

## **Bystander Anti-Racism: A Review of the Literature**

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*This review of literature on anti-racist prosocial action points to the strong and largely untapped policy potential of bystander anti-racism. Bystander anti-racism is conceptualized as action taken by “ordinary” people in response to incidents of interpersonal or systemic racism. The utility of bystander anti-racism is also demonstrated, with evidence suggesting productive effects for targets and bystanders, as well as perpetrators. The relative merits of confrontational or diplomatic action are reviewed, as is the delicate balance between communicating disapproval and maintaining interpersonal relations. The potential of bystander anti-racism will be enhanced where there are social norms that are intolerant of racism. The literature has paid little attention to the influence of context or to affective drivers of bystander anti-racism. We recommend changes to Ashburn-Nardo’s five-stage Confronting Prejudice Model, to better facilitate anti-racism policy and practice. The additions adapt the model to organizational settings, and more strongly acknowledge the importance of social norms and contexts, as well as the specific functions of racism. Through these changes, there is a scope to increase the prominence of bystander anti-racism as a vital element of anti-racism policy.*

Racism can be broadly defined as a phenomenon that maintains or exacerbates avoidable and unfair inequalities in power, resources, or opportunities across racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious groups in society. Racism can be expressed through beliefs (e.g., negative and inaccurate stereotypes), emotions (e.g., fear

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or hatred), or behaviors/practices (e.g., unfair treatment) (Berman & Paradies, 2010). Bystander anti-racism is a unique form of action that primarily addresses behaviors or practices.

Racism continues to be an enduring worldwide social problem (Dunn, Forrest, Pe-Pua, Hynes, & Maeder-Han, 2009; European Commission, 2008; Karlsen, 2007; Simon, 2004; Statistics Canada, 2003; The Ombudsman Against Ethnic Discrimination, 2007), which may even be worsening (United Nations, 2009). Essed (1991) coined the term “everyday racism” to describe how racism is recurrent and normalized, “infused into familiar practices” such as jokes, everyday exclusions, and racist talk (p. 3). In spite of the everyday nature of much racism, only a handful of the 219 clauses in the 2009 Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) speak to the actions of ordinary people (including those who witness racism). In particular, only one clause (United Nations, 2009, p. 31, clause 58) implies a role for bystander anti-racism, where nation-states are asked to develop “measures and policies . . . which encourage all citizens and institutions to take a stand against racism.”

A primary finding from this review is the strong and largely untapped potential of bystander anti-racism as part of a holistic approach to anti-racism. The review outlines a case for the wider social benefits of hearing anti-racist talk and witnessing bystander anti-racism. Bystander action can be seen as a “troubling” mechanism in that it unsettles otherwise normalized situations, displacing dominant and taken-for-granted acts and utterances of everyday racism. We contend that bystander anti-racism is a neglected, yet potentially powerful form of anti-racism for which a much stronger empirical understanding of the frequency, potential, benefits, and constraints of bystander anti-racism is required. The targets of racism currently carry most of the burden of anti-racism. Bystander anti-racism is politically significant in developing effective approaches that shift the burden of anti-racism away from targets. Bystander anti-racism should be considered an essential element of anti-racist social policy.

### **Defining Bystander Anti-Racism**

In the field of psychology, the term “bystander” refers to an individual who is present or witnesses a situation of interest. Typically, this has been assumed to be an emergency of some kind in which the person experiencing this emergency is a stranger (for two classic social psychological studies see Darley & Latané, 1968; Rosenthal, 1964). Thus, the term bystander traditionally offers no indication of the extent to which an individual is active or willing to intervene. In some literature, in fact, the term bystander has an implication of passivity (Darley & Latané, 1968, e.g., refer to the unresponsive bystander). Recent studies of bystander helping (see, e.g., Garcia, Weaver, Darley, & Spence, 2009; Levine & Cassidy, 2010; Levine & Crowther, 2008) and prosocial bystander behavior (see, e.g., Banyard, 2008)

indicate an attempt in the literature to move the focus from passivity to active helping. Similarly, in this article, bystander anti-racism is defined as an active process. This is akin to Hyers' (2007) interest in assertive responses (following Swim, Cohen, & Hyers, 1998) that specifically "communicate one's displeasure in a way that is visible to the perpetrator" (cited p. 1). Here, we define bystander anti-racism as:

Action taken by a person or persons (not directly involved as a target or perpetrator) to speak out about or to seek to engage others in responding (either directly or indirectly, immediately or at a later time) against interpersonal or systemic racism.

This definition encompasses more than just emergency or critical incidents; it also includes legal discrimination and more subtle, everyday, and institutional forms of racism. This review focuses on bystander action in response to both interpersonal racism (i.e., interactions between people that result in avoidable and unfair inequalities across different racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious groups) and systemic racism (i.e., requirements, conditions, practices, policies, or processes that result in avoidable and unfair inequalities across different racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious groups; Paradies et al., 2009).

Bystander anti-racism can aim to stop the perpetration of racism, reduce its escalation, prevent the physical, psychological, and social harms that may result, and/or strengthen broader social norms that should reduce racism in the future. Therefore, examples of bystander anti-racism include actions that confront the perpetrator, recruit other active bystanders, support a target after an experience of racism, formally report the incident, or seek assistance (e.g., from a colleague, manager, police officer, or school teacher).

Changing social norms toward the intolerance of racism is one of the desired outcomes of bystander action. While we think of active bystanders as individuals, it is important to highlight that bystander action takes place within specific social contexts. For example, many of the studies reviewed here examine bystander behavior in schools and workplaces. The power of bystander anti-racism to influence social norms lies in the fact that it is embedded in social contexts. On this basis, we argue below that bystander anti-racism is an important component of anti-racism policy.

### **Aims and Scope**

This review focuses on the origins, underlying theories, and empirical research relating to bystander anti-racism and demonstrates that the body of literature in this area has not been brought to bear on anti-racism policy. The literature reviewed was relatively broad in scope, necessitated by the sparse and disparate scholarship that examines bystander anti-racism. The limited literature meant social psychological experiments were drawn on where possible, but the review was

supplemented with commentary and qualitative research where appropriate. The Scopus database was used to identify relevant literature published between 1960 and 2010. Search terms employed were “prosocial behavior” and “bystander.” Broader search terms were also employed (anti-oppression/racism/bias/prejudice/discrimination, nondiscrimination prejudice/racism/stereotype reduction/modify/education). The search for this review also drew on literature that examined the responses of targets/victims of racism, prejudice, or discrimination, with key search terms being “victim” or “target response.” The reference lists of articles identified were examined for further studies to include. Further searches were conducted to identify literature either published by or cited by key academics in the field (e.g., Ashburn-Nardo, Czopp, Hyers, Levine, and Monteith). A total of 45 articles with an empirical and/or theoretical focus on bystander racism and/or anti-racism were identified. Much of this literature focused on intergroup interactions, helping/prosocial behavior, social identity theory, and social norms. It is noteworthy that the studies reviewed in this article are mostly social psychological and were conducted in the United States.

### **Prevalence of Bystander Intervention**

In spite of the potential for bystander intervention to have an impact on everyday and other forms of racism, there has been insufficient research on this topic. There is little indication in the literature of the extent to which individuals engage in bystander anti-racism when witnessing an incident of racism. One exception is Hyers' (2007) examination of women's responses to anti-Black racism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism, and sexism. Hyers (2007) recruited 98 female participants from a university (and its surrounding community) in the Northeast United States. Participants were asked to record their experiences of discrimination over a 1-week period. The author found that while 75% of participants considered an assertive response (“making some outwardly visible sign of dissatisfaction” [p. 4]), only 40% actually made one. A subsequent study by Hyers (2010), albeit focused on heterosexism, found that respondents considered an assertive response in two-thirds of incidents, but only acted on them in about half of the incidents. In a study of interpersonal violence, Banyard (2008) asked 389 undergraduate university students about their engagement in a range of bystander behaviors (51 behaviors in total). Participants were asked to indicate how many of these behaviors they had engaged in over the past 2 months. One of the statements pertained to bystander anti-racism, and Banyard found that 47% of participants indicated that they had spoken up against racist jokes in the past 2 months (p. 90).

Turning briefly to the literature on bystander interventions in school bullying, Aboud and Joong (2008) interviewed 50 children in either third or sixth grade at a primary school in Montreal, Canada, about bullying incidents and found most bystanders did not help. In 44% of race-based bullying incidents at school, some or

all of the bystanders did nothing (either watched or left the scene), and in a further 25% of incidents, they encouraged the bully. Respondents intervened against the bullying in only 30% of incidents. In an observational study of interventions among students at a Toronto primary school, Hawkins, Pepler, and Craig (2001) found similarly low rates of peer intervention (19%) in bullying incidents. From the limited literature available, it seems that the rates of bystander action among children are somewhat lower than those reported by adults. The bullying literature is highly “context specific,” with a focus on schools, drawing attention to the importance of particular settings when attempting to assess the prevalence of bystander anti-racism.

The literature cited here on prevalence of bystander anti-racism suggests that there is a proportion of *potentially* active bystanders who are inhibited from taking action for various reasons that we return to below, and this is a largely untapped resource for anti-racism action. What is clear, however, is that we currently lack robust data on the prevalence of bystander anti-racism and of stated preparedness to take such action. Also missing is a clear understanding of how the prevalence of bystander anti-racism varies across different settings, as well as by the form and overtness of the racism in question.

### **Outcomes of Bystander Anti-Racism**

If bystander anti-racism is to become a key component of anti-racist social policy, productive outcomes of bystander anti-racism must be demonstrated. This section reviews the literature on the possible outcomes of bystander anti-racism for a range of different social actors and highlights areas where further research is needed.

The first question of interest is the effect of bystander anti-racism on those targeted by racism. There is evidence that, for a direct target of racism, responding to an incident of racism has health benefits (Brondolo, Brady ver Halen, Pencille, Beatty, & Contrada, 2009; Krieger, 1990; Krieger & Sidney, 1996). It is not known whether the health benefits extend to a target of racism if a bystander takes prosocial action. In a discussion piece on bystander training in organizational settings, Scully and Rowe (2009) hypothesize that for targets of racism “‘on the spot’ help and affirmation from bystanders may be especially effective because it is an immediate, positive, often unexpected reinforcement” (p. 1), but this issue has not yet been explored empirically. Further research is needed to determine the extent to which bystander action assuages the negative impacts of racism for targets.

There is some suggestion that there are benefits of bystander anti-racism beyond the target. Hyers’s (2007) study of bystander action was introduced above. She used a diary method to gather 98 women’s reflections on their responses to racism (among other things) and the consequences of their response(s). There were benefits from assertive responses (i.e., showing visible signs of dissatisfaction) for

bystanders themselves, with almost three-quarters of assertive responders (71%) reporting that they were satisfied with their response, compared to only 31% of those who responded in a nonassertive fashion. When asked whether they would respond differently to such an incident in the future, those who had employed nonassertive responses were significantly more likely to express a desire to respond differently in the future than were assertive responders (54% vs. 29%). This study points to the personal satisfaction created from challenging racism and potentially educating or changing perpetrator behavior (Hyers, 2007, p. 9).

Lingering regret may even lead to rumination that has been associated with ill health. Brosschot, Gerin, and Thayer (2006) reviewed the literature on worry, rumination, and anticipatory stress, and they demonstrate that these processes can affect both psychological and somatic health. Low, Radhakrishnan, Schneider, and Rounds (2007) looked at ethnic discrimination in the workplace among working adults, staff, and students at a university in the southwest United States. Witnessing ethnic discrimination was common among their respondents, and was reported as frequently as personal experiences of discrimination. Across three studies, between 46% (undergraduate students) and 69% (working adults) of participants reported having witnessed ethnic/racial harassment in the workplace over the previous 2 years. They found that witnessing or even hearing about incidents of ethnic discrimination directed at a co-worker “was associated with deleterious well-being consequences that were comparable to those suffered by direct targets” (p. 2290). Low et al. found that the experiences of being a bystander had a cumulative effect on those who were also targets of discrimination. That is, those who witnessed discrimination and were also a target of discrimination themselves were found to have the poorest occupational, psychological, and health outcomes. In sum, there are suggestions in the literature that bystander inaction has deleterious effects, but there has been insufficient investigation of the potential benefits of bystander anti-racism.

Examination of incident diaries in Hyers’s (2007) study revealed that one of the key motives of active bystanders was educating the perpetrator. The possibility that bystander anti-racism has productive effects for the perpetrator requires further empirical investigation. Assertive responses may stop the behavior at the moment of confrontation, and in the longer term (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Hyers, 2010). White U.S. university undergraduates participated in a series of experiments where experimental confederates confronted them about stereotypical racial comments (Czopp, Monteith, & Mark, 2006). Participants reported negative self-directed effects in the form of guilt and self-criticism following the confrontation. The confrontation also had behavioral consequences: participants were less likely to respond in stereotypical ways on a subsequent task. In a study of aversive racism and bystander behavior, Son Hing, Li, and Zanna (2002) designed an experiment that induced participants (introductory psychology students at a Canadian university) to respond in a manner that employed racial stereotypes. Following this,

participants were required to write a persuasive essay arguing that minority students must be treated fairly at universities. While the essay they had just written espousing egalitarian values was fresh in their minds, an experimental confederate then pointed out the hypocrisy of their earlier response, pointing to participants' use of stereotypes. For individuals high on a measure of aversive racism, highlighting the hypocrisy of their response led them to rely less on stereotypes in a posttest. This study of inducing hypocrisy provides some support for the assertion that bystander anti-racism has educative benefits for perpetrators of racism.

The impact of bystander behavior across multiple levels is evident in a study by Paluck (2011) that focuses on bystander action in schools, in relation to religion, race, and homosexuality. In this study, beneficiaries of bystander intervention span from individual protagonists to broader school culture. Paluck examined the effects of an education program implemented in 10 U.S. high schools involving 539 students. The training program had an impact beyond the individual peer trainers, with 58% of trainers in the program being nominated by their peers as someone likely to stand up for students being teased or insulted, compared to 30% of trainers who did not complete the program (see also Paluck, 2006).

When thinking about social norms, a key question of interest is whether bystander anti-racism only inhibits public expressions of racism or whether underlying beliefs are changed. Czopp et al. (2006) argue that even if bystander action only changes public behavior, this nonetheless "may have beneficial consequences by creating norms of egalitarianism and instigating self-regulatory processes" (p. 784).

The public intolerance of racist behavior can have a vital contextual effect on subsequent acts of racism, but also on attitudes. Watt and Larkin (2010) found that higher levels of prejudice are associated with increased false consensus effects, such that highly prejudiced individuals overestimate support for their racist views to a greater extent than less prejudiced individuals. People who perceive themselves to be in the majority are more forthright in expressing racist opinions, less prepared to compromise, and less likely to modify their views, than those who perceive themselves to be in the minority (Watt & Larkin, 2010). Public condemnation through bystander anti-racism can potentially combat "false consensus effects" that result from individuals overestimating general community support for their racist views (Pedersen, Walker, Paradies, & Guerin, 2011). Social norms influence both attitudes and behavior. In a study by Blanchard, Crandall, Brigham, and Vaughn (1994) involving 277 White women attending university in the United States, hearing a condemnation of racism increased expressions of anti-racism, while in a study of 395 American college students, peer norms were found to predict racist attitudes over and above an individual's own ideological beliefs (Potéat & Spanierman, 2010). In line with Blanchard et al. (1994), anti-racist peer norms (using a measure of appreciation of cultural diversities and commonalities) were found to predict lower individual modern racism attitudes, suggesting

that anti-racist group norms may have a positive effect on individual members' racial attitudes. In combination with evidence that attitudes and behaviors are moderately correlated (Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson, & Gaertner, 1996; Schutz & Six, 1996; Wagner, Christ, & Pettigrew, 2008) and behavior change can lead to attitude change (Pedersen, Walker, & Wise, 2005), it seems likely that bystander anti-racism can establish social norms that will constrain racist behavior in the short term but also affect attitudes in the long term.

### **Obstacles to Bystander Anti-Racism**

The social psychological literature points to a number of factors that could act as barriers to bystander anti-racism. This section particularly highlights the roles of group identity and perceptions of risk, both to personal safety and to social status.

One of the key variables of interest in this work is group identity. Research indicates that under most conditions, bystanders are most likely to help those they see as similar to themselves (Levine, Cassidy, Brazier, & Reicher, 2002; Saucier, Miller, & Doucet, 2005). A meta-analysis of helping behavior found that White American participants generally offered less help to Black Americans than to fellow White Americans, particularly when a failure to assist could be attributed to a reason other than race (Saucier et al., 2005). That is, when helping took longer, involved more risk, was more difficult or required more effort, less help was given to Black compared to White Americans. Kunstman and Plant (2008) put experimental participants into staged emergency situations and measured the speed and quantity of help provided to Black and White victims. Blacks received help more slowly and less often than Whites in equivalent emergencies. They found that the discrepancy between help offered to Blacks relative to Whites increased with the severity of the emergency. In addition, consistent with an aversive racism perspective, where racist behavior is enacted when it can be justified by nonracial reasoning, the relationship between "race" and helping speed was mediated by interpreting the situation as less severe. When the target of an emergency was Black, White participants constructed the situation as less severe, therefore requiring less of their help, than when the target of the same emergency was White. The implication is that when it is possible to attribute racist behavior to some other factor, this aversion toward out-groups will become evident.

That bystander action is more likely when the target belongs to the same group as an onlooker has implications for bystander anti-racism. If only those belonging to the same ethnic group as the target of racism are likely to intervene, this severely restricts the potential for bystander anti-racism. We return to this issue below, where we highlight invoking superordinate group membership as a possibility for overcoming this obstacle.

Another key obstacle to bystander anti-racism is perceived personal risk. In the previously cited study of school race-based bullying in Canada, Aboud and

Joong (2008) found that the obstacles to bystander action tended to be *selffocused*. It was very common in this study for children to fear that a bully might turn on them if they were to intervene. This highlights the importance of bystander risk as an obstacle to action. Other common barriers were perceptions that intervening would be ineffective, that the issue was “none of my business,” and that “no words came to mind,” suggesting that the children in the study were ill-equipped to act in situations of race-based bullying. Even when children in this study intervened in incidents of name calling, although they felt good about having done so, they doubted the effectiveness of their intervention. There may be strong public perceptions that bystander action has little effect, and this perception would constitute a major obstacle to action. However, there has been too little empirical research to make sound prescriptions on this potential obstacle, and on the merit of awareness raising about the benefits and means of bystander anti-racism.

Related to personal risk, bystander anti-racism is also perceived to potentially impact interpersonal relations. Hyers’s (2007) study, described above, was interested in how “gender role prescriptions for women to be passive and accommodating” (p. 1) could inhibit anti-racist or assertive responses. The study examined whether activist norms or gender role prescriptions take precedence when hearing a racist comment. From her analysis of 98 women’s diaries of racist incidents, Hyers concluded that gender role prescriptions were “a prominent enforcer of silence” (p. 10). The reasons that women did not respond in an assertive way (though three-quarters considered assertive responses) were to avoid conflict (37%) and impression management (13%). Confronting racist opinions (that often take the form of jokes or “light-hearted banter”) can also provoke accusations of excessive levels of political correctness. Although not speaking up against racism may be seen in itself as a failure of free speech, Witenberg (2004, 2007) found that (although not the case for younger children) youth between 15 and 24 years presented freedom of speech concerns as a reason not to engage in anti-racism, with appeals to “free speech” increasing with age. Dominant discourses about freedom of speech, and antipolitical correctness, can reinforce a sense of threat to social status from engaging in bystander anti-racism.

In their reflections on bystander training in organizations, Scully and Rowe (2009) suggest that preservation of interpersonal relations may be an obstacle to bystander action in the workplace. They argue that a number of fears may inhibit bystander interventions in organizations, including fear of losing friendships, embarrassing superiors, loss of privacy, retaliation, and other potential consequences. Maher (2009) found in 10 interviews and a focus group with non-Muslim “media readers or viewers” in Australia that speaking up against anti-Islamic talk when in the company of family and close friends was hindered by the perceived threat to interpersonal relations and in-group status. Guerin (2003, 2005) argues that one of the functions of racist talk is to maintain social relationships, a function that is often overlooked. In contexts like schoolyards, “racist statements function to

maintain groups and relationships rather than seriously promote racism” (2003, p. 29). This suggests that the social status to be gained from racist talk may be an obstacle to bystander action across a range of different settings. According to Guerin (2003), the implication of this is that bystander interventions need to parallel the social function of racist talk in order that status not be imperiled. That is, just citing facts or statistics alone as a means to contradict racist talk will be ineffective. However, there has been too little empirical research that has explored this issue.

Finally, underdeveloped social norms may inhibit bystander anti-racism. Kawakami, Dunn, Karmali, and Dovidio (2009) conducted an experiment to look at discrepancies between how people imagine they would feel upon hearing a racist comment and how they actually feel. Participants were exposed to no racism, a moderate racial slur, or an extreme racial slur. Regardless of the severity of the insult, the authors found that “although people anticipate feeling upset and taking action upon witnessing a racial act against an out-group, they actually respond with indifference” (p. 278). The authors suggest that norms of intolerance in relation to racism may not be as well developed as is needed. Blanchard et al. (1994) examined the effect of hearing others either condemn or condone racism, finding that such social influence accounted for 45% of the variance in anti-racist opinions of participants. Anti-racist opinions could be pushed in either direction. That is, as noted above, hearing a condemnation of racism increased expressions of anti-racism, but hearing another condone racism significantly weakened anti-racist views (Blanchard et al., 1994).

This section has presented some of the obstacles that need to be considered in the area of bystander anti-racism, including in-group preferences, risk to personal safety, risk to social status, and weak social norms. The next section examines effective bystander anti-racism.

### **Effective Bystander Anti-Racism**

We now turn to the literature on what makes bystander anti-racism effective. We highlight that the form and tenor of bystander anti-racism must be context appropriate. The literature on group identity is also explored to look at who is best positioned, in-group or out-group members, to engage in bystander anti-racism.

The most effective bystander action is that which communicates a message of disapproval or discomfort without damaging interpersonal relations. This is important considering that fear of damaging interpersonal relations is a commonly cited barrier to bystander action. Effective bystander action is a delicate balance between communicating discomfort and maintaining interpersonal relations, and the most appropriate action will depend on features of a particular situation. Plous (2000) suggests that interventions will be most effective if a bystander can avoid inducing defensiveness in the offender. Possible means of doing this are as follows

(from Plous, 2000, p. 199): (1) Ask questions, rather than make statements. For example, “why do you say that?” As Fisher and Ury (1983) argued, “Statements generate resistance, whereas questions generate answers. . . Questions offer. . . no target to strike at, no position to attack” (cited p. 117); (2) target the offender’s egalitarian self-image where possible. For example, “I’m surprised to hear you say that, because I have always thought of you as someone who is very open-minded”; (3) describe how a racist comment or joke makes you feel. For example, “It makes me uncomfortable to hear that”; and (4) take a respectful, rather than self-righteous, approach.

In line with a number of these suggestions, the Anti-racism Response Training (A.R.T.) program lists the following possible responses to racism: disagreeing/assertive interjection, asking the perpetrator to clarify/repeat his or her comments, expressing personal emotional reactions, empathic confrontation (i.e., helping perpetrator to reflect on his or her feelings/behavior), noting the damage and offense caused, questioning the validity of the action, naming the action as racism, supporting the target, and mobilizing support from other bystanders/authorities. This program also includes a situation checklist that includes: (1) assessing the safety of the situation; (2) determining what action can be taken; and (3) considering what outside assistance is required. After the incident has been resolved, a last step is to consider whom to debrief and how (Ishiyama, 2007).

The interplay between hostile and nonhostile confrontations and interpersonal relations was explored by Czopp et al. (2006). The research found that confrontations were effective in reducing subsequent use of stereotypes, regardless of the level of threat involved in the confrontation. Hostile interventions, however, had greater negative interpersonal consequences. Those exposed to the threatening confrontation expressed more anger toward the confronter and evaluated the confronter less favorably than those in the low-threat condition, “a hostile and accusatory confrontation that labeled participants as racists elicited stronger feelings of anger than a calm appeal for fairness and equality” (p. 799). This work implies that measured confrontations can be equally effective as more hostile approaches, while simultaneously preserving interpersonal relations. Similarly, a recent study by Hyers (2010) found that the hostility of a confrontation about heterosexism did not increase the effectiveness of the confrontation, and also had negative interpersonal implications. Another experimental study examined the effectiveness of strategies to reduce defensiveness or “backlash” when a perpetrator of racial prejudice is confronted by a bystander (Stone, Whitehead, Schmadler, & Focella, 2011). The authors found that asking questions designed to encourage a process of self-affirmation in the perpetrator reduced the negative interpersonal implications of a confrontation.

In an article examining racism among White youth in the English midlands, Nayak (2010) reflected on the visceral nature of the racist discourses they used in relation to Asian-British shopkeepers and residents, and toward Nayak

himself. The English youth discussed the smell of Asians and their houses through references to excrement and their lack of morality, and associated them with rubbish and filth. This deeply evocative and visceral racism has been identified in the work of Mary Douglas (1992), and more recently by David Sibley (1995) regarding Romani in Europe. Nayak observed that government reports and prescriptions for improving community relations often fail to engage with visceral racism. Nayak also noted the limited success of his own measured use of logic and contradiction to combat such visceral racism. It may be that visceral forms of racism require visceral-like responses (i.e., visceral anti-racism). This research cautions against an automatic rejection of more confrontational tactics and language, especially in circumstances where interpersonal relations are weakly developed. It also reiterates the need to be cognizant of the perceived and actual risks involved in responding to racism, particularly when it is of a more overt and explicit nature.

The role of group identity on helping behavior was discussed above. Helping was most likely among individuals who saw themselves as similar to one another. Levine, Prosser, Evans, and Reicher (2005) found that the level of help offered depends on the group identity that is primed. When a relatively narrow social group identity (Manchester United football fans) was primed, participants in the experiment were slower to help (and offered less help) to football fans from a rival team. However, when a more inclusive social group identity was primed (football fan), the help offered was equivalent regardless of the particular team a target supported. Public education campaigns aimed at fostering more inclusive identities (including global, national, regional, and sectoral identities) may be important in fostering prosocial action across ethnic difference. These campaigns could emphasize shared values, experiences, affiliations, and roles to promote common, inclusive social group membership. This has analogies to a more general point that anti-racism strategies (especially social marketing campaigns) are most successful when they celebrate and emphasize difference while also emphasizing the universality of the human condition (Levy et al., 2005; Paradies et al., 2009; Pedersen et al., 2011).

There has also been some exploration within social psychology of who is best positioned to confront racism. The research on this issue is somewhat mixed. Czopp and Monteith (2003) found that bystander interventions by target group members (African Americans in their research) were less effective in inducing feelings of guilt and self-criticism in perpetrators than confrontations from nontarget group members (White Americans). In addition, bystander action from people of the same ethnicity as the target of the racism was more likely to be assessed as an overreaction. Similarly, in-group members were found to have more influence when intervening than out-group members in a study by Levine et al. (2002). Rasinski and Czopp (2010) found that this extends not just to the individual being confronted, but also to others observing the incident. Those observing bystander confrontations evaluated the confrontation more favorably when the confronter

was a nontarget rather than a target group member (Rasinski & Czopp, 2010). Another study, however, found that confrontation was equally effective regardless of whether the bystander belonged to the target or the nontarget group (Czopp et al., 2006). In general, the research reviewed paints a generally optimistic picture about the potential for bystanders, regardless of target group status, to play a role in curbing everyday racism.

If nontarget group members do have an especially effective role in bystander anti-racism, then this makes addressing false consensus effects all the more important, highlighting the critical need for leadership and role modeling to inculcate majority group responsibility for bystander action.

### Discussion: Bystander Anti-Racism Policy and Practice

This review has identified a range of potential enablers and obstacles to bystander anti-racism. Potential enablers and obstacles range from factors like group identity, which have received extensive empirical attention, to those like an awareness of the harm caused by racism, where further research is required to establish precisely their role in bystander anti-racism. Table 1 below summarizes the range of enablers and obstacles associated with bystander action as discussed thus far.

**Table 1.** Potential Enablers and Obstacles to Bystander Action

<b>Enablers of bystander action</b>
Knowledge of what constitutes racism
Awareness of harm caused by racism
Perception of responsibility to intervene
Perceived ability to intervene—skills (optimism, self/collective efficacy)
Desire to educate perpetrator
Affective responses to racism: empathy, anger, disapproval, etc.
Anti-racist social norms
<b>Obstacles to bystander action</b>
Exclusive group identity
Fear of violence or vilification, being targeted by perpetrator
Perception that action would be ineffective
Lack of knowledge about how to intervene
Gender role prescriptions for women
Impression management, preserving interpersonal relations
Desire to avoid conflict
Freedom of speech/antipolitical correctness
Social norms that are tolerant of racism

*Sources:* (Aboud & Joong, 2008; Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008; Howley & Pedersen, 2006; Hyers, 2007; Levine et al., 2005; Saucier et al., 2005; Stocks et al., 2009; Wellman et al., 2009; Witenberg, 2004, 2007).

Ashburn-Nardo, Morris, and Goodwin (2008) used the classic social-psychological research on bystander intervention to develop the Confronting Prejudiced Responses (CPR) model. The CPR model is an attempt to take the theory and research on bystander helping and apply it to antiprejudice action. The CPR model outlines five steps that a bystander goes through in the process of intervening: (1) an incident must be interpreted as racism or discrimination; (2) the bystander must decide whether the incident warrants confrontation; (3) the bystander needs to take responsibility for intervening or confronting the perpetrator; (4) once a bystander has taken responsibility, that person is required to decide how to confront or intervene. This means a bystander has to make an assessment that he or she has the skills or ability to intervene; and (5) a bystander takes action, and this may involve a cost-benefit analysis.

The five-stage CPR model is an instructive description of the processes involved in bystander action at an individual level. The authors of the CPR model acknowledge that bystanders may not always go through such a deliberative process before intervening and that sometimes action is spontaneous or driven by strong emotion. Our review considers the CPR model's coverage of motivational factors as inadequate, a point we return to below. The CPR model does offer, however, an indication of the cognitive factors that enable bystander anti-racism. The first two steps of the model suggest that bystander action is facilitated by knowledge of what constitutes racism, coupled with an awareness of the gravity of racism, and an ability to see a situation from the target's perspective. This suggests the need for public education both on the nature of racism as existing on a continuum that includes subtle manifestations (Denson, Iyer, & Lickel, 2010) and on promoting empathy, perspective-taking, and egalitarian norms (see Paradies et al., 2009). There may also be utility in increasing awareness of the wider detrimental effects of everyday racism, such as racist jokes and stereotypes, as these more mundane offences may be evaluated as too insignificant to warrant a response. The CPR model also suggests that bystander action is more likely when individuals feel responsible for intervening when racism occurs. The third step of the CPR model points to the importance of campaigns that inculcate a prosocial position, drawing on shared social identities, as well as the influential effect of leaders, role models, and peers.

The fourth step in the CPR model points to the importance of skills in intervention or confrontation. Bystander action is enabled when individuals perceive they have the skills to act. This reinforces the argument made in the previous section about the need to develop appropriate skills and confidence in bystander action (Aboud & Joong, 2008). Providing people with these skills, as well as educating them about the utility of confrontation, will enable bystander anti-racism. Scully and Rowe (2009) have suggested that many of the obstacles identified in Table 1 (above) could be overcome through training. Such training needs to involve both observing and *practicing* bystander behavior, including "discussions about when

to act, when and whom to consult” (Scully & Rowe, 2009, p. 7). Banyard (2008) highlights the need for training to be specific to the type of situation in which a bystander may be called on to act. Lawson et al. (2010) tested the effectiveness of a role-playing exercise based on Plous’s (2000) suggestions. In a laboratory environment, undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology unit were allocated to either an experimental (23 students) or a control group (38 students). Participants in the control group took part in the role-playing exercise, practicing bystander anti-racism. The ability of undergraduate students in the experimental group to develop effective responses to prejudiced comments was improved, relative to the control group, after participating in the exercise.

Research by Wellman et al. (2009) suggests that dispositional optimism (a generalized positive outlook) is related to bystander anti-racism. Wellman et al. found that when egalitarian values were made salient, low-prejudiced optimists were more likely than low-prejudiced pessimists to challenge a racist joke. The willingness of optimists to intervene was hypothesized by the authors to be related to optimists’ heightened sense of self-efficacy. Along these lines, Howley and Pedersen (2006) looked at the roles of self- and collective efficacy in helping behavior. In their work, self-efficacy is understood as an individual’s belief that one can have an impact on community decisions, while collective efficacy refers to an individual’s belief that a group of people working together can affect community decisions. These researchers found that beliefs about *collective* rather than self-efficacy were more closely linked to helping behavior. A recent experimental study involving 82 U.S. White university students demonstrated that bystander action supporting affirmative action at the university was higher among those with high perceived collective efficacy than among those who perceived that their collective efforts had only a small chance of being effective (low efficacy condition) (Stewart, Latu, Branscombe, & Denney, 2010). This research again amplifies the importance of role modeling, social norms, and consensus effects in relation to bystander anti-racism.

Taken together, this research suggests that developing skills to act is important, but equally important are perceptions that action will be beneficial. This brings us to step 5 of the CPR model, which states that bystanders are more likely to act when they are aware of the benefits of intervening. While the CPR model provides a good indication of the cognitive decision-making processes required for bystander anti-racism, it fails to adequately account for motivational and contextual influences at play in bystander anti-racism.

Empathy and other affective responses have been demonstrated to motivate bystander anti-racism. Motives for making assertive responses were examined by Hyers (2007). One powerful motive for action identified was emotional expression. Female participants in the study reported that their assertive responses were driven by a need to respond in a way that expressed their values. That is, bystander action was an expression of anger, disapproval, defiance, and so on. Along the same

lines, in a study of complaining, Kowalski (1996) found that complaining could serve a number of purposes. A complaint could be aimed at changing a situation or someone's behavior, but complaints also serve an intrapsychic or cathartic function, to vent frustrations or express anger. Recent research by Stocks, Lishner, and Decker (2009) suggests that bystander behavior is not only driven by self-oriented motives (such as reducing self-directed negative affect or achieving catharsis) but also by empathy for a target. In a study of primary school children, Aboud and Miller (2007) looked at rationales for intervening in incidents of bullying. Both older (sixth grade) and younger (third grade) children utilized psychological rationales for intervention, which included empathy for the target's hurt feelings. The affective drivers of bystander action are insufficiently encapsulated in the CPR model.

The CPR model also overlooks the extent to which context matters. The research reviewed in the article suggests that strong anti-racist social norms may be key enablers of bystander action. Literature cited earlier suggests that social norms play a key role in individuals' willingness to engage in bystander anti-racism. Hearing others condemn racism increased anti-racist opinions of participants in Blanchard et al.'s (1994) study, while Poteat and Spanierman (2010) found that peer norms predicted racist attitudes. As noted above, much of the power of bystander anti-racism is derived from its potential to strengthen social norms, simultaneously combating "false consensus effects," which persist when individuals are allowed to believe the general community supports their racist views (Watt & Larkin, 2010).

Bystander anti-racism models need to acknowledge the effects of context and the social functions of the racism that bystander anti-racism is intended to challenge. We outlined earlier the advice of Guerin (2003) that bystander interventions should reflect and address the social function of the racism they address (see also Czopp et al., 2006; Hyers, 2010; Nayak, 2010). For example, if the racism of the schoolyard is principally about enhancing social status (i.e., showing off), then the tactics and rhetoric of schoolyard anti-racism needs to operate within the same idiom. This suggests the need for parity between the functions of racism and the nature of bystander anti-racism. Contextually, appropriate talk and stories are needed to replace the social uses that racist talk often fulfills. "Conversational skills and strategies for dealing with racist talk need to be taught rather than just facts and evidence" (Guerin, 2003, p. 40). Some resources have been developed that attempt to do this. For example, the U.S.-based Southern Poverty Law Center produced *Speak Up! Responding to Everyday Bigotry* (see [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)), which presents stories of everyday bigotry followed by reflections on the stories, and suggested actions when facing such a situation, including high-status responses to counter common stereotypes and misconceptions. The power of this handbook lies in the attention paid to contexts and specific situations, for example, bystander behavior within families, among friends and neighbors, and at work,

at school, and in public. Aboud and Miller (2007) highlight the importance of equipping children with the skills to respond to school-based bullying, suggesting there may be utility in training children to use particular catch phrases to intervene. These catch phrases would only be a starting point. Skills needed for bystander anti-racism must be dynamic enough to respond to a multitude of situations.

This review has demonstrated that cognitive, affective, and contextual influences must all be taken into account in promoting bystander anti-racism. We have thus weaved into Ashburn-Nardo et al.'s five-stage CPR model the importance of context, in-group effects, and the social functions of the racism. The five steps below also include suggestions on how bystander anti-racism might be enhanced through organizational readiness and by establishing stronger anti-racism norms. Finally, our view is that it may be more instructive, given the importance of context and norms, to swap the order of steps 4 and 5.

1. Some racism is overt and easily recognizable, other incidents are more subtle. In the latter cases, individuals' ability to recognize racism would benefit from professional development and training. This should include raising awareness about what constitutes racism, as well as what constitutes inclusive behavior in organizations (clubs, workplaces, etc) and settings (public realms).
2. For bystanders to decide that an incident warrants confrontation, there need to be clear statements from leaders and other voices of authority that any form of racism, no matter how "minor" or jovial, is unacceptable. It may be useful to outline the negative social and economic effects of racism.
3. Bystanders need to take responsibility for intervening, reporting, or otherwise challenging perpetrators. All members of an organization or setting should be expected to contribute to an inclusive, nondiscriminatory culture. Bystander anti-racism must also be seen as a universal responsibility, and not just as something individuals do for a member of their own group.
4. For bystanders to take action, they will have progressed through a cost-benefit analysis. The decision to act will rely heavily on context, with bystander anti-racism more likely within a local culture and practice which normalizes action and which privileges action over inaction. Setting anti-racist social norms may require local leadership and the role modeling of bystander action, especially regarding universal responsibility.
5. Once bystanders have taken responsibility, they are required to decide how to confront or intervene. This requires a bystander to have the necessary skills or ability to intervene. Ordinary people need to be informed about the means (words, tenors, and tactics) by which they can confront racism. They need some sense of which of those tools and tenors are most appropriate in different settings, for different forms of racism, and where the racism serves different social functions.

### Future Research and Policy Challenges

The scholarship reviewed here suggests that there may be multiple benefits from bystander anti-racism. The specific benefits can be categorized according to the target, the active bystander, other witnesses, the perpetrator, the organization, and society. Apart from having the racism they experience blunted or intercepted, victims may also benefit from not feeling abandoned by their peers in public, as well as having their sense of citizenship, belonging, and community (to the nation, locality, organization, or company) affirmed. Those who take prosocial action against racism may benefit by not experiencing regret, by accumulating positive feelings from having acted virtuously, and may also ameliorate detrimental effects on their own well-being. Other witnesses to the prosocial act could feel safer within their organizations or in those settings, and may be emboldened to act themselves in the future. The established positive effect of bystander anti-racism on perpetrators is to constrain their racist behaviors, challenging their consensus perceptions, and constructing racist acts as a deviance. The benefits of bystander anti-racism for organizations probably mirror those that have been established regarding all forms of anti-racism: reductions in absenteeism and staff turnover, and enhanced staff productivity and creativity (Paradies et al., 2009). There is a need for more robust quantitative evidence on the positive effects of bystander anti-racism and this needs to be analyzed alongside social and contextual variables. Similarly, empirical data on the deleterious effects of nonaction need to be collected.

This review detailed some of the perceived obstacles to bystander anti-racism. A key obstacle is within group identification that can numb feelings of prosocial responsibility toward targets from another group (e.g., another cultural background). Another notable obstacle is the lack of knowledge about what are efficacious bystander tactics, rhetoric, and tenor. There is as yet insufficient data on these obstacles to generate suggestions on bystander practices or policy prescriptions. Another obstacle to action is the concern about the safety of bystanders. There is a need for research to assess both the perceived and actual risk of bystanders becoming additional targets during racist incidents. As discussed above, risk of damage to interpersonal relations is important for many potential bystanders. Again, these perceived risks need to be quantified so that they can be matched against the potential benefits of bystander action. A cost-benefit analysis would shore up the policy case for bystander action and provide a basis from which to review campaign materials for encouraging such action.

There are different forms of bystander anti-racism. It may be better that bystander anti-racism adopt nonconfrontational tactics, so as to avoid generating defensiveness within the racist protagonist. There is also an argument for confrontational approaches in those circumstances where strident racism serves certain social functions and where interpersonal relations will not be jeopardized by confrontation. Bystander anti-racism could include stern, serious but

diplomatic statements. The use of humor is another option, but it again ranges from words and tenors that ridicule the racist, to joking that deflates a tense situation or that distracts an offender from their target. Too little is known about the relative merits of these different forms of bystander anti-racism across different social settings.

Encouraging bystander anti-racism offers the hope of shifting social norms toward intolerance of everyday racisms, and leveraging additional prosocial action from the untapped potential that seems to exist. This would have a positive effect on consensus perceptions, and, in a cyclical manner, dominant social norms would further strengthen the public intolerance of racism and constrain public enactments of racism.

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