under conditions of large impact ($M = 2.74, SD = 1.20$), compared with under conditions of small impact ($M = 4.18, SD = 1.49$). These effects, however, were qualified by the two-way interaction, $F(1, 113) = 66.61, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.29$. Simple effects tests revealed that when the injustice was perpetrated by a less powerful perpetrator, there were no differences between conditions on the basis of impact of the injustice event, $F < 1, ns$. However, when the perpetrator of the injustice was powerful, participants were less willing to engage in bystander collective action under conditions of large impact (many victims; $M = 2.13, SD = 0.77$), compared with under conditions of small impact (fewer victims; $M = 5.24, SD = 1.31$), $F(1, 113) = 119.80, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.68$.

Perpetrator Power \times Impact, Normativity of the Injustice Event, and Efficacy to Change Injustice

We expected perceptions of normativity to shape bystanders' beliefs about whether bystander collective action would be effective (bystander efficacy). To investigate the hypothesized mediating role of perceptions of the normativity of the injustice event on the relation between the interaction term (perpetrator power \times Impact) and bystander efficacy, a mediated moderation path analysis was conducted (Muller et al., 2005), using a 5000 re-sample bootstrapping procedure (Hayes, 2012). There was support for partial mediation. Consistent with predictions, when perceived normativity was included as a mediator, the total effect of the perpetrator power \times impact interaction on efficacy was reduced (total effect = $-0.46, p < .001$, to direct effect = $-0.29, p = .04$). Perceived normativity of the injustice event uniquely and significantly ($p = .04$) explained the relation between the perpetrator power \times impact interaction and bystander efficacy (Figure 2), point estimate of -0.1988 and a 95% bias corrected/accelerated interval between -0.3474 and -0.0752 . Because 0 is excluded from the 95% confidence interval, the indirect effect was significant ($p < .05$).

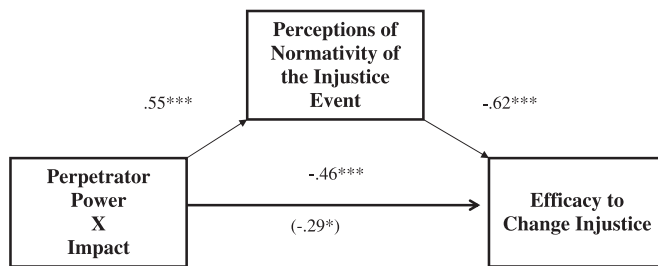


Figure 2. Experiment 2 mediated moderation analysis of the effect of perpetrator power \times impact (number of victims) on bystander efficacy via perceptions of normativity of the injustice event (descriptive norms). All coefficients are standardized. $p \leq .05$. $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Perpetrator Power \times Impact, Efficacy to Change Injustice, and Bystander Collective Action

We expected bystander efficacy to explain bystanders' willingness to engage in bystander collective action. To investigate the mediating role of bystander efficacy on the relation between the interaction term (perpetrator power \times impact) and bystander collective action, a mediated moderation path analysis was conducted, with 5000 re-samples. There was support for partial mediation. As hypothesized, the total effect of perpetrator power \times impact interaction on bystander collective action was reduced (total effect = -0.55 , $p < .001$ to direct effect = -0.30 , $p < .001$), when efficacy was included as a mediator. The indirect effect was significant. Efficacy, point estimate of -0.3179 , and a 95% bias corrected/accelerated interval between -0.4965 and -0.1713 uniquely and significantly ($p < .05$) explained the relation between the interaction term and bystander collective action.

Discussion

Experiment 2 provides a conceptual replication of Experiment 1. When powerful perpetrators engaged in an injustice with a large impact, participants reported less efficacy and were also less willing to engage in bystander collective action. As in Experiment 1, the same injustice event was perceived as more normative when engaged in by a high-power perpetrator compared with a lower power perpetrator. Moreover, the more bystanders viewed an injustice event as normative, the less likely they were to perceive that bystander action would be effective at changing injustice (bystander efficacy). In addition, bystander efficacy mediated the relation between the perpetrator \times impact interaction and bystander collective action. The replication of the pattern of results using an alternative injustice context provides converging evidence for our hypotheses.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

History suggests that social change is often more likely when bystanders engage with injustice befalling others (e.g., moderate Whites during U.S. Civil Rights Movement; Arsenault, 2006). Although a large body of research has explored the factors that motivate collective action on behalf of one's own group (van Zomeren et al., 2008), relatively less research has

explored the factors that influence bystanders' willingness to engage in collective action. In seeking to fill this gap, the present work examined how perpetrator power affects not only bystander efficacy but also bystander collective action. The present work provides insights into the factors that help to explain when injustice evokes (fails to evoke) bystander collective action.

The current studies illustrate the strong influence of target power in shaping bystander responses to injustice. The results suggest that bystanders may use perpetrator power as a cue to help determine whether bystander action is likely to be effective. Indeed, across two experiments, participants reported decreased bystander efficacy in response to injustice perpetrated by a powerful perpetrator, relative to injustice perpetrated by a less powerful perpetrator. Moreover, both experiments illustrate that bystanders are less willing to engage in collective action when injustice is perpetrated by the powerful, relative to the less powerful. Given less investment and stakes, bystanders may be especially responsive to cues regarding the likelihood that their action can be effective. Our findings provide evidence that perpetrator power is one factor that affects not only bystanders' judgments about whether bystander action can be effective but also their willingness to act on behalf of injustice.

The effects of perpetrator power on bystander efficacy and collective action, though, were moderated by impact of the injustice event, such that bystanders were especially likely to report decreased efficacy and willingness to engage in bystander collective action under conditions of large impact (many victims), relative to conditions of small impact (fewer victims). In line with our theorizing that bystanders are attuned to cues that communicate whether bystander action is likely to be effective at changing injustice, the results from the present work illustrate that information and characteristics of the injustice event itself may also be important to shaping bystander collective action. More specifically, characteristics of the injustice event which communicate that bystander collective action is less likely to be effective (e.g., structural disadvantage; enduring injustice) may dampen bystanders' willingness to engage in collective action.

The current studies also illustrate the critical role of efficacy in shaping bystander collective action but also suggest that perceptions of normativity may serve as an antecedent to bystander efficacy. First, whereas research on collective action on behalf of one's own group finds that group-based anger (outrage) and efficacy have complimentary effects on collective action and are "dual pathways" to collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2012), the findings of the current two experiments provide evidence to suggest that efficacy may be a particularly important pathway to bystander collective action. One interpretation of these findings is that efficacy may be especially important, relative to outrage, in determining bystander responses, particularly under conditions involving a powerful perpetrator of injustice. However, consistent with a dynamic feedback approach (van Zomeren et al., 2004), it is likely the case that efficacy and outrage may have complimentary effects on bystander collective action. Second, the present work illustrates that perceptions of normativity may serve as an antecedent to bystander efficacy. Norms can help to motivate collective action (Reicher, Hopkins, Levine, & Rath, 2005) and are often influential in shaping what costs and benefits that group members pay attention when making

collective action decisions (Louis, Taylor, & Douglas, 2005). Whereas past research has primarily focused of the role of norms in action on behalf of one's own group (Smith & Louis, 2009), our results suggest that norms, in particular descriptive norms or the perceived normativity of an injustice event, also play a role in shaping bystander efficacy. In the context of bystander collective action, it seems that views about the normativity of an injustice event are influential in shaping bystander beliefs about the effectiveness of bystander action. Thus, complementing recent work suggesting a need for greater attention regarding the role of norms within collective action (Louis, 2009; Louis et al., 2005; Tabri & Conway, 2011), our results illustrate that perceptions of normativity may have a strong influence in determining bystander judgments about whether bystander action is likely to be effective.

More broadly, the present findings provide indirect evidence that people may "shift standards" in how they evaluate injustice (Miron, Branscombe, & Biernat, 2010), with a bias that can favor high-power targets. Indeed, across two experiments, the same exact unjust event was perceived as more normative when a powerful perpetrator engaged in the injustice, relative to a less powerful perpetrator. These findings of course may be unique to the injustice contexts selected in the present work (war and financial crime). Nevertheless, the results are consistent with past research on Norm theory, which illustrates that powerful individuals and groups are often more likely to be left "unmarked" relative to less powerful, such that the actions of powerful targets are more likely to be perceived as normative and thus receive less attention, compared with the actions of the less powerful (Pratto et al., 2007). The present research is thus consistent with work suggesting that individuals often "lionize" the powerful (Kay, Jost, & Young, 2005), such as in the tendency to reinterpret moral transgressions of the powerful to be less negative (Polman, Pettit, & Wiesenfeld, 2013). The pattern of findings, including the results of the present work, suggests people may be more likely to downplay or normalize the transgressions of the powerful compared with the less powerful, particularly if targets are a part of an in-group (Iyer, Jetten, & Haslam, 2012). The overall pattern of results may be important for revealing the psychological processes that help to explain how disparities in the criminal justice system may develop, such as low prosecution rates of high-power offenders (e.g., the absence of criminal prosecutions after the 2008 financial meltdown; Pontell, Black, & Geis, 2014) or in public skepticism about ameliorating injustice perpetrated by powerful institutions (e.g., Hillsborough football disaster; Scraton, 1999). This overall pattern of findings, suggesting a bias in favor of powerful institutions, illustrates just one of the challenges and obstacles inherent to bystander collective action.

Challenges of Bystander Collective Action and Pathways to Increasing Bystander Collective Action

The current results provide a framework for understanding the challenge of increasing bystander action in the face of large injustice. Understanding how to increase bystander collective action is complicated by the tension between how to garner bystander attention, on the one hand, and maintaining

legitimacy, on the other hand. The current results illustrate that large-scale injustice perpetrated by a high-power target is perceived as normative, suggesting, perhaps paradoxically, that there may be times when bystanders pay less attention to large-scale injustice. However, bystander collective action, at least in part, is predicated on two factors. *First*, bystander action is predicated on the injustice event receiving attention from bystanders (e.g., media attention increased action against apartheid; Culverson, 1996). Though, within the modern "attention economy," attention is a scarce commodity (Davenport & Beck, 2001), and thus, focusing bystanders' attention on any one particular injustice is a challenge. *Second*, bystander collective action is often predicated on bystanders perceiving that action is legitimate. There is, however, a natural tension at the heart of these two prerequisites: the need to garner bystander and/or authority attention *and* the need to maintain legitimacy. For example, violent forms of protest are generally more likely to receive media attention, compared with non-violent protests (Addison, 2012; Bacha, 2009). Yet, at the same time, non-violent protest is generally perceived as a more legitimate form of protest than violent protest (Hall, Rodeghier, & Useem, 1986) and thus more likely to increase support from bystanders (Thomas & Louis, 2014). These findings convey the challenge of developing strategies that not only receive media attention and raise awareness about injustice but also maintain legitimacy to help increase sympathy and support among bystanders/authorities.

More generally, the current studies may help to explain why, at times, people appear to accept injustice and unfair societal arrangements. Inaction in the face of large injustice or inequality can stem from a motivation to defend or rationalize existing societal arrangements (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004), but inaction may also stem from a perception that it is difficult to change large-scale injustice and complex systems of inequality, particularly when perpetrated by powerful people, groups, or institutions. Across two experiments, participants reported less efficacy in the face of large-scale injustice. The results not only speak to the challenge inherent in raising awareness about complex forms of injustice or inequality (e.g., institutional racism; Adams, Edkins, Lacka, Pickett, & Cheryan, 2008) but also suggest that calling attention to the power of a perpetrator or to longstanding structural disadvantage may actually undermine bystanders' willingness to engage with injustice. Despite the challenges, we view bystander efficacy, particularly the perception that action can be effective at changing injustice as central to understanding the pathway to bystander collective action.

As bystanders may be especially attuned to cues about whether bystander action is likely to be effective, the actions of aggrieved or minority groups within the "local context" may be especially important to increasing bystander collective action. Past research illustrates that instrumental social support, or expectations about fellow in-group members' willingness to get involved in collective action, is an important antecedent to efficacy (van Zomeren et al., 2004). In line with this theorizing, we would argue that bystanders' expectations about the target (minority or aggrieved) group's willingness to get involved in collective action, what might be called *out-group instrumental social support*, may have a strong influence on bystander efficacy and, in turn, bystander collective action. Thus, in focusing on bystander or third-party action,

we would suggest that group-based collective action likely plays an integral role in the process of bystander collective action. For example, within the civil rights (Arsenault, 2006) and anti-apartheid (Culverson, 1996) movements, action for social change was initiated and led by the minority group, with bystanders coming aboard later in the process. To the extent that bystanders perceive that the aggrieved group is willing to take action (out-group instrumental social support) and that descriptive norms are changing (i.e., reduced prevalence of the injustice), bystander collective action may become more likely. Thus, actions by the aggrieved (minority) group may be especially important to increasing bystanders' empowerment (Drury & Reicher, 2000) and producing shifts in self-categorization among bystanders to be in solidarity with victims of injustice (Subasic, Reynolds, & Turner, 2008).

Although the present findings provide initial evidence for the effect of perpetrator power on bystander efficacy and bystander collective action, we note some limitations, which suggest a cautious interpretation of the results is warranted. First, because we only tested the relative effects of power, it is impossible to tell whether high-power decreases bystander responses or low-power increases bystander responses. However, an interpretation that the results are driven by the high-power condition is consistent with research illustrating that power reduces efficacy (Sullivan, Landau, & Rothschild, 2010). Moreover, because power is a relative construct (i.e., it is inherently relational; Pratto & Walker, 2001) and perceivers automatically attribute level of power to targets (Banaji, Hardin, & Rothman, 1993; Pratto & Bargh, 1991), a "no-power" control condition seems less meaningful and ecologically valid. A second limitation of the current work concerns the broad operationalization of power. To the extent that the target-power manipulation included common correlates of power (e.g., status) and/or the power manipulation tapped multiple components of power (Depret & Fiske, 1993), there is less clarity regarding the aspects of power that affect bystander collective action. Additional work is therefore needed to identify how the specific components of power affect bystander efficacy and action, as well as whether additional factors (e.g., perceived costs; Klandermans, 1986), may help to explain bystander responses to injustice perpetrated by the powerful. Similarly, we are cautious in interpreting the emotions results owing to the lack of specificity in measurement regarding the target of the emotions (e.g., perpetrator vs. victim). A third limitation of the present work is not examining the full structural equation model, testing the effects of the interaction of power and impact on perceptions of normativity, bystander efficacy, and bystander collective action. Sample size and measurement reliability are two prerequisites to structural modeling (Kline, 1998), but sample size (Experiment 1) and measurement reliability (Experiments 1 and 2) did not meet typical guidelines for modeling. Thus, future work should examine the full set of relations among the respective variables using structural equation modeling.

In conclusion, the present work fills an important gap in the literature by exploring the antecedents to bystander efficacy and bystander collective action. This research provides a framework for understanding the psychological processes that explain how bystanders respond to large-scale injustice and

offers insight into the relatively understudied area of bystander collective action. The results help to explain why bystanders, at times, may be less likely to engage with "big injustice," compared with "small injustice." More broadly, the findings may provide insight and shed light on how to motivate bystanders to participate in collective action and increase support for social change in the context of complex and powerful injustice.

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