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# The other side of the bystander effect: Negative consequences for victims of public insult and attempt for redemption

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**Abstract**

The bystander effect is a famous phenomenon in social psychology but effect for victims of such bystander situations have not been studied broadly. This study tries to gain insight in this topic based on different theories, e.g. ostracism. Furthermore the effect of Importance of Social Image (ISI) was taken into account in the assessment of negative consequences for victims. An experiment, in which a victim was insulted by a *perpetrator* after failing a task, was conducted to assess blame, violation of fundamental needs, perception of safety and negative affect in a Bystander/No-Bystander and Apology/No-Apology condition. Results revealed that participants in the bystander condition ascribed more blame to the perpetrator. Moreover a trend was found concerning safety perception in the presence of bystanders. Additionally, it seems that people high in ISI feel more self-blame and more negative affect. However, no other significant effects were found. Notwithstanding this study has its implications. Nevertheless, it is, to our knowledge the first one that tries to reach beyond effects of victimization and takes effects of passivity of bystanders into account, as well as effects of an attempt for redemption in form of an apology offered by the perpetrator.

The other side of the bystander effect: Negative consequences for victims

## Introduction

*"I think it's pretty disillusioning that you don't receive help, that you lie on the ground and nobody reacts (...) you feel helpless and alone at this very moment (...)At the end I was lying on the ground and screamed for help...and the people...they just walked by. And I thought for myself: what must happen? Is a bloodbath necessary?"* (Beobachter, 2015;Digezz, 2015)

This is an excerpt from an interview with an actor who played a victim in an experiment about bystanders' courage in a crowd. In the situation described above the perpetrator and the victim bumped into each other by accident as the victim displayed feelings of guilt by offering an apology to the perpetrator. However, the perpetrator pushed the victim away in a harsh manner and called aloud that the victim should be even more apologetic by exhibiting aggressive behavior towards the victim, attacking the latter both physically and verbally. The bystanders witnessing these attacks were unwilling to intervene and did not help the victim. The scene described above is a good example of the so called *bystander effect*.

The bystander effect is a well-known phenomenon in social psychology and plays a prominent part in understanding helping behavior (Fischer et al., 2011). Latané and Darley (1970) identified several psychological processes that prevented bystanders from helping in emergency and non-emergency cases. In two thirds of violent incidents, bystanders are present (Hamby, Weber, Grych & Banyard, 2016) which explains the importance of studying the bystander effect in such a great extent like it was done in the past.

However, to our knowledge, so far no studies dealt with the victims' perspective of the bystander effect and the consequences on victims in these situations, as most studies focus on the bystander perspective or on victimization effects in general. Many people adhere to the principle of "safety in numbers" (Latane & Nida, 1981) as they anticipate that the more people are present, the more help they will receive in an emergency situation. The repeated occurrence of the bystander effect shows the contrary and could lead to an unpleasant experience of a victim.

Hence, the current study aims to investigate this other side of the bystander effect: The consequences for a victim as a result of the passivity of others. Hereby, the effects of redemption through an apology offered by the perpetrator will be taken into account. Comprehension of such psychological effects may help to improve self-help programmes in order to treat emotional and psychological trauma. Several theories and concepts exist which could be related to the negative consequences of victimhood in a bystander situation.

The other side of the bystander effect: Negative consequences for victims

**Ostracism**

A characteristic of the bystander effect is a lack of attention towards the victim and his/her concomitant situation. Ignoring victims and the bystander effect seem to be similar phenomenon's at first glance, but psychological consequences of the bystander effect in relation with psychological consequences of ignoring are, to our knowledge, not studied so far. What does this neglect induce in the victim? Effects of ignoring and exclusion, often without broad explanation or negative attention, called *ostracism* (Williams, 2007) could possibly partly predict effects on the victim in a bystander situation. Self reported distress, e.g. sadness, anger, hurt feelings and lower levels of self-esteem, meaningfulness, control and belonging are consequences of *ostracism* (Williams, 2007).

The Need- Threat- Model by Williams (2009) describes four fundamental needs that are threatened by ostracism: to belong, to maintain reasonably high self-esteem, to perceive a sufficient amount of personal control over one's social environment, and to be recognized as existing in a meaningful way.

Ostracism leads to the feeling of a separation between oneself and others, a disconnection and exclusion from the group, resulting in violation of belongingness as a need. Self-esteem as a need is violated by silence stemming from the ostracizing group: the victim is excluded without explanation, therefore it is given time for ruminating about reasons of ignoring. Thoughts of, e.g. self -blame and selfishness will be considered which leads to a list of bad things done or said, possibly resulting in a lower self-esteem. The unilateralism of ostracism explains violation of the third need: i.e. control - due to the fact that the ostracized individual has no chance to argue or discuss with ostracizers about the exclusion. Unlike in verbal or physical arguments, in ostracism one is treated as invisible and non-existing, and therefore has an existential threat quality and explains the violation of the fourth need (Williams, 2009).

It could be expected that the non-intervention of bystanders influences victims, in a way that they feel more negative emotions in a bystander situation. Moreover, non-intervention, could as a result, lead to more violation of fundamental needs than in a no-bystander situation.

**Blame**

Bystanders can witness events where physical violence occurs, but can also be present at events where psychological maltreatment occurs, such as bullying. The denial of human uniqueness (attributes that distinguish humans from other animals) in interpersonal maltreatment, implicates that a person is

seen as immature, irrational, incompetent, unintelligent, backwards or coarse, and affects the status relative to others (Bastian & Haslam, 2011). Loss of status, through mistreatment by others is often linked to self-blame (Vohs, Baumeister, & Chin, 2007).

Other consequences of the denial of human uniqueness could be feelings of shame or guilt (Bastian & Haslam, 2011). Especially situations of public exposure are sources of shame (Smith, Webster, Parrott & Eyre, 2002). There exist several studies that imply the close relation to shame and self-blame. Furthermore, self-blame is highly correlated with fear of negative evaluation and shame (Gilbert & Miles, 2000). Due to the fact that a bystander situation is usually a public matter, it could be argued that more self-blame is felt in a bystander situation.

Another approach is the *belief in a just world* (BJW). A lot of studies revealed that individuals have the need to believe that everyone deserves the fortune they get, to maintain a sense of justice, and this often results in victim derogation. However, there are not enough studies that focus on the victims themselves (Furnham, 2003) but nevertheless it could be argued, that a victim feels self-blame while experiencing maltreatment.

Furthermore, shame is characterized by the real or imagined disapproval and rejection of others towards the self which could in turn lead to a retributive act of hostility towards others which results in externalization of blame. This could be seen as a *defense mechanism* to protect the self (Lewis,1971). Transferred to a bystander situation, a victim could respond to feelings of self-blame with other-blame, and therefore blaming perpetrators or bystanders.

**Perception of Safety**

Moreover, as a victim is exposed to maltreatment, this could have an effect on the sense of safety. A study by Kirchoff et al. (2013) indicates that when people become victims of any kind of violence, the need of safety becomes violated. Gini, Pozzoli, Borghi and Franzoni (2008) investigated the role of bystanders in a bully-victim situation and perception of safety in a school context (Gini et. al 2008). Respondents were given a booklet with different stories of how bystanders behaved in three different ways while bullying took place, followed by a questionnaire. Results of this study revealed that the respondents' perception of safety was influenced by the behavior of the bystanders in the bully situation, in which a peer was insulted and threatened. When bystanders intervened, respondents had a higher sense of safety, whereas when they did not, the sense of safety was low, as passivity of the peers was interpreted as conspiracy with the bully, which as a result contributed to uncertainty and a climate of fear (Gini et al, 2008). Even though this study did not investigate the opinion of the victim about safety perception but the view of an observer, it gives rationale to argue that also victims would have a lower sense of safety in a passive bystander situation.

Violated needs (Need to belong, to maintain reasonably high self-esteem, to perceive a sufficient amount of personal control, and to be recognized as existing in a meaningful way), negative affect, self- and other-blame and reduced safety perception all could be negative consequences of victimhood (NCV) in a bystander situation, therefore the first hypothesis is:

*H1: NCV are greater in a bystander condition compared to NCV in a no bystander condition.*

**The role of apologies**

A study of Anderson, Linden and Habra (2006) showed that apologies can have an anger-reducing effect. Another study shows that reduction of negative emotions through an apology can serve as a mediator between, for instance ruminating over an offense (McCullough, Bono & Root, 2007). Murphy (2006) explained in his article that public apologies may lead to *retributive satisfaction* in the victim even if the apology is insincere: "*Some victims of wrongdoing might not care about the sincerity of the apology, however, so long as the making of the apology is painful to the right degree for the person who must deliver it*". However, in the current study the deliverer is not forced to give an apology. Nevertheless, the effect of public vs. no apology will be studied.

*H2: An insult leads to greater NCV unless an apology is followed, compared to NCV if no apology is followed.*

*H3: Especially if bystanders are present, the attenuating effect of an apology on NCV is greater compared to the attenuation effect of an apology on NCV if bystanders are absent.*

**Importance of social image**

Being mistreated in a bystander context may not only affect sense of safety, blame and needs but also the social image. For example Gilmore (as cited in Rodriguez Mosquera, et al., 2008) stated that a negative evaluation of a victim's' self by others in social situations present a particularly great threat to the social image. Insults appear to have a greater impact on individuals with stronger attachment to honor culture than on individuals without such an attachment: A study of IJzerman, van Dijk and Gallucci (2007) investigated reactions of individuals to insults, which adhered to honor norms in comparison to individuals with low adherence. The former exhibit more anger, less fear and less joy. The current study will take place in The Netherlands, where honor is interpreted differently in comparison to other countries but "protection of one's public image" is as important to Dutch students as it is to Spanish ones

(Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead & Fischer, 2002). Therefore it seemed logical to study the *Importance of Social Image (ISI)* i.e. the importance of how others perceive one's self and one's family, which is linked to the culture of honor in a broader way.

Again, it seems that shame and blame play a prominent role, this time in relation to social image: A study of Gruenewald, Kemeny and Aziz (2006) indicates that participants high in subjective social status show an increase in cortisol, in feelings of shame and lack of acceptance from evaluators in confrontation with a difficult task in a social setting (Gruenewald, Kemeny & Aziz, 2006). It can be suggested that people who ascribe more importance to social image feel more threatened by social put-downs and blame themselves for losing their status relative to others. Therefore we hypothesize:

*H4: If bystanders are present, people high in ISI feel more negative feelings and self-blame, compared to people who are low in ISI. This effect is lesser when no bystanders are present.*

**The present study**

Being a victim of violent or non-violent incidents is already followed by psychological consequences (see e.g. Kirchoff, 2013) but what are the effects when a victim realizes it does not get help from observers of such situations? The question that the current study aims to answer is what the effects on a victim of maltreatment in a bystander situation are. This is done by testing if a victim feels more violated in its needs, has lower levels of safety perception, feels more self - and other-blame, and report higher levels of negative affect in a bystander situation compared to a one-on-one situation. Moreover, the effect of an apology on the emotional state of the victim, with consideration of the presence or absence of bystanders, will be investigated. The hypotheses will be tested through an experimental study at the University of Twente, The Netherlands.

## Method

This experimental study underwent ethical examination and received permission.

**Participants and Design**

In total 124 persons participated in the study, of which one was excluded due to meeting an exclusion criteria and one due to deep acquaintance with the researcher who played the perpetrator. This resulted in 122 participants (50 [41%] male, 72 [59%] female). Their age ranged from 18 to 58 ($M=$ 22.65, $SD=$ 5.99). Participants were randomly assigned to one condition of the 2 (Bystander: None vs.

Three) x 2 (Apology vs. No Apology) between-subjects factorial design. Students of the *University of Twente, Netherlands* were recruited through *SONA systems* to participate in this study. For participating they received one *SONA-credit*. Furthermore, persons out of the circle of acquaintances from the researchers did participate. Inclusion criteria for both groups were aside from sufficient knowledge of English and being above eighteen years old, a non-clinical score on the *Performance Failure Anxiety Inventory (PFAI)*.

**Procedure**

The research consisted of two parts. In the first session the participants were asked to fill in an online survey that was distributed via a *Qualtrics*-link, measuring on the first hand the degree of fear of failure in order to exclude participants with a clinical degree (2 *SD* above the mean) from the experiment. Those who fulfilled the participation criteria were enabled to continue with the survey, which then additionally assessed the moderator variables (narcism, attribution style, importance of social image, forgiveness and self-kindness & self-judgement).

Hereafter, participants were invited to participate in a second session that required the presence on the University campus in order to fulfill the task. There an instructor welcomed the participants and instructed the participants to build a *Jenga*-tower consisting of forty stories within a timescale of three minutes. A *Jenga*-tower is constructed of 54 blocks, with the aim to remain solid, while removing one block at a time and to place it on top of the tower, resulting in an increasingly taller and more unstable construct. This task should be unsolvable, due to the fact that the experimental upset required the participants to fail.

The participant was allegedly assigned to this task together with a *fellow participant* who indeed was part of the researcher team. This *fellow participant* was given the task to keep track of the time while building the tower and later fulfilled the role of the *perpetrator*. As an incentive the participants were told that by beating the record both participants would receive a 25€ voucher for an online shop of their choice. After explaining the task and assigning the tasks, the instructor left the room. In the three-bystander condition also the three *other participants*, in fact other researchers, stayed in the room under the pretence to wait for their turn. In the no bystander condition, the *perpetrator* and the participant were left alone in the room.

While the participant was building the tower, the *perpetrator* made comments about the remaining time (e.g. *"only one minute left"*). At the point where the time was up, the *perpetrator* suggested to already count the stories before the instructor would come back (e.g. "*Twenty-five? And we had to do? Forty?"*). This then led towards the *perpetrator* insulting the participant with the words: *"Oh my god it's not even that hard. My little sister could do that and she is like three"*. In case that the tower

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fell slightly before the three minutes were over the insult followed immediately, if there was too much time left though the participant was told to build it up again.

In the bystander condition, the *other participants* remained passive even though they demonstratively looked over to the *perpetrator* and the participant, pretending to be shocked by the insult. In case of a participant commenting on the insult, this was ignored.

To ensure the instructor would come back directly after the insult has been taking place, the *perpetrator* secretly phoned the instructor while at the same time the smartphone was being used as a stopwatch. The instructor overhearing the *perpetrators'* insult entered the room again, counted the stories and instructed the participants to stow the used materials away while leaving again to get the allegedly forgotten laptop (*"Sorry, I forgot my laptop I will be right back"*) that would be needed for the final survey.

In the apology condition, while tidying up the *perpetrator* offered an excuse to the participant (*"I am sorry about earlier, I am not having a great day"*). This again was overheard on the phone ensuring the instructor would enter the room after the apology had been offered.

Eventually, the participant had to fill in the last survey via *Qualtrics*, measuring the dependent variables. Thereafter, the participant was debriefed verbally and in written form (see Appendix) and brought in contact with the *perpetrator* to ensure that the participant left on amicable terms. Finally the participant was thanked and received a chocolate bar for the participation and was furthermore asked to keep the aim of the study private.

**Materials**

**Fear of Failure**

The short form of the *Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory(PFAI)* of Conroy (Conroy, 2003) was used to measure the exclusion criteria. The survey consisted of twenty-five items (e.g. "When I am failing, I am afraid that I might not have enough talent"), which could be rated on a 5-point-Likert-Scale (-2= Do not believe at all, +2 Believe 100% of the time). The internal consistency was excellent ($\alpha$=.91).

**Blame**

In all conditions self-, perpetrator- and bystander - blame was measured. The items were derived from the *Self- And Other-Blame Scale (SOBS)* from Besharat, Eisler and Dare (2001). For self- and perpetrator-blame the same four items were used in different forms (e.g.: "What happened was entirely my/the perpetrators/other's fault"). For other-blame only three of these items were selected, whereas one of these was also slightly modified ("other people are partially to blame for what happened"). Totaling

eleven items could be rated on a 7-point-Likert-Scale (1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree). For the assessment of the reliability these 11 items were averaged and resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .72.

**Fundamental needs**

The items measuring the fundamental needs were extracted from the *Assessment of Need Satisfaction following ostracism* from Williams (2010). The original twenty items scale was reduced to twelve items with every need being assessed by three items each: Belonging (e.g. I felt rejected), Self-esteem (e.g. I felt insecure), Meaningful existence (e.g. I felt meaningless) and Control (e.g. I felt I was able to influence the action of others). Those items could be rated on a 5-point-Likert-scale (1= Not at all, 5 = Extremely). To assess the reliability of the modified scale the mean of the 12 items was taken and resulted in a good Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha$ = .79).

**Safety perceptions**

The perception of safety scale was developed especially for the current study. It consisted of three items (i.e. I feel safe) which were rated on 5-point-Likert-Scale (1= Never, 7= Always). The internal consistency was poor ($\alpha$ = .59). By removing item 3 ("I feel safe at the University") the reliability would be acceptable ($\alpha$ =.62). Still, since the removal would result in a two-item scale it was chosen to keep item 3.

**Positive and negative affect**

The *Positive And Negative Affect Scale (PANAS)* from Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988) was used to measure negative and positive affect using twenty one-word-items defining different feelings. Hereby, ten items describe negative affect (e.g. Hostile, Angry) and the other ten items positive feelings (e.g. Proud, Inspired). However item 18 from the original scale (see Appendix) was modified from "Jittery" to "Anxious" due to incomprehensibility for non-native speakers. These items could be rated on a 7-point-Likert-Scale (1= Very slightly or not at all, 7 = Extremely). The internal consistency of both subscales was good ($\alpha$ =.88 for negative affect, $\alpha$ = .84 for positive affect).

**Importance of social image**

The *Importance of Social Image Scale* (Rodriguez Mosquera & Imada, 2013) included six items measuring the participant's valuation of their own and family's social image, attempting to measure their general importance of social image. Participants were asked to rate the importance of each item (e.g. "Your reputation") on a 7-point-Likert-Scale ranging from 1 (Not important at all) to 7 (Extremely important). The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .77, which is an acceptable value.

## Results

**Manipulation check**

To check if participants in the apology condition realized the offer of an apology a binary logistic regression was run. A significant difference between the two conditions was found ($b$= -3.15, Wald $X^2$ (1) = 36.07, $p < .001$) which indicates that the manipulation worked. Furthermore, a one-way ANOVA on bystander presence revealed a significant difference between the two conditions (No Bystander vs. Three Bystander) which indicates that participants in the three bystander condition ($M$= 3.10, $SD$= 0.05) in fact perceived the other persons in the room (F= [1,118] = 2079.16, $p < .001$), whereas the participants in the no bystander condition did not ($M$= 0.02, $SD$= 0.05).  .

**Hypotheses testing**

A two-way between groups analysis of variance was conducted to test the first three hypotheses and explore the impact of (1) Bystanders (none vs. three) and an (2) Apology (yes vs. no) and (3) its interaction on negative consequences of victimhood. In total 10 two-way ANOVAs were run, whereby three of them accounted for the different kinds of blame (self-blame, perpetrator-blame and other-blame), four for the violation of fundamental needs (need to belong, to maintain high reasonably high self-esteem, to perceive control and to be recognized as existing in a meaningful way), one for the safety perception and two for positive and negative affect respectively (see Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 for all values).

**Bystanders and NCV**

Partial support for the first hypothesis was found for perpetrator-blame ($F$ [1,118]=5.74, $p = .02$), whereby more blame was ascribed in a three bystander condition ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.20$), compared to a no bystander condition ($M = 1.63$, $SD = 0.85$). A trend was found ($F$ [1,118] = 3.61, $p= .06$) for safety perception where participants reported less perception of safety in a three bystander condition ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.70$) in comparison with the no bystander condition ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.71$).
Contrary to our expectations no significant effect of the bystanders was found for self-blame, other-blame, violation of needs or negative affect. Nonetheless, hypothesis 1 can partially be supported.

**Apology and NCV**

A statistically significant effect of an apology in relation with the need to belong was found ($F(1,118) = 6.17$, $p = .01$). Inconsistent with our expectation, participants in the apology condition ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.11$) felt more violated in this need, comparing to the no apology condition ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.12$). The analysis revealed no other significant differences regarding this hypothesis, therefore hypothesis 2 must be rejected.

**Bystanders and Apology on NCV**

There was no interaction effect found for any of the dependent variables in relation to the two independent variables bystander and apology (all $p's > .12$). Therefore hypotheses 3 can be rejected. In consequence, the main effects could be interpreted safely.

**Importance of social image on blame and negative affect**

By means of a multiple regression analysis it was measured in how far importance of social image has an impact on self-blame and negative affect. An interaction effect was found for self-blame in relation to *ISI* and bystander ($b = .65$, $t = 2.01$, $p = .05$), indicating that participants who scored high on the Importance of Social Image-Scale were more likely to feel more self-blame in the three bystander condition (Fig. 1). This is in line with hypothesis 4. Furthermore, the analysis revealed an interaction effect of *ISI* ($b = .39$, $t = 2.26$, $p = .03$), indicating that participants who's score was higher on the ISI-Scale felt more negative affect in the three bystander condition (Fig.2). This also is in line with our expectation and therefore hypothesis 4 can be supported.
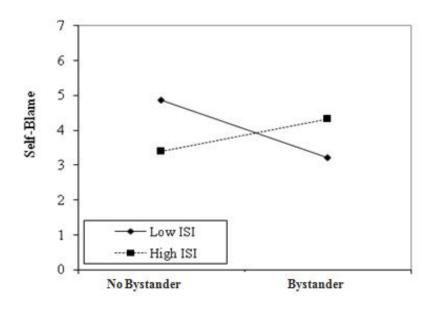
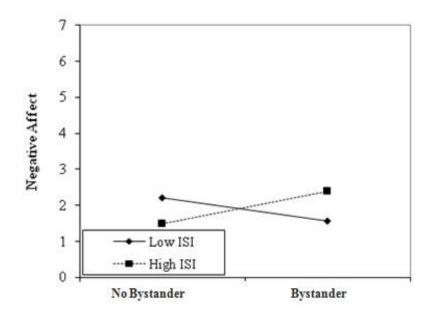*Figure 1*. Score on Self-Blame in No-Bystander vs. Three Bystander Condition Moderated by Score on ISI-Scale.



*Figure 2*. Score on Negative Affect (PANAS) in No-Bystander vs. Three Bystander Condition Moderated by Score on ISI-Scale.

**Table 1**
*ANOVA- Effects of Bystander Presence, Apology Condition and Bystander Presence with Apology Condition on Blame*

| Variable | F | df | p* | ηp2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-blame | | | | |
| 1. Bystander Presence | 2.82 | 1 | .09 | .02 |
| 2. Apology Condition | 0.83 | 1 | .36 | .01 |
| 3. Bystander* Apology | 0.32 | 1 | .56 | .00 |
| Other-blame | | | | |
| 1. Bystander Presence | 1.48 | 1 | .23 | .01 |
| 2. Apology Condition | 1.48 | 1 | .23 | .01 |
| 3. Bystander* Apology | 2.51 | 1 | .12 | .02 |
| Perpetrator-blame | | | | |
| 1. Bystander Presence | 5.74 | 1 | .02 | .05 |
| 2. Apology Condition | 2.33 | 1 | .13 | .02 |
| 3. Bystander* Apology | 0.74 | 1 | .39 | .01 |

**Table 2**
*ANOVA- Effects of Bystander Presence, Apology Condition and Bystander Presence with Apology Condition on Needs and Safety*

| Variable | F | df | p* | ηp2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Needs total | | | | |
| 1. Bystander Presence | 0.85 | 1 | .36 | .01 |
| 2. Apology Condition | 4.73 | 1 | .03 | .04 |
| 3. Bystander* Apology | 0.08 | 1 | .78 | .00 |
| Need Belong | | | | |
| 1. Bystander Presence | 0.04 | 1 | .84 | .00 |
| 2. Apology Condition | 4.86 | 1 | .01 | .01 |
| 3. Bystander* Apology | 2.38 | 1 | .13 | .02 |
| Need Control | | | | |
| 1. Bystander Presence | 0.01 | 1 | .92 | .00 |
| 2. Apology Condition | 0.25 | 1 | .62 | .00 |
| 3. Bystander* Apology | 0.39 | 1 | .54 | .00 |
| Need Self-esteem | | | | |
| 1. Bystander Presence | 2.23 | 1 | .14 | .02 |
| 2. Apology Condition | 2.48 | 1 | .14 | .02 |
| 3. Bystander* Apology | 0.02 | 1 | .90 | .00 |
| Need Meaningful existence | | | | |
| 1. Bystander Presence | 0.86 | 1 | .36 | .01 |
| 2. Apology Condition | 2.01 | 1 | .16 | .02 |
| 3. Bystander* Apology | 0.06 | 1 | .81 | .00 |
| Safety-Perception | | | | |

| | Variable | F | df | p* | ηp2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bystander Presence | 3.61 | 1 | .06 | .03 |
| 2. | Apology Condition | 0.53 | 1 | .47 | .01 |
| 3. | Bystander* Apology | 0.72 | 1 | .40 | .01 |

**Table 3**
*ANOVA- Effects of Bystander Presence, Apology Condition and Bystander Presence with Apology Condition on PANAS*

| Variable | | F | df | p* | ηp2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PANAS | | | | | |
| 1. | Bystander Presence | 0.23 | 1 | .64 | .00 |
| 2. | Apology Condition | 0.78 | 1 | .38 | .01 |
| 3. | Bystander* Apology | 0.35 | 1 | .56 | .00 |
| Negative Affect | | | | | |
| 1. | Bystander Presence | 0.26 | 1 | .61 | .00 |
| 2. | Apology Condition | 1.08 | 1 | .30 | .01 |
| 3. | Bystander* Apology | 0.31 | 1 | .56 | .00 |
| Positive Affect | | | | | |
| 1. | Bystander Presence | 1.65 | 1 | .20 | .01 |
| 2. | Apology Condition | 0.10 | 1 | .76 | .01 |
| 3. | Bystander* Apology | 0.13 | 1 | .72 | .00 |

## General discussion

The present research was designed to gain insight in the consequences of victimization with regard to passivity of bystanders in such a situation. First, we expected the negative consequences of victimhood to be worse in a bystander situation. Secondly, we hypothesized that the effect of the negative effects of victimhood would be lower when an apology follows an insult. Thirdly, we expected an interaction between the offer of an apology and the presence of the bystanders. Finally, an influence of importance of social image on negative affect and self- blame was expected.

In support of the first hypothesis we found that participants in a bystander situation reported more perpetrator- blame than in a no bystander condition. It is possible that participants in this condition tried to protect themselves (Lewis, 1971) from self-blame and humiliation in front of others by externalizing blame to the perpetrator.

Moreover, a trend was found for safety perception, indicating that the presence of passive bystanders in the room had a negative effect on participants' sense of safety. This is consistent with the concept of *safety in numbers* (Latane & Nida, 1987). It can be speculated that participants in the no bystander condition still believed that in maltreatment situations, help can be expected, whereas people in

the bystander condition realized that help was in fact not offered. Furthermore, this result can be seen as an additional point of view to a study of Gini et. al (2008) which showed that observers felt less safe when bystanders remain passive in a bullying situation, as our study focused on the victim's' perception of safety. With regard to the other dependent variables, no effects were found.

Regarding the second hypothesis, no attenuating effect of an apology on NCV was discovered and surprisingly, the need to belong was even more violated in the apology condition. This effect is not consistent with our expectation, but it can be questioned if the apology offered by the perpetrator was normative to the participants, which means that they think that other people in a similar situation would have acted the same way the perpetrator did. Participants revealed that they often did not even realize an insult or perceived it as a joke, which may lead to confusion when receiving an apology. If participants in the apology condition did not have the feeling that other people in the same situation would offer the same type of apology (Riordan, Marlin & Kellogg, 1983), it could be speculated that they want to separate themselves from the non-normative apologizer, which resulted in lower sense of belongingness.

No support was found for the third hypothesis, suggesting that there was no interaction effect of presence of bystanders and an apology on NCV.

In favor of the last hypothesis, the results indicate that participants high in ISI feel more self-blame in a bystander condition. It can be debated if participants high in ISI felt more threatened with regard to their social image and therefore blamed themselves for not accomplishing the task and the put-down of the perpetrator. In support of this stands a study of Gruenwald, Kemeny and Aziz (2006) indicating that people with high subjective social status feel more threat to social image and less acceptance in confrontation with a difficult task in presence of evaluators (Gruenewald, Kemeny & Aziz, 2006). Furthermore, it seems that participants high in ISI experience more negative feelings in a bystander condition, which is also in line with the last hypothesis. This result finds support in the existing literature, in relation with honor culture: people adherent to honor feel more negative feelings when it comes to an attack (IJzerman, van Dijk &Gallucci, 2007).

**Strengths, limitations and further research**

Even though we found a number of results, these need to be interpreted with caution due to some limitations. Sometimes it was obvious to the researchers that participants believed the insult was faked and the perpetrator was part of the research team, which could have an effect on the dependent variables. This assumption is based on facial expressions during the experiment (e.g. smiling while receiving the insult) and comments towards the researcher afterwards, revealing that they were suspicious after receiving the insult. Most of the participants were psychology students which are used to participate in experiments and therefore could maybe foresee that not everything that happens will be real.

Moreover, there were some participants who took the insult too literally thinking that the *perpetrator* would claim that her three-year old sister could actually build a 40 stories high *Jenga*-tower, which was considered ridiculous.  Others defended themselves even before starting the experiment or after the insult with comments such as: "but 40 is pretty high" or "I think it is really hard" and unveiled while debriefing that therefore the insult was not taken seriously. Others simply did not hear the insult correctly. All these factors can have an impact on the dependent variables and explain why not more effects were found.

Despite, this study is, to our knowledge, the first one that tested the consequences of victimhood in direct relation with the bystander effect. Furthermore, an effect of an apology was investigated in this study. We made sure that the perpetrator was always the same person across every condition, to prevent differences across participants.

Further research should try to include a more diverse sample into the study, to prevent bias which psychology students possibly have towards manipulated experiments. Furthermore, the perpetrator should be played by a professional actor to make sure, that body language and tone are the same over different conditions, which was tried in this experiment but could not be warranted.

Bystanders are present in 66% of violent incidents (Hamby et al., 2016), therefore it is important to not only investigate why these passive bystanders behave the way they do, but also to focus on the other side: The effect on victims in these situations. Victimization in general already has its negative effects (see e.g.Kirchhoff, 2013), but being exposed in front of others which are not offering help could even worsen the consequences. Insight in victim's feelings after such incidents can promote improving help, if psychological aftermath requires expertise. Our study helped to gain insight into this new topic by uncovering some of these negative consequences.

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# APPENDIX

**Appendix A.** First questionnaire (PFAI, Moderators)

Q1
We are conducting a study to gain insights into the different personality types based on how you perform a Jenga game. The study consists of two sessions. The first one will be an online questionnaire. The second session will consist of an experiment at the University of Twente in which you will be asked to build a Jenga tower followed by a second questionnaire

Informed Consent
'I hereby declare in a manner obvious to me, to be informed about the nature, method, target of the investigation. I know that the data and results of the study will only be published anonymously and confidentially to third parties. My questions have been answered satisfactorily. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study, while I reserve the right to terminate my participation in this study without giving a reason at any time'.</div>
- ❍ Agree
- ❍ Disagree

Q2 What is your gender?
- ❍ Male
- ❍ Female

Q3 What is your age?
_____ Age

Q23 If you participate via Sona please enter your Sona-id

Q4 Please read each statement carefully before answering. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

| | Do Not Believe At All<br /> -2 | -1 | Believe 50% of the Time<br /> 0 | +1 | Believe 100% of the Time<br /> +2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| When I am failing, it is often because I am not smart enough to perform successfully. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am failing, my future seems uncertain. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am failing, it upsets important others. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am failing, I blame my lack of talent. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am failing, I believe that my future plans will change. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am failing, I expect to be criticized by important others. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am failing, I am afraid that I might not have enough talent. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am failing, it upsets my "plan" for the future. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| When I am failing, I lose the trust of people who are important to me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am not succeeding, I am less valuable than when I succeed. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am not succeeding, people are less interested in me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am failing, I am not worried about it affecting my future plans. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am not succeeding, people seem to want to help me less. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am failing, important others are not happy. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am not succeeding, I get down on myself easily. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am failing, I hate the fact that I am not in control of the outcome. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I am not succeeding, people tend to | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| leave me alone. | | | | | |
| When I am failing, it is embarrassing if others are there to see it. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| When I am failing, important others are disappointed. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| When I am failing, I believe that everybody knows I am failing. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| When I am not succeeding, some people are not interested in me anymore. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| When I am failing, I believe that my doubters feel that they were right about me. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| When I am not succeeding, my value decreases for some people. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| When I am failing, I worry about what others think about me. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| When I am failing, I worry that others may think I am not trying. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q5 Please rate how important each of the following are for you.

| | Not important at all<br /> 1 | 2 | 3 | Moderately important<br /> 4 | 5 | 6 | Extremely important<br /> 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Your social image (i.e., how positively other people think of you). | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The reputation of your family. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Respect (i.e., how much other people respect you). | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Social image of your family (i.e., how positively other people think of your family). | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Your reputation. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Respect towards your family (i.e., how much others respect your family). | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q6 In the course of our lives negative things may occur because of our own actions, the actions of others, or circumstances beyond our control. For some time after these events, we may have negative thoughts or feelings about ourselves, others, or the situation. Think about how you typically respond to such negative events. Next to each of the following items write the number (from the 7-point scale below) that best describes how you typically respond to the type of negative situation described. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as open as possible in your answers.

| | Almost Always False of Me<br /> 1 | 2 | More Often False of Me<br /> 3 | 4 | More Often True of Me<br /> 5 | 6 | Almost Always True of Me<br /> 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Although I feel badly at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I hold grudges against myself for negative things I've done. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Learning from bad things that I've done helps me get over them. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| It is really hard for me to accept myself once I've messed up. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I don't stop criticizing myself for negative things I've | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | Never<br />1 | Almost Never<br /> | rarely<br />3 | sometimes<br />4 | Often<br />5 | Almost always<br /> | Always<br />7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| felt, thought, said, or done. | | | | | | | |
| I continue to punish a person who has done something that I think is wrong. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I continue to be hard on others who have hurt me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Although others have hurt me in the past, I have eventually been able to see them as good people. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| If others mistreat me, I continue to think badly of them. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When someone disappoints me, I can eventually move past it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q7 Please read each statement carefully before answering. Indicate how often you behave in the stated manner

| | Never<br />1 | Almost Never<br /> | rarely<br />3 | sometimes<br />4 | Often<br />5 | Almost always<br /> | Always<br />7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | /> 2 | | | | /> 6 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| tenderness I need. | | | | | | | |
| I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q8 Please rate the following statements.

| | Strongly disagree<br /> 1 | Disagree<br /> 2 | Somewhat disagree<br /> 3 | Neither agree nor disagree<br /> 4 | Somewhat agree<br /> 5 | Agree<br /> 6 | Strongly agree<br /> 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I like to be the center of attention. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I always know what I am doing. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Everybody likes to hear my stories. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I am more capable than other people. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I think I am a special person. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I usually get the respect that I deserve. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I like to do things for other people. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrased. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I try not to be a show off. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| There is a lot that I can learn from other | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | people. | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |

Q9 Read the following statements carefully and indicate to which degree you agree with them.

| | Strongly disagree<br /> 1 | Disagree<br /> 2 | Somewhat disagree<br /> 3 | Neither agree nor disagree<br /> 4 | Somewhat agree<br /> 5 | Agree<br /> 6 | Strongly agree<br /> 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| What happens to me is my own doing. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Becoming a success is a | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| matter of hard work; luck has little or nothing to do with it. | | | | | | | |
| People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| This world is run by the few people in power and there is not much the little guy can do about it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| me. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Q10 Here is your unique id: ${e://Field/RandomID}
Please write this number down and take it with you to the experiment. This is important, without your number you cannot participate (and receive the Sona point). Thank you!

Q21 Thank you for your participation. You have been assigned to the condition where no further actions are required. For this reason, your presence at the University of Twente is not necessary. This is the end of the survey.

**Appendix B**. Second Questionnaire (Dependent Variables)

Q22 What is your Sona-id?

Q9 This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then list the number from the scale below. Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment.

| | Very Slightly or Not at All<br /> 1 | A Little<br /> 2 | Moderately<br /> 3 | Quite a Bit<br /> 4 | Extremely<br /> 5 |
|---|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| Interested. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Distressed. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Excited. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Upset. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Strong. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Guilty. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Scared. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Hostile. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Enthusiastic. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Proud. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Irritable. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Alert. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Ashamed. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Inspired. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Nervous. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Determined. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Attentive | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Anxious. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Active. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Afraid. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q10 Please select the number that best represents your feelings experienced during the task.

| | Not at all<br /> 1 | A little<br /> 2 | Moderately<br /> 3 | Quit a bit<br /> 4 | Extremely<br /> 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel disconnected. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel rejected. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel like an outsider. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel good about myself. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| My self-esteem is high. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel insecure. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel meaningless. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel non-existent. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel important. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel powerfull. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel I have the ability to significantly alter events. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel I am able to influence the action of others. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q11 Please select the number that best represents your feelings experienced during the task.

| | Never<br /> 1 | Rarely<br /> 2 | Sometimes<br /> 3 | Often<br /> 4 | Always<br /> 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel safe. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| If danger occurs people help each other. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel safe at the University. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q12 Remember the task, indicate for each of the following statements how much you agree or disagree.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| What happened was entirely my fault. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I blame myself. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I feel guilty about what happened. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I am responsible for what happened. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| What happened was entirely my partners fault. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| I blame my partner. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| My partner should feel guilty. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| My partner is solely responsible for what happened. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q13 Remember the task, indicate for each of the following statements how much you agree or disagree.

|  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| What happened was partially the fault of others. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Other people are partially to blame for what happened | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| Other people should feel guilty for what happened. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

Q14 Were there other people beside your partner and the instructor present in the room?
❍  Yes
❍  No

Q15 How many?

Q16 Did you recieve an apology?
❍  Yes
❍  No

Q17 How did you perceive the apology?
❍  Extremely negative
❍  Somewhat negative
❍  Neither positive nor negative
❍  Somewhat positive
❍  Extremely positive

Q18 How realistic did you perceive the experiment?
- ○ Not at all
- ○ A little bit
- ○ Somewhat
- ○ Very
- ○ Extremely

**Appendix C.** Written debriefing

When people are discouraged to intervene in an emergency situation due to the presence of others, who also fail to intervene, is called the bystander effect. It is one of the most known phenomena in social psychology and a lot of research has been done on this topic. However, not much is known about the effects for victims in these situations.

The study, in which you just participated, aims to investigate the psychological effects of the bystander effect from the perspective of the victim. Certainly, we cannot really make participants a victim of something terrible like a crime. For this purpose you were placed in the position that somewhat resembles a victim, namely the victim of a rude person or bully. The task that you were asked to perform was virtually impossible, and designed that no one would be able to do it. We then scripted everything the perpetrator said, so please be aware that it was not meant as a personal insult: each participant received the exact same insults.

We did, however, change a few things, for each experimental condition. In one condition, there were several people present in the room, whereas in the other condition the participant was alone with the person who insults them. The idea behind this is that it is worse to receive an insult in the presence of other people, than it is when you are alone. Because of the silence of other people, perhaps the 'victim' will think they are not worth being helped, or they may to some degree deserve the bad behavior. This is what is often called 'victim blaming' and is done by people who witness a crime, but sometimes also by the victims themselves.

Another thing we changed per condition is that the rude person would apologize after being rude. In one condition, the perpetrator would apologize shortly after the insults, whereas in the other condition, participants would first make the questionnaire and then the rude person would apologize. The idea is that apologies make things better again, and make the 'victim' feel good about themselves. However, this is especially true when the apology is done in the presence of others, as apologies can repair the perceived 'status' of the 'victim'.

This study can have important outcomes for victims of (public) bullying, but also of real crimes, as it could help to make support more aimed to their specific needs. Your participation has contributed to gain first insight into this topic.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any further questions, please feel free to ask the experimenters or use the contact information provided.

**Appendix D.** Layout Codebook

| PPNR | Condition | Random NR | Sona | Gender | Bystanders? | Researcher? | Perpetrator? | Relation researcher | Relation perpetrator | Relation bystanders | Room | General comments |
|------|-----------|-----------|------|--------|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------|------------------|
|      |           |           |      |        |             |             |              |                     |                      |                     |      |                  |