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Abstract

Five studies investigated the effects of nonviolent (vs. violent) strategies on people’s reactions to social movements. In a correlation study with a nested design, across 23 movements perceived use of violence negatively predicted participants’ willingness to support and join the movement (Study 1). This effect was also found experimentally, with Americans being more supportive of nonviolent rather than violent movements in hypothetical as well as real foreign countries (Study 2-3). Likewise, Iranians (Study 4) and Americans (Study 5) were more supportive of nonviolent rather than violent movements in their own countries. The underlying mechanism of this effect was driven by perceptions of greater moral patiency of nonviolent movements, and subsequent perceptions of greater morality and victim status (Study 1-5). Together, these studies demonstrate and explain the advantages of strategic nonviolent action.

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Keywords: collective action; nonviolence; agency/patiency; morality; victimhood
The Power of Nonviolence: Confirming and Explaining the Success of Nonviolent (Rather Than Violent) Political Movements

Since 2011 several Arab countries have been going through unprecedented social change. In Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria, among other countries, citizens protested and demonstrated for fundamental changes to their country’s political system. These protests turned into popular social movements and in a short period of time spread across many Arab countries, now known as the Arab Spring. Yet, not all movements succeeded in effecting the social change they strived for. While the movements in Tunisia and Egypt did induce social change, the movements in Libya and Syria fell short. We agree with Louis (2009) that understanding such differences in movements’ effectiveness is tantamount to developing a comprehensive theory of collective action, social movements and change, as political struggles and resistance always incur costs for all sides of the struggle as well as society at large (Dodd, 2011; Saleh & Werr, 2011).

Many observers, pundits, and scholars in political science, sociology and psychology have attributed the difference in success across social movements to a difference in strategy (i.e., use of violent versus nonviolent strategies) as well as to the differential effects that these strategies are believed to have on participation in and support for movements. The Arab Spring movements in Tunisia and Egypt, for example, used nonviolent strategies and stuck to these, whereas the movements in Libya and Syria eventually turned to violent strategies. This distinction between violence and nonviolence is akin to distinctions between normative and non-normative collective action (Tausch, Becker, Spears, Christ, Saab, & Singh, 2011; Zaal, Laar, Stahl, Ellemers, & Derks, 2011), radicalism and activism (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009), and moderate versus militant political action (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; see also Thomas & Louis, 2014). Yet, attributions of real life differences in movements’ success to these dichotomies are
often based more on opinion and beliefs than on conclusive empirical evidence for cause-effect relationships. While past research on the effects of nonviolence concluded that nonviolent movements faced with violent oppression are significantly more successful than violent movements, this research is almost exclusively based on retrospective/archival data (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Schock, 2013; Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008). Consequently, this research is subject to many possible confounding factors, which makes it hard to attribute the cause of success or failure of movements to their use of nonviolent or violent strategies.

There are only two papers that provide causal evidence for the claim that nonviolence increases a movement’s success. One shows that nonviolent (compared to violent) environmental movements receive more support when the system they oppose is not seen as corrupt; when the system is seen as corrupt, however, violent environmental movements received the same level of support as nonviolent ones (Thomas & Louis, 2014). The other shows that violent student movements struggling against tuition increases lose support when their use of violence is seen as a violation of the norms of a broader, superordinate ingroup (Becker, Tausch, Spears, & Oliver, 2011). In sum, the research on political movements struggling against oppressive regimes (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2008; Schock, 2013) falls short of establishing cause and effect, and the little experimental research that does establish cause and effect does not speak to the context of political movements that struggle against corrupt political systems. Perhaps as a consequence, the aforementioned experimental research has been inconsistent with the (non-experimental) research on political movements in that it finds advantages of nonviolence only when the system is not seen as corrupt (which is not the case in most contexts studied by the political movement literature; see Chenoweth & Stephan, 2008). Thus, past research cannot conclusively answer the question of whether the (relative) successes of some social movements (e.g. in Egypt or Tunisia)
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over others (e.g. in Libya or Syria) are due to their use of nonviolence. Further, it is unclear why and through what mechanisms nonviolence would increase a movement’s success.

Answering these questions contributes to the literatures on collective action, social movements in social/political psychology and sociology/political science, respectively. To do so, we conducted four experiments testing whether the use of nonviolence indeed causes an increase in the likelihood of success of a movement that faces an oppressive regime, and whether it does so because nonviolence creates a situation where the movement is seen as the clearly identifiable and innocent victim holding the moral high ground, whereas the regime is seen as the clearly identifiable and culpable perpetrator with corrupted morals.

**Predictors of a movement’s success**

While there is no consensus on which strategy – violent or nonviolent – is more effective, there is consensus that public opinion is crucial for movements to succeed. Winning public opinion increases domestic and international support and hence gives movements more room to maneuver in their demands for social change (e.g., Burstein, 2003; Burstein & Linton, 2002; Louis, 2009). Therefore, social movements seek their success through convincing the domestic and/or international public to support them. Indeed, Chenoweth and Stephan (2008) found that support was the main predictor of movements’ success (defined as reaching their stated goals). This support can take many forms: transformation of a neutral third party into a sympathetic one (Oegema & Klandermans, 1994; Simon & Klandermans, 2001), transformation of a sympathetic person into an active and engaging member of the movement (Oegema & Klandermans, 1994; Van Stekelenberg & Klandermans, 2013), encouragement of regime supporters to stand by or even defect (Nepstad, 2013), encouragement of third parties that support the regime to withdraw
their support (Stewart et al., 2015), or encouragement of third parties to help the cause of the movement (Stewart et al., 2015).

In the case of movements facing oppressive regimes, third-party support to help the movement’s cause has been deemed especially important, as movements that received external support were found to be more than three times as likely to succeed as movements that did not receive external support (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2008). During the Arab Spring, for example, many international parties engaged in sympathetic collective action in support of and solidarity with the movements, particularly the ones in Tunisia and Egypt (Stewart et al., 2015; Strenger, 2011). Besides our question of whether nonviolent (rather than violent) strategies are critical in eliciting this support, a closely related and equally important question is why that would be. Here, drawing on research on morality, collective action, and the ‘underdog effect,’ we suggest that in the context of political struggles, the use of nonviolence increases support through enhancing a movement’s perceived morality and victim status.

Predictors of third-party support: Moral patience, morality, and victim status

We hypothesized that a movement’s use of nonviolence (compared to violence) would maximize the perceptual contrast between the movement and its opponent (i.e., in the context of political struggles, the state or government) in several ways. First, people should see a nonviolent as opposed to a violent movement as more of the receiver or object (rather than the doer or subject) of the struggle between movement and government. In line with this assumption, Gray and Wegner (2009) have shown that people tend to have a dyadic perception of those involved in moral situations, perceiving one side as the moral agent and the other side as the moral “patient”. The moral agent typically is seen as the cause of the situation, and therefore as either praise- or blameworthy, depending on whether the agent’s behavior is seen as moral or immoral. The moral
patient, on the other hand, is typically seen as innocent (Gray & Wegner, 2009; Gray Young, & Waytz, 2012). We hypothesized that in the movement-government dyad, by using nonviolence rather than violence the movement would maximize its own perceived moral patiency and the government’s perceived moral agency.

As research on collective action has established, people usually view and evaluate struggles between movements and governments in terms of illegitimacy and injustice (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013; Stürmer & Simon, 2009). In other words: morality. The government’s behavior in our context of interest (i.e. political movements/struggles) should typically be considered at least morally questionable. Seen at the same time as (more of) a moral agent due to the movement’s use of nonviolence rather than violence, the government should then be perceived as more blameworthy. The movement, on the other hand, should if anything be perceived as more moral and praiseworthy. These predictions are also in line with research on the so-called ‘underdog effect,’ describing the phenomenon that the disadvantaged will be cast in the role of underdogs, which compared to topdogs are seen in a more positive light (Michniewicz & Vandello, 2013), as more likeable (Goldschmied & Vandello, 2009) and more moral (Vandello, Michnievicz, & Goldschmied, 2011). Last but not least, the perception of the nonviolent (rather than violent) movement as a moral patient (rather than agent), along with its perception as more moral, should make it easier for people to clearly identify who is the victim and who is the perpetrator in the struggle.

Crucially, when people see others as moral patients, they see them in terms of their needs (Gray & Wegner, 2009; Gray & Wegner, 2010). Similarly, people see underdogs (as opposed to topdogs) as more deserving (Kim, Alison, Eylon, Goethals, Markus, Hindle, & McGuire, 2008;
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Vandello, Goldschmied, & Richards, 2007). Further, when people see others as moral, they usually are more empathic toward and supportive of them (Riva, Brambilla, & Vaes, 2015). Thus, if nonviolence indeed boosts a movement’s perceived moral patiency, morality, and victim status, then it follows that nonviolence should also give the movement a boost in terms of support. The complete hypothesized model is depicted in Figure 1.

Overview of the Studies

Five studies examined the effect of movements’ strategy on people’s willingness to support and join the movement. Using a nested design and 23 social movements in the U.S., Study 1 tested whether perceived violence of a movement’s strategy can predict likability, support, and willingness to join the movement beyond the perceived morality of the movement’s goal. The next four, experimental studies tested whether a movement’s use of nonviolence (rather than violence) increases its perceived moral patiency, morality, and victim status, and ultimately people’s support for the movement and their willingness to join it. Study 2 tested this hypothesis among Americans learning about a hypothetical movement in a hypothetical foreign country. To test whether the findings of this study were specific to movements fighting for democracy or would generalize to movements with other goals, we manipulated not only the movement’s means (i.e. strategy: nonviolent vs. violent vs. unknown) but also its ends (i.e. goal: democracy vs. authoritarianism). This study also ruled out perceived powerlessness of the movement as an alternative to moral patiency in explaining the effect of nonviolence. Study 3 conceptually replicated the previous study in the context of a real country (Myanmar) and a real movement, and ruled out general patiency as another alternative to moral patiency in explaining the effect of nonviolence. In order to extend the findings of Study 2 and 3 to people within the country of the movement, Study 4 tested our model among Iranians in the context of the Green
Movement in Iran, and Study 5 tested it among Americans in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States. Last but not least, we combined comparable data from all experimental studies (Studies 2-5) and ran a cumulative meta-analysis to reconfirm our results and reconcile some inconsistencies that had emerged in the four individual experiments.

Study 1

In this study we used a variety of real social movements in the United States. We included movements with different goals (moral vs. immoral) and strategies (violent vs. nonviolent), ranging from the U.S. civil rights movement to Neo-Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan (for a complete list of all movements see Appendix A). This variety of movements granted more ecological validity and generalizability to our results. Further, we aimed to test whether perceived strategy of a movement could predict support for the movement above and beyond the perceived morality of its goals.

Method

Participants. The sample consisted of 203 participants recruited on MTurk. After excluding four participants who were not born in the United States, and one participants who used significantly more time to complete the survey (outliers; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), 198 participants were retained for data analysis (120 female, age M = 39.81, SD = 14.55, rang = 18-78).

Procedure. We asked Americans to rate 23 social movements that have happened or have been happening in the United States (e.g., American independence, civil rights, Occupy, Ku Klux Klan, anti-abortion, Tea-Party, Neo-Nazi) on different measures using a visual analog scale from 1 to 9. After each question (e.g., the morality of the movement) participants saw a list of 23
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movements. They were asked to indicate their answer to the question for all 23 movements. Participants therefore conveyed their opinion for each question 23 times for 23 different movements. Unless noted otherwise, the scale endpoints were labeled *Not at All* and *Very Much*.

**Materials.**

*Perceived morality of the movements’ goals.* Participants rated 23 social movements on the extent to which they perceived the movements’ goal as moral ("For each of the following movements, to what extent do you think the goals of the movement are moral?").

*Perceived use of violence.* Participants indicated their opinion about the extent to which each movement uses violence as its strategy ("For each of the following movements, to what extent do you think it has used extreme actions (e.g., throwing stones at demonstrations, doing property damage, bodily harm, etc) to achieve its goals?").

*Perceived likability of the movement.* We asked participants to what extent they like the movements? ("For each of the following movements, how much do you like the movement.").

*Willingness to support the movement.* We asked participants to rate all the movements in terms of the degree to which they were willing to support them ("how much active support would you give to the movements below (e.g., sign petitions, donate money, participate in events, etc)?").

*Willingness to join the movement.* Participants indicated to what extent they were willing to join the movements ("For each of the following movements, if you could, how much would you like to join the movement (i.e., become a member)?").
Attitudes towards repression of the movement. Participants indicated to what extent they were supportive of suppressing each movement (“For each of the following movements, imagine that the movement exists right now in another country whose government feels challenged or threatened by the movement. How understandable would you find it if the government were to use repression or violence against the movement?”).

Results

To calculate regression, we used participants as a random factor, likability of the movement, willingness to support and join the movement, and attitudes toward repression of the movement as the criteria variables, and perceived morality of the movement and use of violence as the predictors (see table 1). For all regression equation, the between-subject degree of freedom was one and the within-subject degree of freedom was 3906. Results showed that all predictors significantly predicted all outcome variables.

Discussion

As indicated in the results, perceived morality of the movements predicted a large amount of variability in all outcome variables, and thus made it harder and less likely to find a significant effect of movements’ strategy on the outcome variables. Importantly, however, the effect of strategy was still significant after taking the effect of morality into account. We found this effect consistently across 23 different movements for all outcome variables. This means that the strategy of the movements above and beyond its goal has its own unique effect on people’s willingness to support and join the movement. On the other hand, the more people believed that a movement pursues violent strategies, the more likely they were to find oppression of the movement as a legitimate policy adopted by its opponent. These effects were not limited to any
particular movement since we included a variety of social movements that can be placed on both ends of the morality (moral vs. immoral) as well as the strategy continuum (violent vs. nonviolent). Due to the correlational nature of this study, however, we could not establish causality study. To address this issue, in the next study we manipulated both the perceived morality of the movement’s goal (moral vs. immoral) as well as its strategy (violent vs. nonviolent vs. baseline) in a 2x3 experimental design.

**Study 2**

**Method**

**Participants.** The sample consisted of 606 participants recruited on MTurk. After excluding ten participants who were not born in the United States, five who were not native speakers, 72 who did not pay enough attention to the vignettes (as evidenced by incorrect answers to questions that checked core facts of the manipulation materials, such as the stated strategy or goal of the movement), and three who used significantly more time to complete the survey than others (outliers; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), 516 participants were retained for data analysis (226 male, age M = 36.98, SD = 13.05, range = 87-18). Our exclusion of 15 percent of participants was very similar to the average exclusion rate deemed necessary to ensure data quality in online research (Chandler, Mueller, & Paolacci, 2014).

**Procedure.** In a 3 (strategy: nonviolent vs. violent vs. unknown strategy) x 2 (goal: democracy vs. authoritarianism) design, participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions. In all conditions they read a hypothetical scenario about tensions between the government of “Country X” and its citizens. According to the scenario, social and economic injustice due to the government’s policies led the citizens to form a movement pushing for
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change, which elicited a repressive reaction from the government. We manipulated movement’s strategy to achieve its goal (nonviolent vs. violent vs. control condition). In nonviolent condition members of the movement used strategies like sit-ins, demonstrations, and strikes. In violent condition movement’s members adopted strategies like setting buildings on fire and using weapons to fight back against the government. Participants in control condition did not receive any information about the strategy of the movement. Goal was manipulated by describing the movement to fight for more civic rights and social justice (democratic goal), or to fight for curtailment of civic rights and social justice (authoritarian goal). After reading the scenarios, participants completed the dependent measures described below on visual analog scales from 1 to 9. Unless noted otherwise, the scale endpoints were labeled Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree, and scales were unidimensional as intended.

Materials.

Attention Checks. Six questions assessed whether participants understood the pertinent facts of the vignette correctly (e.g., “Who was involved in the struggle in Country X?”, “What kind of strategy did the movement adopt towards the government?”).

Perceived illegitimacy. Participants indicated their perception of the illegitimacy of the situation by answering five items (e.g., “The current situation in Country X is unbearable for people”, “The situation the people of Country X are in is unfair.”; \( \alpha = .87, M = 6.76, SD = 1.41 \)).

Perceived efficacy. Four items measured to what extent participants viewed the movement as efficacious (e.g., “The movement will be able to do what it set out to do.”, “In my opinion, this movement will be successful.”; \( \alpha = .95, M = 5.18, SD = 1.84 \)).
Perceived power of the movement. Four items assessed participants’ perception of the movement’s power vis-à-vis the government (e.g., “Compared to the movement, the government has the upper hand in the current conflict.” [reversed], “With regard to the situation in Country X, I believe that the movement has more power than the government.”; \( \alpha = .82, M = 4.47, SD = 1.44 \)).

Perceived moral agency and patiency. This scale, adapted from Gray and Wegner (2009), measured to what extent participants perceived the movement as a moral agent or patient on a continuum from None or Not at all to A lot or Very Much. Five items measured moral agency (e.g. “How responsible is the movement for the current situation?”; “How much should the movement be blamed for the current situation?”) and six items measured moral patiency (e.g. “How vulnerable do you think the movement is?”; “To what extent does the movement need help?”). An exploratory factor analysis revealed that the items intended to measure perceived moral agency of the movement were explained by one factor, as expected; yet, not as expected, only two items (“How responsible is each side for the current situation?” and “How much should each side be blamed for the current situation?”) loaded highly on it, whereas the others loaded with less than .3. As these two items seemed more capturing blame in particular than moral agency in general, we used the item “How agentic or active is each side in the current situation?” as a single-item measure of perceived general agency (\( M = 7.40, SD = 1.31 \)). Another exploratory factor analysis revealed that all items intended to measure perceived moral patiency loaded highly on one factor as expected (\( \alpha = .64, M = 6.81, SD = 1.10 \)).

Perceived morality. Four items measured participants’ perception of the movement as moral (e.g. “Morally speaking, the movement is in the right and the government in the wrong”; \( \alpha = .86, M = 6.12, SD = 1.78 \)).
**Perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator.** Four items measured how clearly participants could distinguish between victim and perpetrator (e.g., “The line between victim and victimizer are blurred in the struggle in Country X. [reversed coded]”, “There is a clear-cut distinction between victim and victimizer in the current struggle in Country X.”; $\alpha = .92, M = 5.02, SD = 2.32$).

**Support.** Two items measured support (“The international community should impose sanctions on the government in Country X in order to support the movement.” and “The international community should put a lot of pressure on the President of Country X to step aside and let Country X's people create a new government as demanded by the movement.”; $\alpha = .85, M = 4.92, SD = 2.35$).

**Attitudes towards joining the movement.** Four items assessed private feelings towards joining the movement (e.g., “If I were a member of this movement, I would regret joining.”, “Overall, I would feel that me joining the movement would not be a worthwhile thing to do.”) and four items assessed public feelings towards joining the movement (e.g., “Overall, I think my membership in this movement would be considered good by others.”, “If I were a member of the movement, most people would consider my membership in other social groups more effective.”), adapted from two subscales of Luhtanen and Crocker’s (1992) Collective Self-Esteem Scale. All eight items loaded highly on one factor and thus were entered into one composite score ($\alpha = .93$, $M = 5.48, SD = 1.94$).

**Perceived morality of democracy and authoritarianism.** In order to assess participants’ perception of the morality of democracy and authoritarianism as two political systems, two separate items assessed participants’ attitudes toward these two political systems (“Democracy
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"as a political system is a good idea.”, M = 7.63, SD = 1.55; “Authoritarianism as a political system is a good idea.”, M = 2.33, SD = 1.64).

Results

A paired t-test revealed that people perceived democracy as more of a moral political system than authoritarianism, t(515) = 45.98, p < .001. All dependent variables were subjected to two-way ANOVAs with strategy and goal as independent variables (and their interaction). Differences in degrees of freedom on different dependent variables (DV) were due to differences in the number of missing values. All results for the main effects of strategy and goal are shown in Table 1. Means and standard deviations for each dependent variable, as well as preplanned comparisons between the levels of each independent variable, are shown in Table 2 and 3. Interaction effects are reported below.

Main effects of goal. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, there were significant effects of the movement’s goal (democracy vs. authoritarianism) on all dependent variables (marginally so for perceived agency and power). The movement largely benefitted from being seen as pursuing democracy rather than authoritarianism.

Main effects of strategy. The movement was perceived as significantly more of a moral patient when it followed a nonviolent rather than violent or unknown strategy; when following a violent strategy, it was seen as even less of a moral patient than when the strategy was unknown. This advantage did not come at the expense of any decrease in perceived illegitimacy, efficacy, power, or agency, while it did come with further advantages in terms of perceived morality, distinction between victim and perpetrator, support for the movement, and attitudes toward joining the movement.
Interaction effects. As reported in detail below, the advantage of nonviolence in terms of support was limited to movements pursuing a more democratic government, but did not occur for those pursuing a more authoritarian government. Similarly, while the advantage of nonviolence over violence in terms of perceived morality was not limited by the movement’s goal, compared to control it only occurred when the goal was a more democratic rather than authoritarian government. Last but not least, the advantage of both nonviolence and violence over control in terms of perceived illegitimacy was reproduced when the movement pursued a more democratic government but did not generalize to a situation where the movement pursued a more authoritarian government. The interaction of strategy by goal was not significant for the other dependent variables.

There was a significant interaction on support, $F(2, 510) = 5.07, p = .007$. When the movement pursued a new democratic government, participants were more supportive when it used a nonviolent ($M = 6.50$) rather than violent ($M = 5.73$) or unknown strategy ($M = 5.08$), $t_s(510) > |1.97|, ps < .050$. When the movement pursued a new authoritarian government, on the other hand, participants’ support did not differ depending on the movement’s strategy ($M_{authoritarian/control} = 4.09, M_{authoritarian/violent} = 3.88, M_{authoritarian/nonviolent} = 4.08$), $t_s(510) < 0.64, ps > .500$.

The interaction on perceived illegitimacy was marginally significant, $F(2, 510) = 2.94, p = .054$. When the movement pursued a new democratic government, participants saw the situation Country X’s citizens lived in as more illegitimate when the movement followed a nonviolent ($M = 4.23$) or violent ($M = 4.47$) rather than unknown strategy ($M = 4.40$), $t_s(510) > |2.00|, ps < .050$. When the movement pursued a new authoritarian government, on the other
The movement’s strategy had no effect on perceived illegitimacy of the movement (\(M_{\text{authoritarian/control}} = 4.60, M_{\text{authoritarian/violent}} = 4.63, M_{\text{authoritarian/nonviolent}} = 4.53\)).

The interaction on perceived morality of the movement was also significant, \(F(2, 510) = 3.97, p = .020\). When the movement pursued a new democratic government, participants perceived it as more moral when it did so using a nonviolent (\(M = 7.33\)) rather than violent (\(M = 6.18\)) or unknown strategy (\(M = 6.22\)), \(t(510) > |4.00|, ps < .001\). When the movement pursued a new authoritarian government, on the other hand, participants perceived it only as more moral when it did so using a nonviolent (\(M = 6.09\)) compared to a violent strategy (\(M = 4.87\)), \(t(510) = 4.70, p < .001\), but not compared to an unknown strategy (\(M = 5.81\)), \(t(510) = 1.14, p = .257\).

Mediation process. We tested our hypothesized model. All paths turned out as predicted, establishing acceptable local and global fit, \(\chi^2(8) = 43.47, p < .001, CFI = .97, NFI = .96, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .04\) (see Figure 2). We also tested the model while accounting for the goal of the movement and its interaction with strategy as additional exogenous variables correlated with each other as well as the nonviolence dummy. This if anything improved the model fit, \(\chi^2(12) = 41.61, p < .001, CFI = .98, NFI = .98, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .03\). The same was true when testing the model only for the comparison of nonviolent versus violent strategy, controlling for the control condition, \(\chi^2(24) = 79.40, p < .001, CFI = .98, NFI = .97, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .04\), or for the comparison of nonviolent versus unknown strategy (control), controlling for violent strategy, \(\chi^2(21) = 65.82, p < .001, CFI = .98, NFI = .97, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .03\). We also tested several alternative models, all but two were inferior to our hypothesized model; even the other two, which fit the data similarly well as our hypothesized model, were inferior in the sense that they had less degrees of freedom and thus less explanatory power (see Supplemental Materials).
Discussion

Study 2 largely supported our hypotheses. When observing a hypothetical movement struggling against an oppressive government in a hypothetical country, the movement’s use of a nonviolent (rather than violent or unknown) strategy led third-party observers to see the movement as more of a moral patient. Notably, it did so without decreasing its perception as agentic, efficacious, or powerful. Perceived moral patiency, in turn, made it easier for third-party observers to identify which party in the conflict was the victim and which the perpetrator, and increased perceptions of the movement’s morality. Ultimately, these changes in perception increased third-party observers’ support for the movement and their positive attitudes toward joining the movement.

The results from this study showing the effect of nonviolence (vs. violence) on support for and willingness to join the movement were rather remarkable. In political contexts, people usually tolerate and sometimes even advocate or mandate the use of violence against the opposing side (Giner-Sorolla, Leidner, & Castano, 2011; Leidner & Castano, 2012; Skitka, 2010; Skitka & Mullen, 2002). Thus, in our context of a hypothetical movement’s struggle against an oppressive regime, where it was relatively easy for participants to justify the use of violence or even see it as heroic, it was even more surprising that participants preferred nonviolence over violence rather than the other way around. In this sense, the context used in this study provided a particularly strong test of the viability of nonviolence as an effective tool for social change. Additionally, our findings regarding support for nonviolent political movements were generally in line with Thomas and Louis (2014), who showed that people are more supportive of
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nonviolent than violent environmental movements. Unlike Thomas and Louis (2014), however, we found these effects of nonviolence even in the presence of a corrupt system (i.e. oppressive regime), whereas Thomas and Louis had observed these effects only in the absence of a corrupt system.

While in our study perceived moral patiency was a key factor in the process from nonviolence to support and attitudes toward joining, research on the underdog effect has argued that, alternatively, perceived powerlessness is the central process variable that leads third parties to perceive the underdog as more moral and therefore more deserving of support (e.g., Vandello et al., 2011). Yet, participants did not perceive the nonviolent movement as less powerful (or, for that matter, less efficacious or agentic) than the violent movement. Thus, the positive effects of nonviolence cannot be explained by perceived powerlessness. By the same token, the role of perceived moral patiency in the process underlying these effects cannot be reduced to perceived powerlessness.

It should be noted that some effects of nonviolence depended on the movement’s goal. While the goal of the movement had main effects, it did not interact with strategy with respect to perceived moral patiency or perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator—indicating that even though people generally saw authoritarian movements as less of a moral patient, nonviolent movements had an ‘advantage’ over violent ones even when pursuing authoritarian goals. There were interactions between goal and strategy, however, on perceived illegitimacy, perceived morality, and support. Perceived illegitimacy and support were not affected by strategy, whereas perceived morality of movement was affected by strategy in the same direction as in the democratic conditions but weaker in magnitude. Overall, then, it appeared that nonviolence leads to similar perceptions regardless of the goal, but these perceptions only
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translate into greater support when the goal is democracy but not when it is authoritarianism. The likely reason for this is that for our participants, democracy was seen as more worthwhile goal than authoritarianism.

One important limitation of this study relates to ecological validity. Both movement and the country in which the movement took place were hypothetical. In the next study we addressed this issue by testing our model in the context of a real country and a real movement.

Study 3

Study 3 had two main goals. First, to test whether the role of perceived patience is unique to the moral aspect of perceived patience. Thus, we measured both moral and general patience (as well as agency). Second, Study 3 aimed to replicate the previous findings with increased ecological validity, focusing on both a real country (Myanmar) and a real movement. In doing so, Study 3 dropped the second manipulation of Study 2 (goal of the movement), as most participants would find it hard to believe that a grassroots movement in a real country ruled by a military regime (Myanmar) sought to establish a more authoritarian (rather than democratic) government.

Method

Participants. We recruited 373 participants on MTurk. After excluding ten participants who were not born in the United States, nine non-serious respondents (as indicated by all responses being at the exact same scale point for all items), 40 participants who misunderstood and/or did not pay sufficient attention to the vignettes (as indicated by incorrect answers to questions that checked key facts of the vignettes, such as the stated strategy of the movement), and three who used significantly more time to complete the survey than others (univariate
outliers, cf. Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), 311 participants were retained for data analysis (146 male, age: \( M = 38.50, \ SD = 13.47, \ range = 18\text{-}75 \)). The exclusion rate of 16.6% was again right at the average benchmark for online studies (Chandler et al., 2014).

**Procedure.** Except the use of a real movement in a real country (Myanmar), the scenarios used in the nonviolent, violent, and control condition of Study 3 were identical to the scenarios in Study 2. After reading the scenarios, participants completed the same dependent measures described below on visual analog scales from 1 to 9. Unless noted otherwise, the scale endpoints were labeled *Strongly Disagree* and *Strongly Agree*, and exploratory factor analyses indicated that all items of each scale highly loaded on one factor.

**Materials.**

**Attention checks.** Six questions assessed participants’ attention to the manipulation materials (e.g., “What kind of strategy did the government adopt towards the movement?” and “What is the main goal of the movement?”).

**Perceived morality** \((\alpha = .80, M = 6.88, SD = 1.32)\), **perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator** \((\alpha = .90, M = 5.73, SD = 1.92)\), **perceived efficacy** \((\alpha = .91, M = 5.42, SD = 1.67)\), **perceived power** \((\alpha = .80, M = 4.01, SD = 1.30)\), and **attitudes towards joining the movement** \((\alpha = .89, M = 6.50, SD = 1.35)\) were measured with the same items as in Study 2. Two items of the latter measure were dropped due to item-total correlations below .40.

**Perceived illegitimacy.** Three items measured the perceived illegitimacy of the situation that the people of Myanmar lived in (e.g., “The current political and economic conditions in Myanmar are unacceptable.”, “No one deserves to live in a situation like the one in Myanmar.”; \( \alpha = .91, M = 7.34, SD = 1.41 \)).
**Perceived general agency.** Four items assessed participants’ perception of the movement’s general agency (e.g., “How hard does the movement try when pursuing its goals?”, “How determined is the movement to achieve its goals?”, “How much effort does the movement put in to achieve its goals?”) from None or Not at all to A lot or Very Much ($\alpha = .86, M = 7.34, SD = 1.15$).

**Perceived moral agency.** Four items assessed participants’ perception of the movement’s moral agency (e.g., “How responsible is the movement for the current situation?”, “How much of the current situation is a consequence of the movement’s actions?”, “How much should the movement be blamed for the current situation?”) from Not at all to Very Much ($\alpha = .87, M = 3.70, SD = 1.66$).

**Perceived general patiency.** Four items assessed participants’ perception of the movement’s general patiency (e.g., “The movement in Myanmar is more passive than active.”, “The movement in Myanmar seems to be largely reacting (to the government), rather than being proactive.”, “The movement’s fate seems to be dictated more by the government’s actions than by its own actions.”) from Not at all to Very Much. After dropping one item with an item-total correlation below 0.40, we entered the remaining three items into a composite score ($\alpha = .63, M = 4.45, SD = 1.43$).

**Perceived moral patiency.** Four items assessed participants’ perception of the movement’s moral patiency (e.g., “How much pain would movement’s members feel if they lost comrades to their cause?”, “How much fear does the movement feel in the current situation?”, “How vulnerable do you think the movement is?”) from None or Not at all to A lot or Very Much ($\alpha = .67, M = 6.88, SD = 1.01$).
Perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator. Five items from Study 2 measured how clearly people could distinguish between victim and perpetrator ($\alpha = .90, M = 5.63, SD = 1.90$).

Support. Four items measured participants’ support for the movement (e.g., “International community should send consultants and experts in order to help the movement reach its goals.”, “International community should support the movement financially, allowing it to mobilize more people.”; $\alpha = .86, M = 5.45, SD = 1.88$).

Results

All results for the effects of strategy are shown in Table 4. All means (standard deviations) and pre-planned comparisons are shown in Table 5.

As in Study 2, the movement was perceived as significantly more of a moral patient when it used a nonviolent rather than violent or unknown strategy. While the movement was perceived as significantly more of a “general” patient when it used a nonviolent rather than violent strategy, this was not the case in comparison to control. In other words, the effect of strategy on moral patiency was driven by nonviolence, whereas the effect of strategy on general patiency was driven by violence. These patterns suggest that the advantage of nonviolence in terms of patiency is specific to moral, not general, patiency. Again, this advantage did not come at the expense of any decrease in perceived general agency. Further, violence was perceived as more morally agentic than nonviolence (and as marginally more powerful than control, if not nonviolence)—an effect that translated in a decrease in perceived morality, support, and attitudes toward joining the movement, suggesting that the perception of violence as more morally agentic was not
positive but negative (i.e. not praise- but blameworthy; see Gray & Wegener, 2009). As in Study 2, on all of these variables nonviolence outperformed violence and control.

Mediational process. Results established good local and global fit for our hypothesized model, \( \chi^2(5) = 3.83, p = .575, CFI = 1.00, NFI = .99, RMSEA = .00, SRMR = .02 \) (see Figure 3). While, as in Study 2, alternative models were all inferior to our hypothesized model (see Supplemental Materials), unlike in Study 2, the path from perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator to support did not reach significance. In order to be sure that it was moral and not general patiency of the movement that drove the underlying mechanism of the effects, we also tested a model with general patiency in lieu of moral patiency; this model was also inferior to our hypothesized model, as the crucial pathways from general patiency to the step-2 mediators were not significant, \( ts < 0.20 \) (see Supplemental Materials for details).

As shown in Figure 3 we found some additional paths compared to our hypothesized model. There were two direct effects of nonviolent strategy on perceived morality of the movement and perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator. There was also a direct effect of perceived moral patiency on support for the movement. Importantly, the model fit did not substantially change when we tested the model without these additional paths.

Discussion

Study 3 reproduced the results of Study 2 in a more ecologically valid context, focusing on a real rather than fictitious movement and country. While Study 2 showed that it is perceived patiency – not agency or powerlessness – of the movement that explains the advantages of nonviolence, Study 3 showed that it is the perceived moral (not general) patiency of the
movement that explains these advantages. As in Study 2, participants perceived the nonviolent movement to be equally agentic, efficacious, and powerful as the violent movement.

Study 2 and 3 focused on a hypothetical or real movement outside of the United States, respectively. Thus, the movement and its members constituted an outgroup for our study participants. An unanswered question was therefore whether the same effects would emerge when the movement takes place in participants’ own country (i.e. their [broader] ingroup). As a host of research has shown, people see morality as a more important dimension to evaluate a group when the group is an ingroup rather than an outgroup (Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007). Further, morally questionable behavior such as violence is seen more leniently when committed by ingroup rather than outgroup members (e.g., Leidner & Castano, 2012), and especially so when the behavior has been committed by underdogs (Vandello et al., 2011). These phenomena cast doubt as to whether we would also observe advantages of nonviolence for movements in participants’ own country, or whether in those situations participants would support a violent movement as much as, or even more than, a nonviolent movement. Testing our model in a context in which participants and the movement share (at least superordinate) group membership also necessitated the choice of contexts where participants recently witnessed a real social movement. Thus, such a test further increased the ecological validity of this research. To this end, the next two studies were conducted in Iran in the context of the Green Movement, and in the U.S. in the context of Black Lives Matter.

Study 4

Study 4 was conducted in Iran during the summer of 2015 (i.e. before US-Iranian relations substantially improved, and before the recent 2016 elections largely won by Rouhani’s more moderate party). After the Iranian presidential elections in 2009, many Iranians believed
that the election had been fraudulent and therefore staged public protests. This collective action against the government was called the Green Movement, which was ultimately repressed. The fact that the Green Movement failed to achieve its goals\(^1\) despite the use of nonviolence provided us with a stringent test of our model. In this context of a past nonviolent movement that failed, people should if anything be skeptical of the future use of nonviolence to effect change. If they would nevertheless support a nonviolent movement more than a violent movement in the future, this would provide strong support for our model.

**Method**

**Participants.** Due to the nature of the research topic in general and the questionnaire in particular, participants had to be recruited carefully. Recruitment was done via snowball sampling, asking people deemed trustworthy (yet not necessarily unsupportive of the government) by local experts to participate in the research. To maximize the number of participants we administered the study both online and via paper and pencil. Since the nonviolent condition played the most important role, we first completed recruitment for this condition and then started recruitment for the violent condition. For this reason, and because it was particularly difficult to find people who were willing to respond to the violent condition, participants in the nonviolent condition ended up outnumbering participants in the violent condition. Finally, we were able to recruit 122 participants altogether, 99 in the nonviolent condition and 23 in the violent condition. Two participants were excluded due to misunderstanding the movement’s strategy (as indicated by their incorrect answer to a question examining their comprehension of the movement’s strategy).

\(^1\) Our classification of the Green Movement as a failed movement is based on the fact that it did not achieve its stated goals, which were to (a) revoke the results of the 2009 election, and (b) call for a new and free election.
**Procedure.** After designing the questionnaire in English, it was translated into Persian (Farsi). We asked participants to imagine that the same movement that emerged in 2009 would re-emerge in the future. Although the Green Movement had been nonviolent, in the violent condition we asked participants to imagine that when it re-emerged in the future it would be violent, destroying government buildings, rioting, and interfering with security forces. In the nonviolent condition, we asked participants to imagine that when the movement re-emerged in the future it would be nonviolent, holding rallies, staging sit-ins, or organizing strikes. Then we administered measures similar to those in the previous studies. All scales in the online survey were visual analog scales from 1 to 9 with endpoints labeled *Completely disagree* and *Completely agree* unless noted otherwise. All scales in the paper-and-pencil questionnaire were from 1 to 6 (as it would be cognitively taxing to choose between nine distinct Likert points) and endpoints were labeled identical to the online survey. Before analyzing the data, we thus had to transform all 6-point scales from paper-and-pencil questionnaires into 9-point scales \( x = \left( (x - 1) \times \frac{8}{5} \right) + 1 \), so as to be able to analyze the online and paper-and-pencil data together, as intended. By virtue of being a *linear* transformation, this transformation does not affect any statistics used or reported below; it only served the purpose to bring both online and paper-and-pencil data onto the same metric.

**Materials.**

*Attention check.* Two questions assessed whether participants paid sufficient attention to the study materials, most importantly the movement’s strategy.

*Perceived illegitimacy.* Three items measured the illegitimacy of the situation Iranian people live in politically and economically (e.g., “The situation people live in is not fair.”; “The political and economic situation in Iran is totally unacceptable.”; \( \alpha = .86, M = 7.16, SD = 1.95 \)).
**Perceived efficacy.** One item measured to what extent participants believed that the movement is efficacious in terms of achieving its goal (“This movement will be able to achieve its goal.”; $M = 4.51, SD = 2.43$).

**Perceived power.** Two items measured to what extent the movement has enough power to resist against the government (e.g., “Compared to the government, the movement has more power”, “This movement can resist against the government’s repression”; $\alpha = .81, M = 3.20, SD = 2.03$).

**Perceived general agency.** Three items measured to what extent participants perceived the movement as a general agent (e.g., “How much do you think the movement tries to reach its goal?”, “How much do you think this movement is determined to reach its goal?”; $\alpha = .94, M = 5.51, SD = 1.90$).

**Perceived moral agency.** Three items measured to what extent participants perceived the movement as a moral agent (e.g., “To what extent we can blame the movement because of this imaginary conflict?”, “To what extent this movement is responsible for causing this imaginary conflict?”; $\alpha = .87, M = 4.35, SD = 2.41$).

**Perceived general patiency.** Three items measured to what extent participants perceived the movement as a general patient (e.g., “This movement is more passive than active.”, “Instead of being proactive, this movement is a reaction to the government’s policies and actions.”; $\alpha = .80, M = 5.80, SD = 1.99$).

**Perceived moral patiency.** Three items measured to what extent participants perceived the movement as a moral patient (e.g., “How much do you think this movement is vulnerable?”; “How much pain would movement members feel if they lost comrades to their cause?”; $\alpha = .74, M = 7.69, SD = 1.36$). We dropped one item due to its low total-item correlation than .40. As the
distribution of this variable was severely skewed, we transformed it (reflect and square root; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2011) according to our a priori determined data analytical strategy.²

Perceived morality. Three items measured participants’ perception of the movement as moral (“Morally speaking, the movement is in the right and the government is in the wrong.”, “The government’s behavior is morally wrong.” [reversed]; \( \alpha = .85, M = 6.49, SD = 2.16 \).

Support. Four items measured to what extent participants were willing to support the movement (e.g., “I would donate money to the movement to reach its goals.”, “If there was a rally in our neighborhood to support the movement, I would participate in it.”; \( \alpha = .91, M = 5.93, SD = 2.52 \)).

Willingness to join the movement. Three items measured to what extent participants were willing to join the movement (e.g., “If I were a movement member, I would be happy.”, “I think it is worthy to be a member of this movement.”; \( \alpha = .77, M = 5.51, SD = 2.20 \)).

Results

Before comparing the nonviolent to the violent condition, we first examined the nonviolent condition in and of itself. First we carried out paired t-tests in order to see if participants perceived moral and general agency as well as moral and general patiency differently. Participants perceived the movement’s moral agency \( (M = 4.59, SD = 2.51) \) as lower than its general agency \( (M = 5.23, SD = 2.02) \), \( t(113) = -2.08, p = .040 \), whereas they perceived the movement’s moral patiency \( (M = 7.84, SD = 1.59) \) as greater than its general patiency \( (M = \)

² We checked the distribution of all continuous variables for normality violations in all studies. When normality was substantially or severely violated, we transformed the distribution according to Tabachnick and Fidell (2011). As transformations are never guaranteed to substantially improve normality, we then re-checked the distributions of the transformed variables, but only used the transformed variables if their distribution had substantially improved over the original/raw distribution; if not, following Tabachnick and Fidell (2011), we used the raw/untransformed variable even despite its normality issues.
5.89, SD = 1.97), t(113) = 8.43, p < .001. We then examined the relationships between these four variables (Table 6), as well as their relationships with the other DVs (Table 7).

There was a significant positive relationship between moral agency and general patiency of the movement, indicating that perceptions of the movement as morally agentic if anything were associated with perceptions of it as more (rather than less) passive. Moral patiency, on the other hand, correlated positively with general agency, indicating that perceptions of the movement as morally patientic if anything were associated with perceptions of it as more (rather than less) active.

The relationships of perceived moral patiency with support, willingness to join the movement, illegitimacy, and perceived morality were positive and significant. The relationships of perceived general patiency with those variables were in the opposite direction, again indicating that the positive relationship of patiency with benefits of nonviolence is specific to moral patiency and does not generalize to general patiency. The same was true for the relationships of moral agency with the other DVs. The relationships of perceived general agency, on the other hand, were similar to the relationships of perceived moral patiency. To be sure, then, that it was the perceived moral patiency but not perceived general agency that drives the benefits of nonviolence, we computed the correlations of moral patiency and the other DVs while partialing out any overlap with general agency (see Table 8).

After partialing out perceived general agency, most of the significant relationships remained significant. In particular, all but one of the relationships of perceived moral patiency with the other DVs remained significant, and the one that did not still reached marginal significance. Therefore, the relationships of perceived moral patiency with the other DVs could
not have been merely due to the overlap between perceived moral patiency and perceived general agency.

Mediation analysis. According to our conceptual model, perceived morality should mediate the relationship between perceived moral patiency and the two outcomes, willingness to support and join the movement. Indirect effects were tested with PROCESS (Hayes, 2012, model 4), with 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals. Results indicated that perceived morality mediated the relationship between perceived moral patiency and support (Effect = .28, Boot SE = .09, LLCI = .139, ULCI = .480), and the relationship between perceived moral patiency and willingness to join the movement (Effect = .15, Boot SE = .07, LLCI = .047, ULCI = .313). We also tested the mediation of the effect of perceived moral patiency on the two main DVs, support and willingness to join, by perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator. Perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator mediated the relationship between moral patiency and support (Effect = .15, Boot SE = .08, LLCI = .036, ULCI = .376), whereas it did not do so for the effect of moral patiency on willingness to join (Effect = .04, Boot SE = .05, LLCI = -.023, ULCI = .173).

Experimental effects. Since the nonviolent condition heavily outnumbered the violent condition (97 vs 23), to test for differences between the conditions we used the Wilcoxon rank-sum test (equivalent to the Mann Whitney U test), which is the nonparametric equivalent of the independent t-test. Results are shown in Table 9; negative Zs indicate greater means in the nonviolent compared to the violent condition.
As in previous studies, participants did not perceive nonviolent and violent movements differently in terms of illegitimacy or power. Importantly, participants wanted more support for the nonviolent movement, were marginally more willingness to join it, and perceived it as marginally more of a moral patient. Interestingly, participants perceived the nonviolent movement as *more*, not less, generally agentic than the violent movement. The effect of strategy on perceived morality was not significant.

**Discussion**

This study tested whether despite a general tendency to excuse immoral and/or violent ingroup behavior, people would still give preferential support to movements in their own country (i.e. in their own superordinate group) based on use of nonviolent as compared to violent strategies. Doing so in Iran in the context of the Green Movement, this study also extended our previous findings in a context in which people had experienced a nonviolent social movement that failed. Iranians who imagined the movement to re-emerge in the future using nonviolent strategies perceived that future movement as more of a moral (but not general) patient and more of a general (but not moral) agent. In other words, the more Iranians perceived the movement as a moral patient, the more they perceived it also as generally agentic. Further, the more they perceived the movement as morally agentic, the more they perceived it also as passive (generally patientic). Even after partialing out perceived general agency, perceived moral patiency was still a significant predictor of support for the movement, willingness to join it, and its perceived morality. Mediation analysis revealed the same pattern that had emerged in previous studies, with perceived morality of the movement mediating the relationship between perceived moral patiency and willingness to support and join the movement. This, again, supported our model.
Most importantly, Iranians were more willing to support the movement when imagining it were to use nonviolent rather than violent strategies. Corresponding effects on willingness to join the movement and perceived moral patience were marginally significant, while the effect on perceived morality was not. Given the difficult logistics of collecting data for this study in Iran and the resulting challenges for data analysis and the interpretability of results, we conducted another experiment in the U.S., immediately after the widely publicized death of the African American Freddie Gray while he was in police custody in Baltimore, which spurred a debate over police brutality and racism, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

**Study 5**

The main goal of Study 5 was similar to that of Study 4: to replicate our findings in Studies 1-3 in the context of a movement in participants’ own country, while overcoming the logistical difficulties of Study 4. To this end, we ran Study 5 with Americans in the context of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. The Black Lives Matter movement came about after numerous incidents in which Black people were killed by White police officers, for example the killing of a 18 year old African-American male, Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri, at the hands of a White police officer. The most important demand of the movement is to get rid of widespread systemic racial injustice in the United States. The movement has gradually gained popularity with similar incidents across the country, such as the death of Freddie Gray.

**Method**

**Participants.** We recruited 247 participants on MTurk. After excluding 9 participants who were not born in the U.S. or were not native speakers, 12 participants who misunderstood the news report (based on their written summaries after reading the news report), and 17
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participants who did not pay enough attention to the news report (as indicated by their answers to the questions that checked core facts of the news report), 1 participants who did not find the article credible, 12 participants who served in the U.S. military or police force, and 10 participants who used significantly more time to complete the survey than others (outliers; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), 186 participants were retained for data analysis (74 male, age M = 36.09, SD = 12.25, range = 19-68).

Procedure. Like Study 4, Study 5 used a real context (police brutality and social justice) and a movement within participants’ own country (Black Lives Matter). Because most people had pre-existing knowledge of the Black Lives Matter movement and its largely nonviolent strategy, a control condition would likely have been very similar to the nonviolent condition. Thus, as in Study 4, we focused on the nonviolence and violence conditions. Participants were thus randomly assigned to one of these two conditions. In both conditions, a news report described the incident of the death of Freddie Gray, who “allegedly possessed a switchblade.” He “fell into a coma while being transported in a police van and was taken to a trauma center,” and died due to “multiple injuries to his spinal cord.” For further investigation six Baltimore police officers were temporarily suspended. This incident “spurred a civil movement, similar to the incident of the shooting of Michael Brown.” In the violence condition, participants were told that the movement as a whole was discussing to adopt violent strategies including using projectiles, throwing rocks, and burning police vehicles. In the nonviolent condition, participants were told that the movement as a whole was discussing to adopt nonviolent strategies including sit-ins, civil disobedience, strikes, and occupying police and governmental buildings. In both conditions the police/state strategy against the movement was depicted as rather confrontational, using tear gas, stun grenades, arresting and imprisoning movement members, and declaring a state of
emergency and deploying the Maryland National Guard to Baltimore. To increase each condition’s credibility despite participants’ likely preconceptions about the movement, the nonviolent condition mentioned that “[d]espite different media’s characterization of the movement as violent, a recently released official report shows that the organizers, activists, and the majority of protesters in Baltimore strongly advocate for nonviolent strategies”; and the violent condition mentioned that “[d]espite different media’s characterization of the movement as nonviolent, a recently released official report shows that the organizers, activists, and the majority of protesters in Baltimore strongly advocate for violent strategies”. After reading the news report, participants completed the dependent measures described below on visual analog scales from 1 to 9. Unless noted otherwise, the scale endpoints were labeled Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree.

Materials.

Attention checks. Six questions measured if participants understood and paid enough attention to the manipulation materials (e.g. “What kind of strategy did the movement predominantly adopt?”, “What is the struggle in Baltimore about?”).

Perceived moral patiency ($\alpha = .77$, $M = 6.20$, $SD = 1.59$), perceived moral agency ($\alpha = .95$, $M = 4.78$, $SD = 2.35$), perceived general patiency ($\alpha = .82$, $M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.90$), perceived general agency ($\alpha = .85$, $M = 6.77$, $SD = 1.65$), perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 5.01$, $SD = 2.21$), perceived efficacy ($\alpha = .96$, $M = 4.51$, $SD = 2.11$), and willingness to join the movement ($\alpha = .85$, $M = 4.84$, $SD = 2.07$) were measured with the same items as in Study 4. We dropped two items measuring perceived general patiency of the movement due to item-total correlations below .40.
In this study, when subjecting both perceived moral patiency and moral agency to an exploratory factor analysis, the “eigenvalue greater than 1” criterion and the scree plot both suggested a one-factor solution, with the one factor explaining 91% of the variance. The reason for this divergence from our previous studies and past research on agency/patiency, where agency and patiency are treated as separate constructs, appeared to be that agency and patiency in this study were strongly (negatively) correlated ($r_{study5} = -.57; r_{study2} = 0.25, r_{study3} = -0.21$). Yet, based on our previous studies and past research on moral agency/patiency, we kept the two constructs separate and created two separate composite scores (moral agency: $\alpha = .95, M = 4.75, SD = 2.36$; moral patiency: $\alpha = .76, M = 6.21, SD = 1.57$). We then used them as separate DVs in our analyses of variance. However, for testing our whole model via path analysis, we had to use one composite score comprising both moral patiency and (reverse-coded) moral agency ($\alpha = .89, M = 5.73, SD = 1.75$), as the large amount of shared variance between moral patiency and moral agency otherwise posed multicollinearity problems and violated statistical assumptions of path analysis.

**Perceived illegitimacy.** Three items measured the perceived illegitimacy of the police behavior toward Freddie Gray (e.g. “No one deserves to be treated like Freddie Gray was.”, “The police behavior toward Freddie Gray in Baltimore is unacceptable.”; $\alpha = .96, M = 7.32, SD = 1.99$).

**Perceived power.** Four items measured how powerful participants think the movement is (e.g. “The movement has enough power to push back the police.”, “The movement has more power than the police.”; $\alpha = .86, M = 4.45, SD = 1.72$).

**Perceived morality.** Four items measured perceived morality of the movement (e.g.}
“Morally speaking, the movement is in the right and the police department is in the wrong.”, “In terms of good and bad guys, the movement clearly plays the role of the good guy in this struggle.”; $\alpha = .91, M = 5.44, SD = 2.22$).

**Support.** Six items measured the extent to which participants wanted to support the movement (e.g. “If there was a demonstration in my city to support the movement in Baltimore, I would participate in it.”, “I would like to donate money to the movement in Baltimore.”; $\alpha = .95, M = 4.26, SD = 2.36$).

**Results**

All dependent variables were subjected to analyses of variance. Since political ideology predicts people’s attitudes toward political and racial issues in general, and attitudes toward the legitimacy of using violent strategies in political and race contexts in particular, we also entered political ideology as a covariate. The effects of strategy on all dependent variables are shown in Table 10.

Consistent with Studies 2-4, the nonviolent movement was seen as more of a moral patient and as more moral, received more support and was more likely to be joined. As in previous studies, participants did not perceive the nonviolent movement as less powerful or less efficacious than the violent movement. In fact, they even saw the nonviolent movement as (somewhat) *more* efficacious and powerful than the violent movement. They also perceived the nonviolent movement as less morally agentic and simultaneously saw it as more generally agentic (as well as more morally patientic). Comparing the results with and without political affiliation as a covariate, the effects of strategy on all dependent variables were virtually identical, except that without controlling for political affiliation, the effect on perceived moral
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patience only trended towards significance, \( F(1, 184) = 2.61, p = .108. \)

*Mediational analyses.* Since exploratory factor analysis revealed that all items intended to measure perceived moral agency and perceived moral patiency loaded on one factor (rather than two factors), we entered the composite score comprising both moral agency and moral patiency (rather than two separate composite scores) into a model testing the hypothesized mechanism. The model fit the data very well, \( \chi^2(4) = 2.31, p = .680, CFI = 1.00, NFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00, SRMR = .01 \) (see Figure 4). Again, we also tested alternative models, which were inferior to our hypothesized model (see Supplemental Materials).

As in Study 3, in this study, too, we obtained two additional paths that we had originally not predicted in our hypothesized model. As indicated in Figure 4, there were two direct effects of perceived moral patiency to support and willingness to join the movement. Again, testing our hypothesized model without these two additional paths did not change the results.

**Discussion**

Study 5 replicated and bolstered the results of Study 4, this time with a roughly balanced design (89 participants in violent vs. 101 participants in nonviolent condition), addressing the main issues of the experimental comparison in Study 4. Even though people generally tend to justify ingroup behavior that can appear morally questionable (e.g. Leidner et al., 2012), especially when it is committed by underdogs (Vandello et al., 2011), participants were nevertheless more willing to support and join the Black Lives Matter movement when it was depicted as nonviolent (rather than violent). Again, this willingness was driven by nonviolence-induced increases in perceived moral patiency and morality. While the direct effects of strategy on moral patiency and agency were separable and occurred as we had predicted, we could not
account for both separately in the path analysis for reasons explained earlier. Yet, when using them in the same composite for the path analysis, results reproduced the mediational role of moral patiency established in Study 2-4. Study 5 did not find an effect, however, on the perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator. Yet, we believe these weaknesses are absorbed by the strong consistency of results for these DVs across all four studies.

**Continuously Cumulative Meta-Analysis of Studies 2-5**

In four experimental studies we have shown that adopting nonviolent strategies benefited the movement through perceived moral patiency, which led people to see the movement as more moral and make a clearer distinction between victim and perpetrator. This in turn led them to be more willing to join and support the movement. While results converged across different contexts, the role of perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator was unclear in Study 4 and 5, and our model had some additional paths in Study 3 and 5 that we had not hypothesized. In order to reconcile these inconsistencies we conducted a cumulative meta-analysis across Study 2-5. To do so, we combined comparable data from Study 2-5. In addition to the condition (nonviolence vs. violence), we entered “study” into the general linear model. The results are displayed in Table 12, confirming our predictions across all four experiments. Finally, we tested our path model, again entering “study” as an additional exogenous factor (see Figure 5). The model fit was acceptable, $\chi^2(4) = 25.18, p < .001$, $CFI = .99$, $NFI = .99$, $RMSEA = .08$, $SRMR = .04$. All alternative models compared to our hypothesized model were inferior (see Supplemental Materials).

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3 Again, testing our hypothesized model without these two paths indicated no substantial changes to the model fit.
General Discussion

Five studies investigated the effects of a social movement’s use of nonviolent (rather than violent) strategies on people’s willingness to support and join the movement, and the underlying mechanisms. Study 1 demonstrated that across 23 social movements participants’ perceptions of the movement’s strategy as violent or nonviolent predicted their liking and support of, and willingness to join the movement. In line with non-experimental research on political movements with maximal goals (i.e. change of government; Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2013), and extending the nascent experimental research on social movements with non-maximal goals (e.g. change in policies such as environmental policies; Thomas & Louis, 2014), four experimental studies revealed that political movements’ use of nonviolence increases those factors that predict their success (i.e., support, increasing membership numbers by convincing people to join). We also presented a novel model to explain how nonviolence exerts these effects. That is, the presence (or absence) of nonviolent strategies plays a critical role in shaping people’s perceptions of a movement. At the heart of these perceptions lies the movement’s moral patience: its perceived role as the recipient (rather than the cause) of the struggle with the government. Perceptions of moral patience then feed into views of the movement as moral, and the classification of the movement as the victim and the government as the perpetrator. Importantly, and in contrast to activists’ concerns, these perceptions do not feed into perceptions of nonviolent movements as less active/agentic, less powerful or efficacious. And in line with literature on moral patience (Gray & Wegener, 2009, 2010), the underdog effect (Goldschmied & Vandello, 2009; Kim et al., 2008; Michnievicz & Vandello, 2013; Vandello et al., 2007) and
perceptions of morality (Riva et al., 2015), this process through perceived moral patiency, morality and victim role culminates in increased willingness to support and join nonviolent movements.

**The building blocks of support: Moral patiency, morality, and victim status**

As Gray and Wegener (2009) demonstrated, in every interpersonal situation, one side of the dyad is seen as more of the agent, while the other is seen as more of the patient. The situation may or may not be one that concerns morality. When it does not, one side of the dyad is seen as more active, the other as more passive. When it does concern morality, however, one side is seen as more responsible (either in a praise- or blameworthy way), the other as more sensitive of needs and more deserving. Our context of political struggle is clearly one that people usually attribute morality to. As a consequence, the moral (rather than general) aspect of agency/patiency played a central role in driving the effects of a movement’s strategy. Importantly, however, moral patiency was more critical than moral agency. By using nonviolent rather than violent strategies, movements create a starker contrast with (repressive) governments, and thus maximize the increased perceived moral agency (blameworthiness) of the government and the perceived moral patiency of themselves. These perceptions, in turn, increase the perceived morality and victim role of the movement, and decrease that of the government. Together, these perceptions enhance support for the movement.

There were however some disparities with regards to one of these building blocks of support: the distinction between victim and perpetrator. In some studies, the effect of strategy on this variable was significant whereas in others it was not. Moreover, in our hypothesized model the paths from this variable to support and willingness to join were not consistently significant. Yet, a cumulative meta-analysis revealed that the effect of strategy on the distinction between
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victim and perpetrator after combining all comparable data was significant, and so was the effect of this variable on support (but not willingness to join).

Importantly, it also follows from Gray and Wegener’s distinction between general vs. moral agency/patiency that any one element of the dyad can be perceived as morally patientic (i.e. deserving) without necessarily being perceived as generally patientic (i.e. passive) at the same time. This distinction becomes especially important in the context of social movements, where people often believe that the morality of nonviolence will be mistaken as weakness or passivity. Yet, our data shows that this is not the case. Nonviolent movements were neither seen as more generally patientic nor as less generally agentic, less powerful or less efficacious. If anything, the opposite was the case.

Implications for underdogs, collective action, and nonviolent activism

The finding that the increased support for nonviolence is driven by increases in perceived moral patiency, morality and victim status without simultaneous decreases in perceived general agency, power or efficaciousness is also important for the literatures on the underdog effect, collective action, and nonviolent activism. First, this finding indicates that people not only sympathize with underdogs (here: nonviolent movements) and want them to win, but – perhaps more importantly – that they also see them as more capable of winning than violent movement (see Table 12 in the cumulative meta-analysis section). Second, as a host of research has shown, perceived efficacy is critical in motivating people to engage in collective action (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004; Van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; Van Zomeren & Spears, 2009; Stekelenburg, Klandermans, & Van Dijk, 2009) or, as we have shown, increasing people’s willingness to support and join a social movement even in rather risky struggles against repressive state systems. Finally, as we mentioned earlier, this
finding alleviates a widespread concern in the social scientific literature on nonviolence, activism, and resistance (Ackerman & DuVal, 2000; Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2013; Schock, 2003, 2005; Martin, 1998)—that is, that nonviolence may be seen as passive or ineffective, and thus garner less attention and support. According to our data, this concern is rather unwarranted, and patience and victim status in the *moral* sense if anything help a movement garner support.

Further, we have shown that even when people perceive nonviolent and violent action as equally efficacious and as stemming from equally illegitimate situations, they are still more supportive of nonviolence than violence. This finding contrasts with the collective action literature, which showed that perceived efficacy of the group/movement and perceived illegitimacy of the current situation mediate – or explain – the relationship between the use of nonviolence and support (e.g. Thomas & Louis, 2014). From our findings, it appears that at least in the context of maximal political struggles that we investigated here, the effect of nonviolence cannot be completely explained by the factors of efficacy and illegitimacy. It does matter what kind of situation people who take action are in (illegitimate vs. legitimate), or how likely their actions are going to be successful (efficacious vs. non-efficacious). Yet, it _also_ matters what kind of action they take (nonviolent vs. violent) and what that says about them (moral vs. immoral, victim vs. perpetrator).

In another discrepancy from and extension of the collective action literature, we have shown that even in the context of corrupt systems, people give more support to nonviolent than to violent movements. Past research, on the other hand, has suggested that the presence of corruption can *undermine* the advantage of nonviolent strategies (in the context of environmental movements), such that in the presence of corrupt system there was no difference in group efficacy regardless of the movement’s strategy (Thomas & Louis, 2014). Consistent with
Chenoweth and Stephan’s (2008) analysis of nonviolent (compared to violent) campaigns of social movements in the context of corrupt systems, our findings indicate that in a maximal political context, the advantages of nonviolence are not limited to the absence of corruption. Given these divergent findings in different contexts, more research is warranted to uncover when corruption does or does not undermine nonviolent movements in which contexts.

**Conclusion**

Our findings suggest that the use of nonviolence, through moral patience, lets social movements occupy the moral high ground and clearly position itself as the victim of an illegitimate situation. Despite the fact that activists have been voicing concerns about being perceived as the victim due to possible links between perceived victimhood and perceived passivity, our results showed that the perception of “victimhood” is to their advantage, as it comes with perceptions of deservingness, morality, and ultimately with greater support and mobilization potential. At the same time, it does not come with a loss in perceived power, efficacy, or (general) agency; even in a corrupt political context people see nonviolence as a way to achieve social justice as active/agentic as violence. In this sense, nonviolence holds an important key for social movements to unlock the goals they pursue.
References


Dodd, V. (2011, October 24). Cost of English riots much higher than first thought, met police report suggests. Initial findings of metropolitan police review put claims for loss and


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Figure 1. Hypothesized model of the effect of nonviolence (vs. violence) movement strategy on support for the movement (through perceived moral agency and patience of the movement, perceived morality of the movement, and perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator).

Table 1. Prediction of main variables based on perceived morality of movements’ goals and perceived use of violence by the movements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>perceived morality of movements’ goals</th>
<th>perceived use of violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likability</td>
<td>4605.49</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Support 2196.01  < .001  55.86  < .001

Willingness 1727.36  < .001  12.15  .001
to join

Attitudes 383.97  < .001  113.67  < .001
toward repression

---

Table 2. The main effects of strategy and goal in Experiment 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>DFwithin</th>
<th>Main effect of strategy</th>
<th></th>
<th>Main effect of goal</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>η²</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived illegitimacy</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>.272</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived efficacy</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>.918</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>12.04</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived power</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>.519</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived agency</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.343</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived moral patiency</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>30.50</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>26.62</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived morality</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>22.01</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>46.19</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>12.78</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>58.52</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>86.07</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Means (standard deviations) by level of strategy in Experiment 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes toward joining the movement</th>
<th>Nonviolent</th>
<th>Violent</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived illegitimacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.87 (1.42)</td>
<td>6.78 (1.37)</td>
<td>6.63 (1.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived efficacy</td>
<td>5.21 (1.90)</td>
<td>5.15 (1.89)</td>
<td>5.18 (1.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived power</td>
<td>4.50 (1.54)</td>
<td>4.38 (1.37)</td>
<td>4.54 (1.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived agency</td>
<td>7.35 (1.41)</td>
<td>7.53 (1.28)</td>
<td>7.34 (1.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived moral patiency</td>
<td>7.26 (1.11)</td>
<td>6.44 (1.06)</td>
<td>6.67 (0.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived morality</td>
<td>6.71 (1.72)</td>
<td>5.57 (1.79)</td>
<td>6.02 (1.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator</td>
<td>5.65 (2.29)</td>
<td>4.58 (2.36)</td>
<td>4.77 (2.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>5.29 (2.36)</td>
<td>4.86 (2.37)</td>
<td>4.59 (2.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward joining the movement</td>
<td>5.71 (1.92)</td>
<td>5.22 (1.98)</td>
<td>5.50 (1.91)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cells with shared subscripts did not differ significantly ($p > .100$); cells with different subscripts differed significantly ($p < .050$); “+” indicates marginally significant differences ($0.050 < p < .100$).

Table 4. Means (standard deviations) by level of goal in Experiment 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes toward joining the movement</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Authoritarianism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived illegitimacy</td>
<td>7.04 (1.28)</td>
<td>6.47 (1.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived efficacy</td>
<td>5.45 (1.59)</td>
<td>4.90 (2.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived power</td>
<td>4.36 (1.37)</td>
<td>4.58 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived agency</td>
<td>7.51 (1.21)</td>
<td>7.29 (1.39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Perceived moral patiency 7.02 (0.97) 6.58 (1.18)
Perceived morality 6.59 (1.53) 5.63 (1.90)
Perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator 5.72 (2.10) 4.28 (2.30)
Support 5.78 (2.10) 4.02 (2.26)
Attitudes toward joining the movement 6.20 (1.46) 4.74 (2.10)

Figure 2. Path model of the effects of nonviolent vs. violent movement strategies on support for and attitudes toward joining the movement in Study 2.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 5. The effects of strategy in Experiment 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>$DF_{within}$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived illegitimacy</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived efficacy</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>.253</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived power</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived general agency</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>23.56</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived moral agency</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>7.56</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td>Nonviolent</td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived illegitimacy</td>
<td>7.34 (1.49)_{ab}</td>
<td>7.59 (1.33)_{a}</td>
<td>7.15 (1.42)_{b}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived efficacy</td>
<td>5.51 (1.66)_{a}</td>
<td>5.53 (1.83)_{a}</td>
<td>5.19 (1.48)_{a}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived power</td>
<td>3.96 (1.28)_{ab}</td>
<td>4.17 (1.43)_{a}</td>
<td>3.87 (1.30)_{b+}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived general agency</td>
<td>7.66 (1.01)_{a}</td>
<td>7.64 (1.15)_{a}</td>
<td>6.76 (1.11)_{b}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived moral agency</td>
<td>3.63 (1.65)_{a}</td>
<td>4.26 (1.83)_{b}</td>
<td>3.37 (1.57)_{a}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived general patiency</td>
<td>4.83 (1.37)_{a}</td>
<td>3.77 (1.42)_{b}</td>
<td>4.77 (1.27)_{a}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived moral patiency</td>
<td>7.11 (1.00)_{a}</td>
<td>6.76 (1.02)_{b}</td>
<td>6.77 (1.04)_{b}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived morality</td>
<td>7.26 (1.30)_{a}</td>
<td>6.74 (1.39)_{b}</td>
<td>6.59 (1.23)_{b}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator</td>
<td>6.65 (1.79)_{a}</td>
<td>5.20 (1.99)_{a}</td>
<td>5.40 (1.71)_{b}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>5.87 (1.82)_{a}</td>
<td>5.26 (2.05)_{b}</td>
<td>5.29 (1.79)_{b}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards joining the movement</td>
<td>6.91 (1.21)_{a}</td>
<td>6.25 (1.65)_{b}</td>
<td>6.29 (1.23)_{b}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Means (standard deviations) by level of strategy in Experiment 2.
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Cells with shared subscripts did not differ significantly \((p > .100)\); cells with different subscripts differed significantly \((p < .050)\); “+” indicates marginally significant differences \(.050 < p < .100\).

Table 7. Bivariate correlations between moral/general patiency/agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived moral agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.27**</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Perceived general agency</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.41***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Perceived moral patiency</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Perceived general patiency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\uparrow p < .10; \; \uparrow\uparrow p < .05; \; \uparrow\uparrow\uparrow p < .01; \; *** p < .001\)

Table 8. Bivariate correlations between moral/general patiency/agency and DVs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Moral agency</th>
<th>General agency</th>
<th>Moral patiency</th>
<th>General patiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>-0.18†</td>
<td>0.36***</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>-0.34***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Willingness to join the movement  \(-.28^{**}\)  \(.48^{***}\)  \(.24^*\)  \(-.39^{***}\)
Perceived illegitimacy  \(-.18^{†}\)  \(.15^{†}\)  \(.35^{***}\)  \(.03\)
Perceived power  \(-.22^*\)  \(.39^{***}\)  \(.01\)  \(-.33^{**}\)
Perceived morality  \(-.26^{**}\)  \(.31^{**}\)  \(.24^*\)  \(-.15^{†}\)
Political ideology  \(.29^{**}\)  \(-.09\)  \(-.25^*\)  \(.05\)

\(\dagger p < .10; \ast p < .05; \ast\ast p < .01; \ast\ast\ast p < .001\)

Table 9. Partial correlations between perceived moral/general agency/patiency, partialing out perceived general agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Moral agency</th>
<th>Moral patiency</th>
<th>General patiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for the movement</td>
<td>-0.17†</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to join the movement</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>.17†</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived illegitimacy</td>
<td>-.18†</td>
<td>.35^{***}</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived power of the movement</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived morality of the movement</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political ideology</td>
<td>.28^{**}</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\dagger p < .10; \ast p < .05; \ast\ast p < .01; \ast\ast\ast p < .001\)

Table 10. Wilcoxon rank-sum tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>-3.36</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to join the movement</td>
<td>-1.63</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived illegitimacy</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>.952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived efficacy</td>
<td>-1.75</td>
<td>.080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 11. The effects of strategy on all DVs in Study 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV</th>
<th>Effect of strategy</th>
<th>Nonviolent</th>
<th>Violent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$DF_{within}$</td>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived illegitimacy</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived efficacy</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived power</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General agency</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral agency</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>23.90</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General patiency</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral patiency</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived morality</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>10.82</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived distinction between victim and perpetrator</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effect on perceived moral patiency is reported for the transformed variable (due to severe skewness); for the untransformed variable, the effect did not reach significance ($Z = -1.27$, $p = .210$).
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victim and perpetrator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>183</th>
<th>10.22</th>
<th>.002</th>
<th>.05</th>
<th>4.78 (2.36)</th>
<th>3.93 (2.32)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to join</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>15.08</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>5.31 (1.95)</td>
<td>4.41 (2.07)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. The effect of condition and study as full factors on DVs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect of condition</th>
<th>Effect of study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived illegitimacy</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived power</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived efficacy</td>
<td>9.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral patiency</td>
<td>43.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement’s morality</td>
<td>22.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Path model of the effects of nonviolent vs. violent movement strategies on support for and attitudes toward joining the movement in Study 5.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.
THE POWER OF NONVIOLENCE

Clear distinction 18.88 < .001 .02 33.54 < .001 .11
between victim and
perpetrator
Support 29.72 < .001 .03 8.69 < .001 .03
Willingness to join 23.22 < .001 .03 29.34 < .001 .09

Appendix A

Below you can find the list of all movements used in Study 1.

1- American Independent Movement
2- Anti-Tax Movement
3- Modern Anti-Slavery Movement
4- States’ Rights Movement
5- Women’s Rights Movement

Figure 5. Path model of the effects of nonviolent vs. violent movement strategies on support for and attitudes toward joining the movement across Study 2 to 5. When entering “study” and its interaction with nonviolence vs. violence as additional exogenous factors into the model, all paths remained significant and the fit was almost identical.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.
THE POWER OF NONVIOLENCE

6- Labor Movement

7- U.S. Civil Rights Movement

8- Anti-War Movement

9- Environmental Movement

10- Occupy Wall Street Movement

11- LGBT Movement

12- Animal Rights Movement

13- Anti-Abortion Movement

14- Tea-Party Movement

15- Ku Klux Klan

16- Gun Control Movement

17- Immigrants Rights Movement

18- Economic Justice Movement

19- Neo-Nazi Movement

20- Anti-Gun Control Movement

21- Anti-Gay Movement

22- Anti-Whaling Movement

23- Pro-Choice Movement