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The Responsive Bystander: How Social Group Membership and Group Size can
Encourage as well as Inhibit Bystander Intervention.

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Abstract

Four experiments explore the interaction of group size, social categorization and bystander behavior. In Study 1 increasing group size inhibits intervention in a street violence scenario when bystanders are strangers but encourages intervention when bystanders are friends. Study 2 replicates and extends these findings to social category members. When gender identity is salient, group size encourages intervention when bystanders and victim share social category membership. In addition, group size interacts with context specific norms that both inhibit and encourage helping. Study 3 uses physical co-presence and gender identities to examine these social category effects. Increasing group size of women produces greater helping of a female victim but increasing group size of men does not. Additionally, increasing numbers of out-group bystanders results in less intervention from females but more intervention from males. Study 4 replicates these findings using a measure of “real life” helping behavior. Taken together we argue that the bystander effect is not a generic consequence of increasing group size. When bystanders share group level psychological relationships, group size can encourage as well as inhibit helping.

The Responsive Bystander: How Social Categorization and Group Size can
Encourage as well as Inhibit Helping Behavior

The bystander effect is one of the most well established findings in social psychology (Latané & Nida, 1982). Beginning in the late 1960's, a series of innovative and carefully choreographed studies suggested that the more witnesses to an emergency event, the less likely an individual bystander was to intervene (Darley & Latané, 1968, Latané & Darley, 1970). The effect was cemented by a meta-analysis of over 50 studies (Latané & Nida, 1982) that established the idea that group size is inversely related to the likelihood of helping behavior. This body of work appears in most undergraduate psychology textbooks (Manning, Levine & Collins, 2007; Griggs & Proctor, 2002) and in the most up-to-date reviews of the academic literature (Penner, Dovidio, Pilliavin & Schroeder, 2005). Indeed, the bystander effect continues to play an important part in contemporary academic research (Garcia, Weaver, Moskowitz & Darley, 2002).

However, against this impressive edifice, there has always been a minority of studies that run counter to the traditional story of the effect of group size. For example, even as they were establishing the platform for the bystander effect, Darley and Latane (1968) published a study that showed that groups of friends were more likely to intervene in emergencies than groups of strangers, particularly if the person in need was part of the group concerned. This seemed to suggest that likelihood of intervention was dependent not simply on numbers of others, but rather on the kind of relationship between them. One implication of this is that the bystander effect is most pronounced when bystanders are strangers to each other. As Rutkowski, Gruder and Romer (1983) point out, in nearly all of the studies in the bystander effect literature,

participants tend to be placed in emergency situations with others whom they have never met before (and sometimes who they could not even see). Rutkowski et al., argue that this results in groups who are low in cohesiveness, and that it is this lack of cohesiveness which is responsible for the bystander effect. They demonstrate that if participants are given time to get to know each other then groups can encourage helping, particularly if social responsibility norms are made salient. Taken together, the minority of studies which sit uneasily with the bystander effect seem to indicate that, where particular forms of psychological relations exist between bystanders, then the bystander effect may be less pronounced.

Exploring Psychological Relationships Between Bystanders

Recent developments in the social psychology of the self-concept have raised the possibility of reconciling this evidence. For example, Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce and Neuberg (1997) propose a reinterpretation of Batson's empathy-altruism model (Batson, 1987, 1991; Batson, Batson, Griffitt, Barrientos, Brandt, Sprengelmeyer & Bayly, 1989; Batson & Shaw, 1991) based on the insight that the self-concept can be located outside the individual and inside close related others. They introduce the concept of *oneness* to describe this self-other overlap and present data which suggests that feelings of empathetic concern, rather than determining helping directly, are predicated on feelings of oneness. At the same time, in the most recent formulation of the arousal: cost-reward model, Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder and Clark (1991) argue for the importance of the concept of *we-ness*, described as "a sense of connectedness or a categorization of another person as a member of one's own group" (p. 102). Dovidio et al., suggest that the categorization of others as members of the in-group increases the likelihood of helping behavior. They go on to suggest that there is substantial data consistent with this aspect of the arousal: cost-

reward model. Although Cialdini et al., (1997) distinguish the concept of oneness from the concept of we-ness on the grounds that the latter refers to a sense of merger with a collectivity, where the former refers to relationships with a specific other, they remark on the “striking similarity between the concepts we have found useful to account for our findings and those used to account for the powerful in-group favoritism effect in which individuals allocate greater resources to their own groups (see Brewer, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1985)”, (p. 492).

This shared emphasis on collective or group level analysis has been extended to the bystander tradition by Levine and colleagues, using an approach to bystander behavior which is also influenced by social identity theory (Levine, 1999; Levine, Cassidy, Brazier & Reicher, 2002; Levine, Prosser, Evans & Reicher, 2005). They argue that bystanders are more likely to intervene when victims are common category members (Levine et al., 2002, 2005) and that bystanders will be influenced by others (to intervene or not to intervene) to the degree that fellow bystanders are perceived as in-group rather than out-group members (Levine et al., 2002).

Bystanders, Groups and Emergency Intervention

This paper will argue that by exploring the different ways in which the presence of others can be rendered psychologically meaningful, increasing group size can be shown to encourage as well as inhibit helping behavior. Drawing on the research outlined above it will be argued that when others are not imagined as group members (i.e. as strangers) then increasing group size leads to the inhibition of helping. We suggest it is the absence of a group level psychological relationship amongst bystanders (which might provide pro-social norms and values, cohesion or sense of collective efficacy) that produces the classic bystander effect. However, we will suggest that when others are constructed as group members, then group size is

less likely to lead to a reduction in helping. More specifically, we will draw a distinction between groups based on friendship and groups based on social category membership. The former are group entities based around interpersonal attraction, group commitment and group pride (Mullen & Copper, 1994). The latter are associated with social identity: the definition and evaluation of self in terms of a self-inclusive social category (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). In the case of friendship groups (and following Rutkowski et. al., 1983) we suggest that increasing group size promotes increasing social cohesion and - if social norms favor helping - thus increase the likelihood of bystander intervention. In the case of social identity based groups we suggest that increasing group size contributes to helping in two ways. Firstly increasing group size can promote depersonalization (Turner, 1985) and thus a greater adherence to the norms and the values of the group. Secondly, increasing group size can enhance the ability of the group to enact those group values. For example, research on helping which draws on social identity theory (Dovidio, Gaertner, Validzic, Motoka, Johnson & Frazier, 1997; Levine et al., 2005) argues that this kind of categorization leads to perceptions of similarity, feelings of greater closeness and increased feelings of responsibility for welfare of other in-group members. In similar fashion, research on collective behavior suggests that increased numbers may lead to greater feelings of group efficacy (Reicher & Levine, 1994 a, b; Reicher, Levine & Gordejijn, 1998), and greater likelihood of collective action (Reicher 1996, Drury & Reicher, 1999; Stott & Drury, 2000).

Study 1

In designing the empirical studies in this paper we pay particular attention to the work of Cherry (1995). Cherry argues that one of the key limitations of the

traditional research on bystander behavior has been its focus on group size at the expense of other socially meaningful dimensions. This is partly a result of the kinds of emergency contexts that have been used by researchers to explore bystander behavior. As Cherry points out, although the event which was the progenitor for the traditional bystander paradigm (the brutal rape and murder of Kitty Genovese) involved a violent attack by a man on a woman, the experiments that followed neglected both the violence and the gendered nature of the attack. Emergency events in traditional bystander research tended to be limited to instances of smoke coming into rooms, accidents at work or medical emergencies. The result was that the research that established the bystander effect contained neither consideration of the psychological relationships between those present nor a focus on violence.

The aim of the first study in this paper therefore will be to examine the effect that group size and social relationship type can have on bystanders who are witnesses to violence. The study will centre on a scenario which describes a violent altercation between a man and a woman in a public place. Following the technique established by Garcia et al. (2002), participants will be asked to imagine they are witnesses to the violence, and that they do so in the presence of either one other or five other people. In addition, the relations between participants and fellow bystanders will also be manipulated. These other bystanders will be variously described as strangers, friends, or social category members. On the basis of this design, three main hypotheses can then be examined. Firstly, when bystanders are explicitly imagined as strangers, then group size serves to inhibit the likelihood of bystander intervention. This results in the classic bystander effect. Secondly, when bystanders are imagined as friends, group size serves to encourage the likelihood of intervention. Contrary to the classic bystander effect, group size increases levels of intervention. Thirdly, when bystanders

are imagined as social category members, group size serves to encourage the likelihood of intervention. Again, contrary to the classic bystander effect, group size increases levels of intervention

Method

In an adaptation of the priming technique developed by Garcia et al. (2002) for their work on the implicit bystander effect, participants were asked to imagine that they were walking down a street in town. They were then asked to imagine either one other or five other people walking on the same street. These others were described as strangers, friends or students. Having imagined the presence of others, they were asked to imagine encountering an incident between a man and a woman which rapidly escalates into a violent attack by the man on the woman. Participants were then asked how likely they would be to do nothing/ remain uninvolved, to intervene indirectly (by calling the police for example) or to intervene directly themselves.

Design, participants and procedure. This resulted in a 2 (group size: one/five) x 3 (category membership of bystanders: stranger/friend/ student) between-subjects design. Participants were 90 female first year undergraduates at the psychology department at Lancaster University. Mean age of participants was 19 years. Participants were recruited from seminar groups in the psychology department. Testing was done in the last five minutes of the seminar and participants were told they were free to leave if they wished. None did so. All participants were volunteers and did not receive payment for participating. For the purposes of the experiment participants were randomly allocated to experimental conditions. Data was collected from groups which ranged in size from 4 to 8 members. A researcher told participants that they were taking part in an experiment that was trying out 'a new visualization technique for collecting data about peoples experiences in different situations'.

Participants were asked to imagine, step by step, the following scenario as it was described to them. The researcher paused after each sentence to give participants the opportunity to construct a mental image.

Imagine you are walking through town. It is about 4-o'clock in the afternoon. You are walking along in the same direction as 1 other person/ 5 other people, who is (are) a stranger(s) to you/ a friend(s) of yours/ a (are) student(s) you recognize from the university but have never spoken to before. Imagine this (these) stranger(s)/friend(s)/ student(s) next to you. As you are walking, you see a man and a woman who have clearly been arguing. As you get closer they begin to scuffle. He slaps her with an open hand. Then he grabs her by the lapels of her jacket. It looks as if he is about to hit her again.

Dependent variables. Having heard and imagined this scenario, participants were asked to fill in a short questionnaire. The first page of the questionnaire contained the scenario (which participants were asked to read again to remind themselves of the visualization) and a blank box in which they were invited to write down anything which came to mind (this was a technique adopted in experiment 5 of Garcia et al., 2002 in order to enhance the manipulation). Participants were given one minute for this task. They were then asked to turn the questionnaire over and answer the questions on the reverse. Participants were asked “ Which of the following actions would you be most likely to engage in if you came across a similar situation in real life?” Participants responded on the dimensions: a) not help at all, try to stay uninvolved; b) try to inform an authority figure, perhaps a security guard or the police c) go over and confront the people involved to try and resolve the situation. Each question was answered on a 9-point scale from 1 (*not at all likely*) to 9 (*very likely*).

The order of presentation of the questions was varied to prevent order effects.

Participants were instructed not to confer, to complete the questionnaire on their own and to answer the questions in the order in which they appeared. Brief demographic details, including age and gender was collected at the end of the questionnaire. After participants had completed the questionnaire they were thoroughly debriefed.

Results

Before the hypotheses were tested, the three dependent measures were subjected to a reliability analysis. This revealed that the item which asked about alerting an authority figure was poorly related to the other two measures ($\alpha=.22$ with item included, $\alpha=.76$ with the item removed). Thus the two remaining items were collapsed to produce a single “intention to intervene” score per participant. The intention to intervene measure was then subjected to a group size x social category membership of bystanders ANOVA. There was no overall main effect of group size, $F(1, 84)=0.003, p=.95$. There was also no overall main effect of social category membership of bystanders, $F(2, 84)=2.51, p=.09$. There was however a 2-way interaction of group size and social category membership of bystanders, $F(2, 84)=7.93, p=.001, \eta^2=.159$. Participants were significantly more likely to intervene, $F(1, 28)=5.17, p=.031$, when they were with one stranger ($M=5.23, SD=1.72$) than when they were with five strangers ($M=3.79, SD=1.70$). However, when participants imagined they were with friends, they were significantly more likely to intervene, $F(1, 29)=12.57, p=.001$, when they were with five friends ($M=6.45, SD=0.92$) than when they were with one friend ($M=4.52, SD=1.58$). There was no difference across group size when participants imagined they were with students, $F(1, 27)=0.67, p=.42$.

Taken together the results suggest that participants are less likely to express an intention to intervene when they are with five strangers than one stranger. However they are more likely to express an intention to intervene when they are with five friends than one friend. There is no difference in intervention levels across group size when bystanders are imagined as students.

Discussion

The results of this study offer support for two of the three hypotheses. As predicted, when fellow bystanders are explicitly imagined as strangers then the greater the group size the less participants are willing to get involved or to intervene directly. In an example of the classic bystander effect, group size seems to inhibit helping behavior. However, and again in line with predictions, when fellow bystanders are imagined as friends, then the greater the group size the more participants are willing to get involved or to intervene directly. This finding is not easily explained by traditional bystander theory. It does however accord with the suggestion of Rutkowski et al. (1983) that these friendship groups have greater social cohesion and as such participants feel empowered by the presence of fellow bystanders to be able to intervene.

The one hypothesis which is not supported in the experiment is the prediction for bystanders described as social category members. When bystanders were imagined as students it was predicted that group size would encourage intervention. However, there is no difference across group size on any of the possible intervention behaviors. Interestingly, categorizing other bystanders as students did seem to inoculate participants against the traditional bystander effect. However, it did not increase the likelihood of intervention.

One explanation for this is that, while student identity may have been salient, it is unclear how the particular social identity relates to the scenario at hand. In other words, when student identity is salient there is no clear relationship between the bystanders and the person in need. Students have no particular obligation to get involved in a violent altercation between a man and a woman. They are as likely to define it as “none of our business” as they are to feel responsible for sorting it out.

However, if the social identity relationships are specified in such a way that the victim is clearly an in-group member, then increasing group size of in-group bystanders might lead to greater intervention. There is already an existing body of literature which shows that, when social identity is made salient, people are more likely to help in-group members than out-group members (Dovidio et al., 1997; Levine et al., 2005). It may be therefore that, at the level of social category group membership (as opposed to friendship group membership) increasing group size of in-group members might only encourage intervention when the victim is a fellow in-group member. The identity consonance between bystander and victim taps into the normative injunction to help fellow in-group members – and is then amplified by the increased presence of in-group bystanders.

In order to test this hypothesis, in Study 2 an attempt will be made to replicate and extend the experiment. The original scenario will be retained and group size and social category relation to bystanders will be retained as the key independent variables. However, in Study 2, data will be collected from male participants as well as female participants. By retaining the original scenario (with a female victim) but including male participants, we are able to explore the willingness to help an in-group or an out-group victim. In other words, while the categories of stranger and friend will be retained, the student social category will be replaced by two new social category

designations: “women” and “men”. It will be argued that (when gender identity is made salient) for female participants the female victim will be seen as an in-group member. However, for male participants, the female victim will be seen as an out-group member. Thus we predict that, for female participants, increasing the number of in-group (female) bystanders will lead to greater levels of intervention. However, for the male participants, increasing the number of in-group (male) bystanders will not encourage intervention.

Study 2

This study replicates and extends Study 1. In adding experimental conditions that raise the salience of gender identity, Study 2 is able to test new predictions about the interaction of group size and social category membership on helping behavior. By making gender identities salient in the social category group level condition we require our participants to orientate explicitly to the gendered nature of the violence (see Cherry, 1995). At the same time we can create conditions such that fellow bystanders can be presented as in-group or out-group and the victim of violence can be presented as in-group or out-group. In this way we can explore the possibility that, at the level of social category group memberships, increasing group size does not automatically lead to increased intervention. We suggest it is only when the victim is a fellow in-group member that increasing group size encourages helping. Thus, we suggest that for group size to encourage helping, identity salience must be consonant across both bystanders and victim.

Taken together, this allows three hypotheses to be examined in Study 2. The first two hypotheses remain from Study 1 (and thus attempt to replicate those findings). The new, third hypothesis predicts that, at the level of social category group salience, increased group size encourages helping when both bystanders and victims

are in-group members. Thus, we predict that when bystanders are explicitly imagined as strangers, then group size serves to inhibit the likelihood of bystander intervention. This results in the classic bystander effect. Secondly, we predict that when bystanders are imagined as friends, group size serves to encourage the likelihood of intervention. Contrary to the classic bystander effect, group size increases levels of intervention. Thirdly, we predict that when bystanders are imagined as social category members, group size serves to encourage the likelihood of intervention when bystanders are imagined as in-group members *and* the victim is an in-group member. Thus, for female participants, increasing group size of female (in-group) bystanders increases intervention while increasing group size of male (out-group) bystanders does not. However, for male participants, increasing the group size of male (in-group) bystanders does not increase intervention and neither does increasing the group size of female (out-group) bystanders.

Method

Design, participants and procedure. Given the differential predictions for male and female participants in hypothesis three, the design was a 2 (sex of participant) x 2 (group size: one/five) x 4 (social category membership of bystanders: stranger/friend/men/ women) between-subjects design. Participants were 210 undergraduates from the Applied Sciences Faculty at Lancaster University (131 women and 79 men). Mean age of the participants was 19 years. Participants were recruited from seminar groups across the Faculty (which includes the departments of psychology, computing, communication sciences, mathematics and engineering). Once again, data was collected in the last five minutes of a seminar session and participants were given the chance to leave. All participants were volunteers and did not receive payment for participating. The same procedure was adopted as that in

Study 1. The only difference was that the condition in which participants had previously been asked to imagine “students” was replaced with the instruction to imagine a man/men or a woman/women as appropriate.

Results

Before exploring the research hypotheses, the three dependent measures were subjected to a reliability analysis. Once again, the item referring to alerting an authority figure was poorly related to the other intervention measures ($\alpha = .38$ with item included, $\alpha = .78$ with item removed). Thus the two remaining measures were computed into a single intervention score per participant. This intention to intervene measure was then subjected to a sex of participant x group size x category membership ANOVA. There was an overall main effect of sex of participant, $F(1, 193) = 43.58, p < .001, \eta^2 = .18$. Male participants were more likely to intervene ($M = 5.99, SD = 0.17$) than female participants ($M = 4.57, SD = 0.13$). There was no main effect of group size, $F(1, 193) = 0.52, p = .82$. There was however a marginally significant main effect of social category membership of bystanders, $F(3, 193) = 2.52, p = .059, \eta^2 = .04$. Participants were least likely to intervene in the presence of strangers ($M = 4.97, SD = 0.22$) and males ($M = 5.01, SD = 0.21$) and most likely to intervene in the presence of friends ($M = 5.52, SD = 0.21$) and females ($M = 5.62, SD = 0.21$).

The only significant 2-way interaction involved group size and category membership of bystanders, $F(3, 193) = 13.89, p < .001, \eta^2 = .18$. Participants were less likely to intervene, $F(1, 48) = 5.66, p = .021$ when there were five strangers ($M = 4.16, SD = 1.71$) than when there was one stranger ($M = 5.42, SD = 2.02$). They were also less likely to intervene, $F(1, 54) = 7.66, p = .008$ when there were five men ($M = 4.13,$

$SD=1.02$) than when there was one man ($M=5.39$, $SD=2.01$). However, they were significantly more likely to intervene, $F(1, 49)=9.88$, $p=.003$ when there were five friends ($M=6.08$, $SD=1.27$) than when there was one friend ($M=4.70$, $SD=1.78$). They were also significantly more likely to intervene, $F(1, 52)=7.92$, $p=.007$ when there were five women ($M=5.98$, $SD=1.29$) than when there was one woman ($M=4.85$, $SD=1.63$).

There was no overall 3-way interaction of sex of participant by group size by social category membership of bystanders, $F(3, 193)=0.72$, $p=.54$. However, to pursue the predicted different pattern of responses by female and male participants in hypothesis three, the male and female data were further analyzed separately. This allowed for a more detailed examination of the performance of female and male participants with respect to the three individual research hypotheses.

Female Participants: Inspection of the group size by social category membership data for female participants reveals that they were significantly more likely to intervene, $F(1, 29)=7.75$, $p=.009$, when they were with one stranger ($M=4.80$, $SD=1.60$) than when they were with five strangers ($M=3.37$, $SD=1.18$). They were also significantly more likely to intervene, $F(1, 29)=17.87$ $p<.001$, when they were with five friends ($M=5.46$, $SD=0.42$) than when they were with one friend ($M=4.12$, $SD=1.11$). These findings are as predicted for the female participants and replicate the results of Study 1. Moreover, when female participants imagined that bystanders were women (in-group), they were more likely to intervene, $F(1, 33)=5.39$, $p=.03$ when they imagined five women ($M=5.47$, $SD=1.01$) than when they imagined one woman ($M=4.47$, $SD=1.46$). However, when they imagined male (out-group) bystanders they were marginally less likely to intervene, $F(1, 35)=3.75$, $p=.06$, when they imagined five men ($M=3.89$, $SD=1.06$) than when they imagined one

man ($M=5.01$, $SD=1.95$). These findings are also as predicted for the female participants in the third hypothesis.

Male participants: For male participants group size had no effect on willingness to intervene when bystanders were imagined as strangers, $F(1, 19)=1.21$, $p=.27$. Group size did also not effect willingness to intervene when bystanders were imagined as friends, $F(1, 19)=2.69$, $p=.12$. These findings are not as predicted for the male participants. However, when male participants imagined male (in-group) bystanders, increasing group size significantly reduced the likelihood of intervention $F(1, 18)=17.70$, $p=.001$ when they imagined five men ($M=4.50$, $SD=0.57$) than when they imagined one man ($M=6.65$, $SD=0.54$). This supports the hypothesis that increasing the number of in-group bystanders does not promote intervention under conditions where the victim is an out-group member. However, we did not predict that increasing group size would significantly reduce helping in this case. When male participants imagined female (out-group) bystanders they were significantly more likely to intervene, $F(1, 18)=4.84$, $p=.04$, when there were five women ($M=7.06$, $SD=0.57$) than when there was one woman ($M=5.50$, $SD=0.54$). This was not as predicted for male participants in the third hypothesis.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 provide strong support for the predictions for female participants. Females were less likely to intervene in the presence of others imagined as strangers (the classic bystander effect) but more likely to intervene in the imagined presence of a group of friends. Also, as predicted, increasing group size of social category members only encouraged intervention when bystanders were in-group members AND the victim was an in-group member. The findings for the male participants were less expected. There was no effect of group size when others were

imagined as strangers or friends. However, as predicted, (given that the victim was an out-group member) increasing group size of in-group members did not lead to greater levels of intervention. In fact, for male participants, increasing the number of in-group bystanders lead to a significant inhibition of helping.

What was most surprising about the pattern of results for this study was the effect on levels of intervention of the presence of out-group bystanders. When bystanders were imagined as out-group members, increasing group size resulted in significantly less intervention from female participants, but significantly more intervention from male participants. One possible explanation for this can be found in research on sex-role stereotypes. In their meta-analysis of 172 studies on gender and helping, Eagly and Crowley (1986) show that, in general, men are associated with helping in short term, emergency situations while women tend to help in long term, sustained relationships. Male helping tends to be constructed around norms of heroism and chivalry, while female helping is characterized by care and empathetic concern. However, Eagly and Crowley also argue that there is much variability in the pattern of sex differences in helping. They suggest that it is not a simple question of whether men are more helpful than women, but that “the size and direction of sex differences should be a product of situational variables that determine what social roles are salient in particular situations” (1986, p 286). It seems that, in our study, the presence of out-group bystanders creates the conditions for the activation of the social norm of male, heroic intervention in short term emergency situations. However, the activation of this social norm has differential effects for female and male participants. For female participants, the presence of large numbers of out-group bystanders (men) means that they defer to the sex role stereotype that males should engage in heroic intervention, and are thus significantly less likely to intervene themselves. However,

for male participants, the presence of large numbers of out-group bystanders (women) means that they embrace the sex role stereotype that men should intervene heroically and are thus significantly more likely to intervene themselves. It is important to note that for both female and male participants the presence of large numbers of in-group bystanders does not seem to activate this sex role stereotype. In other words, the activation of this norm is context specific – and in our study the relevant context seems to be the increasing group size of out-group bystanders.

Taken together, the results of Study 2 make several important contributions. Firstly, the data from female participants replicates the pattern of behavior for the “strangers” and “friends” conditions from Study 1. This seems to confirm that the traditional bystander effect is most closely associated with situations where people have no group-level psychological relationship to each other. It also provides the first evidence for the facilitation of helping when bystanders are imagined as social category members. More specifically, the data demonstrate that, at the level of social category groups, increasing group size promotes intervention when fellow bystanders are in-group members *and* victim is an in-group member. It appears, therefore, that when the boundaries of the salient social category encompass both the bystanders and the victim, then intervention behavior is guided by the well-established injunction to help fellow group members.

In addition, the results of Study 2 also indicate that, under conditions where there is no consonance between the identity of fellow bystanders and victim, other norms can be activated. In this case, when bystanders find themselves in what might be called a comparative context (men with women and vice versa) and gender is salient (see for example Turner, Oakes, Haslam & McGarty, 1995), the sex-role stereotype of “heroic” male intervention seems to have been activated. This locally

activated norm then has differential impact on the female and male bystanders. It leads to a reduction in female helping as group size (of out-group bystanders) increases. However, it leads to the facilitation of male helping as group size (of out-group bystanders) increases.

In Study 3, the two main hypotheses that emerge from Study 2 are examined directly. The first hypothesis, that increasing group size only encourages helping when there is a consonance between identity of bystanders and identity of victim, is replicated. The second hypothesis, that when bystanders are out-group, increasing group size inhibits helping for female participants but encourages helping for male participants, is tested prospectively for the first time. However, and to help bring these hypotheses into sharp relief, in Study 3, gender identity is made explicit. That is, the study is framed in terms of gender, thus making the gender of participants salient from the outset. Finally, the scenario method is replaced by a method in which group size is manipulated by physical co-presence, and the requirement to imagine the event is replaced by the introduction of a filmed, “real life” violent episode.

Study 3

While Study 2 provides evidence for the interaction of group size and social categories in respect of helping behavior, it relies on a methodology that is far removed from the experimental realism that characterizes the best of traditional bystander research. The use of scenarios to create the emergency setting and the reliance on Garcia et al.’s (2002) “imagine” priming technique to manipulate group size, means that participants are not really immersed in an emergency event. Of course, creating a “real life” emergency that involves violence raises difficult practical and ethical problems. Choreographing a real life replication of the violence described in the scenario – and managing to repeat it exactly in trial after trial – would

be extremely difficult. Similarly, if the staged violence were to be both realistic and believable, it might raise ethical objections in respect of the potential distress suffered by participants. However, it remains important to demonstrate that group size and social categorization can interact in a violent emergency in a way that doesn't rely on participants simply imagining the event.

To that end, a third study was carried out in which participants, rather than just imagine the presence or absence of others, took part in the study on their own or in groups. In other words, group size was manipulated by actual physical co-presence rather than imagining the presence of others. Secondly, the male-on-female street violence event was filmed as if captured by a town centre Closed Circuit Television Camera (CCTV) and presented to participants as an example of a real-life event.

While this is clearly not the same as encountering such violence in the flesh, research on the reporting of date rape allegations (Sleed, Durrheim, Kriel, Solomon, & Baxter, 2002) has shown that such video presentations have significant advantages over written or verbal presentations. Participants found them more engaging and reported greater feelings of involvement than when simply reading about the event. In this experiment, participants watched the video on their own or in groups of three. The group conditions comprised of three women; three men; two women and a man; two men and a woman. Finally, the salience of gender identities was made explicit. This was achieved by advertising the study as being concerned with "gender and helping" and informing participants that the responses of men and women were being compared.

Using this new methodology we aim to replicate the finding that increasing group size serves to promote helping when identity of bystanders and victim is consonant. We also aim to test the hypothesis that, when bystanders are seen as out-

group members, then increasing group size inhibits helping for female participants but encourages helping for male participants. Thus, we predict that female participants are more likely to intervene when they watch the video as a group of three women than when on their own. However, we predict that male participants are no more likely to intervene when they watch the video as a group of three men than when on their own. In respect of the hypothesis about the differential effect on women and men of the presence of out-group members, we predict that female participants are less likely to intervene when they watch the video as a minority with two men than in any other group condition. However we predict that men are more likely to intervene when they watch the video as a minority with two women than in any other group condition.

Method

Design, participants and procedure. This was a 2 (sex of participant) x 4 (co-presence: alone/same gender group/male minority group/female minority group) between-subjects design. Participants were 159 undergraduates from Lancaster University (88 women and 71 men) who were signed up to the psychology departments research participants list. Participants were recruited by an advert on the research participant electronic noticeboard asking for people to take part in a study on “gender and helping”. They were then asked to sign up for a slot in the experiment schedule. Participants could only see a single available slot for the experiment and thus did not know in advance whether they would be on their own or with others – or who those others would be. When participants arrived for the study they were met by a graduate assistant who showed them into a small room with three seats in close proximity in front of a large TV screen. In the “alone” condition participants were asked to sit in the middle seat leaving the outer seats empty. In the same gender condition participants filled all three seats. In the minority/majority conditions the

graduate assistant organized the seating such that minority participant was seated in the middle seat. Participants were told that they were taking part in a study on gender and helping and that they would be shown a short CCTV clip of an incident captured on camera in Lancaster town centre. They were told that, having watched the clip, they would be asked to fill in a short questionnaire. The questionnaire contained the same dependent measures from Studies 1 and 2. Participants were paid \$6 for taking part.

Results

Before exploring the research hypotheses, the three dependent measures were subjected to a reliability analysis and the item referring to alerting an authority figure was once again removed ($\alpha = .33$ with item included, $\alpha = .76$ with item removed). Thus the two remaining measures were computed into a single intervention score per participant. This intention to intervene measure was then subjected to a sex of participant x co-presence ANOVA. There was a main effect of sex of participant, $F(1, 151) = 40.03, p < .001, \eta^2 = .21$. Male participants were more likely to intervene ($M = 4.97, SD = 0.15$) than female participants ($M = 3.54, SD = 0.14$). There was also a main effect for co-presence condition, $F(3, 151) = 9.12, p < .001, \eta^2 = .15$. Participants were least likely to intervene when on their own ($M = 3.78, SD = 0.23$) and in a female minority group ($M = 3.53, SD = 0.26$). They were most likely to intervene when in a same gender group ($M = 4.61, SD = 0.15$) or in a male minority group ($M = 4.90, SD = 0.19$). There was also a significant 2-way interaction of sex of participant and co-presence condition, $F(3, 151) = 5.94, p = .001, \eta^2 = .11$. In order to explore this interaction, univariate ANOVA's were carried out on the female and male participant data.

Female participants: Given the unequal cell sizes, Levene's test of equality of error variances was calculated which revealed no significant difference in error variance across groups, $F(3, 84) = 0.87, p = .46$. There was an overall main effect of co-presence, $F(3, 88) = 9.23, p < .001, \eta^2 = .25$. Post-hoc comparisons by Tukey's HSD were carried out on the four co-presence conditions. These revealed that female participants were significantly more likely ($p = .013$) to intervene in the all female group condition ($M = 4.39, SD = 0.89$) than when alone ($M = 3.44, SD = 0.81$). In the group conditions, female participants were significantly less likely to intervene when they were the minority in a group with males ($M = 2.56, SD = 1.04$) than in the two other group conditions (against all female group, $p < .001$; against male minority group ($M = 3.77, SD = 1.21$), $p = .002$).

Male Participants: Given the unequal cell sizes, Levene's test of equality of error variances was calculated which revealed no significant difference in error variance across groups, $F(3, 67) = 1.93, p = .13$. There was an overall effect of co-presence, $F(3, 71) = 4.95, p = .004, \eta^2 = .18$. Post-hoc comparisons by Tukey's HSD were carried out on the four co-presence conditions. These revealed that male participants were not significantly more likely ($p = .45$) to intervene in the all male group condition ($M = 4.83, SD = 1.60$) than when alone ($M = 4.13, SD = 0.98$). In the group conditions, male participants were significantly more likely to intervene when they were the minority in a group with females ($M = 6.03, SD = 1.38$) than in the two other group conditions (against all male group, $p = .035$; against female minority group ($M = 4.50, SD = 1.04$), $p = .029$).

Discussion

The results of Study 3 replicate and extend the findings of Study 2. Women are more likely to intervene when in the (physical) presence of a group of women than

when alone. Moreover, women are less likely to intervene when they are surrounded by men than in any other group condition. For the male participants, the results of Study 3 also support the hypotheses. As in Study 2, men were most likely to intervene when they were the only male in a group of women. Moreover, the other group conditions neither facilitate nor inhibited helping.

Taken together, the results of this study provide confirmation for the hypothesis that group size and social category membership encourage intervention when the social category membership of bystanders and victim is consonant. Underlying this effect, we argue, is the importance of the inclusivity of group boundaries and the well-established norm of helping in-group members in need. At the same time, when fellow bystanders are not in-group members, other situation specific norms can be invoked which shape bystander responses. In this case, where gender identity is salient, the norm which seems to predominate is the male sex-role stereotype of heroic intervention in chronic emergencies. This sex-role stereotype functions to reduce the likelihood of female intervention as women defer to the role expectation for men, but enhance male intervention as the male participants come to act in terms of the sex-role expectations.

Study 3 thus successfully demonstrates the importance of the interaction of group size and social category memberships for understanding bystander behavior. The physical co-presence of others, when defined in terms of their gender, produces both facilitation and inhibition of helping in line with experimental predictions. However, while Study 3 has the advantage of using actual physical co-presence to explore the effects of group presence, it does not deal with actual helping behavior. While the video presentation of the male-on-female violence may increase participant engagement, the dependent measures are still expressions of intention to intervene.

We have already alluded to the difficulties of exposing participants to “real life” violent emergencies that would meet both practical and ethical objections. However, it is important to see whether the kinds of intentions expressed by participants in response to the video violence are matched by their actual behavior in a similar but non-violent emergency. To that end, a fourth study was carried out. Study 4 used the procedure which was developed to collect the data for Study 3 as the backdrop against which participants could be exposed to a request for “real life” help. More specifically, just as each testing session for Study 3 was ending, a female confederate would interrupt the experiment and make an appeal for participants to take part in her own, unrelated study. She was then rebuffed rudely and aggressively by the male graduate student (and confederate) who was running Study 3. The female confederate then withdrew to the next room and waited in such a way that participants could offer help as they left the main room. The aim of Study 4 was to see whether, following the gender identity and co-presence primes of the previous study, participants offers of actual help would mirror the intentions to help revealed by the dependent measures of Study 3. Thus, we predict that female participants will be more likely to help after being in a group of three women, than after being tested on their own. Secondly, we predict that female participants will be least likely to help after being in a minority with two men than after any other condition. Finally, we predict that male participants will be most likely to offer help after being in a minority with two women than after any other condition.

Study 4

Method

Design, participants and procedure. Participants were 76 undergraduates from Lancaster University (39 women and 37 men) who took part in Study 3. The

procedure for Study 4 began as soon as participants arrived to take part in Study 3. Participants were met at the door leading off the main corridor by a male graduate assistant who was running Study 3. He welcomed participants into an internal corridor where they could see into a room where a female confederate was seated at a desk. The male graduate assistant then directed participants down the short internal corridor to the main room – telling them (in passing) that a different experiment was being conducted in the room they could see into as they arrived. Having shown the participant(s) into the main room, the graduate student then directed them to the appropriate chair. Participants in the lone condition sat in the middle chair; the all male/all female groups filled all three seats; groups with a male minority had the male participant in the middle seat; groups with a female minority had the female participant in the middle seat. When the video had been watched and the dependent measures completed the graduate student began the process of paying the participants. This was the cue for the female confederate (also a graduate student and thus of similar age and status) who had been seated next door to knock on the door of the main room and enter. She proceeded to establish eye-contact with the participant(s) (to make sure that they had seen her entry) before asking the male graduate student if she could ask his participants if they would help with her study as she was finding it difficult to get people to take part. His response was sharp in tone and verbally aggressive. He told the female confederate that she was interrupting his experiment which she had no right to do and that she should leave immediately. The female confederate mumbled an apology and withdrew. She then went and waited in front of (and facing) the bookcase in the other room, positioned so her shoulder but not her face could be seen by the participants leaving the main room and making for the exit onto the main corridor. The male graduate student then returned to paying the

participants for their help. He made sure that he paid the person sitting in the middle seat first, so that they were the first to leave. This was done to ensure that, in the minority group conditions, the minority representative was always the first to leave. This was designed to avoid the potential confound which might be introduced by the “modeling” of other participants behavior by those who left second and third in the group conditions. The problem of modeling in-group conditions meant that only data from the first person to leave the room could be used. A record was then made of whether the participant stopped to offer help to the female confederate or not. No eye-contact was made by the confederate at this stage. The dependent measure was thus the behavior of the participant when they left the room in the alone condition, or the behavior of the first person to leave the room in the group conditions. All participants were sent a debriefing sheet at the end of the study explaining the nature of the study and their participation in it.

Results

Given the differential predictions for the male and female participants, the data from males and females was analyzed separately.

Female participants. Data from the female participants was subjected to analysis by chi-square (see Table 1 for table of frequencies). The overall chi-square for type of co-presence condition by helping behavior revealed a significant difference in the pattern of frequencies, $\chi^2(2, N=39)=6.08, p=.048$. Separate chi-square analysis for pairs of conditions revealed that females were significantly more likely to help after being in the all female group condition than the alone condition, $\chi^2(1, n=28)=3.88, p=.049$. Women were also significantly less likely to help after being in the female minority group condition than in the all female group condition $\chi^2(1, n=23)=5.24, p=.022$. Both these findings are as hypothesized and replicate the

intention to help data for female participants in Study 3. There was no difference between help/no help responses for those who had been in the female minority condition and the alone condition, $\chi^2(1, n=27)=0.31, p=.58$

Male participants. Data from the male participants was subjected to analysis by chi-square (see Table 1 for table of frequencies). The overall chi-square for type of co-presence condition by helping behavior revealed a significant difference in the pattern of frequencies, $\chi^2(2, N=37)=9.94, p=.007$. Separate chi-squared analysis of the pairs of conditions revealed that participants were significantly more likely to help after being in the male minority condition than either the alone condition, $\chi^2(1, n=25)=4.81, p=.028$ or the all male group condition, $\chi^2(1, n=25)=9.08, p=.003$. Both of these findings are as hypothesized and replicate the data for intention to act for male participants in Study 3. In similar fashion, there was no difference in help/no help responses for men who had been in the male group condition or the alone condition, $\chi^2(1, n=24)=0.89, p=.35$. This is a replication of the finding for intention to act in Study 3.

Discussion

The results of Study 4 provide further support for the importance of the interaction of group size and social category composition of group on helping behavior. When exposed to a “real life” request for help, female participants are more likely to help after being in a group with other women, but less likely to help after being in a group with other men. Men are more likely to help after being in a group with other women, but not more likely to help after being in a group with other men. The traditional bystander effect of inhibition of helping by virtue of the simple presence of the group is hardly ever found. The only time the presence of others

inhibits helping is when a woman is surrounded by men. By contrast, increasing group size can lead to the facilitation of helping in a variety of different ways.

Perhaps most straightforward is the facilitation produced for female participants by the co-presence of other women. Increasing group size of in-group bystanders seems to encourage even greater adherence to the injunction to help fellow in-group members in distress. Facilitation of helping can also be seen for male participants as a function of group presence— but only when those others are women. It is likely that male helping in this context is a function of an expression of heroic and chivalrous norms (Eagly & Crowley, 1986) but interesting to note that these behavioral norms are not enhanced by the presence of other men. The theoretical explanation offered in this paper is that this is because the victim is not an in-group member. We argue that it is only when the identity of bystanders and victim is consonant that the solidarity provided by increased group size contributes towards greater attempts to help an in-group victim in need.

The strength of Study 4 is that it demonstrates these effects using a behavioral measure. The pattern of intentions to intervene in Study 3 is replicated by behavior in Study 4. However, it must be remembered that helping in Study 4 is not intervention in violence. While the rude and verbally aggressive tone of the male graduate student towards the female confederate was designed to convey something of the antagonistic relationship between the man and the woman in the video, participants in Study 4 were engaged in helping rather than emergency intervention. Thus it cannot be claimed that Study 4 reveals a behavioral pattern in respect of intervention in violence. However, a more positive reading of this suggests that the data in Study 4 shows that the evidence for group size and gender categorization interaction is not limited to violent emergencies alone. This behavioral data offers evidence that the

interaction of group membership and group size identified in Study 1, Study 2 and Study 3 in respect of intention to intervene in violence, might generalize to other kinds of helping behavior also.

General Discussion

The bystander effect is one of the most reproduced and influential constructs to emerge from social psychology. It appears in almost all undergraduate social psychology textbooks (Manning, Levine & Collins, 2007) and its sponsors are amongst the most influential psychologists in the history of social psychological research (Griggs & Proctor, 2002). Despite this impressive edifice, this paper suggests that the bystander effect, far from being a generic effect of the presence of other bystanders, is rather a specific effect of the absence of a group level social relationship amongst potential bystanders. More specifically, the results of the four experiments in this paper suggests that, contrary to the traditional bystander effect, increased group size can encourage as well as inhibit bystander intervention.

For example, in Studies 1 and 2 of this paper, the bystander effect only emerges when bystanders are constructed as strangers rather than friends. We argue that when there is no group level social relationship to guide behavior, then the bystander effect becomes more likely. However, when bystanders are imagined as friends, then increasing group size can promote willingness to intervene. We suggest, following Rutkowski et al (1983) that this is as a result of the social cohesion derived from the social attraction, commitment and pride which friendship groups can draw on when called upon to act in a socially responsible way.

In addition, this paper provides the first evidence of the role of social category group membership in intervention behavior. The paper demonstrates that bystanders need not be part of affiliative, friendship groups in order to be able to intervene.

Sharing social category membership with fellow bystanders can also promote intervention. However, our research suggests that social category membership and group size only interact to promote helping when the victim in need is also an in-group member. This is important in two respects. Firstly it seems to fit with the well-established injunction that people should help in-group members in distress. The greater the number of in-group bystanders, the more willing they are to help an in-group victim in need. Secondly, it differentiates friendship group helping from social category group helping. In the former, it seems that there is no requirement that the victim is necessarily a friendship group member. However, at the level of social category groups, it seems important that the victim falls within the boundaries of an inclusive social category.

This paper also identifies a second feature of the role played by social category relations in bystander behavior. We argue that, under conditions where bystanders do not share social category membership then other, situation specific, norms may come to shape the behavior of bystanders. In our studies, when gender identity was salient, and bystanders were out-group members, the sex-role stereotype of heroic and chivalrous male, seemed to guide behavior. This resulted in female participants being less willing to intervene in the presence of men, and male participants being more willing to intervene in the presence of women. Perhaps most importantly, evidence suggests that this normative sex role stereotype did not operate under all group conditions. This suggests that the norms that govern bystander behavior and its interaction with group size, are not in themselves generic norms, but emerge in specific social contexts.

The final strength of this paper is the cumulative weight of evidence derived from both incremental replication and range of dependent measures. The story begins

with scenario methodologies, moves through methods that engage participants in more veridical social situations and ends with a measure of “real-life” intervention behavior. In doing so, the research shares some of the power of studies from the traditional bystander cannon, which were famed for their ability to test the effect of group size on “real” emergencies.

While the importance of group level psychological relationships for bystander behavior are clearly demonstrated by this paper, the relative contributions of a variety of moderating and mediating processes remains to be explored. For example, where friendship groups are concerned, while we argue that group size and social cohesion can interact to promote helping, we can only speculate that the mechanisms identified by Mullen and Copper’s (1994) review of the friendship group literature are playing a part. Work need to be done to explore the relative contributions of interpersonal attraction, commitment, pride and indeed other factors which might shape friendship group helping in emergencies. At the same time, at the level of social category groups, the importance of strength of identification (Hogg & Abrams, 1988), collective efficacy (Reicher & Levine, 1994), group level emotions (Sturmer, Snyder & Omoto, 2005) and other possible contributory factors all need to be carefully unpacked. For example, further studies are required to determine whether female participants are more likely to intervene in the presence of other women because they feel a greater sense of empowerment, or a greater sense of empathy for the in-group victim. Of course, these variables are not mutually exclusive. However, by manipulating the kind of emergency (and thus the presence or absence of perpetrators) it should be possible to see the degree to which group size promotes the strength to tackle powerful out-groups.

In similar fashion, it is important to determine whether male participants intervene in the presence of women because they feel a greater sense of chivalrous obligation, or a sense of shame or embarrassment at the behavior of a poorly performing in-group member. Once again, these potential mediators are not mutually exclusive. However, by drawing on some of the measures (and insights) of researchers in the inter-group emotions (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000) and black sheep effect (Marques, Abrams & Serodio, 2001) traditions, it should be possible to explore the importance of these variables in more detail.

The picture already presented by this paper shows that there will be no simple linear relationship between group size and group level psychological impact on emergency helping. To understand how and why group size and social group membership interact, it is necessary to understand not only what kinds of groups are salient, but also how those groups relate to each other and to the immediate social context. While specifying the detail of some of these relationships will be the task of future work, this paper provides strong evidence that the traditional certainties of the bystander effect need to be revisited. It is clear from the data in this paper that group size can interact with presence of others in such a way that bystander intervention can be encouraged as well as inhibited. Understanding more about the power of the group to promote helping will reinvigorate the contribution that social psychology can make to designing practical strategies to promote bystander intervention.

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Table 1.

Help/No Help Frequencies by Gender of Participant and Co-presence Conditions

| Gender | Co-presence condition | Help | No Help | % Helping |
|---------------------|--------------------------|------|---------|-----------|
| Female Participants | Alone | 6 | 10 | 37.5% |
| | Minority | 3 | 8 | 27.3% |
| | Group | 9 | 3 | 75% |
| Male Participants | Alone | 4 | 8 | 33.3% |
| | Minority | 10 | 3 | 76.9% |
| | Group | 2 | 10 | 16.7% |