Minority- and Majority-Status Bystander Reactions To, And Reasoning About, Intergroup Social Exclusion

Sally B. Palmer

University of Exeter

Andrea Filippou,

UCL Institute of Education

Eirini K. Argyri and Adam Rutland

University of Exeter

Author Note

Data was collected as part of the second author's Masters dissertation at the UCL Institute of Education, supervised by the first author. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sally B. Palmer, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter EX1 2LU, United Kingdom. Email: s.b.palmer@exeter.ac.uk

Highlights

- Intergroup status of bystanders and victims influences helping
- Majority-status bystanders help majority victims most
- Minority-status bystanders help majority-status and minority-status victims equally
- Majority-status bystanders with cross-group friendships help minority-status more
- Increasing a sense of personal responsibility may boost majority-status helping

Abstract

We examined minority-status (non-Cypriot immigrant) and majority-status (Cypriot national) preadolescents' bystander reactions to, and reasoning about, intergroup social exclusion (N=367; M_{age}=11.7 years; 50% Cypriot). Participants read one of three contexts where victim group identity was either non-Cypriot or Cypriot, or a context where identity was not mentioned (i.e., control). Cypriot participants reported higher prosocial bystander responses when Cypriot victims were excluded compared to when non-Cypriot victims were excluded. Non-Cypriot participants reported equally high prosocial bystander responses for Cypriot and non-Cypriot victims, and both were higher than the control condition. When choosing to challenge social exclusion, non-Cypriot and Cypriot participants employed moral reasoning, focussing on concerns of welfare and equality. When choosing not to challenge the exclusion, Cypriot bystanders referenced personal choice (e.g., "I would not say anything, it is not my problem") more when victim identity was salient. Non-Cypriot bystanders only referenced personal choice when not challenging exclusion in the control context. Cypriot participants with high levels of intergroup contact reported higher helping intentions towards non-Cypriot victims. These findings support and extend social reasoning developmental theory and highlight practical implications for tackling intergroup social exclusion in schools and maintaining positive intergroup relations.

(192 words)

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Minority- and Majority-Status Bystander Reactions To, And Reasoning About, Intergroup Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is pervasive across childhood and adolescence (Killen & Rutland, 2011). It negatively impacts children's social emotional wellbeing and the ability to develop healthy peer relationships, and can impede academic engagement and learning (McDougall, Hymel, Vaillancourt, & Mercer, 2001; Nansel et al., 2001). *Intergroup* social exclusion - when someone is "left out" by the peer group because of a particular group membership (e.g., ethnicity, nationality) - is particularly detrimental for the excluded individual because it typically reflects issues of prejudice and discrimination (Killen & Rutland, 2011; Mulvey, 2016). This exacerbates negative outcomes for victims, and normalizes negative intergroup attitudes among the wider peer group (Mulvey, Hoffman, Gonultas, Hope & Cooper, 2018; Russell, Poteat, Sinclair & Koenig, 2012). It is therefore imperative to recognize when social exclusion reflects prejudice and when it does not, as the latter requires a response that acknowledges the wrongfulness of prejudice and discrimination (Killen et al., 2013). One way to attenuate the negative effects of intergroup social exclusion is to encourage those who witness it ("bystanders"), to challenge it. The current study examines if and when young bystanders differentiate between different contexts of social exclusion.

Peer-based social exclusion typically occurs in front of peer bystanders, who can react in a number of ways (e.g., Salmivalli et al., 1996). When bystanders challenge victimization, they can stop it and prevent negative attitudes from becoming entrenched (Abbott et al., 2020; Palmer & Abbott, 2018). Consequently, promoting prosocial bystander behaviors that help to reduce victimization is understood to be one of the most important features of successful anti-bullying interventions (Evans, Cotter & Fraser, 2014). Yet, despite a wealth of research on bystander reactions to generalized bullying, few studies have examined how young people react as bystanders to intergroup contexts of social exclusion, and none have

considered how the identity-status (i.e., the position a group holds within the societal hierarchy) of bystanders, perpetrators, and victims may *combine* to influence bystander reactions to intergroup social exclusion. Understanding whether young people recognize the difference between different forms of social exclusion (i.e., when it may reflect prejudice and when it does not) is necessary in order to effectively inform school-based interventions to reduce it (e.g., Evans et al., 2014; Killen et al., 2013; Palmer & Abbott; 2018). As such, it is imperative to determine whether bystanders find it tougher to challenge contexts of social exclusion where identity-status is salient compared to when it is not. Importantly, this may vary according to the bystander's own identity-status. The current study therefore examined when and how the relative identity-status of both the victim and the bystander, influenced bystander reactions to contexts of intergroup social exclusion where identity-status was salient, compared to social exclusion where identity-status was not salient.

Group Membership and Status

Initial studies suggest that different group memberships may prompt different bystander reactions during intergroup contexts. One study on inter-school name-calling showed that adolescent bystanders challenged the victimization of school-ingroup victims more than school-outgroup victims (Palmer et al., 2015). However, in this study, both the ingroup and outgroup schools shared the same societal status. Importantly, when group identity reflects a relative minority or majority-status position in society, intergroup social exclusion may prompt additional concerns related to prejudice and discrimination (Hitti et al, 2017). This can influence evaluations and bystander reactions. Indeed, Mulvey, Boswell and Niehaus (2018) found that language-ingroup (majority-status) bystanders challenged the exclusion of a language-outgroup (minority-status) member *more* than the exclusion of a language-ingroup member. However, other research suggests outgroup status results in *lower* rates of helping during intergroup name-calling (Abbott & Cameron, 2014). These studies,

however, both examined only majority-status bystander responses. Research on intergroup *bullying* showed that majority-status peers tend to challenge intergroup contexts *less* than their minority-status counterparts (e.g., Caravita et al., 2019; Gonultus & Mulvey, 2020). The present study uniquely compares minority and majority-status bystander responses in the context of social exclusion.

Together with Palmer et al. (2015), these studies collectively demonstrate how group membership is a relevant consideration for bystander decision-making during intergroup contexts – and that status is an important part of this. The findings of Mulvey et al (2018) and others (Elenbaas & Killen, 2016; McGuire, Elenbaas, Killen & Rutland, 2019) suggests that, by ten years of age, children are aware of status-differentiation in intergroup contexts, and this can inform their decision-making. As such, preadolescence is an important period of development for understanding intergroup processes such as identity-status. However, to date, no study has examined how *the status of the bystander* (as a minority or majority group member) – in addition to the victim's group status – influences bystander decision-making during intergroup social exclusion contexts. Furthermore, bystander responses to intergroup contexts where status is salient has not been compared to social exclusion where identity-status is not a feature. The present study uniquely examined both majority- and minority-status preadolescent bystander reactions to contexts of intergroup social exclusion, and investigated whether bystander responses varied depending on whether identity-status was salient or not.

Minority- and Majority-Status

As schools become more diverse, majority and minority-status youth are increasingly experiencing and witnessing intergroup social exclusion (Syed, Santos, Yoo & Juang, 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to understand how both majority- and minority- status youth react when witnessing incidents of social exclusion involving both majority- and minority victims,

compared to when identity is not salient. Children become aware of group identity and relative status by middle childhood, and this has been shown to influence both minority and majority-participants' evaluations of, and reasoning about, intergroup social exclusion (Crystal et al., 2008; Elenbaas & Killen, 2016; Hitti & Killen, 2015; Killen et al., 2007; McGuire, et al., 2019; Mulvey, 2016).

Children's evaluations of intergroup social exclusion differ depending on the participants' own minority or majority status (e.g., Killen et al., 2007). For example, children from racial-minority groups (African American, Latin American, Asian-American) are more likely to anticipate social exclusion on the basis of race - and more likely to reject it - compared to European American counterparts (Crystal et al., 2008; Killen et al., 2007). Similar patterns have been observed among ethnic and racial minority and majority children in the Netherlands (Verkuyten, 2001; 2002), Germany (e.g., Feddes, Noack & Rutland, 2009) and Australia (e.g., Griffiths & Nesdale, 2006). Despite emerging research on majority- and minority- bystander reactions to *bullying* of immigrants (e.g., e.g., Caravita et al., 2019; Gonultus & Mulvey, 2020), investigations on bystander reactions to *social exclusion* have been largely neglected. The present study therefore examined whether bystander reactions to social exclusion – and the reasoning that underpins these reactions - differed between minority- and majority-status participants.

Initial research suggests that, although both minority- and majority- status children are aware of intergroup status, majority-status bystanders may demonstrate a preference for helping ingroup members - an "ingroup bias" compared to outgroup members (e.g., Caravita et al., 2019; Palmer et al., 2015). Furthermore, research shows that majority-status youth increasingly hold discriminatory attitudes towards migrant peers (Jones & Rutland, 2018; Miklikowska, 2017) which may inhibit prosocial bystander intentions (e.g., Gonultas & Mulvey, 2020). In contrast, minority-status youth experience high levels of intergroup social

exclusion, which may result in more negative evaluations of intergroup social exclusion, and an enhanced ability to differentiate between identity-based exclusion compared to a control context where identity is not mentioned (Crystal et al., 2008; Killen et al., 2007; Ruck et al., 2014). Due to lack of personal experience, majority-status bystanders may be less able to identify that exclusion is occurring due to immigrant-status, and treat it similarly to other forms of social exclusion (i.e., the control context). In increasingly diverse societies, it is important to investigate what inhibits and promotes proactive bystander reactions among minority- *and* majority-status youth.

A National-Majority and Immigrant-Minority Context

With increasing rates of migration internationally (International Organization for Migration, 2018), and accompanying negative rhetoric from majority-status members within host societies (e.g., Gniewosz & Noack, 2015; Louis, Esss & Lalonde, 2013; Zick, Pettigrew & Wagner, 2008), prejudice and discrimination toward children and adolescents from minority-status immigrant backgrounds is prevalent within schools around the world (Gonultas & Mulvey, 2019; Jones & Rutland, 2018). The current study was conducted in Cyprus; like many European nations and other countries around the world, increasing migration in Cyprus coincides with a rise in the number of children from immigrant backgrounds in Cypriot schools (European Commission, 2018; Zembylas, Michaelidou & Afantintou-Lambrianou, 2010). It is vital that research examines different national and cultural contexts in order to achieve a fuller understanding of how young people experience and respond to social exclusion (Nielsen, Haun, Kartner & Legare, 2017). Indeed, our participants attended schools where 50% of the population identified as immigrants – 25% higher than North American contexts where early research on this topic currently sits (Gonultas & Mulvey, 2020). This makes Cyprus a highly appropriate context to examine the role of identity-status, and to determine whether bystander responses among minority- and

majority- youth vary depending on who is being socially excluded. For context, an opinion poll conducted by the United Nations (Psaltis et al., 2019) in 2015, and repeated in 2018, showed that Cypriot attitudes towards migrants in general had improved, with general feelings in 2018 being neutral to negative. However, efforts to integrate migrant students within the Cypriot education system have had mixed outcomes (Theodorou, 2011).

Indeed, increasing levels of immigration has led to widespread concerns around the integration of immigrant youth in schools and maintenance of positive intergroup relations (Plenty & Jonsson, 2017). Immigrant youth, as well as other ethnic and racial minority peers, find themselves increasingly victimized compared to non-immigrant peers, and yet the way in which they react, as bystanders, to contexts of social exclusion has not yet been examined.

In the current study, we presented immigrant minority- and Cypriot national majority-status participants with one of three social exclusion contexts; (1) majority-status group excluding a minority-status peer; (2) minority-status group excluding a majority-status peer or (3) social exclusion with no mention of group-status. By including this third "control" context where identity-status was not salient, we uniquely isolated the effects of intergroup status on bystander reactions and examined whether preadolescents interpret the social exclusion contexts differently, and based on their own identity-status.

Intergroup Contact

Meaningful interactions with members of other groups ("intergroup contact") can lead to more positive intergroup relationships (Cameron & Abbott, 2017). Past research has shown that majority-status children who have contact with outgroup peers have stronger negative evaluations of outgroup exclusion compared to majority-status peers who have low intergroup contact (Crystal et al., 2008; Ruck et al., 2014; Turner & Cameron, 2016). Abbott and Cameron (2014) showed, in a relatively homogenous region of the UK, that general intergroup contact with "Black, Asian or minority-ethnic" others, increased adolescents'

intentions to help an immigrant peer. Given the influx of immigrants within Cyprus, also reflected in the proportion of immigrant participants within our study, we measured intergroup contact – via cross-group friendships - to determine whether high intergroup contact influenced majority-status bystander reactions to the social exclusion of minority-status peers in a heterogeneous environment. Cross-group friendships are a more accurate indicator of positive intergroup contact compared to measuring general levels of diversity (e.g., Turner & Cameron, 2016), so we asked participants specifically about friendships with non-Cypriot immigrant peers.

Social Reasoning Developmental Approach

The present research was informed by the Social Reasoning Developmental (SRD) model (Killen & Rutland, 2011; Rutland & Killen, 2015), which provides a framework to examine children's social and moral decision-making during intergroup contexts of social exclusion. SRD states that, with age, children become increasingly adept at weighing up moral concerns (e.g., welfare, wrongfulness of prejudice), societal concerns (e.g., group identity, status, norms) and personal concerns (e.g., autonomy, personal choice) when evaluating and reasoning about intergroup social exclusion (Rutland & Killen, 2015). In the present study, we applied the SRD approach to understand bystander reactions to intergroup social exclusion (see Palmer & Abbott, 2018; BLINDED, 2021b).

Children and adolescents from both minority and majority-status backgrounds frequently evaluate intergroup social exclusion as wrong (e.g., "it's wrong to leave someone out just because they're from a different country"). When evaluating social exclusion as okay, children can reference stereotypes or group membership (e.g., "it is ok to not invite them since they might not like the same things as us") or personal concerns and autonomy (e.g., "It's a free world, people can do what they like"). Thus, although children typically evaluate social exclusion negatively, there are instances where social exclusion is viewed as

more condonable. Reasoning data sheds more light on how children reach these decisions (Hitti & Killen, 2015; Mulvey, 2016).

Research on reasoning about bystander reactions shows that, when bystanders want to challenge intergroup social exclusion or aggression, their decisions are frequently accompanied by moral concerns. Moral concerns relate to issues of fairness, equality and discrimination (e.g., "I will help them because it's not fair that they're left out just because of where they are from"; Mulvey et al., 2016; Mulvey, 2018; Mulvey et al., 2018; Palmer et al., 2015). This is similar to reasoning about evaluations of social exclusion as "not okay", also accompanied by moral reasoning (Mulvey, 2018). In contrast, decisions not to challenge intergroup social exclusion and aggression as a bystander are frequently accompanied by a focus on personal concerns (e.g., It's none of my business, I shouldn't get involved; Mulvey, Palmer & Abrams, 2016; Palmer et al., 2015).

Unlike research which examines participants reasoning about their evaluations of social exclusion, bystander intentions are not always justified with societal reasoning (e.g., Palmer et al., 2015). Indeed, when reasoning about *evaluations* of social exclusion, or evaluations of *others'* bystander behaviors, societal concerns such as group identity and group norms may be more readily prompted (Mulvey et al., 2016; Mulvey et al., 2018), than when the participant is thinking about their own bystander action. Personal reasoning may feature more strongly in bystander reasoning than evaluation reasoning because bystanders are potentially placing themselves in a position of risk (Mulvey et al., 2016). Additionally, personal reasoning moves the focus of social exclusion away from group status and intergroup inequalities, and may therefore reduce the perceived need to challenge intergroup exclusion, particularly among participants who feel less equipped to do so - typically majority-status youth (e.g., BLINDED, 2021a).

As such, in the present study, we expected moral reasoning to accompany decisions to challenge social exclusion and personal reasoning to accompany decisions not to challenge. We expected majority-status participants to generally choose not to challenge more often than minority-status participants, particularly when identity-status was salient. As such, it was likely that concerns around personal choice would be more frequently referenced by majority-status participants compared to minority-status participants. It was an open question as to whether societal concerns (e.g., a reference to group level expectations or rules) would be used to justify bystander reactions.

Study Summary

In summary, this study provided a novel examination of the role of minority- and majority- status on preadolescents' bystander reactions to three incidents of social exclusion. "Cypriots" were considered the national majority-status group and "Non-Cypriots" an immigrant minority-status group. We presented Cypriot or non-Cypriot preadolescents with hypothetical scenarios of one of three social exclusion contexts. The first two contexts made intergroup status salient by referencing national or immigrant identities: Cypriot group excludes non-Cypriot or Non-Cypriot group excludes Cypriot. The third social exclusion context involved no mention of these group memberships, and therefore identity-status was not salient (i.e., control).

Preadolescence was the focus age group because it is a crucial developmental period for understanding intergroup processes such as identity, status and intergroup contact (e.g., Crystal, Killen & Ruck, 2008). Children are aware of status differences between groups by ten years old (Crystal et al., 2008; Elenbaas & Killen, 2016; Hitti & Killen, 2015; McGuire, et al., 2019). We did not recruit beyond 14 years to maintain an age range prior to puberty and adolescence where new concerns can emerge (e.g., more focus on romantic relationships, and new levels of cognitive complexity; Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006; Merten, 2004;

Roisman et al., 2004). However, as research has documented developmental variation in bystander reactions we controlled for age in our analyses. In line with other research, we presented gender-matched social exclusion scenarios (e.g., Abrams, Rutland & Cameron, 2003; McGuire et al., 2019) and controlled for gender as it was not a focus of the present study and no previous studies have shown that intergroup status is understood differently by boys and girls.

H1. We expected higher helping intentions for intergroup contexts of social exclusion where identity-status was salient, as these are more often recognised as discriminatory (Thijs, 2017).

H2. We expected participants would indicate different bystander intentions, depending on whether they identified as a Cypriot-national (majority-status) or Non-Cypriot immigrant (minority-status) (Hitti, Mulvey & Killen, 2017).

H3. We expected an interaction between participant's status and the social exclusion context. In line with Palmer et al. (2015) we expected majority-status bystanders to report higher helping intentions when a majority-status victim was excluded. We expected minority-status bystanders would report equally high bystander helping intentions across both intergroup social exclusion contexts (e.g., regardless of whether the victim was minority- or majority-status).

H4. When challenging social exclusion, we expected all participants, regardless of status, to employ moral reasoning (Killen, 2007; Mulvey, 2016; Mulvey et al., 2016). We predicted that decisions not to challenge exclusion would be accompanied by personal reasoning (e.g., Palmer et al., 2015). When reasoning about their decisions not to help, we expected majority-status participants to reference personal choice more than minority-status participants. It was an open question as to whether differences in societal reasoning would be observed based on decisions to challenge or not.

H5. Majority-status bystanders with higher levels of intergroup contact with minority-status peers were expected to report higher helping reactions to minority-status victims.

Method

Participants

Three hundred and sixty-seven 10-14 year olds (*M*=11.7 years, *SE*=1.47) from state schools in Larnaca, Cyprus, participated (50% female). Questionnaires were presented in Greek. Half (51%) self-identified as Greek-Cypriot (i.e., majority-status nationality) referred to here as "Cypriot". Half were from first-generation immigrant backgrounds (i.e., minority-status nationality) referred to here as "non-Cypriot". Self-reported national identities for non-Cypriot children included Bulgarian (30%), English (6%), Georgian (14%), Filipino (2%), Romanian (18%), Russian (22%), and Syrian (6%). There were no Greek or Turkish-Cypriot children in the sample.

Power analysis was conducted in G*Power to determine the appropriate sample size for an ANOVA with 6 groups, based on an alpha of .05, power of .90 and an effect size of .25 (medium). Based on these assumptions we required a sample of 338 participants (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang & Buchner, 2007).

Design

We employed a 2 (Participant Group Status: Cypriot vs. non-Cypriot) x 3 (Social Exclusion Context: Cypriot group excluding non-Cypriot vs. non-Cypriot group excluding Cypriot vs. Status Not-Salient (i.e., control) between-participant design. The main dependent variable was Prosocial Bystander Intention. We also examined if Challenge Decisions (i.e., bystander decisions to "challenge" or "not challenge" social exclusion) had an effect on social-moral reasoning.

Measures and Procedure

All measures were approved by [BLINDED NAME OF INSTITUTION] ethics committee. Informed consent was secured from schools, parent/guardians and participants. Trained researchers assisted data collection in class-sized groups, although participants were instructed to work alone. When finished, participants were debriefed and given the opportunity to ask questions.

Group context. We employed a hypothetical social exclusion scenario to test our hypotheses (e.g., see Mulvey et al., 2016 for a review) in a team context (e.g., Nesdale et al., 2014). Participants in the intergroup contexts were asked to imagine two friendship groups made up of same-gender peers. Participants read:

> "*Read on to find out which of the two following groups you belong to. The members from this group are all from the same group - they were born in Cyprus. This means they are all Cypriots. Here is the group [picture of four characters]. And here is another group. This group is different to the Cypriot group. They are not Cypriots. They were born in different countries and now live in Cyprus. We'd like you to imagine that this group is made up of children from other countries, who were born in a different country but now live in Cyprus with their families.*"

Participants in the control context did not read any information about national groups. These participants read simple information about two gender-matched groups, Group A and group B: "*Here is Group A [picture of four characters]. Here is Group B [picture of four characters]".*

Ingroup preference. To ensure the group memberships were meaningful for participants we measured ingroup preference. Participants read, "How much do you like being a member of the [group name] community?" And responded on a 1 (Very unhappy) to 5 (Very happy) Likert-type scale. One-sample t-tests showed participants were positive about their ingroup community. Cypriot: t (185) = 42.92, p<.001, M=4.80, DE=.57; non-Cypriot: t

(178) = 30.190, $p<.001$, $M=4.68$, $SD=.74$. These scores did not differ between Cypriot and non-Cypriot participants, t (363) = 1.65, $p=.101$).

Intergroup social exclusion contexts. Participants read about a group getting ready to play a game of volleyball, a common gender-neutral sport in Cyprus. They were told that the volleyball team needed one more player in order to play the game but there were two equally-skilled players to choose from. Participants read that the Cypriot group picked the Cypriot member to join (therefore excluding the non-Cypriot peer), or that the non-Cypriot group picked the non-Cypriot member to join (therefore excluding the Cypriot peer). In the control context participants read that group A pick a peer from group A (therefore excluding a peer from group B). E.g.:

> *Imagine that the Cypriot group is playing volleyball during recess at school. A non-Cypriot girl and a Cypriot girl both want to join the team. Both are good players in volleyball, but there is only room for one more player on the team. The Cypriot group decides to invite the Cypriot girl to play with them.*

Prosocial bystander intentions. Participants indicated on a 1 (*Extremely unlikely*) to 6 (*Extremely likely*) scale how likely it is they would respond in five different "prosocial" ways, including reporting to the teacher and comforting the excluded person (Palmer et al., 2015). These five items scored high reliability $\alpha=.82$ and were combined.

Direct challenge decision. We asked participants whether they thought they would directly challenge the exclusion, e.g., "Do you think you would tell the Cypriot group that they shouldn't behave in that way to the non-Cypriot girl?" Participants responded "yes" or "no". They were asked "why?" and were given three lines to write their reasoning (e.g., Mulvey et al., 2016).

Social and moral reasoning. Reasoning was coded in line with Social Domain Theory (Turiel, 1983), previous research (e.g., Mulvey et al., 2016; Palmer et al., 2015) and

pilot data. Four categories of reasoning were identified: (1) Welfare, fairness and individual rights (2) Equality, and the wrongfulness of prejudice and discrimination (3) Group identity and group norms and (4) Personal concerns (see Table 1). Two researchers independently coded 25% of the data, resulting in 96% agreement. Proportional values were used to code participants reasoning. As such, for each participant a 1 or 0 represented use of each reasoning sub-category (e.g., if a participant employed welfare reasoning then a 1 was placed in the welfare category and a 0 in each remaining category). When participants used more than one reason for a given question then this was coded proportionally (e.g., .50 and .50 would be placed in each category, and zeros in remaining categories). This prevented participants from being represented more than once in the data file. As such, an ordinal scale was created with 0, .50, and 1.0 for the use of reasoning. This proportional coding procedure is employed extensively in published research on the investigation of social and moral reasoning as it reduces concerns regarding the interdependence of the data (Hitti & Killen, 2015; Posada & Wainryb, 2008; Wainryb, Shaw, Laupa & Smith, 2001).

Intergroup contact. We asked majority-status participants, "In school, how many friends do you have who are from a different country and now live in Cyprus?" The question was repeated for "outside of school". Responses were placed on a 1 (None) to 5 (Most) scale. Pearson's r =.69, p<.001, and an average score of intergroup contact was created.

Table 1. Categories of social and moral reasoning

Domain	Category	Examples
Moral	Welfare, fairness and individual rights	"Because they are not being fair", "He will feel bad", "It's not right to treat a girl like that"

	Equality, and the wrongfulness of prejudice and discrimination	"We are all equal. The non-Cypriots were being selfish and racist", "It doesn't matter if you are Cypriot or not, you can be friends with any kid"
Societal	References to group identity and group norms or general conventions for behavior	"He is a foreigner and should be with the non-Cypriots", "The team might want to win and had to choose the one that they considered the best player" "Because these are the rules in volleyball"
Personal choice	Personal preference, self-interest and autonomy	"I would not say anything, it is not my problem", "They should learn to solve their own problems"

Results

Prosocial Bystander Responses

To test hypotheses 1-3, a 2 (Participant Group Status: Cypriot vs. non-Cypriot) x 3 (Social Exclusion Context: Cypriot excludes Non-Cypriot; Non-Cypriot excludes Cypriot; Control) between-participant ANOVA was conducted with prosocial bystander intentions as the dependent variable. We controlled for age and gender as scenarios were gender-matched and neither age nor gender were a focus of the current study. Confirming H1, a main effect of Social Exclusion Context, F (2, 359) = 3.89, p=.021, η^2=.021, showed participants generally reported equally high prosocial intentions when faced with intergroup contexts, and higher prosocial intentions in intergroup contexts ($M_{Cypriot\text{-}victim}$=4.64, SE=.10; $M_{Non\text{-}Cypriot\text{-}victim}$=4.54, SE=.10), compared to control (M=4.27, SE=.10), p=.008 and p=.046 respectively).

In line with H2, a main effect of Participant Group Status, F (1, 359) = 4.16, p=.04, η^2=.011 showed that non-Cypriot participants reported higher helping intentions (M=4.60, SE=.08) compared to Cypriot participants (M=4.37, SE=.08). These main effects were superseded by a Social Exclusion Context x Participant Group Status interaction, F (2, 359) = 8.70, p<.001, η^2=.046.

As predicted Cypriot participants reported higher prosocial intentions towards a Cypriot victim (M=4.57, SE=.14) compared to a non-Cypriot victim (M=4.13, SE=.13; p=.021). Cypriot's prosocial intentions towards a non-Cypriot victim did not differ compared to control (M=4.41, SE=.14; p=.13), and their intentions towards a Cypriot victim did not differ compared to control (p=.44). Non-Cypriot participants demonstrated the same prosocial intentions across both intergroup contexts, regardless of whether the victim was Cypriot (M=4.71, SE=.14) or non-Cypriot (M=4.96, SE=.14; p=.21). Unlike Cypriot participants, non-Cypriots differentiated between the intergroup contexts and control, helping Cypriot victims more than control (M=4.12, SE=.14, p=.003) and non-Cypriots more than control (p<.001). Furthermore, non-Cypriot participants were more likely to help excluded non-Cypriots than Cypriots were (p<.001), were equally likely to help excluded Cypriots as Cypriot participants were (p=.457), and were equally likely to help those in the control exclusion condition as Cypriots were (p=.13), see Figure 1.

Therefore, in line with H3, majority-status participants indicated higher prosocial intentions towards ingroup members compared to outgroup members, whereas minority-status non-Cypriot participants were equally likely to help an outgroup majority-status peer as an ingroup minority-status peer. Furthermore, minority-status participants differentiated their helping intentions between intergroup contexts of social exclusion and the control context, reporting higher intentions when identity was salient. It should be noted that effect sizes were small (Ferguson, 2009).

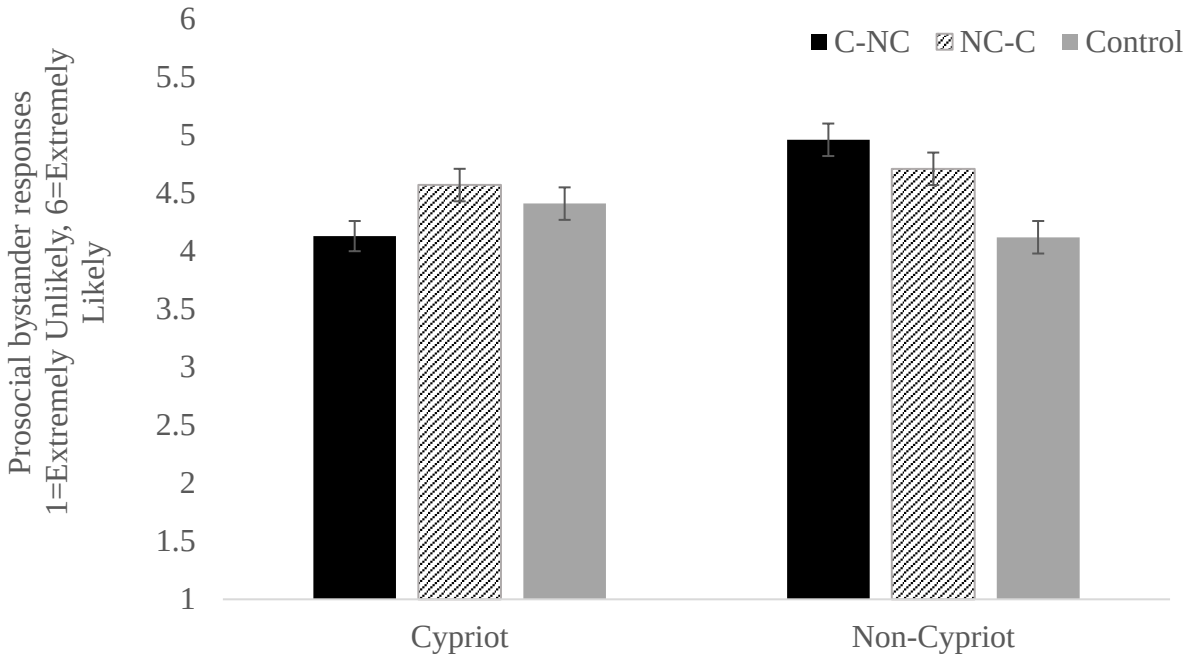

Figure 1. *Prosocial bystander responses according to Participant Group Status (Cypriot or Non-Cypriot) and Social Exclusion Context.*
Note. C-NC=Cypriot excludes Non-Cypriot; NC-C=Non-Cypriot excludes Cypriot.
P values for comparisons within participant type: Cypriot participants: NC-C to C-NC, p=.021; C-NC to control, p=.13; NC-C to control, p=.44; Non-Cypriot participants: NC-C to C-NC, p=.21; NC-C to control, p=.003; C-NC to control, p<.001. Comparisons within scenario type: C-NC: non-Cypriot participants to Cypriot participants, p<.001; NC-C: non-Cypriot participants to Cypriot participants, p=.457; Control: non-Cypriot participants to Cypriot participants p=.13.

Social and Moral Reasoning

We asked participants about the likelihood of directly challenging the exclusion together with their reason for their bystander response. In line with previous research we employed a repeated measures ANOVA to examine the reasoning data, as it is robust to the problem of empty cells (Killen et al., 2011; Mulvey et al, 2016; Palmer et al., 2015; Posada & Wainryb, 2008; Wainryb et al, 2001). Reasoning (Welfare, Equality, Group identity and norms, and Personal choice) was the repeated measures factor; Challenge Decision (yes vs. no), Participant Group Status (Cypriot vs. non-Cypriot) and Social Exclusion Context (Cypriot exclude Non-Cypriot; Non-Cypriot exclude Cypriot; Control) were between-

participant variables. Reported statistics are Greenhouse-Geisser estimates (p=.480) to correct sphericity violations and reduce F value inflations. Follow-ups are Bonferroni corrected.

A main effect of reasoning was observed, F (1.44, 413.43) = 27.85, p<.001, η^2=.088. In line with H4, paired sample t-tests showed that overall welfare was most frequently referenced (M=.68, SD=.47; all ps<.001) and equality was next most-used (M=.18, SD=.38; all ps<.05). Group identity and group norms (M=.033, SD=.13) and personal choice reasons (M=.077, SD=.27) were referenced least often and a similar amount, p=.183.

As expected, reasoning interacted with decisions to challenge or not challenge, F (1.44, 413.43) = 18.35, p<.001, η^2=.06. As predicted, those who reported they would challenge the exclusion (N=263) made more reference to moral issues: Welfare ($M_{challenge}$=.74, SD=.44, $M_{notchallenge}$=.22, SD=.42; p<.001) and Equality ($M_{challenge}$=.20, SD=.40, $M_{notchallenge}$=.00, SD=.00; p<.001); and less reference to Personal choice ($M_{challenge}$=.004, SD=.06, $M_{notchallenge}$=.61, SD=.49; p<.001), compared to those who would not challenge the exclusion (N=36). No differences were observed for use of reasoning about Group identity and norms ($M_{challenge}$=.03, SD=.11, $M_{notchallenge}$=.08, SD=.19; p=.087).

Furthermore, a three-way interaction between Social Exclusion Context x Participant Group-Status x Challenge Decision was observed for Personal choice reasoning, F (2, 287) = 57.36, p<.001, η^2=.29. Pairwise comparisons showed differences in the use of personal choice reasoning when comparing Cypriot participants' challenge vs. not-challenge decisions. Across all scenarios, majority-status Cypriots employed more personal choice reasoning (e.g., "I do not care"; "It doesn't concern me"; "I don't want to get involved in their problem") for not-challenge decisions compared to challenge decisions (Cypriot excludes Non-Cypriot: $M_{challenge}$=.02, SD=.02, $M_{notchallenge}$=.83, SD=.06, p<.001; Non-Cypriot excludes Cypriot: $M_{challenge}$=.00, SE=.02 $M_{notchallenge}$=.58 SD=.04, p<.001; Control: $M_{challenge}$=.00, SD=.02 $M_{notchallenge}$=.25 SD=.07, p=.001).

In contrast, non-Cypriot participants referenced personal choice reasoning similarly for challenge and not-challenge decisions for both intergroup contexts, (Cypriot excludes Non-Cypriot (N=1): $M_{challenge}$=.00, *SD*=.02 $M_{notchallenge}$=.00, *SD*=.09; Non-Cypriot excludes Cypriot (N=4, $M_{challenge}$=.00, *SD*=.02, $M_{notchallenge}$=.00, *SD*=.15, *ns*). For the control context, non-Cypriot participants referenced personal reasoning significantly more for not-challenge decisions (M=.90, SE=.05) compared to challenge decisions (M=.00, SE=.02), *p*<.001.

Moreover, in line with H4, comparisons of personal reasoning across not-challenge decisions showed that Cypriot participants employed more personal reasoning for the intergroup contexts of social exclusion compared to non-Cypriots, *p*s<.001. Non-Cypriots employed significantly more personal reasoning when deciding not to challenge the control scenario compared to Cypriots, *p*<.001 (see Figure 2).

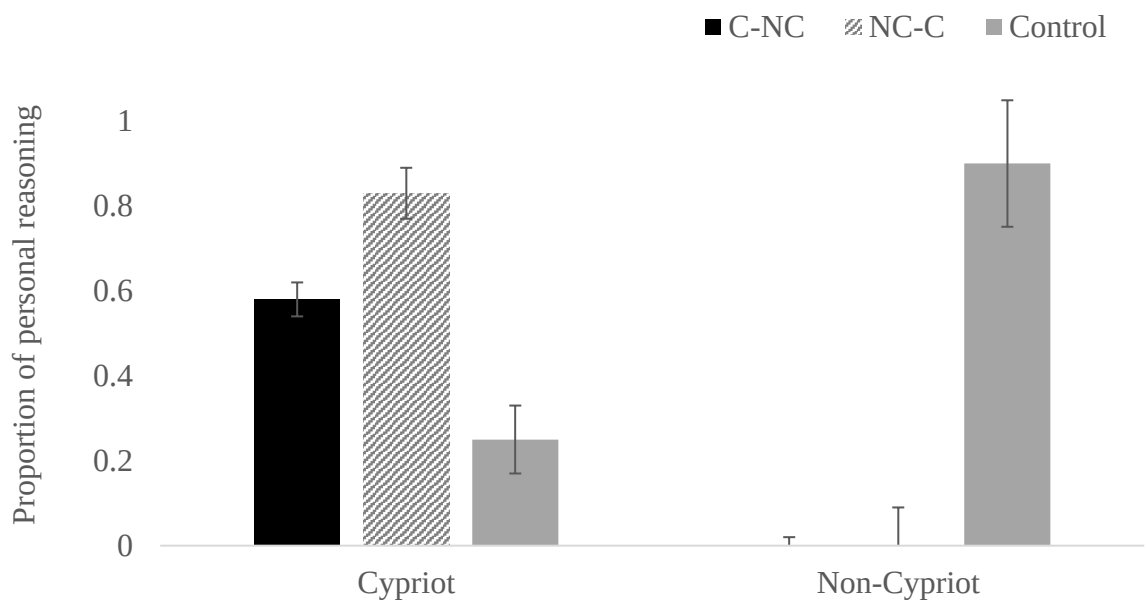

Figure 2. *Proportional use of personal reasoning across Participant Group Status (Cypriot, Non-Cypriot) and Social Exclusion Context when making decisions to "not challenge" social exclusion.*
Note. C=NC=Cypriot excludes Non-Cypriot; NC-C=Non-Cypriot excludes Cypriot. Significance values for pairwise comparisons of scenarios within participant type: Cypriot participants: C-NC to NC-C, p=.001; C-NC to control, p<.001; NC-C to control, p<.001; Non-Cypriot participants: C-NC to NC-C, p=1.00; C-NC to control, p<.001; NC-C to control, p<.001. Significance values for pairwise comparisons of participants within scenario type: C-NC: Cypriot to non-Cypriot, p<.001; NC-C: Cypriot to non-Cypriot, p<.001; Control: Cypriot to non-Cypriot, p<.001.

As can be seen in Figure 2, when choosing not-challenge, Cypriots employed more personal choice reasoning in both intergroup contexts compared to non-Cypriots, and less in the control context (25% of the time compared to 90% by non-Cypriots), all ps<.001. This suggests that majority-status Cypriot participants felt that intergroup contexts are those in which they do not take responsibility for challenging (e.g., "I wouldn't say anything because it's not my job"). In contrast, non-Cypriot participants only felt that way in the control context. As indicated by zeros in Figure 2, they did not refer to personal choice when deciding not to challenge the social exclusion of minority- or majority-status victims. Note, however, that only five non-Cypriots said they would not challenge the social exclusion of a minority- or majority-status peer.

Intergroup contact

Regression analysis was employed to investigate H5 - whether cross-group friendships significantly predicted majority-status participants' likelihood of helping a minority-status peer. To control for age and gender, these variables were entered into the first step of the model. Cross-group friendships were entered into the second step. The model was significant and explained 34% of the variance, R^2=.115, F (1, 62) = 2.69, p=.05. As expected, when cross-group friendships increased, prosocial bystander reactions increased (β=.36, p=.031), see Table 2.

Table 2. Step two of the regression model, testing the predictive value of Cypriot participants' cross-group friendships on bystander helping intentions to non-Cypriot victims

	β	SE	*t*	*p*
Age	-.20	.11	-.22	.07
Gender	.36	.31	.14	.25
Cross-group friendships	.36	.16	.27	.03

Discussion

This study uniquely examined bystander reactions to intergroup social exclusion between a diverse group of national-majority and immigrant-minority preadolescents in Cyprus. Findings showed that (1) Cypriot participants displayed an ingroup preference, to some extent, by reporting higher prosocial bystander responses towards Cypriot victims compared to non-Cypriot victims. In contrast, non-Cypriot victims reported equally high prosocial responses for both majority- and minority- victims. Furthermore (2) this distinction was reflected in the use of personal choice reasoning about bystander decisions not to help; non-Cypriot bystanders only referenced personal choice in the control condition (when identity was not salient), whereas Cypriot participants used more personal reasoning in the conditions where identity was salient. Additionally (3), cross-group friendships were significantly related to Cypriot bystanders' higher helping intentions towards non-Cypriot victims.

Our findings support social reasoning developmental (SRD) model predictions (e.g., Killen & Rutland, 2011), demonstrating generalizability of research on group identity and moral reasoning in a new national context, and extending research on *evaluations* of intergroup social exclusion by examining *bystander* responses - the first step in challenging social exclusion. Our findings provide unique insights into how preadolescents from both

minority- and majority-status groups react as bystanders to social exclusion, and the role of identity-status within this. By demonstrating when and how adolescents differentiate their bystander responses between different contexts of social exclusion, these findings have important implications for bystander research and the tailoring of school-based intervention programs to promote intergroup relations.

1. Bystander responses

Our first finding showed that Cypriot bystanders demonstrated highest prosocial intentions when the excluded peer was Cypriot (i.e., ingroup), compared to contexts where the excluded peer was non-Cypriot. This extends research from intergroup bullying contexts (e.g., Palmer et al., 2015), and could indicate majority-status participants' negative feelings towards immigrant peers (e.g., Gonultas & Mulvey, 2020; Miklikowska, 2017). At the time of data collection, immigration was perceived negatively by the general public in Cyprus (see United Nations, 2019). Discriminatory attitudes could have lowered bystander intentions towards outgroup social exclusion (e.g., Gonultas & Mulvey, 2020), or increased a sense of perceived outgroup threat and consequently ingroup protection; exploring these mechanisms is an important next step for future research. Majority-status participants also indicated similar levels of challenging when comparing Cypriot exclusion to the control context. Potentially, majority-status participants interpreted the control scenario to be the same as the intergroup scenario. However, there was also no significant difference when examining Cypriot bystander reactions towards non-Cypriot exclusion compared to control. Overall, this close pattern of bystander reactions across social exclusion contexts for majority-status participants suggests that they have difficulty differentiating between different forms of social exclusion.

In contrast, and extending research on children's evaluations of social exclusion (e.g., Hitti, Mulvey & Killen, 2017; Verkuyten, 2002), our findings showed that non-Cypriot

bystanders demonstrated equally high prosocial bystander responses regardless of whether the excluded peer was Cypriot or non-Cypriot (i.e., an ingroup or outgroup member). Non-Cypriot participants also differentiated between intergroup contexts of social exclusion and the control context where victim status was not salient. Perhaps recognizing the particular severity of intergroup social exclusion, non-Cypriot bystanders' prosocial intentions towards Cypriot and non-Cypriot victims were also higher than in the control condition. This could be due to their own experiences of discrimination increasing minority-bystanders' sensitivity to the seriousness of intergroup social exclusion (Crystal et al., 2008; Killen et al., 2007; Ruck et al., 2014). Another explanation is that challenging the social exclusion of a majority-status outgroup peer could facilitate the acceptance of minority-status peers within the majority-status dominated society. However, if minority-participants were expecting to enhance their position within the wider peer group, we may have seen more reasoning about group identity and group norms to support this.

Future research should measure previous experience as a victim of intergroup social exclusion, and investigate perceived consequences (e.g., benefits or outcomes) as a result of helping minority compared to majority-status peers. Additionally, future research should investigate whether different mechanisms underpin majority-status participants' responses to different forms of exclusion, and should investigate further the social-cognitive processes explaining the difference between minority- and majority-status bystander responses (BLINDED, 2021b).

2. Reasoning about bystander challenging

Generally, bystander responses to intervene during social exclusion were supported by moral reasoning and decisions not to intervene were accompanied by personal reasoning - this is in line with other bystander research in intergroup *bullying* contexts (e.g., Palmer et al., 2015). However, our research showed differences between minority- and majority-status

participants reasoning, reflecting the differentiation we observed in bystander responses. Non-Cypriot participants employed personal reasoning to accompany decisions not to challenge only when identity-status was *not* salient (i.e., in the control context). In contrast, Cypriot bystanders employed personal reasoning in contexts where identity was salient.

As personal choice reasoning focusses on autonomy and often eschews responsibility for dealing with the situation, this finding suggests that, compared to non-Cypriots, Cypriot participants felt less equipped to deal with (or take responsibility for challenging) intergroup social exclusion that involved prejudice. Majority-status bystanders may therefore require more support to understand when, and potentially how, they could take appropriate responsibility for challenging social exclusion. As indicated in research on perspective-taking and building self-efficacy for challenging discrimination (BLINDED, 2021a), peer-based discussions may be a route to enhancing majority-status bystanders' prosocial responses to prejudice-based social exclusion.

Importantly, the difference between minority- and majority- participants in the consideration of personal choice concerns sits alongside differences in prosocial intentions. As such, this reasoning data reiterates how different concerns and experiences drive the bystander reactions of majority and minority-status preadolescents during intergroup social exclusion. Research on, and school programs that foster, positive intergroup relations could examine the personal concerns held by majority- and minority-status peer bystanders further, so as to determine what drives these. This information should feed into considerations of how young people from different backgrounds can be best supported in appropriately challenging the social exclusion of peers, depending on their own identity-status and that of others.

3. Cross-group friendships

Cypriot participants with higher rates of cross-group friendships with immigrant peers predicted stronger prosocial bystander reactions when non-Cypriots were excluded. This

extends research that shows general intergroup contact predicts bystander responses in immigrant-bullying contexts (Abbott & Cameron, 2014) by demonstrating the same pattern in relation to cross-group friendships (a high quality form of contact) in the context of intergroup social exclusion. This finding provides further support for the idea that encouraging healthy intergroup relationships across childhood and adolescence is important for harmonious intergroup relations (Turner & Cameron, 2016), and can extend to positive bystander action. Facilitating cross-group friendships in diverse locations (as is the nature of the present sample) could therefore be instrumental in encouraging majority-status peers to challenge intergroup social exclusion of minority-status peers.

Strengths and Limitations

Our findings extend the generalizability of past research on group identity and moral reasoning during intergroup social exclusion by presenting data from a novel national setting where immigration rates were particularly high (50% within the sample). Moreover, we extend research on bystander responses - very few bystander studies have examined social moral reasoning and intergroup contact. Furthermore, our findings have important implications for research and practice: bystander responses from minority-status youth perspectives are under-researched and future intergroup bystander research needs to proactively include the views of minority-status youth – importantly this should also be from a range of minority backgrounds in different geographic locations as "minorities" are not a homogenous group (Nielsen et al., 2017; Syed, Santos, Joo & Jaung, 2018). Indeed, our findings contribute to a better understanding of differences in minority- and majority-status youth bystander reactions; existing evidence suggests that school programs designed to boost prosocial bystander intentions are less effective in diverse communities (Evans, Fraser & Cotter, 2014) which is precisely where intergroup social exclusion is most common.

By examining bystander responses to intergroup social exclusion we contribute new knowledge to the social exclusion literature (which predominantly examines evaluations) and to the bystander literature (which predominantly examines responses to general bullying). We also extend the social reasoning developmental model for understanding children and adolescents bystander responses in intergroup contexts (e.g., Abbott & Cameron, 2018) and contribute to the emerging literature on how intergroup contexts of exclusion and bullying are understood differently to contexts where identity-status is not salient (Killen et al., 2013). Importantly, the present study provides additional evidence as to how, in a particularly diverse school community (50% minority students), healthy cross-group friendships could be a route to encouraging prosocial bystander reactions among majority-youth. Indeed, this finding may reflect Cypriot schools' efforts to promote integration within their schools.

Our study was not without limitations. We chose our experimental design as it allowed us to test the effects of identity-status on bystander reactions and children's underlying reasoning cognitions. However, we measured bystander intentions, not actual bystander behavior, which can be seen as a limitation. Although recent research has demonstrated that evaluations and intentions can predict behavioral bystander reactions (Abbott, Cameron & Thompson, 2019; Mulvey et al, 2018), future research should examine the role of intergroup status on bystander reactions using simulation paradigms, and could include peer or teacher nominations (see BLINDED, 2021b, for a review). It should also be noted that some small effect sizes were observed which - although supported our theoretically-driven hypotheses and are not uncommon in experimental research in this field (e.g., Goultas & Mulvey, 2020) - should be substantiated through future research. Additionally, although age was not a focus of the current study (as identity-status is well understood by 10 years) research shows that across adolescence bystander intentions to bullying can decline (e.g., Mulvey et al, 2016). Future studies could explore whether factors

that influence the developmental decline (e.g., perspective taking or peer group norms) may also influence how identity-status is considered within bystander reactions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study showed how intergroup status matters for both minority- and majority-status preadolescent bystanders when responding to and reasoning about intergroup social exclusion, but in different ways. We showed, for the first time, how minority and majority- status bystanders react differently to each other when witnessing the social exclusion of peers from different groups and when reasoning about it. These findings highlight the importance of identity-status for young people's decision-making in intergroup contexts, particularly in more diverse societies, which are notoriously under-investigated (Nielsen et al., 2017; Palmer & Abbott, 2018). Our research extends theoretical research on bystander reactions to intergroup social exclusion, and presents important implications for school intervention programs in order to support both minority- and majority-status youth, particularly in diverse settings.

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