

Win Together, Lose Alone:
How Attributions of Blame Pinpoint and Praise Generalize
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Abstract

We've all played the blame game before, pointing the finger at someone for the downfall of our projects. When we succeed, however, everyone's contributions are recognized and celebrated. In this study, we proposed the "Win Together, Lose Alone" phenomenon. Consistent with Barbara Frederickson's research on how positivity broadens thought and negativity narrows it, we propose that when we are successful in our endeavors, our positivity opens us up to praising many people, but when we fail, our negativity narrows our focus to blaming just one person. The current research examines this phenomenon of blaming one but praising many in four domains: athletics, group work, corporations, and parent-child relationships. Through surveys, participants rated the moral responsibility and praiseworthiness/blameworthiness of individuals in each domain. Data suggests that more individuals are praised than individuals who are blamed, supporting the "Win Together, Lose Alone" phenomenon. This repeated effect speaks to the way we assign praise and blame in daily life and how we navigate the moral arena.

We do it every day: blame a coworker for our failed projects, point the finger at the parent of a misbehaving child, and rant about the player that let the team down. When everything is going well, however, everyone's contributions are recognized – team members pat each other on the back, coworkers buy each other rounds, and parent and child alike are praised for the child's good upbringing. In our daily interactions, it seems like there is a difference between how we assign praise and blame for good and bad acts – people blame one but praise many. In this project, we examine the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon in four domains: athletics, group projects, corporate hierarchies, and parenting. By studying how praise and blame are assigned in each of these areas, we can gain a better understanding of how we assign responsibility throughout our everyday interactions.

Research into the asymmetry between positivity and negativity provides key convergent evidence and possible mechanisms for the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon. Positive psychology has shown that positivity broadens our thought, whereas negativity narrows our focus (Frederickson, 2001). For example, feeling joy often leads people to reach for new goals and reach out to others, while despair leads to rumination. It seems logical, then, that when we assign praise (and are judging a positive event) our minds open up to see multiple people's input. When we assign blame (and judge negative events), however, we zero in on one key individual.

In addition to this general tendency to broaden-and-build, the negativity bias could explain why we praise many but blame one. The negativity bias means that although a positive and negative action may be of equal intensity, the negative version is more salient and weighs more heavily into people's judgments (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). For example, losing \$5 is seen as more unfortunate than winning \$5 is fortunate, and losing friends has a greater impact on an

individual than gaining friends (Baumeister, 2001). This applies to the praise-blame asymmetry in that people will weigh their judgments more heavily in the negative (i.e. blameworthy) situation than the positive (i.e. praiseworthy). Given this “bad is stronger than good” phenomenon, one might think that people would blame more people than they would praise – after all, stronger implies a larger number of people. We predict, however, that this extra weight provides a psychological motivation to find the single person or few people who are fully responsible for the wrongdoing. In other words, the “bad is stronger than good” phenomenon found in a variety of domains translates into a greater need to blame than praise, and a greater need to find the specific source for blame.

Indeed, initial research does suggest that accuracy for attribution of intentionality and causation matters more for blame than praise. Research has found that intentionality matters more for negative acts than good ones, mirroring the negativity bias (Ohtsubo, 2007; Pizarro, Uhlman, & Salovey, 2003). The difference between purposefully versus accidentally doing something good is not as large as the difference between purposefully versus accidentally doing something bad. For example, in one study, deliberately paying for an old woman’s groceries was no better than impulsively doing the same (Pizarro, Uhlman, & Salovey, 2003). By contrast, deliberately dine-n-dashing was more blameworthy than doing so spontaneously (Pizarro, Uhlman, & Salovey, 2003). This difference in importance of intention to do good and bad acts could explain why we blame one but praise many. If intent doesn’t matter as much for good acts, then it also doesn’t matter who gets praised – everyone is praiseworthy, regardless of whether or not they meant to help. Since intent matters much more for negative actions, it could play a key role in the singling out of individuals to blame. Its importance calls for a more careful and nuanced judgment, narrowing one’s focus.

Outside of these findings on asymmetries in intentionality, there has been a dearth of research on the attribution of praise, although there is a growing body of literature on the psychological need to blame. Previous research on morality has suggested that at the heart of morality lies a moral template: a moral agent (who commits a good or bad act, and is capable of controlling themselves) and a moral patient (who receives said agent's act, and is capable of feeling; Gray & Wegner, 2011). When someone is harmed, people automatically seek out an agent to blame in a process called dyadic completion (Gray, Schein, & Ward, 2014). For example, many people rationalized Hurricane Katrina as God's punishment for the city being "unclean". In the absence of a clear reason, they turned to the highest agent (Gray & Wegner, 2010). The God-blaming in New Orleans demonstrates how people are compelled to find an agent to blame and need look no further once they find someone to fill the role (effectively completing the dyad). It is unclear whether praise has the same motivational pull.

Finally, blame's link to punishment provides strong motivation to find a single person to blame. Research has found that people punish others even for acts of "moral luck" such as running over a pile of leaves and accidentally killing the kid hiding in the pile (Martin & Cushman, in press). External circumstances made the action either moral or immoral, and yet such poor "moral luck" worsened judgments of punishment because of punishment's core purpose: to discourage future occurrences (Martin & Cushman, in press) Even when one's intent is not malicious, the negative outcome still calls for retribution so that one might be more careful the next time. There is not likely a parallel for positive situations – no specific individual needs to be identified so as to prevent further harm. This outcome dependency supports the "Win Together, Lose Alone" phenomenon by emphasizing how negative situations incite punishment whereas positive situations do not. The key difference is that in the immoral condition,

punishment is doled out to specific individuals in the hopes of avoiding reoccurrences. As punishment and blame are closely linked, it follows that where people punish few individuals they will also blame few. It is likely that there is a different process for positive scenarios where a responsible member need not be pinpointed and rewarded.

Current Research

To test the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon, we ran five studies looking at attributions of responsibility, praise, and blame. Studies 1a and 1b examine how responsibility is assigned in a popular sphere of American culture: athletics. Study 2 seeks to elucidate the reach of our phenomenon by exploring assignments of praise and blame in group projects - a setting where groups are more equal than in sports, in which a coach makes the calls. Study 3 studies the phenomenon in the corporate setting, where there are clear power hierarchies. Finally, study 4 seeks to establish the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon in familial relations. As shown through our exploration of these four domains, this concept of blaming one person but praising many can apply to many areas of life - from the Super Bowl, to our children’s’ Little League games, and in our everyday interactions at work and in our homes. Elucidating how blame and praise are assigned can inform how we assign responsibility in our lives and help us reconsider how justly we are judging others.

Study 1a

Super Bowl XLIX was the perfect opportunity to examine how praise and blame are dealt in football games: one key mistake led to the Seahawks’ loss and the Patriots’ win. Fans blamed Russell Wilson for throwing the ball rather than running it, whereas all Patriot team members were celebrated for their efforts. Furthermore, each teams’ reaction demonstrated the different allocations of praise and blame. Tom Brady, from the Patriots, was quoted as saying “It took a

lot of guys, a lot of effort, and a lot of individual efforts. Collectively as a team, we made plays to get the job done” (Bryan, 2015). He praised everyone. The Seahawk’s coach, however, narrowed the blame to himself, and was quoted as saying “That’s my fault, totally” (Shook, 2015). These different reactions speak to the potential praise-blame asymmetry in groups where teamwork is required. We capitalized on the Super Bowl’s outcome to see if such discrepancies were truly present and hypothesized that more Patriots players would be given responsibility for winning than Seahawks players for losing.

Method

Participants

Subjects were 100 MTurk participants located in the United States, 13 of whom were excluded because they did not watch the Super Bowl and/or failed the attention check ($N = 87$). Loyalties were equally represented, such that participants either rooted for the Patriots ($N = 37$), the Seahawks ($N = 24$), or had no preference ($N = 26$) as to who won. All subjects were required to have at least a 95% HIT approval rate to participate in the study.

Procedure

Subjects saw an MTurk ad for “Football Survey – For Serious Football Fans!”. Once they had agreed to participate, subjects followed a link to a Qualtrics survey where they answered two questions in randomized order – who was responsible for the Seahawks’ loss, and who was responsible for the Patriots’ win. With each question, subjects were given a list of the coach and nine key players for each respective team (as assessed by ESPN) and instructed to check those that they believed were responsible for the win and loss (see Appendix A). After indicating their familiarity with both teams and football in general, subjects filled out demographic information, were credited 20 cents to their account, and debriefed.

Results & Discussion

Averages of the number of players held responsible for each team were calculated and then run through an independent samples t-test. There was a significant difference between the two teams, $t(85) = 4.83, p < .001$, such that participants assigned fewer Seahawks players responsibility for the loss ($M = 2.39, SD = 2.67$) than Patriots players for the win ($M = 3.78, SD = 3.28$.) See Figure 1. In terms of specific players, Pete Carroll was the most responsible for the Seahawks ($N = 79$), and Tom Brady was the most responsible for the Patriots ($N = 63$). As team order did not have a main effect or interaction with responsibility ratings, it was removed from analysis. Subjects were moderately invested in the game ($M = 3.23, SD = 1.06$), knew a moderate amount about football ($M = 3.71, SD = 1.03$), and were equally familiar with the Patriots ($M = 3.05, SD = .9$) and the Seahawks ($M = 2.99, SD = .95$).

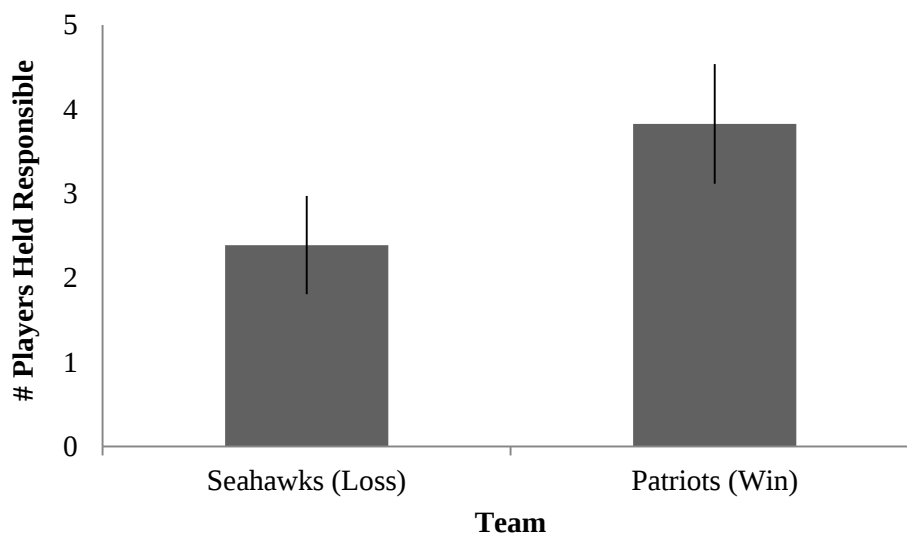


Figure 1. Number of players responsible for Seahawks loss and Patriots win. Error bars indicate 95% CI.

The results indicate that, at least in football, people have a tendency to blame fewer people for a loss and more people for a win. The data support our hypothesis that subjects would

narrow their focus when assigning responsibility to Seahawks players but broaden it when doing the same with Patriots players. It appears that the praise-blame asymmetry exists when the Super Bowl title is at stake. To further test this asymmetry, we examined assignments of praise and blame in another sport: basketball.

Study 1b

Given the large and dedicated fan base at this university, we also capitalized on UNC's basketball season to examine how blame and praise are distributed in basketball. March Madness provided an invested population to answer surveys immediately after a game. As with the football study, we hypothesized that fewer players would be blamed for a UNC loss compared to the number of players praised for a UNC win.

Method

Participants

87 participants were recruited from around the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill campus the day after either a UNC loss against NC State (2/24/2015) or UNC win against Harvard (3/19/2015). Four participants were excluded for failure to follow directions and/or complete the survey ($N = 83$, 57% female, $M_{age} = 20$). The UNC loss was the first time in 12 years that NCSU had beaten Carolina in Chapel Hill. NCSU was in the lead going into the second quarter. The Tarheels started a run with about 15 minutes left, but it was not enough to earn them the victory. In the match against Harvard, Carolina just barely squeaked by with a win thanks to a last-second shot and subsequent dunk.

Procedure

Data was collected from public areas around campus the day after UNC lost or won. Subjects were asked if they would be willing to fill out a short survey for research on campus. In

the case of a UNC victory, subjects were given a survey and asked to indicate the players responsible for the win from a checklist of all the team members that had played in the game (see Appendix B). In the case of a UNC loss, subjects were given a similar survey but asked to indicate the players responsible for the loss (see Appendix C). Subjects were also asked to rate how much they cared about UNC's basketball team on a scale from 1 to 10. After completing the survey, participants were thanked for their participation and debriefed.

Results & Discussion

Averages of the percentage of players held responsible for the loss and win were computed. There was a significant difference between conditions, $t(81) = -2.2$, $p = .03$, such that subjects rated a smaller percentage of players as responsible for the loss ($M = 37.9$, $SD = 28.9$) than the win ($M = 52.8$, $SD = 30.8$). See Figure 2. Subjects on average were very invested in the games ($M = 8.3$, $SD = 1.71$).

These results reinforce the findings of the previous study, demonstrating a tendency to blame fewer team members for a loss than are praised for a win. The data support our hypothesis that such a narrowing of focus would occur for a negative result - namely, the loss – but that subjects' focus would be broadened in the positive counterpart – the victory, supporting the presence of the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon in basketball as well as football.

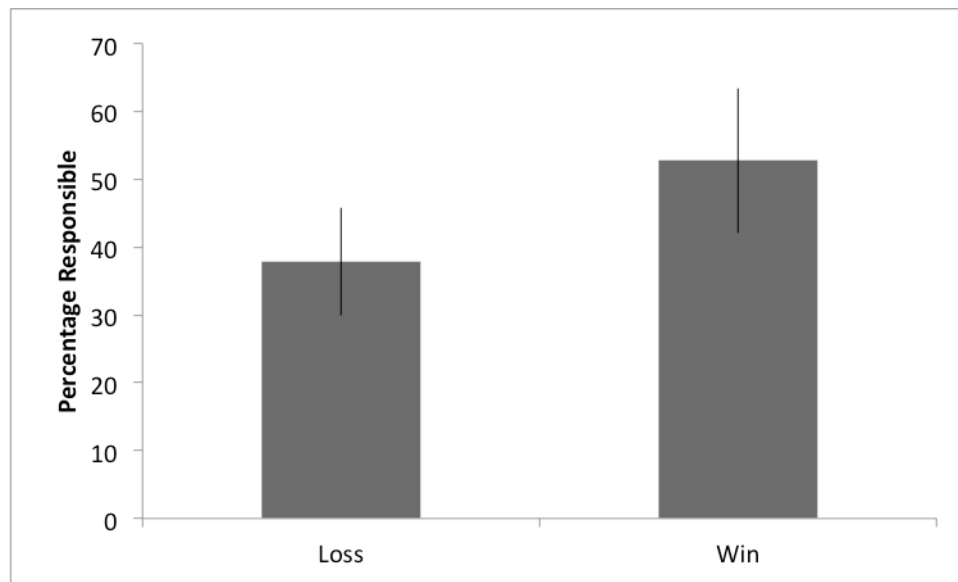


Figure 2. Percentage of players responsible for UNC loss or win. Error bars indicate 95% CI.

Thus far we have illustrated the praise-blame asymmetry in two sports, but sports have a specific set-up limiting the generalizability of this finding: a team under the tutelage of a specific coach. We therefore turn next to ascriptions of responsibility in a more free-form setting: group work.

Study 2

The second domain in which we examined the praise-blame asymmetry was that of group work. Group projects, unlike sports teams, do not have a clear coach. Agency and responsibility, at least at the start, are equal across all members with leaders and weak links emerging. To get at these potential differences, we surveyed participants about their experiences in group projects that had either succeeded or failed. We hypothesized that subjects that were asked to recall a successful group project would praise more of their group members and find more of their group members responsible than subjects that were asked to recall a failed group project.

Method

Participants

Subjects were 100 MTurk participants, 19 of whom were excluded for failure to follow directions or failing the manipulation check ($N=81$, 58% male, $M_{age} = 31$). All subjects were located in the US and were required to have at least a 95% HIT approval rate.

Procedure

An MTurk ad was posted, advertising “Group Project Survey (~4mins), answer questions about a past group project.” Once accepting the HIT, subjects were taken to a Qualtrics survey where they were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Those in the success condition were asked to recall a time that they were in a group project that was successful and to fill out the survey based on that experience. Subjects in the failure condition were asked to recall a time that they were in a group project that failed and to fill out the survey based on that experience.

Regardless of condition, subjects were asked general questions about the project (See Appendices D and E for a full list of survey items). Subjects listed the number of members in their group and the reasons why their project failed or succeeded. They also rated how responsible each group member was for the outcome of the project on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Not At All Responsible, 5=Extremely Responsible), and were asked to list the number of group members they thought were responsible for the outcome. Our main dependent variables were the percentage of group members held responsible of the total number of group members, and the percentage of group members blamed/praised. Finally, subjects were thanked for their participation, credited 20 cents, and debriefed.

Results & Discussion

Subjects’ recalled groups had 5 members on average ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 3.44$), with most recalled projects completed over a year ago ($N = 29$). Assignments of responsibility were significantly different between the two conditions, $t(79) = 2.61$, $p = .01$, such that subjects in the

failure condition held a smaller percentage of members responsible ($M = 71.7$, $SD = 35.2$) than subjects in the success condition ($M = 88.1$, $SD = 18.5$). See Figure 3.

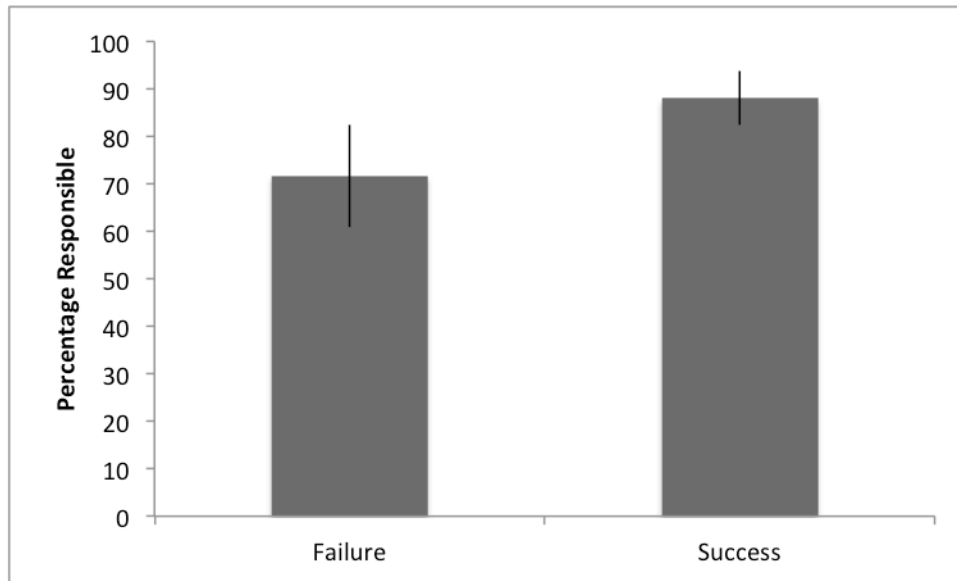


Figure 3. Percentage of members responsible for group projects' failures and successes. Error bars indicate 95% CI.

Assignments of praise and blame were also significantly different, $t(79) = 3.27$, $p = .001$, such that subjects in the failure condition blamed a smaller percentage of members ($M = 64.4$, $SD = 32.9$) than subjects praised in the success condition ($M = 84.1$, $SD = 19.5$). See Figure 4.

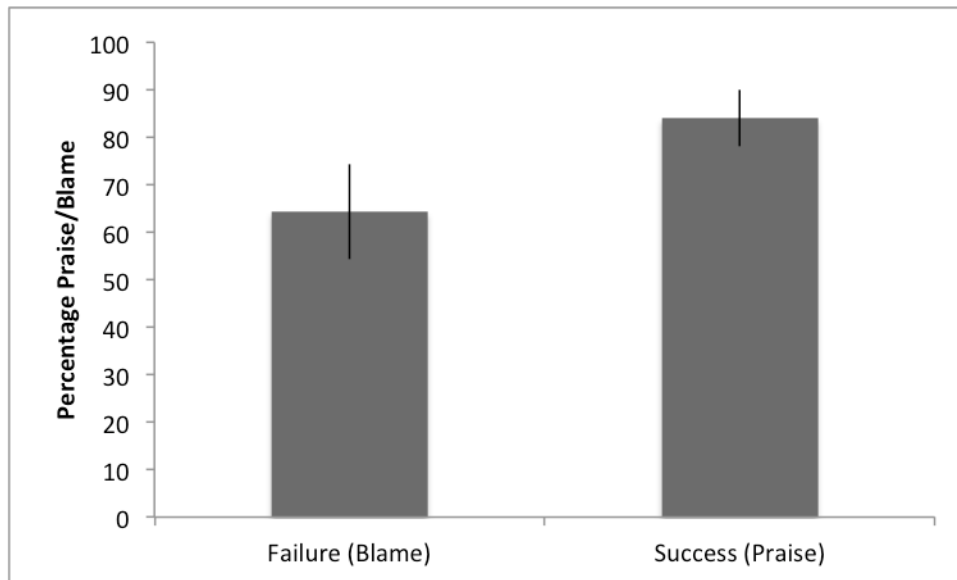


Figure 4. Percentage of group members blameworthy and praiseworthy for failure and success.

Error bars indicated 95% CI.

As with the prior two studies, subjects tended to blame fewer people than they praised in their group projects, supporting the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon. In our next study, we examined smaller groups in a third domain: corporate hierarchies.

Study 3

After studying large, equally agentic groups, we studied how blame and praise are distributed in smaller groups where power disparity is more exaggerated across members. To do so, we used the hierarchical structure of a corporation. It’s often the case that managers take the hit for a branch’s failures, but everyone gets to bask in the positive glow of success. We therefore hypothesized that subjects would blame fewer people - focusing the blame on the leadership – but that all parties involved would be praised.

Method

Participants

100 subjects on MTurk took a survey called “Judgments of the Workplace.” Thirty-six were excluded for failure to follow directions and/or complete the survey ($N = 64$, 53% male, $M_{age} = 36$). Subjects had to be located in the US to participate and have a 95% HIT approval rate.

Procedure

An ad was posted on MTurk where subjects were informed that they would be awarded 20 cents for completing a short survey about workplace scenarios. After agreeing to participate, subjects clicked on a link that took them to a Qualtrics survey.

In the *harm (help)* condition, subjects read:

Rob is the CEO of a company and has recently found out about a potential new investment project from Grey, a senior consultant. Grey informs Rob that this project could potentially help the environment. Rob takes him up on the offer. Rob instructs Tim, a lower level employee, to carry out the investment. Tim completes the project.
The project actually harms (*helps*) the environment.

Importantly, only the last line varied by condition. Subjects then rated how morally responsible, blameworthy/praiseworthy, and deserving of reward/punishment Rob, Grey, and Tim were (see Appendices F and G). Items were rated on a 5-point scale (i.e. 1=No Blame, 5=Extreme Blame), as measures were based on those used in Pizarro, Uhlman and Salovey (2003). Participants then completed demographics information, were thanked for their participation, and debriefed.

Results & Discussion

A 2 (condition: harm, help) x 3 (character: CEO, consultant, worker) between and within-subjects ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of condition, $F(1, 62) = 12.73$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$, such that characters were given on average more moral responsibility in the help condition ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .78$) than in the harm condition ($M = 3.17$, $SD = .77$). There was also a significant main effect of character, $F(2, 124) = 22.44$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .27$: the consultant ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.08$) was ascribed significantly more responsibility than the CEO ($M = 3.66$, $SD =$

1.07), who was in turn ascribed significantly more responsibility than the worker ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.46$). Most importantly, there was a significant interaction between condition and character, $F(2, 124) = 28.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .31$. See Figure 5.

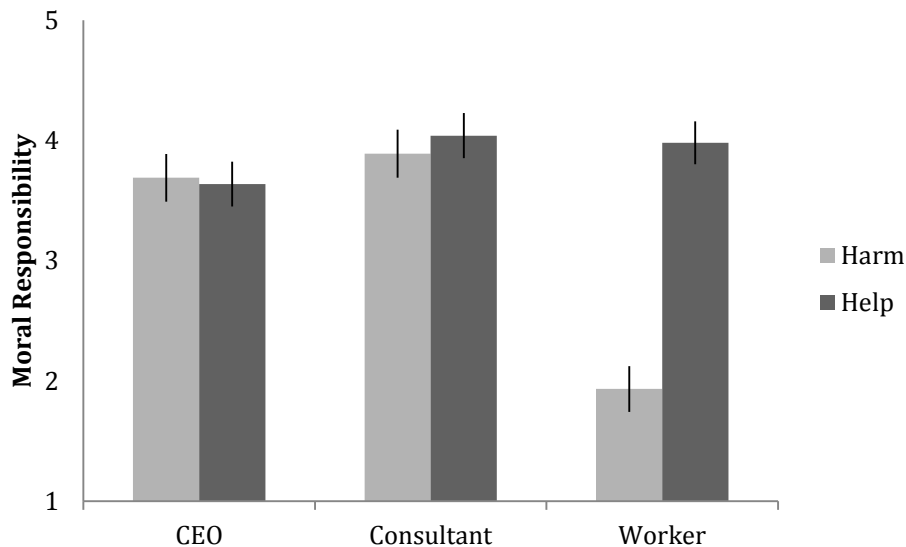


Figure 5. Interaction between character and condition in assignments of responsibility for harming or helping the environment.

The responsibility of the worker in the help condition ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.11$) did not differ from that of the CEO ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.11$) or consultant ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.11$), $p > .15$, although the consultant was ascribed significantly more responsibility than the CEO, $p = .01$. The responsibility of the worker in the harm condition ($M = 1.93$, $SD = .95$), however, was significantly less than the CEO ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.05$) and the consultant ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.07$), $p < .001$, and the consultant and CEO did not significantly differ, $p = .22$.

The same tendency to hold fewer people responsible for immoral acts than one would for moral acts was again replicated in this study. Subjects rated the CEO and consultant as most responsible for harming the environment, with a significant drop in the worker's ratings. In terms of helping the environment, however, responsibility was more evenly distributed. The data

therefore support our hypothesis that praise would be more dispersed across characters in the help condition but more concentrated in the harm condition. Our findings also point to the importance of power dynamics in conjunction with the tendency to narrow our focus when assigning blame. While anecdotally, people tend to pin the blame on the top level, this study indicates that the specifics of a situation could determine otherwise. The results call for further research into how power plays into responsibility, and how it is differentially assigned based on good or bad outcomes.

Another domain in which power is vastly different across characters is in families. Parents are like the CEO, in charge of their lower employees (in this case, children). As a final examination of hierarchy in the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon, we turn to parenting.

Study 4

One key difference between the parent-child and supervisor-employee relationship is that in a family relationship, the subordinate is a child and is therefore not typically construed as a moral agent. If people still assign praise to a child (who is not traditionally subject to moral responsibility) then it is possible that accuracy matters less in praise than blame. Building off of the previous study, we examined how praise, blame, and responsibility are assigned to parents and their children. Using the parent-child relationship allows us to test whether the asymmetry still holds for characters that are typically not held responsible.

Pilot testing showed that children and parents are praised regardless of their moral responsibility – we tell kids they did a good job and give them a gold sticker just for participating. Blame and responsibility are correlated, however, showing that as children become more responsible, they in turn become more blameworthy. Further tests showed that across age, blame, but not praise, becomes hydraulic. As a child grows older and gains more responsibility,

their parents' responsibility decreases. Praise, however, stays the same for parents and children alike across the child's age. Based on this pilot testing, we hypothesized that parents specifically would be blamed for the immoral act, but that praise would be dispersed equally across parents and children in the moral act.

Method

Participants

100 subjects took a survey on MTurk called "Judgments of Family Scenarios." Fifteen participants were excluded for failure to follow directions and/or complete the survey ($N = 85$, 66% male, $M_{age} = 34$). To be eligible to take the survey, participants had to be located in the United States and have a 95% or greater HIT approval rate.

Procedure

The MTurk ad noted that the survey would take about 3 minutes and that participants would be awarded 15 cents upon completion. Once agreeing to participate, subjects clicked on a link that took them to a Qualtrics survey, where they read one of two scenarios and were instructed to answer the questions that followed.

In the *immoral* condition, the participants read:

Amy and Peter Miller have two daughters, Claire who is thirteen and Jordan who is six. During family night, the Millers hear a rustling noise and then a loud crash coming from their backyard. The parents order Jordan, the younger daughter, to get her slingshot. Claire, the older sister, opens the window, and as her parents are watching, Jordan slings the rock toward the noise, directly hitting the intruder.

However, the intruder turns out to be a neighborhood boy taking a shortcut home. The rock hits the boy directly in the eye, causing permanent blindness in that eye.

In the *moral* condition, the participants read the same initial story, with a different ending:

However, the intruder turns out to be a serial burglar who has stolen millions from local residents. The rock hits the burglar directly in the eye, causing the burglar to fall down and the police are able to arrest him.

It should be noted that the scenarios differ only in the outcome. Characters' actions were the same in both conditions.

Once they read the scenario, subjects rated the Millers on a number of items examining moral responsibility and blame/praise on a 5-point scale (i.e. 1=Not At All Responsible, 5=Extremely Responsible; see Appendices H and I). After completing the survey, subjects were thanked for their participation and debriefed.

Results & Discussion

A 2 (condition: harm, help) $\times$ 3 (character: parents, older sister, younger sister) between and within-subjects ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of condition, $F(1,83) = 1.689$, $p = .2$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, but a significant main effect of character, $F(2,166) = 48.969$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .371$: the parents ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.09$) were ascribed more responsibility than the older sister ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 1.06$), and the younger sister ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.23$). There was also a significant interaction between condition and character, $F(2, 166) = 40.764$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .33$. See Figure 6.

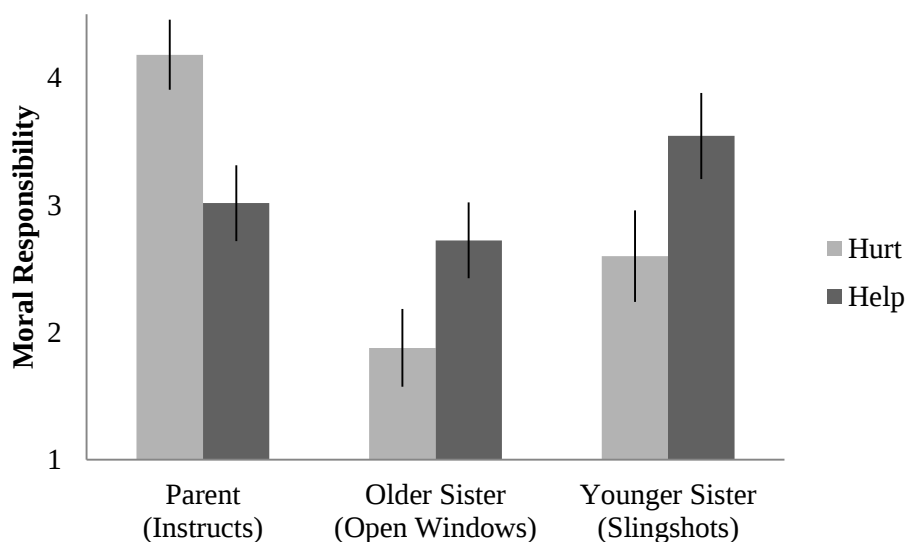


Figure 6. Interaction between character and condition in assignments of responsibility for hurting boy or stopping burglar. Error bars indicate 95% CI.

In the harm condition, the parents were rated as more responsible ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .91$) than both the older ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 1.01$) and younger sister ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.2$), $p < .001$, with the younger sister also rated as more responsible than her older sister, $p < .001$. By contrast, in the help condition, the parents ($M = 3.02$, $SD = .95$) and the older sister ($M = 2.72$, $SD = .95$) did not significantly differ, $p = .09$, but were both significantly less responsible than the younger sister ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.08$) $p = .01$ and $p < .001$, respectively. The older sister (who only opened the window) was actually assigned some responsibility - significantly more than in the hurt condition, $p < .001$.

Mirroring the results of study 3, the data demonstrate that people tend to narrow their focus to one person when blaming, but broadly distribute it when praising. Subjects rated the parents much more responsible than either of their children in the harm condition, but not in the help condition. These findings support our hypothesis that parents would be blamed in the immoral condition but that everyone would be praised in the moral condition. This can be seen in the older sister's different ratings – although she does the exact same thing in each vignette, she's rated as more responsible when the outcome is good. This depicts the tendency to broaden-and-build in positive cases, whereas the focus was shifted to just the parents in the negative situation, supporting the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon in the home domain.

These results further speak to how power dynamics could play into assignments of praise and blame. Agency is even more disparate between parents and children, and could explain why the parents are held exceedingly responsible for harm. On the other hand, parents should then theoretically be held more responsible for praiseworthy acts as well. The results' divergence

from this theory supports the concept of blaming one but praising many, suggests that accuracy matters more for blame, and demonstrates the need for further research into power's role in this domain.

General Discussion

Five studies provide initial support for the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon. Subjects narrowed their focus in negative conditions, but broadened it in the positive counterparts. We see this asymmetry in all four domains: in the public sports arena (Studies 1a and 1b), in group projects (Study 2), in the workplace (Study 3), and finally in the home realm (Study 4). In each case, subjects held fewer people responsible for their immoral acts and failures than for their successes.

These findings are consistent with the literature on positivity and negativity. The moral conditions allowed for broadening-and-building, and the immoral conditions narrowed focus (Frederickson, 2001). Participants opened their perspectives to include others in praise, but singled out specific individuals to blame. Furthermore, these differing assignments of praise and blame suggest that there may be an asymmetry in dyadic completion – automatically finding someone responsible to blame (Gray, Schein, & Ward, 2014), but more loosely finding someone(s) to praise. Future research should test whether motivation to blame and a need for accuracy in causal attribution for blame provides a mechanism for our findings. It is possible that once an agent was found, participants could stop looking for someone to blame. This idea was supported by the repeated result where subjects found fewer people responsible for an immoral act than a moral act. Subjects found one and were done. With praise there may not be an analogous need to assign specific causal responsibility, consistent with earlier research in differences in intentionality ratings (Knobe, 2003; Pizzaro, Uhlman, & Salovey, 2003).

Negativity calls for accurate action – one must find the problem and eradicate it so that it doesn't happen again. The same process happens when blaming someone – we must identify the source of the issue, taking steps to prevent it from arising again. With praise, however, finding the precise causal sources might matter less, as over-assigning responsibility for good acts typically does not matter. Perhaps in settings where accuracy matters equally for blame and praise, the effect is mitigated.

These studies had some limitations. First and foremost, they were all survey-based. While helpful in the exploratory stage of research, surveys cannot depict the entire picture. More behavioral experiments should be done to solidify this effect and further study how it unfolds in real-life situations. Secondly, some of the studies could benefit from redesign. The basketball study specifically will need to be rerun when the same players are in both games, so that the list of potential responsible players is identical across conditions.

Despite these weaknesses, the similar results between studies present a strong argument as to the presence of the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon. The asymmetry holds across a wide variety of domains: athletics, group work, corporations, and families. Its repeated presence implies an underlying process that cuts across many of our everyday operations. We hope to explore other areas in the future, including public health and politics – two disciplines where praise and blame are exchanged back and forth.

Further, we hope to run an in-lab experiment extending the findings of Study 2 (Group Projects). In this experiment we will have 4 subjects and 1 confederate come into the lab. We will tell them to build something creative and practical out of Legos, and that it will be judged as either pass/fail after fifteen minutes of work. The confederate will be suggestive and confident in his/her opinions during these fifteen minutes, regardless of condition. Once we have told the

subjects whether they have passed or failed, we will then have them rate how responsible each member of the group is for their outcome. We hope that this experiment will provide more valid evidence of the praise-blame asymmetry and the “Win Together, Lose Alone” phenomenon. Such ideas can be applied to all of the domains studied in this paper, and hopefully will be.

Conclusion

We all point fingers and pat each other on the back. The findings of this paper suggest that the number of people that receive those points and pats are different based on the outcome of our matches, projects, and actions in general. Negativity and positivity influence our judgments, limiting our perceptions to include just one person, or expanding them to include our entire group. We bring these judgments into many diverse aspects of our life as we encounter groups in our homes and workplaces. We must remember then to examine how our situations are affecting our perceptions, and notice how divided we blame, but together we praise.

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Appendix A

Did you watch the Super Bowl on Sunday?

Yes

No

Who should be held responsible for the Seahawks loss in the Super Bowl? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Pete Carroll, Coach
- ☐ Russell Wilson, Quarterback
- ☐ Bruce Irvin, Linebacker
- ☐ Ricardo Lockette, Receiver
- ☐ Jeremy Lane, Cornerback
- ☐ Jon Ryan, Kicker
- ☐ Marshawn Lynch, Running Back
- ☐ Earl Thomas, Safety
- ☐ Jermaine Kearse, Receiver
- ☐ Richard Sherman, Cornerback

Who should be held responsible for the Patriots win in the Super Bowl? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Bill Belichick, Coach
- ☐ Tom Brady, Quarterback
- ☐ Malcolm Butler, Cornerback
- ☐ Julian Edelman, Receiver
- ☐ Danny Amendola, Receiver
- ☐ Logan Ryan, Cornerback
- ☐ Brandon LaFell, Receiver
- ☐ Rob Gronkowski, Tight End
- ☐ Matthew Slater, Special Teams
- ☐ Jonathan Casillas, Linebacker

Who were you hoping would win the Super Bowl?

- ☐ The Seahawks
- ☐ The Patriots
- ☐ I had no preference

How much do you care about the Super Bowl?

Not At All	A Little	Moderately	Very	Extremely
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How knowledgeable are you about football?

Not At All	A Little	Moderately	Very	Extremely
------------	----------	------------	------	-----------

How knowledgeable are you about the Patriots?

Not At All	A Little	Moderately	Very	Extremely
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How knowledgeable are you about the Seahawks?

Not At All	A Little	Moderately	Very	Extremely
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Manipulation Check

How are you feeling? Many times in psychological surveys, researchers are interested in feelings. However, in this question, we are only interested in whether you are reading the instructions. In the following question, only select inspired.

How are you feeling right now?

Excited Irritated Happy Frustrated Inspired Tired

Demographics

Gender: _____

Age: _____

In which country do you reside? (drop down list)

Appendix B**UNC vs. Harvard**

Who was responsible for UNC Chapel Hill's win yesterday? (check all that apply)

☐	Roy Williams, Coach
☐	Justin Jackson, Forward
☐	J.P. Tokoto, Forward
☐	Marcus Paige, Guard
☐	Kennedy Meeks, Forward
☐	Brice Johnson, Forward
☐	Joel James, Forward
☐	Isaiah Hicks, Forward
☐	Joel Berry II, Guard
☐	Desmond Hubert, Forward
☐	Theo Pinson, Forward/Guard

On a Scale of 1-10 (10 being the most) how much do you care about UNC's men's basketball team? _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Appendix C**UNC vs. NC State**

Who was responsible for UNC Chapel Hill's loss yesterday? (check all that apply)

☐	Roy Williams, Coach
☐	Nate Britt, Guard
☐	Theo Pinson, Forward/Guard
☐	Joel Berry II, Guard
☐	Kennedy Meeks, Forward
☐	Luke Davis, Guard
☐	Marcus Paige, Guard
☐	Brice Johnson, Forward
☐	J.P. Tokoto, Forward
☐	Desmond Hubert, Forward
☐	Jackson Simmons, Forward
☐	Isaiah Hicks, Forward
☐	Sasha Seymore, Forward
☐	Justin Coleman, Guard
☐	Joel James, Forward
☐	Justin Jackson, Forward/Guard
☐	Stilman White, Guard

On a Scale of 1-10 (10 being the most) how much do you care about UNC's men's basketball team? _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Appendix D

Failure Condition

Please read each question carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. Think back to a group project you worked on that was a failure. Describe your experience in a couple of sentences.

2. How many students, including yourself, were in the group?

3. Do you believe the project failed or succeeded? Please circle one.

Failed

Succeeded

4. Please list the reasons why you believe the project failed.

5. Please list the initials of each group member, beginning with yourself. Check each box that you fill out. There may be more lines than needed, so leave any unused lines empty.

- ☐ Your initials _____
- ☐ Group Member #1 _____
- ☐ Group Member #2 _____
- ☐ Group Member #3 _____
- ☐ Group Member #4 _____
- ☐ Group Member #5 _____
- ☐ Group Member #6 _____
- ☐ Group Member #7 _____

6. On a 1 to 5 scale, rate how responsible each person was for the failure of the project.

Person	Not At All Responsible 1	2	3	4	Extremely Responsible 5
1. You	1	2	3	4	5
2.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	1	2	3	4	5

6. How long ago was this project?

A Few Days	1 Week	1 Month	A Couple of Months	Half A Year	1 Year	1+ Years
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7. Of the total number of group members (including yourself), how many members are blameworthy for the failed outcome of the project?

8. Of the total number of group members (including yourself), how many members are responsible for the failed outcome of the project?

9. What is your gender? _____

10. What is your age? _____

11. In which country do you reside? (drop down list)

Appendix E

Success Condition

Please read each question carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. Think back to a group project you worked on that was successful. Describe your experience in a couple of sentences.

2. How many students, including yourself, were in the group?

3. Do you believe the project failed or succeeded? Please circle one.

Failed

Succeeded

4. Please list the reasons why you believe the project succeeded.

5. Please list the initials of each group member, beginning with yourself. Check each box that you fill out. There may be more lines than needed, so leave any unused lines empty.

- ☐ Your initials _____
- ☐ Group Member #1 _____
- ☐ Group Member #2 _____
- ☐ Group Member #3 _____
- ☐ Group Member #4 _____
- ☐ Group Member #5 _____
- ☐ Group Member #6 _____
- ☐ Group Member #7 _____

6. On a 1 to 5 scale, rate how responsible each person was for the success of the project.

Person	Not At All Responsible 1	2	3	4	Extremely Responsible 5
1. You	1	2	3	4	5
2.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	1	2	3	4	5

6. How long ago was this project?

A Few Days	1 Week	1 Month	A Couple of Months	Half A Year	1 Year	1+ Years
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7. Of the total number of group members (including yourself), how many members are praiseworthy for the successful outcome of the project?

8. Of the total number of group members (including yourself), how many members are responsible for the successful outcome of the project?

9. What is your gender? _____

10. What is your age? _____

11. In which country do you reside? (drop down list)

Appendix F

Harm Condition

Rob is the CEO of a company and has recently found out about a potential new investment project from Grey, a senior consultant. Grey informs Rob that this project could potentially help the environment. Rob takes him up on the offer. Rob instructs Tim, a lower level employee, to carry out the investment. Tim completes the project.

The project actually harms the environment.

How responsible are each of the following people?

Character	Not At All Responsible 1	2	3	4	Extremely Responsible 5
Rob, the CEO	1	2	3	4	5
Grey, the consultant	1	2	3	4	5
Tim, the employee	1	2	3	4	5

How blameworthy are each of the following people?

Character	Not At All Blameworthy 1	2	3	4	Extremely Blameworthy 5
Rob, the CEO	1	2	3	4	5
Grey, the consultant	1	2	3	4	5
Tim, the employee	1	2	3	4	5

Should the following be punished?

Character	Definitely Not 1	2	3	4	Definitely Yes 5
Rob, the CEO	1	2	3	4	5
Grey, the consultant	1	2	3	4	5
Tim, the employee	1	2	3	4	5

Politically, I would call myself...

Strongly Liberal	Moderately Liberal	Slightly Liberal	Neutral	Slightly Conservative	Moderately Conservative	Strongly Conservative
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Gender: _____

Age: _____

In which country do you reside: (drop down menu)

In this story, the environment was:

- ☐ Helped
- ☐ Harmed
- ☐ Stayed the same

Whose idea was the investment initially?

- ☐ Rob
- ☐ Grey
- ☐ Tim

Manipulation Check

How are you feeling? Many times in psychological surveys, researchers are interested in feelings. However, in this question, we are only interested in whether you are reading the instructions. In the following question, only select inspired.

How are you feeling right now?

Excited	Irritated	Happy	Frustrated	Inspired	Tired
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Appendix G

Help Condition

Rob is the CEO of a company and has recently found out about a potential new investment project from Grey, a senior consultant. Grey informs Rob that this project could potentially help the environment. Rob takes him up on the offer. Rob instructs Tim, a lower level employee, to carry out the investment. Tim completes the project.

The project helps the environment.

How responsible are each of the following people?

Character	Not At All Responsible 1	2	3	4	Extremely Responsible 5
Rob, the CEO	1	2	3	4	5
Grey, the consultant	1	2	3	4	5
Tim, the employee	1	2	3	4	5

How praiseworthy are each of the following people?

Character	Not At All Praiseworthy 1	2	3	4	Extremely Praiseworthy 5
Rob, the CEO	1	2	3	4	5
Grey, the consultant	1	2	3	4	5
Tim, the employee	1	2	3	4	5

Should the following be rewarded?

Character	Definitely Not 1	2	3	4	Definitely Yes 5
Rob, the CEO	1	2	3	4	5
Grey, the consultant	1	2	3	4	5
Tim, the employee	1	2	3	4	5

Politically, I would call myself...

Strongly Liberal	Moderately Liberal	Slightly Liberal	Neutral	Slightly Conservative	Moderately Conservative	Strongly Conservative
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Gender: _____

Age: _____

In which country do you reside: (drop down menu)

In this story, the environment was:

- ☐ Helped
- ☐ Harmed
- ☐ Stayed the same

Whose idea was the investment initially?

- ☐ Rob
- ☐ Grey
- ☐ Tim

Manipulation Check

How are you feeling? Many times in psychological surveys, researchers are interested in feelings. However, in this question, we are only interested in whether you are reading the instructions. In the following question, only select inspired.

How are you feeling right now?

Excited	Irritated	Happy	Frustrated	Inspired	Tired
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Appendix H

Immoral Condition

Amy and Peter Miller have two daughters, Claire who is thirteen and Jordan who is six. During family night, the Millers hear a rustling noise and then a loud crash coming from their backyard. The parents order Jordan, the younger daughter, to get her slingshot. Claire, the older sister, opens the window, and as her parents are watching, Jordan slings the rock toward the noise, directly hitting the intruder.

However, the intruder turns out to be a neighborhood boy taking a shortcut home. The rock hits the boy directly in the eye, causing permanent blindness in that eye.

How responsible is each person?

Character	Not At All Responsible 1	2	3	4	Extremely Responsible 5
The parents	1	2	3	4	5
Claire, the older sibling	1	2	3	4	5
Jordan, the younger sibling	1	2	3	4	5

How blameworthy is each person?

Character	Not At All Blameworthy 1	2	3	4	Extremely Blameworthy 5
The parents	1	2	3	4	5
Claire, the older sibling	1	2	3	4	5
Jordan, the younger sibling	1	2	3	4	5

Should each person be punished?

Character	Definitely Not 1	2	3	4	Definitely Yes 5
The parents	1	2	3	4	5
Claire, the older sibling	1	2	3	4	5
Jordan, the younger sibling	1	2	3	4	5

Politically, I would call myself...

Strongly Liberal	Moderately Liberal	Slightly Liberal	Neutral	Slightly Conservative	Moderately Conservative	Strongly Conservative
---------------------	-----------------------	---------------------	---------	--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------

Gender: _____

Age: _____

In which country do you reside: (drop down menu)

Who gets injured in this story?

- ☐ A child
- ☐ A burglar
- ☐ An animal

Manipulation Check

How are you feeling? Many times in psychological surveys, researchers are interested in feelings. However, in this question, we are only interested in whether you are reading the instructions. In the following question, only select inspired.

How are you feeling right now?

Excited	Irritated	Happy	Frustrated	Inspired	Tired
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Appendix I*Moral Condition*

Amy and Peter Miller have two daughters, Claire who is thirteen and Jordan who is six. During family night, the Millers hear a rustling noise and then a loud crash coming from their backyard. The parents order Jordan, the younger daughter, to get her slingshot. Claire, the older sister, opens the window, and as her parents are watching, Jordan slings the rock toward the noise, directly hitting the intruder.

However, the intruder turns out to be a serial burglar who has stolen millions from local residents. The rock hits the burglar directly in the eye, causing the burglar to fall down and the police are able to arrest him.

How responsible is each person?

Character	Not At All Responsible 1	2	3	4	Extremely Responsible 5
The parents	1	2	3	4	5
Claire, the older sibling	1	2	3	4	5
Jordan, the younger sibling	1	2	3	4	5

How praiseworthy is each person?

Character	Not At All Praiseworthy 1	2	3	4	Extremely Praiseworthy 5
The parents	1	2	3	4	5
Claire, the older sibling	1	2	3	4	5
Jordan, the younger sibling	1	2	3	4	5

Should each person be rewarded?

Character	Definitely Not 1	2	3	4	Definitely Yes 5
The parents	1	2	3	4	5
Claire, the older sibling	1	2	3	4	5
Jordan, the younger sibling	1	2	3	4	5

Politically, I would call myself...

Strongly Liberal	Moderately Liberal	Slightly Liberal	Neutral	Slightly Conservative	Moderately Conservative	Strongly Conservative
---------------------	-----------------------	---------------------	---------	--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------

Gender: _____

Age: _____

In which country do you reside: (drop down menu)

Who gets injured in this story?

- ☐ A child
- ☐ A burglar
- ☐ An animal

Manipulation Check

How are you feeling? Many times in psychological surveys, researchers are interested in feelings. However, in this question, we are only interested in whether you are reading the instructions. In the following question, only select inspired.

How are you feeling right now?

Excited	Irritated	Happy	Frustrated	Inspired	Tired
---------	-----------	-------	------------	----------	-------