

# The Influence of Power on U.S. and Chinese Individuals' Judgments and Reasoning About Intrasocietal Conflicts

Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology  
2020, Vol. 51(1) 77–105  
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sagepub.com/journals-permissions  
DOI: 10.1177/0022022119893109  
journals.sagepub.com/home/jcc



Nan Zhu<sup>1</sup>, Skyler T. Hawk<sup>2\*</sup>, and Judith G. Smetana<sup>3\*</sup>

## Abstract

This study used a social domain theory framework to investigate Chinese and U.S. individuals' evaluations of intrasocietal conflicts (defined as situations where some individuals' rights clash with collective interests), and how those evaluations might be influenced by concepts of high versus low power. Undergraduate students in both the United States ( $n = 92$ ) and China ( $n = 98$ ) received either a high-power or a low-power prime and then evaluated (a) the acceptability of actions taken by different parties in hypothetical scenarios about intrasocietal conflicts, (b) moral and societal justifications for these actions, and (c) the appropriateness of actions by outside, third parties aimed at affirming individual rights. Results showed that moral justifications for individual actions were positively associated with pro-individual-rights judgments in both societies, regardless of power condition. In addition, U.S. individuals primed with high power and Chinese participants primed with low power showed lower support for third-party actions, based on societal concerns from the collective perspective. Chinese participants primed with high power also accepted collective actions based on moral and societal concerns. These results extend social domain theory by demonstrating how different power concepts affect the relative importance of moral versus societal concerns in individuals' judgments, especially when evaluating third-party actions.

## Keywords

collective interests, individual rights, power inequality, social domain theory, social judgment, cross-cultural comparison

On April 12, 2014, an armed crowd of protesters initiated a standoff against the law enforcement in Clark County, Nevada, United States, in support of cattle rancher Cliven Bundy, who had refused to pay a monthly fee for his cattle grazing on public land. Later in the same year, angered by a decision by the Chinese authority regarding Hong Kong's local electoral reform, thousands

<sup>1</sup>University of Macau, Taipa, Macau

<sup>2</sup>The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, Hong Kong

<sup>3</sup>University of Rochester, NY, USA

\*The second and third authors contributed equally to this article.

## Corresponding Author:

Nan Zhu, Department of Psychology, University of Macau, Humanities and Social Sciences Building, E21-3063, Taipa, Macau, 999078.

Email: darrenzhu@um.edu.mo

of Hong Kong students and citizens demonstrated outside government headquarters and occupied major city intersections, causing confrontations with the police. Meanwhile, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad began his third term in office, facing opposition from his own people and international interventions into the Syrian civil war.

These incidents all involve a conflict between a group of persons' individual rights (i.e., justice, civic rights, and personal welfare as universally recognized basic human rights; Turiel, 1983) and the collective interests of the social entities to which they belong (e.g., community, organization, country). People in different societies often hold diverse opinions regarding such conflicts, referred to here as "intrasocietal conflicts." These differences in opinion regarding intrasocietal conflicts constitute a major motive for cross-cultural research (LeBaron & Pillay, 2004). Evaluations of intrasocietal conflicts depend largely on individuals' weighing of the relative importance of collective versus individual interests, and they also vary greatly both within societies and between people in different social positions (Turiel, 2002, 2012). These between- and within-society variations may affect how much people approve or justify (a) individual actions to promote individual rights; (b) collective actions to uphold collective interests, defined as the maintenance of social order, conventions, and harmony that are essential to the functioning of each society; and (c) invited interventions or uninvited intrusions by third-party organizations with independent interests to protect individual rights in intrasocietal conflicts (e.g., the United Nations peace-keeping action to prevent war crimes).

The present research explores variations in the evaluations of intrasocietal conflicts among young adults in the United States and China, two societies representing distinct and well-documented cultural orientations (Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Triandis et al., 1998). Both societies are complex and diverse enough to frequently encounter different kinds of intrasocietal conflicts; they also wield strong international influences in their own ways. Utilizing and extending social domain theory (Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 1983, 2006), we aim to provide a unified, psychological explanation for how U.S. and Chinese people make third-party evaluations about "social oppositions and moral resistance" within societies (Turiel, 2012) that extend beyond political and ideological differences. Specifically, given that the United States and China hold different interpretations of power inequalities (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), we examined whether participants from these societies differ in their evaluations of within-society disagreements over intrasocietal conflicts, as well as studying these conflicts from a third-party perspective. This allowed us to examine how individuals make multifaceted evaluations of these conflicts, including the evaluation of both invited and uninvited third-party actions. Beyond examining how different theoretical approaches bear on individuals' judgments in such situations, this research aims to dispel misconceptions and highlight collaborative possibilities in conflict resolution and humanitarian aid based on mutual understanding.

## **Cultural Psychological and Social Domain Perspectives on Social Judgments**

Many cross-society psychological differences (e.g., cognitive styles, emotions, attitudes, motivations) have been characterized as a dichotomy between an individualistic/independent orientation found in Western societies and a collectivistic/interdependent orientation found in East Asian or "Confucian" societies (Brewer & Chen, 2007; Hofstede, 1980; Inglehart & Oyserman, 2004; Kim & Markus, 1999; Triandis, 1995). Individualism as a cultural orientation emphasizes individual autonomy and independence of self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995), thereby encouraging the prioritization of individual rights and autonomy over collective interests. In contrast, collectivism defines individuals in terms of their social connections and as interdependent members of a group (family, community, city, country), therefore encouraging individuals to sacrifice their personal interests and rights in favor of collective interests and social harmony (Triandis, 1995).

It would be an oversimplification to assume that all members within a society subscribe to the same cultural values, and to the same degree. Different patterns of within-society variations in individualism and collectivism have been documented in large-scale, modern societies such as the United States (e.g., Kitayama et al., 2010; Vandello & Cohen, 1999) and China (e.g., Talhelm et al., 2014; Van de Vliert et al., 2013). This prior research still largely regard individuals' social judgments as a function of the predominant cultural orientation in their society, and has mostly neglected the concerns and justifications behind the judgments that may or may not cohere with the predominant cultural orientation.

Unlike the aforementioned studies that largely focuses on between-society differences and cultural orientations, social domain theory (Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 1983, 2006) accounts for within-society and across-society variations in social judgments. This theory asserts that individuals' social judgments can be examined in terms of different conceptual domains of social knowledge (and sometimes, their overlap). Concerns regarding justice, rights, and welfare define the moral domain. Moral concepts are distinguished from an understanding of social conventions, authority, and norms, which constitute aspects of the societal domain. These two domains are also distinguishable based on several empirical criteria. Specifically, across different societies and age groups, people regard moral concerns as universal and unalterable by authorities or social consensus, whereas societal concerns are considered to be context-dependent, rule-contingent, and influenced by authority (see Helwig & Turiel, 2010; Smetana, 2013; Smetana et al., 2014, for reviews).

Importantly, although moral and societal domains are sometimes applied to different issues (e.g., hurting others pertains to the moral domain, whereas violating the convention of wearing uniforms at school pertains to the societal domain), concerns from both domains might be pertinent to judgments about complex issues (Smetana, 2013). Studies on judgments about adolescent-parent conflict (Recchia et al., 2010; Smetana, 1989, 2002), social exclusion (Killen, 2007; Malti et al., 2012), in-group deviant actions (Killen et al., 2013), and controversial topics such as pornography, abortion, and homosexuality (Turiel et al., 1991) have all demonstrated that individuals may simultaneously hold different (and sometimes conflicting) concerns about these issues. Similarly, when evaluating intrasocietal conflicts as a third-party observer whose interests are independent from either conflicting party, moral and societal concerns might be invoked in appropriate contexts to justify actions in favor of or against collective authorities. In doing so, people actively weigh and coordinate moral concerns "for the rights and fair treatment of those in subordinate positions" and societal concerns "upholding the authority of those in dominant positions" (Neff & Helwig, 2002, p. 1431). For instance, moral concerns related to individual rights are used more to justify norm-deviating actions, whereas societal concerns about group functioning (collective interests) are used more to justify norm-conforming actions (Killen et al., 2013). However, children also invoke individual-level moral concerns (e.g., about physical well-being) to justify socially beneficial laws that restrict individual rights, but appeal to collective-level moral concerns (e.g., fairness and equality) to oppose unjust laws (Helwig & Jasiobedzka, 2001). Studies have shown that adolescents and young adults judge government curtailing of individual rights (e.g., freedom of speech, religious freedom) based on concerns ranging from personal choice and fairness to societal progress and unity (Helwig, 1995, 1998).

These multiple, coexisting concerns are also reflected in Chinese individuals' social judgments, despite this country's different predominant cultural orientations and social structure. On one hand, Chinese individuals demonstrate many social attitudes that are consistent with their Confucian cultural heritage, which emphasizes conformity to collective authority rather than self-expression and individual rights (Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Inglehart & Oyserman, 2004). On the other hand, research has also found that Chinese adolescents (both rural and urban) prefer democratic forms of government to a similar degree as Canadian adolescents

(Helwig et al., 2007). Furthermore, just like Western youth, Chinese adolescents prioritize concerns about self-determination over concerns about authority (Lahat et al., 2009). Chinese adolescents considered collective decisions to be more acceptable for enforcing social conventions, but not for interfering with personal issues (Helwig et al., 2011). Thus, in both Western societies and in China, individuals invoke different combinations of moral and societal concerns when judging various complex issues, including intrasocietal conflicts (Neff & Helwig, 2002).

Both moral and societal concerns can be used to justify actions that promote collective interests, or actions that promote individual rights. This potentially leads to four types of justifications for actions that conflicting parties may take when facing intrasocietal conflicts. *Collective-moral justifications* support collective actions to promote fairness and equality at the expense of individual interests; *collective-societal justifications* support collective actions that suppress individual rights to maintain conventions and social order; *individual-moral justifications* support individual actions that challenge collective authorities to promote individuals' welfare and autonomy; and *individual-societal justifications* support individual actions that challenge collective authorities based on conventions and social order. From the social domain perspective, the moral domain is universally applied and is concerned with individual rights (Smetana, 2013). We therefore expected that, regardless of their social positions, people in both U.S. and Chinese societies would evaluate all actions that promote individual rights primarily from the perspective of individual-moral justifications (Hypothesis 1). Meanwhile, because the societal domain is context-dependent and mainly serves collective interests, the link between collective-societal justifications and evaluations of intrasocietal conflicts might be moderated by the cultural orientation and social structure of a society, as well as individuals' positions in terms of their power in that society.

## Concepts of Power in U.S. and Chinese Societies

Social domain theory offers a further insight: that power inequalities in social hierarchies might lead to clashes between moral and societal concerns in intrasocietal conflicts (Turiel, 2002, 2012). Different power concepts and distances (i.e., the degree to which people in a society accept power inequality; Hofstede & Bond, 1988) in different societies might affect the pattern of within-society disagreements on intrasocietal conflicts (Neff & Helwig, 2002; Turiel, 2002; Wainryb & Recchia, 2014). This insight led us to examine the role of experimentally primed power in the evaluation of intrasocietal conflicts among participants from two societies that differ considerably in power distance (Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Triandis et al., 1998).

Inequality in power, defined as asymmetrical control over valued resources (Magee & Galinsky, 2008), is a common feature of most societies. Studies have shown how experimental priming of power drives differences in social judgments and behaviors among otherwise similar individuals (Galinsky et al., 2003, 2006; Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Lammers & Stapel, 2011). For instance, one study found that participants primed with high power emphasized the rules set by authorities, whereas low-power participants prioritized the welfare of the individuals harmed by these rules. However, the results were reversed when the rules restricted participants' own self-interests (Lammers & Stapel, 2009). Moreover, priming different power concepts tends to influence social judgments in different ways. One recent study found that priming the concept of socialized power (i.e., power used to advance collective interests) decreased self-interested behaviors and tolerance of others' corruption, while the opposite was true for priming personalized power (i.e., power used to advance individual interests; Wang & Sun, 2016). Another study found that, when primed with high-power concepts, participants with an "exchange" relationship orientation acted more in line with self-interests, whereas participants with a "communal" orientation acted more in line with responsibility goals (Chen et al., 2001). Therefore, the effect of power priming on individuals' social judgments might also be influenced by individuals' concepts of power.

According to social domain theory, the meaning of power may be contested within societies (Neff & Helwig, 2002; Smetana, 2002; Turiel, 2002). Individuals occupying different power positions might share the same moral and societal concerns. However, they might differentially apply these concerns to either support or challenge collective authorities in ways that are in accordance with their personal interests. Studies have shown that powerful individuals in existing power hierarchies (e.g., husbands in patriarchal societies) are more likely to ascribe rights to themselves than to those lower in power (Turiel, 2002; Turiel & Wainryb, 1998; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994). They may support collective authorities' restriction of individual rights based on societal reasons when their own self-interests are aligned with collective interests. According to Turiel (2002), individuals in powerless positions tend to resist and criticize the norms or authorities more often than those in powerful positions.

However, this power clash may also manifest in different forms than those suggested by Turiel (2002), depending on whether power concepts are socialized or personalized (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010). Societies with different cultural orientations and social structures might promote the cultural transmission of these different power concepts. The socialized concept of power seems to be more prevalent in the United States. Recent research showed that, across the United States, in-group loyalty was emphasized to a greater degree by individuals with higher than lower social status (Van Leeuwen et al., 2014). When a society embraces socialized power in its hierarchy, power is seen as a responsibility to the society, which must sometimes be used to limit individual rights. Powerless individuals might engage in moral resistance against collective authorities when their individual rights are undermined, even though this is sometimes necessary for the greater good of the society. Thus, we expected that U.S. individuals primed with high power would be more likely than those primed with low power to support collective actions and to object to actions that undermine collective authority (Hypothesis 2), because they conceive power as "socialized," which is associated with collective interests. They also should reason using collective-societal justifications that favor collective interests rather than individual rights (Hypothesis 3). In contrast, individuals primed with low power should be more concerned with individual rights than with responsibility to collective interests. They are, therefore, unlikely to oppose actions promoting individual rights based on collective-moral or collective-societal arguments.

Compared with U.S. society, Chinese society is rated higher on power distance (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). That is, Chinese people generally expect and tolerate greater inequality in the distribution of power. As a result, power is less widely shared and more "personalized" in China. When a society embraces personalized power, power is seen as a means to promote personal freedom, which does not always align with collective interests. Powerless individuals might seek to constrain the unrestricted freedom of powerful individuals and uphold collective interests by appealing to societal concerns, rather than rebelling against collective authorities. It is also the case, however, that power concepts in Chinese society are also influenced by Confucian ideology, which emphasizes conformity to the hierarchies and the benevolence of moral authority (Frederickson, 2002; Fukuyama, 2011). Therefore, power concepts among the Chinese are likely to be a hybrid of personalized and socialized power. We hypothesized that, following the Confucian ideals of moral leadership and the order of social hierarchies, Chinese individuals primed with high power would endorse actions upholding collective interests using both collective-moral and collective-societal justifications (Hypothesis 4). They also may expect greater personal freedom, and thus would be more supportive of actions to promote individual rights than those primed with low power (Hypothesis 5). In contrast, Chinese individuals primed with low power should care more about collective interests, given that they lack the sense of personal freedom afforded by personalized power. They also have societal reasons to curb the personalized power of the powerful, who possess greater individual rights. Therefore, they should oppose actions that promote individual rights based on collective-societal concerns (Hypothesis 6).

In summary, social domain theory provided a unique perspective on cross-society and within-society variations in evaluating intrasocietal conflicts. Instead of assuming that U.S. and Chinese

individuals would invariantly exhibit judgments and justifications that pertain to their respective individualistic or collectivistic cultural orientations, we predicted different patterns of “power clashes” within the two societies due to different concepts of power. Notably, in our study, “power clashes” are represented by different judgments and justifications elicited in different experimental priming situations. In reality, individuals need to rapidly adjust their social judgments in accordance with their access to power and the power concept embedded in the immediate social structure. Power priming (Galinsky et al., 2003) allows us to investigate within-society power clashes in more flexible ways than examining people holding different positions in existing social hierarchies. In general, we predicted that U.S. individuals would be more in favor of collective interests when primed with high than low power. In contrast, Chinese individuals were expected to be more in favor of individual rights and support collective interests and individual rights with different justifications when primed with high power (see Table 1 for a summary of our main hypotheses). Therefore, the current research offered an innovative extension of social domain theory by hypothesizing that the “power clash” between high-power and low-power individuals in evaluating intrasocietal conflicts might take different forms in U.S. and Chinese societies, because they are influenced by different, culturally distinct power concepts.

### **Third-Party Actions in Intrasocietal Conflicts**

Evaluations of the tradeoff between individual rights and collective interests may be multifaceted and dependent on the perspectives that people take. In the current research, we additionally assessed judgments about third-party actions aimed at protecting individual rights. Peoples’ judgments about third-party actions may matter in solving or exacerbating intrasocietal conflicts, and people are motivated to make such judgments in favor of others’ welfare and rights. Indeed, research has shown that people across the world engage in third-party actions to punish free-riding or unfair behaviors, even though such actions do not directly benefit themselves (Boyd et al., 2003; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004). Children as young as 3 years of age engage in third-party restorative actions (e.g., returning “stolen” objects to original owners), even if they were not directly harmed by the transgression (Riedl et al., 2015). Therefore, assessing third-party actions can serve as an additional measure of attitudes in favor of individual rights. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, we predicted that, regardless of power condition, both U.S. and Chinese participants would justify third-party actions that affirm individual rights in intrasocietal conflicts using individual-moral justifications (as moral concerns should have the same meaning across social positions and societies). Meanwhile, judgments about the appropriateness of third-party actions promoting individual rights and their relation to collective-societal concerns might be contingent on the society and power priming condition (given that the societal concerns are context-dependent) in much the same way as predicted in Hypotheses 2, 3, 5, and 6.

In addition, we distinguished between invited (referred to below as “intervention”) and uninvited (referred to as “intrusion”) third-party actions. This serves to control for any potential “informational assumptions” (Neff & Helwig, 2002) regarding whether a pro-individual-rights third-party action is solicited or not, as this may affect people’s judgments independent of their moral or societal concerns. As intrusions might be considered a moral transgression undermining collective interests and collective authority in other societies, we hypothesized that collective-moral justifications would be associated with lower support for intrusion, but not intervention (Hypothesis 7).

### **Study Overview**

Based on the social domain perspective (Neff & Helwig, 2002; Turiel, 2002), the present societal comparison focused on U.S. and Chinese participants’ judgments and justifications about

**Table 1.** Summary of Hypotheses.

Hypotheses number	Predictions <sup>a</sup>	Supported by results?
Hypothesis 1	All groups: Individual moral → Lower acceptability of collective actions	Yes
	All groups: Individual moral → Higher acceptability of individual actions	Yes
	All groups: Individual moral → Higher support for intervention	Yes
	All groups: Individual moral → Higher support for intrusion	Yes
Hypothesis 2	High-power American > Low-power American in acceptability of collective actions	No
	High-power American < Low-power American in acceptability of individual actions	No
	High-power American < Low-power American in support for intervention	No
	High-power American < Low-power American in support for intrusion	Yes
Hypothesis 3	High-power American: Collective societal → Higher acceptability of collective actions	No
	High-power American: Collective societal → Lower acceptability of individual actions	No
	High-power American: Collective societal → Lower support for intervention	Yes
	High-power American: Collective societal → Lower support for intrusion	Yes
Hypothesis 4	High-power Chinese: Collective moral → Higher acceptability of collective actions	Yes
	High-power Chinese: Collective societal → Higher acceptability of collective actions	Yes
Hypothesis 5	High-power Chinese < Low-power Chinese in acceptability of collective actions	No
	High-power Chinese > Low-power Chinese in acceptability of individual actions	No
	High-power Chinese > Low-power Chinese in support for intervention	Yes
	High-power Chinese > Low-power Chinese in support for intrusion	Yes
Hypothesis 6	Low-power Chinese: Collective societal → Lower acceptability of individual actions	Yes
	Low-power Chinese: Collective societal → Lower support for intervention	Yes
	Low-power Chinese: Collective societal → Lower support for intrusion	Yes
Hypothesis 7	All groups: Collective moral → Lower support for intrusion (but not intervention)	Partial

<sup>a</sup>“→” refers to a correlation between justification and judgment, not a causal relation.

intrasocietal conflict and the role of power concepts in these evaluations. Most previous studies (e.g., Turiel & Wainryb, 1998; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994) have examined the social judgments of parties who are directly involved in intrasocietal conflicts. As a result, their perspectives are

inevitably confounded with their self-interests. Moreover, these parties held specific, fixed social roles that are part of existing social hierarchies (Turiel, 2002, 2012). Using a conceptual priming technique, participants were randomly assigned to a high-power or low-power condition and then responded to the same set of hypothetical scenarios depicting intrasocietal conflicts. We examined their judgments about collective, individual, and third-party actions and their agreement with moral, societal, and pragmatic justifications for collective and individual actions. Pragmatic justifications were included as covariates to rule out the possibility that participants only agree with the other justifications because of context-dependent, practical concerns (see Helwig, 1998 for a similar practicality category).

Finally, after obtaining social judgments regarding the different scenarios, we also measured and controlled for participants' trait perspective taking and perceived power inequality in our analyses. The former is related to the ability to actively interpret social contexts and hence may facilitate their social cooperation (Galinsky et al., 2005) or perhaps, promote selfish behaviors (Epley et al., 2006). In turn, this may affect how individuals apply various concerns to inform their multifaceted judgments about intrasocietal conflicts. Perceived power inequality in one's society is relevant to the reasoning and judgments about intrasocietal conflicts, as individuals facing power inequality might be more likely to protest the restriction of individual rights (Turiel, 2002; Turiel & Wainryb, 1998; Vandello et al., 2011).

## Method

### Participants

Participants included 92 U.S. undergraduates (29 males,  $M = 20.10$  years,  $SD = 1.16$ , age range = 18~24, all self-identified as U.S. citizens, including multi-nationality) recruited from a mid-size northeastern university, and 98 Chinese undergraduates (23 males,  $M = 22.54$  years,  $SD = 2.99$ , age range = 18~29, all self-identified as Chinese citizens) recruited from a university of similar size in a large metropolitan city in eastern China. Participants in the U.S. sample reported their ethnicity as White (57%), Asian or Pacific Islander (23%), Black or African American (11%), and Other (9%). Participants in the U.S. sample were volunteers who participated in partial exchange for extra credit in undergraduate psychology courses. Participants in the Chinese sample were all ethnically Chinese, and while we did not obtain their residential background, students in the university came from urban and rural areas. Participants in the Chinese sample received a gift notebook for their participation.

To ensure the effectiveness of the social power manipulation, four participants in the U.S. sample (three females and one male) were excluded from the statistical analyses, as their response accuracy in the social power association task was more than 3  $SDs$  below the U.S. sample mean (96.9% correct). Using the same criterion, six participants (five females and one male) were excluded from the Chinese sample. Thus, the resulting sample size was 88 U.S. and 92 Chinese participants. A sensitivity power analysis using the software program G\*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2007) revealed that the minimal effect size detectable for the main results in this study ( $R^2$  of the multiple regression analyses) with the current sample ( $N = 190$ , two-tailed  $\alpha = .05$ , power = .80) was  $f = .06$  (small, according to conventional standards; critical  $F = 2.65$ ). The actual effect sizes of most of the main findings reported below were larger than this value, indicating that our sample size was sufficient.

### Materials

The materials for each sample were presented in English for the U.S. sample and Simplified Chinese for the Chinese sample. The materials (instructions for the power priming task and the



intrasocietal conflict questionnaire) were originally developed in English and were then translated into Simplified Chinese by the first author. They were then checked for consistency by a bilingual speaker of English and Chinese, who confirmed that these two versions match at the sentence level and require similar amount of time to read.

**Power priming task.** Power was primed via procedures similar to the Go/No-Go association task (Nosek & Banaji, 2001), in which participants selectively attended and responded to word stimuli representing certain social roles and behavioral/psychological attributes that correspond to high or low power. Similar conceptual priming tasks have been used by others (e.g., Chen et al., 2001) to activate concepts of high and low power. Our task used two sets of word stimuli. The first set of words (“roles”) concerned social roles in different settings (e.g., leader, CEO, subordinate, intern). The second set of words (“attribute”) concerned behaviors or traits typically associated with these roles (e.g., authority, influence, submissive, powerless). Within both the role and attribute words, six were related to high power, six were related to low power, and six were power-neutral (e.g., teammate, classmate, exchange, interdependent). These 36 words were selected from 86 candidate words through a pilot study with two separate groups of participants from the United States and China, who rated the degree to which each word represented high or low power, with power defined as the “ability to provide or withhold valued resources in social relations.” The pilot study and the stimuli used in the task are described in detail in Supplemental Materials.

Following two practice blocks that were designed to familiarize participants with the high-power or low-power roles and attributes, participants engaged in four main trial blocks that began with a 1 s fixation cross. After that, a role (or attribute) word appeared in the place of the fixation cross and lasted for 1 s, followed by an attribute (or role) word, which was presented for a maximum of 1.5 s. After the second word appeared, participants were instructed to press the SPACE key only if both words were power-related (i.e., in the high-power condition, a high-power role is followed by a high-power attribute; in the low-power condition, a low-power role is followed by a low-power attribute). When one of the words was power-neutral, no response was needed. All trials included at least one power-related word, and all power-related words that appeared were consistent with the power condition (e.g., in the high-power condition, there would be no trials involving low-power words). This ensured that the power priming task maximized participants’ exposure to stimuli consistent with their power condition. A feedback screen immediately followed each trial. Each main block consisted of 36 trials, of which 18 required responses. The presentation sequence between position and attribute words in each block was the same, but was counter-balanced across the four blocks (e.g., in the first and fourth block, roles appeared before attributes, while in the other two block, attributes appeared before roles).

**Intrasocietal conflict questionnaire.** Four social conflict scenarios were used to assess participants’ conflict judgments, related justifications, and the acceptability of third-party actions in social conflicts. Each scenario depicted a hypothetical conflict between two parties within a social entity (a country, an organization, a city, or a community). In each scenario, one party represented the collective interests of the social entity; the action taken by them is referred to here as a “collective action.” The other party represented the interests of individuals belonging to the social entity; the action taken by them referred to here as an “individual action” (see the appendix for an example scenario and example questions for the intrasocietal conflict questionnaire and Supplemental Materials for the full instrument).

Each scenario was followed by the same number and types of questions. Participants first rated the acceptability of each action (e.g., “Rate the acceptability of the government’s plan to forcibly relocate the town’s residents so that they can build the hydroelectric station” and “Rate the acceptability of the town residents’ resistance to the government’s relocation plan” for the

**Table 2.** Explanation and Examples for Various Categories of Justifications for Collective or Individual Actions.

Justification category	Criteria	Example
Collective-moral <sup>a</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appealing to the necessity of collective actions to uphold moral principles such as fairness, justice, and avoidance of harm to other members of the collective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The hydroelectric station broadly benefits the welfare of all of the society's citizens, it would be selfish for the town's residents to obstruct the construction of the hydroelectric station (Scenario 1)</li> </ul>
Collective-societal <sup>a</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appealing to the necessity of collective actions to maintain conventions, social order, and collective interests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There would be chaos and disorder if there were not enough electricity for the citizens of the society (Scenario 1)</li> </ul>
Collective-pragmatic <sup>a</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appealing to practical reasons or aimed at improving efficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police raids are probably the most efficient way to root out violent gangs (Scenario 3)</li> </ul>
Individual-moral <sup>b</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appealing to the necessity of individual actions to uphold moral principles such as individuals' welfare and autonomy, and avoidance of harm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is wrong to expose the innocent slum residents to danger and suffering, even if it is to combat crimes (Scenario 3)</li> </ul>
Individual-societal <sup>b</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appealing to the necessity of individual actions to maintain conventions, social order, and collective interests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relocating people would inevitably disrupt the harmonious relationship among the town's residents and their local tradition (Scenario 1)</li> </ul>
Individual-pragmatic <sup>b</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appealing to practical reasons or aimed at improving efficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There might be other ways (e.g., student clubs, summer projects) to improve critical thinking and creativity (Scenario 4)</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup>These justifications followed acceptability judgments about the collective actions in the scenarios and indicated support for these actions. <sup>b</sup> These justifications followed acceptability judgments about the individual actions in the scenarios and indicated support for these actions.

collective and individual actions, respectively) on 6-point scales (1 = *very unacceptable*, 6 = *very acceptable*). Then, they rated their agreement with seven justifications for the collective and individual actions on 6-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). There were two pragmatic, two societal, and two moral justifications for each action, an additional societal justification for the collective action, and an additional moral justification for the individual action (see Table 2 for a detailed description of the justifications). These justification items were developed through extensive discussions within the research team and feedback from colleagues conducting social domain theory research. Justifications belonging to the same domain (moral, societal, and pragmatic) and action perspective (collective, individual) were combined across the scenarios. The alpha coefficients for collective-moral, collective-societal, individual-moral, and individual-societal justification items across scenarios used in final analyses were .51, .51, .74, and .66, respectively, for the U.S. sample, and .76, .56, .60, and .58, respectively, for the Chinese sample. These relatively low alphas are most likely due to the different themes of each scenario. However, in each scenario, justifications belonging to the same category showed higher correlations with each other than with justifications belonging to other categories, indicating that they can be considered the same kinds of concerns.<sup>1</sup>

Next, participants indicated their support for two potential solutions for the intrasocietal conflict: intervention invited by the individual party (e.g., "Rate how appropriate it would be to have

the international community pressure the government to reconsider the forced-relocation plan, assuming that the community was asked to do so by the town's residents.") and intrusion without invitation from either conflicting party (e.g., "How would you feel about the international community intervening in the issue without being asked by the government or the town's residents?"). Both were rated on 6-point scales (1 = *very inappropriate*; 6 = *very appropriate*).

The four social conflict scenarios were presented in random order for each participant. In each scenario, half of the participants in each power condition saw items related to the individual actions first, and the other half saw items related to the collective actions first. Due to the differences in laws and common practices regarding salary of private organizations in the United States and China, the two samples saw slightly different versions of a scenario about the conflict over a salary raise between old and new employees of a company. As a result, only the mean scores across the other three scenarios were analyzed and reported here.<sup>2</sup>

**Trait perspective taking.** The perspective-taking subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1983), employed as a control variable, included seven items (e.g., "I usually find it easy to see things from the 'other guy's' point of view," "I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision") rated on 5-point scale (1 = *does not describe me well*, 5 = *describes me very well*). We used the mean of the seven items as the perspective-taking score. The alpha coefficient was .80 for the U.S. sample and .69 for the Chinese sample.

**Perceived power inequality.** Perceived degree of power inequality and perceived prevalence of power inequality in participants' own countries, as two separate variables, were each measured by a single item, rated on a 10-point scale (see Supplemental Materials for more detail).

## Procedure

Individuals in both samples completed the tasks on a laptop computer in a university lab in a 30 to 45 min session. First, one block (36 trials) of the power priming task was administered, and then participants read two intrasocietal conflict scenarios and responded to the corresponding item sets. Then, after a short break (about 3 min), participants completed a second block (36 trials) of the power priming task to reinforce its effects, and subsequently another two intrasocietal conflicts. Following this, participants completed the trait perspective-taking items and two items measuring perceived power inequality, along with some demographic questions. The power priming task was implemented using E-prime 2 (Schneider et al., 2002). The other parts of the experiment were conducted using the online software tool SurveyGizmo (see <https://www.surveygizmo.com/>).

## Results

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and the independent *t* tests between high- and low-power conditions of the main variables for the U.S. and Chinese samples. The correlations among all the variables are reported for each sample in Supplemental Materials. We first examined the three scenarios individually. Except for collective-societal justifications, the pattern of results for the various justifications, acceptability judgments, and judgments about third-party actions in each scenario was identical to that of the mean levels of these variables across the three scenarios. For collective-societal justifications, the U.S. participants expressed lower agreement than the Chinese participants in Scenario 1 ("Hydroelectric Station") and Scenario 2 ("Police Raids"), but higher agreement in Scenario 3 ("New Curriculum"). Therefore, the analyses below only focus on the mean levels across scenarios.

**Table 3.** Means, Standard Deviations (in Parentheses), and Mean Comparison for Main Variables Within the Two Samples.

Variable name	The U.S. sample			The Chinese sample		
	High power (n = 45)	Low power (n = 43)	t (High - Low)	High power (n = 45)	Low power (n = 47)	t (High - Low)
<b>Main predictors</b>						
Collective-moral	3.85 (0.58)	3.89 (0.69)	-0.26	3.92 (0.50)	3.85 (0.64)	0.62
Collective-societal	3.62 (0.56)	3.32 (0.52)	2.57*	3.88 (0.49)	3.81 (0.57)	0.56
Individual-moral	4.30 (0.69)	4.46 (0.70)	-1.07	4.20 (0.56)	4.26 (0.50)	-0.59
Individual-societal	3.92 (0.65)	4.03 (0.76)	-0.75	4.17 (0.52)	4.07 (0.55)	0.87
<b>Covariates</b>						
Collective-pragmatic	3.60 (0.61)	3.39 (0.49)	1.77	3.54 (0.41)	3.59 (0.62)	-0.43
Individual-pragmatic	4.14 (0.54)	4.26 (0.77)	-0.79	4.35 (0.46)	4.30 (0.56)	0.47
Perspective taking	4.30 (0.54)	4.41 (0.53)	-1.03	4.05 (0.57)	4.06 (0.47)	-0.06
Degree of power inequality	7.80 (1.52)	7.98 (1.16)	-0.61	7.60 (1.18)	7.94 (1.69)	-1.10
Prevalence of power inequality	7.31 (1.77)	7.60 (1.45)	-0.85	7.33 (1.46)	7.64 (1.55)	-0.98
<b>Dependent variables</b>						
Acceptability of collective actions	3.81 (0.57)	3.61 (0.77)	1.35	3.47 (0.93)	3.41 (0.95)	0.32
Acceptability of individual actions	4.24 (0.72)	4.23 (0.68)	0.11	3.70 (0.84)	3.56 (1.01)	0.74
Support for intervention	3.77 (0.77)	4.26 (0.70)	-3.12**	3.74 (0.78)	3.17 (0.95)	3.15**
Support for intrusion	3.16 (0.96)	3.96 (0.83)	-4.22***	3.27 (0.80)	2.58 (0.94)	3.77***

\*p &lt; .0125. \*\*p &lt; .0025. \*\*\*p &lt; .00025.

### *Individual Differences in Trait Perspective Taking and Perceived Inequality of Power*

We conducted three 2 (power condition: high, low)  $\times$  2 (society: U.S., Chinese) factorial analyses of variance (ANOVAs) on trait perspective taking and the two power inequality measures. For trait perspective taking, there was a main effect of society, with U.S. participants ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ) reporting higher perspective taking than the Chinese participants ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ),  $F(1, 176) = 14.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .07$ . However, neither the main effect of power condition nor the interaction between power condition and society was significant. There also were no significant main effects or interactions for perceived degree or prevalence of power inequality,  $F_s < 2$ ,  $ps > .10$ , thus demonstrating that participants' perceptions of actual power inequality were not confounded with the power manipulation.

### *Effects of Power Condition and Society on Acceptability Judgments*

We conducted a 2 (power condition: high, low)  $\times$  2 (society: U.S., Chinese)  $\times$  2 (action: collective, individual) mixed ANOVA, with action perspective as a within-subject variable. A main effect of action perspective revealed that participants considered individual actions as more acceptable than collective actions  $F(1, 176) = 11.79$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .06$ ,  $M_s = 3.93, 3.57$ ,  $SD_s = 0.88, 0.83$ , respectively. Main effects of society revealed that U.S. participants accepted both collective and individual actions ( $M_s = 3.71, 4.24$ ,  $SD_s = 0.68, 0.70$ ) to a greater degree than did the Chinese participants ( $M_s = 3.44, 3.63$ ,  $SD_s = 0.94, 0.93$ , respectively),  $F(1, 176) = 44.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .20$ . There were no significant main effects or interactions for power condition,  $F_s < 3$ ,  $ps > .10$ .

### *Effects of Power Condition and Society on Justifications*

A 2 (power condition: high, low)  $\times$  2 (society: U.S., Chinese)  $\times$  4 (justification type: collective-moral, collective-societal, individual-moral, individual-societal) mixed ANOVA, with justification type as a within-subjects variable, revealed a main effect of justifications,  $F(3, 528) = 44.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .20$ . In both samples, participants endorsed in rank order from most to least: individual-moral justifications ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ), individual-societal justifications ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ), collective-moral justifications ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ), and finally, collective-societal justifications ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ). Correcting for the number of comparisons, post hoc tests using Tukey's HSD (honestly significant difference) showed that all comparisons between these justifications were significant,  $t_s > 2.6$ ,  $ps < .008$ . In addition, an interaction between justifications and society,  $F(3, 528) = 7.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ , indicated that Chinese participants agreed more with collective-societal justifications than did U.S. participants,  $t(178) = -4.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = -0.68$ , 95% confidence interval (CI) =  $[-0.53, -0.21]$ , but other justifications did not differ by society,  $t_s < 2$ ,  $ps > .10$ . There were no significant effects for power condition.

### *Effects of Power Condition and Society on Judgments About Third-Party Actions*

A 2 (power condition)  $\times$  2 (society)  $\times$  2 (action type: intervention, intrusion) mixed ANOVA revealed a main effect of action type,  $F(1, 176) = 170.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .49$ , indicating that intrusion was considered less appropriate than intervention. A significant main effect of society,  $F(1, 176) = 24.59$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .12$ , was qualified by an interaction between power condition and society,  $F(1, 176) = 28.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .14$ . This showed that high-power participants supported intervention and intrusion to a lesser degree than low-power participants within the U.S. sample, whereas the opposite was true within the Chinese sample. Furthermore, a three-way

interaction among power condition, society, and involvement type,  $F(1, 176) = 8.10, p = .005, \eta_p^2 = .04$ , indicated that the Power Condition  $\times$  Society interaction was stronger for intrusion than for intervention.

### *Predicting Acceptability of Collective Actions*

To examine whether participants in different power conditions and societies justified the acceptability of collective actions based on different concerns, we conducted a series of multiple regression analyses (Table 4). Moral, societal, and pragmatic justifications for the individual and collective actions, trait perspective taking, and the degree and prevalence of power inequality, power condition (low = 0, high = 1), society (United States = 0, Chinese = 1), and their interaction term were entered as predictors in the first step. In this analysis, as well as all of the following analyses with the same design, none of the control variables (i.e., pragmatic justifications, trait perspective taking, and perceived degree and prevalence of power inequality) were significant (all  $\beta$ s  $< .10, ps > .10$ ). Therefore, their results are not reported below. Among the predictors in the first step, collective-societal justifications were associated with higher acceptability of collective actions ( $\beta = .26, p = .007$ ), and individual-moral justifications were associated with lower acceptability of collective actions ( $\beta = -.34, p = .001$ ). A significant effect for society ( $\beta = -.25, p = .014$ ) indicated that U.S. participants accepted collective actions to a larger degree than Chinese participants. In the second step, we entered the interaction between one of the four main justifications and power condition, the interaction between this justification and society, and the three-way interaction among this justification, power condition, and society. This resulted in four different regression analyses with same first-step predictors, which are detailed below. We did not enter the interaction terms of all four justifications together, because this might underestimate some of the effects and render the interpretation of these interactions too difficult. A Bonferroni correction of alpha levels ( $p < .0125$ ) was applied in this step (as in the same analyses of other dependent variables below), taking into account the four alternative hypotheses simultaneously tested.

*Collective justifications (moral and societal).* The three-way interactions among power condition, society, and justifications were significant for both collective-moral ( $\beta = .31, p = .006$ ) and collective-societal justifications ( $\beta = .33, ps = .008$ ). Simple slope analyses revealed that collective-moral justifications were associated with higher acceptability of collective actions for Chinese participants primed with high power (simple slope = 0.48,  $p = .001$ ), but not for high-power or low-power U.S. participants, or low-power Chinese participants (simple slopes = 0.02, 0.05,  $-0.12$ , respectively, all  $ps > .10$ ). Collective-societal justifications were associated with higher acceptability of collective actions for high-power Chinese participants (simple slope = 0.70,  $p < .001$ ), but not for high-power or low-power U.S. participants, or low-power Chinese participants (simple slopes = 0.18, 0.04,  $-0.03$ , respectively, all  $ps > .10$ ). Slope difference tests showed that the associations between collective-moral justifications and higher acceptability of collective actions and between collective-societal justifications and higher acceptability of collective actions were both stronger for high-power than for low-power Chinese participants (slope differences = 3.65, 4.55,  $ps < .001$ , respectively). No difference was found within the U.S. sample (slope differences =  $-0.20, 0.86, ps = .841, .389$ , respectively).

*Individual justifications (moral and societal).* We found that power interacted significantly with individual-moral justifications ( $\beta = .31, p = .006$ ), while society interacted significantly with individual-societal justifications ( $\beta = -.44, p < .001$ ). Individual-moral justifications were associated with lower acceptability of collective actions for low-power participants, but not for high-power participants (simple slopes =  $-0.31, 0.06, ps = .011, .607$ , respectively). Individual-societal

**Table 4.** Multistep Linear Regressions of Acceptability of Collective Actions.

Predictors	Model 0 (Step 1)		Model 1 (Step 2)		Model 2 (Step 2)		Model 3 (Step 2)		Model 4 (Step 2)				
	B	SE	$\beta$	SE	B	SE	$\beta$	SE	B	SE	$\beta$	SE	
Constant	3.79	0.12		3.81	0.12	3.72	0.13	3.82	0.12	3.84	0.11	3.84	0.11
Collective-moral	0.08	0.07	.10	0.05	0.10	0.09	0.07	.11	0.11	0.07	.13	0.11	0.07
Collective-societal	0.22	0.08	.26*	0.21	0.08	0.04	0.12	.05	0.20	0.07	.24*	0.23	0.07
Individual-moral	-0.28	0.08	-.34**	-0.28	0.08	-0.32	0.08	-.39***	-0.31	0.12	-.37*	-0.35	0.08
Individual-societal	0.00	0.08	-.01	-0.02	0.08	0.02	0.08	.02	-0.02	0.08	-.03	0.08	0.10
Collective-pragmatic	-0.03	0.07	-.04	0.00	0.07	-0.01	0.06	-.01	0.00	0.06	.00	-0.02	0.06
Individual-pragmatic	-0.05	0.07	-.06	-0.03	0.07	-0.04	0.07	-.05	-0.03	0.07	-.04	-0.02	0.06
Perspective taking	0.04	0.06	.05	0.02	0.06	0.00	0.06	.00	-0.01	0.06	-.01	0.00	0.05
Degree of power inequality	0.01	0.07	.01	0.03	0.07	0.05	0.07	.06	0.00	0.07	.00	0.00	0.06
Prevalence of power inequality	-0.09	0.07	-.11	-0.12	0.07	-0.10	0.07	-.12	-0.11	0.07	-.13	-0.09	0.07
Power condition	0.01	0.16	.01	-0.01	0.16	0.09	0.16	.06	-0.01	0.15	-.01	0.05	0.15
Society	-0.42	0.17	-.25	-0.45	0.17	-0.30	0.17	-.18	-0.49	0.16	-.29*	-0.47	0.16
Power Condition × Society	-0.03	0.22	-.01	-0.02	0.21	-0.35	0.22	-.18	0.02	0.21	.01	-0.13	0.20
Justification <sup>a</sup> × Power Condition	—	—	—	-0.04	0.15	0.13	0.16	.11	0.36	0.13	.31*	0.30	0.13
Justification <sup>a</sup> × Society	—	—	—	-0.17	0.14	-0.08	0.16	-.06	-0.40	0.16	-.30	-0.60	0.14
Justification <sup>a</sup> × Power Condition × Society	—	—	—	0.63	0.22	0.60	0.23	.33*	0.07	0.22	.04	0.34	0.21
$\Delta R^2$		.317			.053		.087		.088			.127	
$\Delta F$		6.37***			4.52**		7.85***		7.95***			12.32***	

<sup>a</sup>In Models 1 to 4, justification represents collective-moral, collective-societal, individual-moral, and individual-societal justifications, respectively. \* $p < .0125$ . \*\* $p < .0025$ . \*\*\* $p < .00025$ .

justifications were associated with lower acceptability of collective actions for Chinese participants, but not for U.S. participants (simple slopes =  $-0.52$ ,  $0.08$ ,  $ps = .001$ ,  $.462$ , respectively).

### **Predicting Acceptability of Individual Actions**

The same regression procedures as in the previous section were used to examine acceptability of individual actions (Table 5). Among the predictors in the first step, individual-moral justifications were associated with higher acceptability of individual actions ( $\beta = .64$ ,  $p < .001$ ), whereas individual-societal justifications were associated with their lower acceptability ( $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p = .049$ ). The main effect of society was significant ( $\beta = -.27$ ,  $p = .005$ ), with U.S. participants accepting individual actions more than did Chinese participants. Other predictors were not significant. In the second step, we entered interaction terms involving the four different justifications in separate regression analyses.

*Collective justifications (moral and societal).* Adding the two-way and three-way interactions involving collective-moral justifications or collective-societal justifications did not explain additional variance in acceptability of individual actions.

*Individual justifications (moral and societal).* We found significant interactions between society and individual-moral justifications ( $\beta = .58$ ,  $p < .001$ ) as well as individual-societal justifications ( $\beta = .34$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Individual-moral justifications were associated with higher acceptability of individual actions for both U.S. and Chinese participants (simple slopes =  $0.23$ ,  $1.06$ ,  $ps = .030$ ,  $.001$ , respectively), with the association being stronger in the latter sample. Individual-societal justifications were associated with lower acceptability of individual actions for the U.S. participants, but not for the Chinese participants (simple slopes =  $-0.35$ ,  $0.14$ ,  $ps = .001$ ,  $.253$ , respectively).

### **Predicting Support for Intervention**

We conducted multiple regression analyses with support for intervention as the dependent variable according to the same procedure detailed earlier (Table 6). Among the predictors in the first step, collective-societal justifications were associated with lower support for intervention ( $\beta = -.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ), whereas individual-moral justifications ( $\beta = .44$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and individual-societal justifications ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p = .028$ ) were associated with higher support for intervention. In addition, a main effect for society ( $\beta = -.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ) was qualified by a significant interaction between power condition and society ( $\beta = .41$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Specifically, Chinese participants primed with high power regarded intervention as more appropriate than those primed with low power, but there were no differences in the U.S. sample. Other predictors were not significant. We subsequently entered interaction terms involving the four different justifications in the second step in separate regression analyses.

*Collective justifications (moral and societal).* The two-way and three-way interactions involving collective-moral justifications did not explain additional variance in intervention. However, we found a significant three-way interaction among collective-societal justifications, power condition, and society ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $p = .005$ ). Simple slope analyses (Figure 1) showed that collective-societal justifications were associated with lower support for intervention for high-power U.S. and low-power Chinese participants, but not for low-power U.S. or high-power Chinese participants. In addition, slope difference tests showed that the association between collective-societal justifications and lower support for intervention was stronger for low-power than for high-power



**Table 5.** Multistep Linear Regressions of Acceptability of Individual Actions.

Predictors	Model 0 (Step 1)			Model 1 (Step 2)			Model 2 (Step 2)			Model 3 (Step 2)			Model 4 (Step 2)		
	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$
Constant	4.07	0.12		4.10	0.12		4.20	0.13		4.11	0.11		4.05	0.11	
Collective-moral	-0.07	0.07	-.08	0.09	0.10	.10	-0.05	0.07	-.05	-0.12	0.06	-.14	-0.13	0.07	-.15
Collective-societal	-0.05	0.08	-.06	0.00	0.08	.00	0.20	0.12	.23	-0.04	0.07	-.04	-0.04	0.07	-.05
Individual-moral	0.56	0.08	.64***	0.57	0.08	.65***	0.57	0.08	.65***	0.23	0.11	.27	0.59	0.08	.67***
Individual-societal	-0.16	0.08	-.18	-0.12	0.08	-.13	-0.16	0.08	-.18	-0.11	0.07	-.13	-0.35	0.10	-.40**
Collective-pragmatic	0.03	0.06	.03	0.05	0.06	.05	0.03	0.06	.03	-0.03	0.06	-.03	0.02	0.06	.02
Individual-pragmatic	0.04	0.07	.05	0.03	0.07	.03	0.07	0.07	.08	0.04	0.06	.04	0.04	0.06	.05
Perspective taking	-0.01	0.06	-.02	-0.01	0.06	-.01	0.03	0.06	.03	0.07	0.05	.08	0.02	0.05	.02
Degree of power inequality	0.00	0.07	.00	-0.02	0.07	-.02	0.00	0.07	.00	-0.01	0.06	-.01	0.00	0.06	.00
Prevalence of power inequality	-0.02	0.07	-.02	-0.02	0.07	-.02	-0.02	0.07	-.02	0.02	0.06	.02	0.00	0.07	.00
Power condition	0.14	0.15	.08	0.11	0.15	.07	0.02	0.16	.01	0.10	0.14	.06	0.11	0.15	.06*
Society	-0.47	0.16	-.27*	-0.52	0.16	-.29*	-0.55	0.17	-.31***	-0.46	0.15	-.26**	-0.45	0.16	-.26
Power Condition $\times$ Society	0.09	0.21	.05	0.12	0.21	.06	0.28	0.22	.14	0.14	0.19	.07	0.10	0.20	.05
Justification <sup>a</sup> $\times$ Power Condition	—	—	—	-0.27	0.15	-.20	-0.17	0.16	-.13	0.03	0.12	.02	-0.04	0.13	-.03
Justification <sup>a</sup> $\times$ Society	—	—	—	-0.28	0.14	-.22	-0.39	0.16	-.30	0.83	0.15	.58***	0.49	0.14	.34**
Justification <sup>a</sup> $\times$ Power Condition $\times$ Society	—	—	—	0.29	0.22	.13	0.04	0.22	.02	-0.31	0.20	-.16	-0.02	0.21	-.01
$\Delta R^2$	.439			.017			.035			.121			.061		
$\Delta F$	10.75***			1.70			3.60*			14.91***			6.63***		

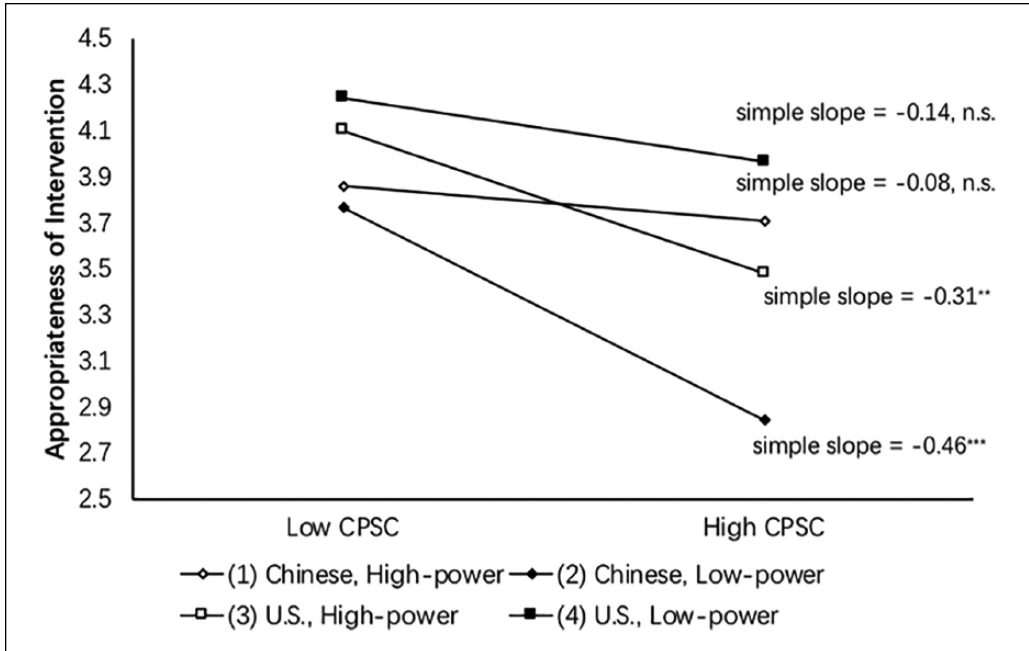
<sup>a</sup>In Models 1 to 4, justification represents collective-moral, collective-societal, individual-moral, and individual-societal justifications, respectively. \* $p < .0125$ . \*\* $p < .0025$ . \*\*\* $p < .00025$ .

**Table 6.** Multistep Linear Regressions of Support for Intervention.

Predictors	Model 0 (Step 1)			Model 1 (Step 2)			Model 2 (Step 2)			Model 3 (Step 2)			Model 4 (Step 2)		
	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$
Constant	4.04	0.10		4.06	0.10		4.10	0.11		4.06	0.10		4.01	0.10	
Collective-moral	0.00	0.06	.00	0.07	0.08	.08	0.03	0.06	.03	-0.03	0.06	-.03	-0.04	0.06	-.04
Collective-societal	-0.24	0.06	-.27**	-0.22	0.07	-.24**	-0.14	0.10	-.16	-0.23	0.06	-.26**	-0.23	0.06	-.26**
Individual-moral	0.39	0.07	.44***	0.40	0.07	.44***	0.37	0.07	.42***	0.22	0.10	.24	0.42	0.07	.47***
Individual-societal	0.15	0.07	.17	0.16	0.07	.18	0.16	0.07	.18	0.17	0.07	.19*	-0.02	0.09	-.03
Collective-pragmatic	-0.03	0.05	-.03	-0.01	0.06	-.01	-0.01	0.05	-.01	-0.05	0.05	-.06	-0.04	0.05	-.04
Individual-pragmatic	0.00	0.06	.00	0.00	0.06	.00	0.02	0.06	.02	0.00	0.06	.00	-0.01	0.06	-.01
Perspective taking	-0.04	0.05	-.04	-0.05	0.05	-.05	-0.04	0.05	-.05	0.00	0.05	.00	-0.01	0.05	-.01
Degree of power inequality	-0.01	0.06	-.01	-0.01	0.06	-.01	0.01	0.06	.02	-0.01	0.06	-.01	-0.01	0.06	-.02
Prevalence of power inequality	-0.04	0.06	-.05	-0.05	0.06	-.06	-0.04	0.06	-.05	-0.02	0.06	-.03	-0.03	0.06	-.04
Power condition	-0.25	0.13	-.14	-0.27	0.13	-.15	-0.31	0.14	-.18	-0.27	0.13	-.15	-0.25	0.13	-.14
Society	-0.79	0.14	-.44***	-0.82	0.14	-.46***	-0.80	0.14	-.45***	-0.79	0.14	-.44***	-0.77	0.14	-.43***
Power Condition $\times$ Society	0.85	0.18	.41***	0.86	0.18	.42***	0.79	0.19	.39***	0.89	0.17	.43***	0.86	0.18	.42***
Justification <sup>a</sup> $\times$ Power Condition	—	—	—	-0.16	0.13	-.11	-0.17	0.14	-.13	0.00	0.11	.00	0.10	0.11	.07
Justification <sup>a</sup> $\times$ Society	—	—	—	-0.21	0.12	-.16	-0.32	0.14	-.24	0.40	0.14	.28*	0.46	0.13	.31**
Justification <sup>a</sup> $\times$ Power Condition $\times$ Society	—	—	—	0.42	0.19	.19	0.55	0.19	.28*	-0.06	0.18	-.03	-0.37	0.18	-.17
$\Delta R^2$	.600			.013			.023			.035			.031		
$\Delta F$	20.67***			1.83			3.23*			5.22**			4.61**		

<sup>a</sup>In Models 1 to 4, justification represents collective-moral, collective-societal, individual-moral, and individual-societal justifications, respectively.

\* $p < .0125$ . \*\* $p < .0025$ . \*\*\* $p < .00025$ .



**Figure 1.** Simple slopes of the endorsement of collective-societal justification (CPSC) predicting the appropriateness of third-party interventions for high-power and low-power participants in the U.S. and the Chinese samples. “Low CPSC” and “high CPSC” represent 1 standard deviation above and below the mean endorsement of collective-societal justifications, respectively. \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Chinese participants (slope difference = 2.80,  $p = .006$ ), but not within the U.S. sample (slope difference = -1.22,  $p = .223$ ).

*Individual justifications (moral and societal).* We found that both individual-moral justifications and individual-societal justifications interacted significantly with society ( $\beta_s = .28, .31, p = .004, p < .001$ , respectively). Specifically, individual-moral justifications were associated with higher support for intervention for both the U.S. participants and the Chinese individuals (simple slopes = 0.22, 0.62,  $ps = .030, .001$ , respectively), with the association being stronger for the Chinese group. Individual-societal justifications were also associated with higher support for intervention for the Chinese participants (simple slope = 0.49,  $p < .001$ ), but not for the U.S. participants (simple slope = -0.03,  $p = .80$ ).

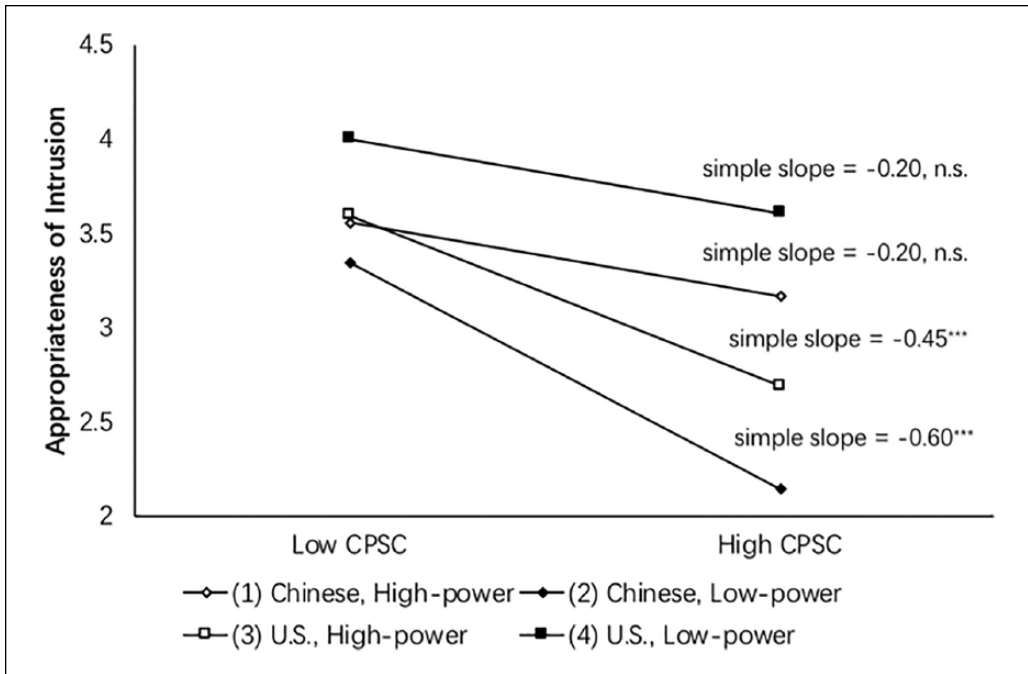
**Predicting Support for Intrusion**

Using the same procedures described earlier, a series of multiple regression analyses examined support for intrusion (Table 7). In the first step, collective-societal justifications were associated with less support for intrusion ( $\beta = -.35, p < .001$ ), and individual-moral justifications were associated with higher support for intrusion ( $\beta = .40, p < .001$ ). Main effects for power condition ( $\beta = -.28, p < .001$ ) and society ( $\beta = -.51, p < .001$ ) were qualified by a significant interaction between power condition and society ( $\beta = .56, p < .001$ ). Specifically, high-power participants regarded power intrusion as less appropriate than low-power participants within the U.S. sample, whereas the opposite was true within the Chinese sample. Other predictors were not significant. Next, the interaction terms for the four different justifications were entered in the second step in separate regression analyses.

**Table 7.** Multistep Linear Regressions of Support for Intrusion.

Predictors	Model 0 (Step 1)		Model 1 (Step 2)		Model 2 (Step 2)		Model 3 (Step 2)		Model 4 (Step 2)		
	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	B	SE	$\beta$
Constant	3.70	0.11		3.74	0.11	3.80	0.12	3.72	0.11	3.69	0.11
Collective-moral	-0.10	0.06	-.10	0.09	0.09	.09	0.06	-0.07	0.07	-0.11	0.07
Collective-societal	-0.35	0.07	-.35***	-0.29	0.07	-.29***	0.11	-0.20	0.07	-0.35***	0.07
Individual-moral	0.41	0.07	.40***	0.41	0.07	.41***	0.07	0.38	0.07	.38***	0.07
Individual-societal	0.10	0.07	.10	0.14	0.07	.14	0.11	0.07	0.11	0.08	.11
Collective-pragmatic	0.07	0.06	.07	0.11	0.06	.11	0.09	0.06	0.06	0.06	.06
Individual-pragmatic	0.01	0.06	.01	0.00	0.06	.00	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.06
Perspective taking	-0.03	0.05	-.03	-0.04	0.05	-.04	-0.03	0.05	-0.03	-0.01	0.06
Degree of power inequality	-0.06	0.06	-.05	-0.07	0.06	-.07	-0.04	0.06	-0.04	-0.06	0.06
Prevalence of power inequality	-0.05	0.07	-.05	-0.07	0.06	-.07	-0.05	0.06	-0.05	-0.04	0.07
Power condition	-0.56	0.15	-.28***	-0.61	0.14	-.30***	0.15	-0.66	0.15	-.33***	0.15
Society	-1.01	0.16	-.51***	-1.09	0.15	-.54***	0.16	-1.05	0.16	-.53***	0.16
Power Condition $\times$ Society	1.30	0.20	.56***	1.35	0.19	.58***	0.21	1.28	0.21	.55***	0.20
Justification <sup>a</sup> $\times$ Power Condition	—	—	—	-0.45	0.14	-.28**	0.15	-0.26	0.15	-.17	0.08
Justification <sup>a</sup> $\times$ Society	—	—	—	-0.39	0.13	-.26*	0.15	-0.41	0.15	-.27*	0.20
Justification <sup>a</sup> $\times$ Power Condition $\times$ Society	—	—	—	0.68	0.20	.28**	0.21	0.66	0.21	.30**	-0.10
$\Delta R^2$		.613			.030		.024		.005		.008
$\Delta F$		21.80***			4.49**		3.56*		0.75		1.18

<sup>a</sup>In Models 1 to 4, justification represents collective-moral, collective-societal, individual-moral, and individual-societal justifications, respectively. \* $p < .0125$ . \*\* $p < .0025$ . \*\*\* $p < .00025$ .



**Figure 2.** Simple slopes of the endorsement of collective-societal justification (CPSC) predicting the appropriateness of third-party intrusions for high-power and low-power participants in the U.S. and the Chinese samples.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

*Collective justifications (moral and societal).* Significant interactions between collective-moral justifications and power condition ( $\beta = -.28, p = .002$ ), as well as society ( $\beta = -.26, p = .004$ ) were qualified by a significant three-way interaction among collective-moral justifications, power condition, and society ( $\beta = .28, p = .001$ ). Collective-moral justifications were associated with lower support for intrusion for high-power U.S. and low-power Chinese participants (simple slopes =  $-0.36, -0.30, ps = .003, .005$ , respectively), but not for low-power U.S. participants or high-power Chinese participants (simple slopes =  $.09, -.07$ , respectively, both  $ps > .10$ ). Slope difference tests showed that the association between collective-moral justifications and lower support for intrusion was stronger for high-power than for low-power U.S. participants (slope difference =  $-0.45, p = .002$ ). No significant slope differences were found for the Chinese sample (slope difference =  $0.23, p = .112$ ).

A significant two-way interaction between collective-societal justifications and society ( $\beta = -.27, p = .009$ ) was qualified by a significant three-way interaction among collective-societal justifications, society, and power condition ( $\beta = .30, p = .002$ ). As shown in Figure 2, collective-societal justifications were associated with lower support for intrusion for high-power U.S. and low-power Chinese participants, but not for low-power U.S. or high-power Chinese participants. In addition, the association between collective-societal justifications and lower support for intrusion was stronger for Chinese low-power than high-power participants (slope difference =  $2.69, p = .008$ ), but no difference was found within the U.S. sample (slope difference =  $-1.68, p = .094$ ).

*Individual justifications (moral and societal).* Neither the interactions involving individual-moral justifications nor those involving individual-societal justifications explained additional variance in support for intrusion.

## Discussion

The current study examined U.S. and Chinese participants' evaluations of hypothetical scenarios about intrasocietal conflicts after being primed with high or low power. U.S. and Chinese individuals evaluated actions taken by hypothetical first parties directly involved in intrasocietal conflicts, as well as invited and uninvited third-party actions aimed at protecting individual rights. They also rated their agreement with moral and societal justifications from both collective and individual perspectives. In general, rather than supporting theoretical approaches describing overarching cultural orientations, our findings supported social domain theory, which emphasizes that the judgments in favor of collective interests or individual rights are differentially informed by moral and societal concerns (Neff & Helwig, 2002; Turiel, 2002, 2012). Consistent with the assertion that moral concerns are universal (Hypothesis 1), we found that within both samples and power conditions, agreement with moral justifications for individual actions was generally linked to lower acceptability of collective actions, higher acceptability of individual actions, and increased support for third-party actions. A general comparison between the two samples showed that U.S. and Chinese participants' evaluations had much in common, despite purported differences in individualism and collectivism. Regardless of power conditions, both samples judged individual actions as more acceptable than collective actions. They also endorsed individual-moral justifications more strongly than collective-societal justifications. The two samples did not differ in their average agreement with most types of justifications. The only exception was that Chinese participants endorsed collective-social justifications to a larger degree than U.S. participants, suggesting that Chinese as compared with U.S. persons do place greater importance on societal concerns (although they did not appear to be less concerned with individual rights). These results are compatible with previous research on Chinese and Western adolescents' judgments and reasoning about rights and authority (e.g., Helwig et al., 2007).

Our findings also extend social domain theory in two important ways. First, in the current study, participants evaluated hypothetical intrasocietal conflicts as third-party observers. In this way, we found that power priming did not affect their judgments about first-party actions (contrary to some of our predictions in Hypotheses 2 and 5), but it did affect judgments about third-party actions. Second, power priming affected judgments about third-party actions differently in the U.S. and Chinese samples. It also moderated the relations between various justifications and judgments about collective and third-party actions across the two samples in ways that were consistent with our expectations regarding differences in culturally transmitted power concepts. Our findings thus support and extend a key argument of social domain theory, that judgments about intrasocietal conflicts are multifaceted and controversial because of the contested interpretations held by people with different levels of power and from cultural backgrounds (Neff & Helwig, 2002; Smetana, 2002; Turiel, 2002).

### *Effects of Power and Society on Judgments About Collective, Individual, and Third-Party Actions*

A strength of our research is that participants were randomly assigned to power conditions. Therefore, the different effects of power found in this study are not contingent on participants' social positions. Unlike in existing social hierarchies, where individuals' judgments of such actions should reflect their power-related self-interests (e.g., individuals occupying a lower power position should be more likely to endorse actions that promote individual rights), participants in the current study were not affected by power priming when judging collective and individual actions. However, in the U.S. sample, third-party actions were supported less by high-power than low-power participants (consistent with Hypothesis 2), while the opposite was true in the Chinese sample (consistent with Hypothesis 5). Thus, power priming seemed to have

parallel effects on invited intervention and uninvited intrusion, although participants in both societies were less inclined to support intrusion than intervention. Individuals' power concepts are more likely to inform their judgments when they may affect the solution of intrasocietal conflicts (in our case, judgments about third-party actions). Moreover, the within-societal variations in these judgments is also consistent with our assumption that concepts of power in the United States are more socialized (highlighting the responsibility to collective interests), whereas Chinese concepts of power are more personalized (highlighting personal freedom; Torelli & Shavitt, 2010; Wang & Sun, 2016).

### *Effects of Power and Society on Justifications*

By examining the association between various types of justifications and judgments about intrasocietal conflicts, our study provided a more in-depth understanding of how individuals' patterns of reasoning contribute to within-society variations in the two societies. Consistent with Hypothesis 3, we found that U.S. participants primed in the high-power (but not the low-power) condition opposed pro-individual-rights third-party intrusions based on collective-societal concerns. Although both groups recognized collective-societal concerns to similar degrees, such concerns seemed to be more salient to U.S. participants when judging uninvited third-party actions. Such concerns are also in line with a socialized power concept. However, high-power U.S. participants' agreement with collective-societal concerns was not associated with their other judgments. This is also compatible with the assertion of the social domain theory, that different judgments may be informed by various concerns. It is likely that such concerns are activated because intrusion, to a much greater degree than intervention, constitutes a third-party infringement on the collective interests of another society.

In contrast, we found that Chinese participants primed with high-power concepts justified collective actions based on collective-societal and collective-moral concerns (supporting Hypothesis 4), but their agreement with collective-societal justifications was unrelated to their support for third-party actions. This points to the complexity of Chinese individuals' power concepts. On one hand, the Confucian ideal of moral leadership in Chinese society (Frederickson, 2002; Fukuyama, 2011) prompts individuals possessing high power to advocate for social hierarchies based on concerns with collective interests. On the other hand, the fewer constraints on power in such social hierarchies might foster a personalized power concept that encourages individuals to seek more individual rights (for themselves) as they accrue more power. Furthermore, Chinese participants primed with low power opposed third-party actions based on collective-societal concerns (consistent with Hypothesis 6), but they did not justify collective actions or oppose individual actions based on the same concerns. Overall, our findings suggest that power concepts are not universally linked with subjugating individual rights. Moreover, contrary to previous research using a social domain perspective (cf. Turiel, 2002, 2012), those without power do not always prioritize individual rights over collective interests.

However, some of our findings did support the view that lack of power might instigate "moral resistance" (moral justifications for individual actions) against collective authorities (Turiel, 2002, 2012). In both samples, participants primed with low power did oppose collective actions based on individual-moral concerns to a greater degree than participants primed with high power. Moreover, for Chinese participants, the acceptability of individual actions was actually more strongly linked to their agreement with individual-moral concerns. However, our findings also imply that "moral resistance" might not be the only form of objection to collective actions that suppress individual rights. Chinese, but not U.S. participants, justified individual actions based on individual-societal concerns, indicating recognition that individual disobedience can also have positive impacts on a society in the long run. This finding differs somewhat from previous research on the justifications for violations of majority-rule decisions, which showed that Chinese

adolescents supported these violations mainly based on individual-moral (e.g., personal rights, welfare) concerns (Helwig et al., 2011). The discrepancy between the findings of ours versus the previous study may be due to methodological differences. We asked individuals to rate different reasons, including collective interests, which were provided in the survey and thus may have made them more salient, whereas previous studies have asked participants to generate justifications (Helwig et al., 2011). In addition, the current sample consisted of college students, who tend to be more sophisticated in their reasoning than the adolescents who were the focus of past research. Although individuals manifest societal and moral concerns from very early ages on, more sophisticated levels of thinking may be needed to incorporate multifaceted concerns in social judgments (Smetana, 2013).

Finally, within the U.S. but not the Chinese sample, a stronger negative association between collective-moral concerns and intrusion explained high-power participants' reluctance to support intrusion, partially supporting Hypothesis 7. Thus, U.S. participants primed with high-power concepts seemed to consider an uninvited third-party action as morally dubious. Although moral concerns can be seen as universal, taking "moral" actions without others' consent might itself constitute a moral transgression, thus undermining the moral grounding of the action. Alternatively, this reluctance to support intrusion might reflect an additional concern for procedural justice (Tyler, 1994). Due to the traditionally larger power distance in Chinese society (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), Chinese participants with low power might have less say over such procedural justice. Thus, collective-moral concerns are less salient to them when judging third-party intrusions.

Overall, participants' agreement with moral or societal justifications from collective or individual perspectives have differential effects on different types of judgments. Some might find it puzzling that high-power U.S. participants did not support collective actions that restrict individual rights based on collective-societal concerns, yet they opposed third-party actions to affirm individual rights based on such concerns. High-power Chinese participants approved collective actions based on collective-moral concerns, yet they failed to oppose intrusions based on such concerns. These asymmetrical findings, however, highlight the distinction between a third-party perspective and the perspective of individual parties directly involved in intrasocietal conflicts. This shows that it is essential to investigate the role of third-party actions in intrasocietal conflicts in future research.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

Despite its novel contributions, the current study still has some notable limitations. One concern is the cultural differences in response styles (Hamamura et al., 2008). East Asians have been found to be more moderate than North Americans in their responses to Likert-type format self-report questions (i.e., using the middle point or avoiding extreme values of a scale; Hamamura et al., 2008). In our study, Chinese participants' responses were closer to the scale mean (3.5 on a 6-point scale) for trait perspective taking and acceptability judgments, but not for other variables. Thus, while response style bias may have accounted for some of the observed societal differences in acceptability judgments, it cannot explain Chinese participants' reluctance to support third-party actions, nor should it be a problem for interpreting other core findings.

Our power priming task asked participants to selectively attend to certain social roles and attributes. To prevent unnecessary distractions that might undermine the effectiveness of the manipulation, we did not further check participants' interpretation of power. As a result, we do not know whether the same priming procedure actually led to different interpretations of power in the two groups (for instance, whether U.S. and Chinese participants interpreted words like "president" and "wealthy" differently, even though they were related to power [i.e., control of valuable resources] in both societies). Future studies should test this by using other priming



methods, such as experiential recall priming (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2003), with more explicit instructions regarding the interpretation of power.

Our participants were university students, who likely represented middle socioeconomic status and particular political values in both the United States and China. Thus, the findings may not generalize beyond educated young adults in both societies. However, many previous studies on power were also conducted with university students, indicating that individuals who have not actually held powerful positions or wielded political power in society at-large can still be influenced by the priming of power concepts (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2006; Lammers et al., 2016). Future research can confirm or extend these findings via field experiments that involve participants with different power status who face real intrasocietal conflicts. Similarly, future research can broaden the investigation to include more diversified intrasocietal conflict scenarios beyond the current ones.

Despite these potential limitations, the use of social domain theory in the current study advanced our understanding of within-society variations in intrasocietal conflicts. U.S. and Chinese participants' responses did not simply align with either individualistic or collectivistic cultural orientations, respectively. Rather, participants in both societies were found to use both moral and societal concerns to inform judgments about actions by conflicting parties or third parties that either restrict or affirm individual rights. Power priming differently affected the judgments about third-party actions, as well as how people justified collective actions and third-party actions in the two societies. These findings shed light on how concepts of power might impact the acceptance and effectiveness of conflict resolution and humanitarian aid efforts. Importantly, third-party actions to resolve conflicts and affirm individual rights should take into account collective interests and different interpretations of power in different societies. Interventions lacking such considerations risk misunderstanding and resistance from the conflicting parties, which could undermine their success and might even exacerbate confrontations.

## Appendix

### *The Intrasocietal Conflict Scenarios and Example Questions*

*Hydroelectric station.* The government of a country is planning to build a hydroelectric station on a major river to provide electricity to meet the country's growing demand. If the new hydroelectric station is not constructed soon enough, the economic growth of the country might suffer from having an insufficient power supply. This would eventually widely hurt the employment and economic interests of people throughout the country.

However, the construction of the hydroelectric station has met some resistance due to the reluctance of some residents to leave their hometown in the "flooding area" near the site of the station. To proceed with the construction, the government has set a deadline for forcibly moving the town's residents living in the flooding area. The town's residents will receive substantial financial compensation if, and only if, they agree to move before the deadline. Those who do not agree to move after the deadline will be forced to move with little or no compensation.

#### Example Questions:

1. Rate the acceptability of the government's plan to forcibly relocate the town's residents so that they can build the hydroelectric station.
2. Now rate your agreement with the following reasons for the government's forced relocation plan of the town's residents. (The type of justification was presented in brackets, which were not shown in the questionnaires presented to the participants.)
  - Neglecting the welfare of the town's residents would not endanger the support for the government to the same degree as risking a countrywide power shortage that would affect quality of living throughout the country. [Pragmatic]

- A government is empowered by the people of the whole country to use force when necessary, that is, against those who are in conflict with the whole country. [Societal-conventional]
  - The hydroelectric station broadly benefits the welfare of all of the society's citizens, it would be selfish for the town's residents to obstruct the construction of the hydroelectric station. [Moral]
  - There is probably no better way to provide electricity to meet the country's growing demand than building the hydroelectric station immediately. [Pragmatic]
  - There might be some regions in the country that are desperately in need of electricity, and the town's residents' resistance might cause those people to suffer unnecessarily. [Moral]
  - There would be chaos and disorder if there were not enough electricity for the citizens of the society. [Societal-conventional]
  - Given that their small number compared with the broader society, the welfare of the town's residents does not outweigh the interests of other citizens in the country. [Societal-conventional]
3. Rate the acceptability of the town's residents' resistance to the government's relocation plan.
  4. Now rate your agreement with the following reasons for the town's residents to resist the government's forced relocation plan. (The type of justification was presented in brackets, which were not shown in the questionnaires presented to the participants.)
    - If they protest, the government will probably give in by offering higher compensation. [Pragmatic]
    - It is unfair to force the town's residents to make this sacrifice while other citizens in the country don't have to, as everyone gets to enjoy the same benefits. [Moral]
    - Relocating people would inevitably disrupt the harmonious relationship among the town's residents and their local traditions. [Societal-conventional]
    - The relocation will impose long-term suffering on the town's residents. [Moral]
    - There might be other ways to meet the electricity demand that are just as efficient. [Pragmatic]
    - Relocating would bring about much instability and chaos within the town, and this is bad for the society as a whole. [Societal-conventional]
    - The town's residents have the right to keep their land and live in their birthplace, which cannot be simply compensated by money. [Moral]
  5. Rate how appropriate it would be to have the international community pressure the government to reconsider the forced relocation plan, assuming that the community was asked to do so by the town's residents.
  6. How would you feel about the international community intervening in the issue without being asked by the government or the town's residents?

### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### **Funding**

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### **ORCID iD**

Nan Zhu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7699-5054>

## Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

## Notes

1. We also checked whether participants' ratings were more consistent within the *same scenario* rather than the *same domain*. It turned out that this was not the case (the alpha coefficients for Scenario 1 was .11 for U.S. participants and .49 for Chinese participants; the alpha coefficients for Scenario 2 was .47 for U.S. participants and .45 for Chinese participants; the alpha coefficients for Scenario 3 was .43 for U.S. participants and .50 for Chinese participants). This indicates that in each context, items pertaining to the same domain are distinguished from items in the same scenario that pertain to different domains.
2. Details of the results from this "salary raise" scenario can be obtained from the first author.

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