





## Individual differences in social control: Who ‘speaks up’ when witnessing uncivil, discriminatory, and immoral behaviours?

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This research examined the personality characteristics of individuals who ‘speak up’ and confront perpetrators of norm transgressions. We tested whether those who intervene tend to be ‘bitter complainers’ or ‘well-adjusted leaders’. In four studies (total  $N = 1,003$ ), we measured several individual differences that are directly implicated by at least one of the two concepts. We also presented participants with uncivil, discriminatory, and immoral behaviours and asked them how likely they would be to intervene if they were to witness each of these behaviours as a bystander. The results confirmed the well-adjusted leader hypothesis: Participants’ self-reported tendency to confront perpetrators correlated positively with altruism, extraversion, social responsibility, acceptance by peers, independent self-construal, emotion regulation, persistence, self-directedness, age, occupation, and monthly salary, but not with aggressiveness or low self-esteem. Individuals who confront prejudice also speak up against other immoral and uncivil behaviours. We discuss the implications of these findings for the perpetuation and change of social norms.

Imagine you are in a public bus. A teenager comes in and puts her shoes on the seat across from her. Her shoes are muddy, and the next person to sit on the seat will most likely get his/her clothes dirty. Would you say something to the teenager? Or imagine you stroll in a park and see two men, heads shaved and wearing black leather jackets, passing a man of Arab/Muslim origin, who is sitting on a bench, and insulting him. Would you intervene? Now turn the questions around and ask yourself: Who in your social environment would intervene – and who would not intervene – when witnessing these behaviours?

The purpose of this article was to identify the personality traits of individuals who ‘speak up’, who ‘intervene’, who ‘confront’ the perpetrator(s) of uncivil and immoral behaviours, and who ‘openly express their disapproval’ when witnessing such behaviours. To be consistent with earlier research, we will refer to these interpersonal disapproval reactions as ‘social control’ (Chekroun, 2008; Lemert, 1972; but see recent

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research in which the authors used the term ‘altruistic punishment’; Balafoutas, Nikiforakis, & Rockenbach, 2016). We examined two theoretically plausible hypotheses. The first is the ‘bitter complainer hypothesis’ according to which individuals who tend to score high on aggressiveness and low on self-esteem and social acceptance are more likely to intervene. The second is the ‘well-adjusted leader hypothesis’, which suggests that extraversion, social responsibility, and high social acceptance are characteristics of individuals who intervene. We will discuss the two hypotheses in more detail below.

### **Who intervenes: Bitter complainers or well-adjusted leaders?**

The ‘bitter complainer hypothesis’ is based on the idea that individuals who feel that they are not a person of worth (low self-esteem) will be hostile towards others as a means to feel better about themselves. When the opportunity presents itself, the hostility will take the form of ‘confronting’ the perpetrator of an uncivil or immoral behaviour. Empirical evidence for this idea is abundant. When participants are made to feel insecure, they judge others’ work more harshly (Amabile & Glazebrook, 1982). The frustration–aggression hypothesis describes how we displace our aggression towards a substitute target when it is impossible to retaliate against the real reason for our frustration (Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939). The perpetrators of uncivil/immoral behaviours are ideal substitute targets, because they have done something wrong, thus allowing the aggressive bystander to release his/her hostility in a socially acceptable way. In a study by Katz, Class, and Cohen (1973), White participants punished a Black confederate more than they punished a White confederate when the confederate was ‘sassy’, but not when he was friendly. This is because the ‘sassy’ Black confederate allows the participants to act out their prejudice in a socially acceptable way. In other words, if they punish the confederate, it is because he is sassy, not because he is Black. Similarly, ‘bitter complainers’ look out for opportunities to be hostile towards others in a socially acceptable way. Scolding the perpetrator of an uncivil or immoral behaviour is a great way to attain this goal.

In a related vein, it has been shown that chronically aggressive individuals are especially likely to perceive hostile intent on the part of another person (Dodge & Coie, 1987). A slightly different version of the ‘bitter complainer hypothesis’ is that aggressive individuals perceive the same uncivil/immoral behaviour as more deviant because they perceive more hostile intent in the action. For example, a bystander low on trait aggressiveness may attribute the teenager’s behaviour in the bus to carelessness, whereas a bystander high on trait aggressiveness may see the same behaviour as a vile attempt to hurt other people. Not surprisingly, then, the former is less likely to intervene than the latter. Given that people punish proportionally to the extent to which they see a behaviour as morally wrong (Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002), the highly aggressive bystander is more likely to ‘speak up’. Taken together, *the ‘bitter complainer hypothesis’ predicts that individuals who score high on aggressiveness and impulsive nonconformity, low on self-esteem, and/or low on social acceptance are more likely to intervene when they witness an uncivil or immoral behaviour.*

The ‘well-adjusted leader hypothesis’ is based on the idea that confronting another person about his/her undesirable behaviour requires character strength, social responsibility, and the knowledge that one is well accepted by the social environment. Individuals who ‘speak up’ are like caring team leaders who try to promote a positive work environment in which team members treat each other fairly and respectfully. The literature provides ample examples of the central roles of leaders in creating and

maintaining social norms (Taggar & Ellis, 2007). According to the well-adjusted leader hypothesis, bystanders who confront incivility/immorality feel connected to and care about the community/society they live in (Cole & Stewart, 1996). In a way, they are driven by the desire to 'make this world a better place' (Gabriel, 2014; Witt & Silver, 1994). Much like effective team leaders, they behave in socially responsible ways and have high ethical/moral standards that they apply to themselves and to others (Schmid, 2012). Thus, when effective team leaders notice that someone shows lack of respect for others or mistreats his/her co-workers, they will intervene, often choosing direct communication strategies rather than indirect ones (Overall, Fletcher, Simpson, & Sibley, 2009). The same is true for individuals who confront incivility and/or immorality: They have a tendency to speak frankly and take action rather than ignore the problem. Effective team leaders are psychologically well-adjusted and know how to regulate their own and others' emotions (Pescosolido, 2002). To confront a potentially conflictual situation – such as suggesting to a team member to change his/her behaviour – leaders need to have built up 'social capital' and need to be accepted by their team members (Coleman, 1988; Thompson, 2005). Individuals who 'speak up' are thus likely to feel well-accepted by others and well-connected to their social environment, and one can expect them to be able to regulate their own emotions and others' emotions effectively. Taken together, *the well-adjusted leader hypothesis predicts that social responsibility, altruism, extraversion, persistence, self-directedness, instrumentality, the feeling of being accepted, and empathy are all positively correlated with people's tendency to intervene when they witness an uncivil or immoral behaviour.*

### **Empirical evidence for the two hypotheses**

The scientific literature has examined people's reactions to norm transgressions and uncivil behaviours mostly from a situational perspective. Brauer and colleagues have shown that the likelihood of 'speaking up' against uncivil behaviours in public settings is determined by three factors (Brauer & Chekroun, 2005; Chaurand & Brauer, 2008): (1) the extent to which the bystanders feel that it is their responsibility to intervene (e.g., personal responsibility has just been made salient; no other bystanders are present), (2) the extent to which bystanders feel that they personally suffer the consequences of the uncivil behaviour (e.g., bystanders are more likely to react if someone litters in their front lawn than in the neighbour's front lawn, or if someone litters in their home town than another town), and (3) the extent to which bystanders care about the norm that is being violated (e.g., when the uncivil behaviour involves pollution, nature lovers and individuals who have just been reminded of the importance to protect the environment are more likely to intervene). These findings seem to support the well-adjusted leader hypothesis more than the bitter complainer hypothesis. If situationally activated responsibility increases people's tendency to speak up, then chronic responsibility (i.e., responsibility as a personality trait) should do the same (see also Chekroun & Brauer, 2002).

The literature on helping behaviour also supports the well-adjusted leader hypothesis. Labuhn, Wagner, van Dick, and Christ (2004) asked more than 1,000 pupils (grade 5–12) how they would react when witnessing five different acts of blatant prejudice. The five situations suggested that a direct intervention might come at high cost for the bystander. The authors found that frequency of interethnic contacts correlated positively, whereas Social Dominance Orientation correlated negatively with respondents' self-reported willingness to intervene. Additionally, Greitemeyer, Fischer, Kastenmüller, and Frey (2006) found that participants' mood was related to their tendency to help others when

the cost was low, but not when the cost of helping was high. These findings appear contradictory to the bitter complainer hypothesis, which would predict that individuals with high Social Dominance Orientation and those in a bad mood are more likely to confront a norm transgressor.

Whistle-blowing is defined as ‘the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action’ (Near & Miceli, 1985, p. 4). In their meta-analysis, Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) found that older employees, as well as employees with tenure and at a higher job level, are more likely to blow the whistle. LePine and Van Dyne (1998) provide evidence for the idea that global self-esteem is positively related to an employee’s tendency to speak up in a constructive/challenging way in a work team. Although whistle-blowing in an organization and exerting social control in a public setting are two different types of behaviours, these findings indirectly support the well-adjusted leader hypothesis.

The literature on empathy and compassion provides contradictory evidence. Initial studies suggested that individuals low on empathic concern (Leliveld, Dijk, & Beest, 2012) or low on compassion (Condon & DeSteno, 2011) are more likely to punish an individual who cheats or behaves in an unfair manner towards another participant. Later studies suggested that a high level of compassion is related to hostility (Keller & Pfattheicher, 2013) and that individuals with an increased motivation to undo injustice whenever they feel unfairly advantaged are more likely to help a victim who is the target of a criminal act (Baumert, Halmburger, & Schmitt, 2013). Yet other studies suggest that compassion is unrelated to participants’ tendency to punish an overly greedy fellow participant in a dictator game (Weng, Fox, Hessenthaler, Stodola, & Davidson, 2015). These findings can thus support either of the two hypotheses described earlier.

### ***The present research***

We conducted four studies to compare the bitter complainer hypothesis to the well-adjusted leader hypothesis. In each of the studies, we measured personality traits, individual differences, and demographic variables that were directly implicated by at least one of our two hypotheses. A short rationale for the inclusion of each of the measured constructs is given in the introduction to each study. We also measured participants’ self-reported reactions to a variety of norm transgressions. We made the choice to use self-reports because we wanted to examine respondents’ reactions to not just one, but to multiple behaviours that violate societal standards. The shortcoming of self-reports is that they do not necessarily predict the behaviours that participants would engage in if they were to witness the norm transgressions in real life (Kawakami, Dunn, Karmali, & Dovidio, 2009). A viable alternative would have been to stage a single norm transgression and to measure bystanders’ actual reactions. However, such a procedure does not necessarily address the above-mentioned shortcoming, because one would not know whether the results generalize to other uncivil and immoral behaviours, to perpetrators with different characteristics (e.g., different gender or appearance), and to situations that differ in important details (e.g., slightly different timing, number of bystanders). In addition, we wanted to compare people’s reactions to three types of norm transgressions, minor (‘uncivil behaviours’), major (‘immoral behaviours’), and prejudice-related (‘discriminatory behaviours’; see Studies 3a and 3b). Such a comparison would not have been possible if we had exposed each participant to only one real behaviour in the field. In an earlier study (Brauer & Chekroun, 2005), the correlation between self-reported and

actual behaviours was quite high: The intervention likelihood in the self-reports correlated .86 with the intervention likelihood in the behaviours (in an analysis with behaviour as the unit of analysis). This finding suggests that people have reasonably good insight in whether and when they intervene.

## STUDY I

The purpose of Study 1 was to test four individual differences directly related to our two hypotheses – altruism, moral outrage, self-esteem, and aggressiveness – as well as five traits that have been shown to be fundamental in personality research (the Big Five).

The well-adjusted leader hypothesis predicts that *altruism* will be positively related to bystanders' tendency to exert social control, that is, their tendency to confront the perpetrators of uncivil behaviours. Both altruistic behaviours and speaking up when witnessing a person engage in an antisocial behaviour reflect an enhanced concern for the well-being of other people. They require the bystander to take initiative and to confront the perpetrator. *Moral outrage* refers to a person's tendency to experience negative emotions when witnessing injustice. Montada, Schmitt, and Dalbert (1986) have shown that the emotional reactions individuals have when confronted with inequality reliably predict whether or not they will help the disadvantaged (see also Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007). Although this personality trait has been studied mostly in the context of political activism (Thomas & McGarty, 2009), it is likely to play an equally important role in people's reactions to norm transgressions, as suggested by the well-adjusted leader hypothesis.

The bitter complainer hypothesis predicts a positive correlation between *aggressiveness* and a person's tendency to openly express his or her disapproval when witnessing norm transgressions. Our goal was to distinguish moral outrage from aggressiveness, and to show that the former does, whereas the latter does not predict people's reactions to uncivil behaviours. The same hypothesis also predicts that people with low feelings of self-worth 'punish' others as a means to feel better about themselves. One would thus expect a negative correlation between *self-esteem* and social control.

The well-adjusted leader hypothesis predicts that among the five components of the Big Five, *extraversion* will be correlated with people's (self-reported) tendency to confront perpetrators of uncivil/immoral behaviours. Extraversion describes energy, positive emotions, sociability, talkativeness, and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others. Extraverted individuals tend to be action-oriented, assert themselves, and have no problems talking to people they have not met before (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Well-adjusted leaders often score high on extraversion (Ployhart, Lim, & Chan, 2001). We had no particular hypotheses for the remaining four personality traits of the Big Five: conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. The bitter complainer hypothesis would predict a correlation with neuroticism, but as we described in the introduction, the indirect support for this hypothesis is weak.

## Method

### Participants

Two hundred and ninety-one students from a large Austrian university (209 women and 82 men) ranging in age from 18 to 29 years ( $M = 23.04$  years,  $SD = 2.75$  years) voluntarily participated to this online study. Participants were recruited via a mass email

to students and had the chance to win a prize of 50 euros for their participation; there were four prizes in total. The final sample of 291 included only participants (1) who were Austrian nationals, (2) whose parents were Austrian nationals, (3) who were <30 years old, and (4) who completed the survey in 15–90 min.<sup>1</sup>

### **Material**

We created an online survey for the purpose of the study. In the first part of the survey, participants watched six short (about 10 s) video clips showing a person engaging in an uncivil behaviour. The video clips were as follows: (1) a person tearing a poster off a bulletin board, (2) a person kicking a beer can multiple times while walking on campus and then leaving without picking it up, (3) a person sitting on a bench and flipping off a woman walking by, (4) a person throwing a Kleenex on the sidewalk in a park right next to a trash can, (5) a person spitting multiple times on the sidewalk, and (6) a person walking passed a trash container and kicking it violently multiple times. These situations were chosen based on informal interviews that identified these scenarios as representative for uncivil behaviours in public settings. In all instances, the ‘perpetrator’ was a young man dressed in average clothes. The actor did not talk in any of the videos, but participants could hear environmental sounds (e.g., the beer can being kicked, cars driving by). Participants were asked to imagine themselves witnessing the situation.

Next, participants were asked about the emotions they experience with regard to the situation shown in the video. They indicated how intensely they would feel fear, disdain, frustration, anger, sadness, disgust, and shame. These ratings were later used to compute an indicator of *moral outrage*. Participants responded on 7-point rating scales with endpoints labelled 1 = ‘not at all intensely’ and 7 = ‘very intensely’. Note that moral outrage measures participants’ reactions to the uncivil behaviours we provided and is thus not a general personality trait.

Finally, participants then indicated the likelihood with which they would adopt each of the following reactions: (1) no reaction; (2) a disapproving look; (3) a loud audible sigh that could be heard by the person; (4) alerting an authority figure (e.g., the police); (5) a disapproving comment about the behaviour, however, not directly addressed to the person; (6) a polite comment to the person, pointing out that the behaviour is wrong; and (7) an aggressive comment to the person, pointing out that the behaviour is wrong. Participants rated their responses on a 9-point scale with endpoints labelled 1 = ‘not at all likely’ and 9 = ‘very likely’.

After providing ratings about each of the six uncivil behaviours shown in the video clips, participants completed several personality scales online: Rushton, Chrisjohn, and Fekken’s (1981) 26-item *Altruism* scale, Rosenberg’s (1965) 10-item *Self-Esteem* Scale, and Bryant and Smith’s (2001) 12-item *Aggression* scale. We measured *the Big Five* with John, Donahue, and Kentle’s (1991) 33-item scale. Participants responded on the same Likert scales that were used by the original authors. We asked participants to fill out Paulhus’ (1994) 20-item *Social Desirability* scale because we wanted to examine whether

<sup>1</sup> In all studies, we excluded participants who did not have (and whose parents did not have) the nationality of the country in which the study was conducted. We did this because foreigners or individuals with a recent immigration background may be hesitant to confront perpetrators of uncivil and immoral behaviours for one or more of the following reasons: They do not master the language or have an accent, they are not familiar with the social norms, they may not agree or endorse these norms, they may perceive a power differential between them and the White, local perpetrator, or they may be afraid the interaction may turn into a racial incident.



the relationships between self-reported social control and the personality traits held up when statistically controlling for participants' tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner.

In the final part of the questionnaire, we asked for demographic information: gender, age, the respondent's nationality, the nationality of the respondent's father and mother, and the respondent's major. The questionnaire contained two additional items that were included for exploratory purposes and that are described in the Supporting Information. All items in the survey are described either here or in the Supporting Information (and the same is true for Studies 2, 3a, and 3b reported below).

### Procedure

Participants filled out the online questionnaire at the end of the academic year. We generated an electronic reference (hyperlink) and distributed it to students via email. All participants accessed the questionnaire by clicking on the hyperlink. They were told that the study investigated how people perceived the behaviours of others in social situations. After giving informed consent, participants accessed the first part of the online questionnaire. All participants viewed and rated the six videos in the order they were described above. They then filled out the second part with the personality scales in the following order: Big Five, aggression, altruism, self-esteem, and demographic information. At the end, the participants had the opportunity to give their contact information if they wanted to participate in the lottery to receive the prize.

### Results and Discussion

All scales had satisfactory internal consistency (all alphas  $> .70$ ; see Table 1). For each of the six behaviours, the five interpersonal disapproval reactions (reactions 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7) clustered together. We thus averaged across all 30 ratings (five social control reactions for each of the six uncivil behaviours) to compute a total social control score for each participant (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .88$ ). Also, we averaged across the 42 emotion ratings (seven negative emotions for each of the six uncivil behaviours) to compute a moral outrage score (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .93$ ).

We computed bivariate correlations between participants' (total) social control score and the personality traits of interest. As predicted, participants' tendency to speak up against uncivil behaviours was related to *altruism*,  $r(289) = .18$ ,  $p < .003$ , and *moral outrage*,  $r(289) = .64$ ,  $p < .0001$  (see Table 1). The more altruistic individuals were and the more intensely they experienced negative emotions when viewing the videos, the more they said they would react to the uncivil behaviours. These results support the well-adjusted leader hypothesis (see General Discussion). The analyses further revealed that participants' social control scores were unrelated to *self-esteem*,  $r(289) = .08$ ,  $p = .18$ . Participants' *aggressiveness* was also unrelated to their self-reported tendency to confront perpetrators of uncivil behaviours,  $r(289) = .05$ ,  $p = .40$ . The latter findings fail to support predictions derived from the bitter complainer hypothesis.

Participants' *extraversion* reliably predicted their social control reactions,  $r(289) = .12$ ,  $p < .05$ . Extraverted individuals were more likely to speak up and confront perpetrators of uncivil behaviours, a finding that replicates Brauer and Chaurand's (2010) country-level analyses. Social control also correlated with *openness to experience*,

**Table 1.** Bivariate correlations between the personality constructs and social control in samples 1 (Study 1), 2 (Study 2), and 3 (Studies 3a and 3b)

Name of construct	Reliability of scale	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3
Altruism	.84, .83	.175**	.235***	
Moral Outrage	.93, .88	.636***	.172**	
Self-Esteem	.84, .81, .83	.083	-.042	.126
Aggressiveness	.74, .88	.049		.016
Extraversion (Big 5)	.83	.117*		
Openness to Experience (Big 5)	.76	.197***		
Conscientiousness (Big 5)	.74	.031		
Agreeableness (Big 5)	.72	.059		
Neuroticism (Big 5)	.74	.066		
Social Desirability	.72, .65 <sup>a</sup>	.013		.167*
Personal Implication	.84		.366***	
Political Conservatism	NA, .77		-.139*	-.104
Impulsive Nonconformity	.86			.129
Social Belongingness (SB)	.91			.140
SB – Acceptance	.84			.196**
SB – Intimacy	.89			.076
Empathy	.79			.089
Interdependent Self-Construal	.67			.098
Independent Self-Construal	.60			.179*
Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)	.88			-.172*
SDO – Group-Based	.84			-.223**
SDO – Opposition to Equality	.84			-.071
Social Responsibility	.70			.298***
Instrumentality/Masculinity	.73			.204**
Expressivity/Femininity	.74			.210**
Novelty Seeking (TCI)	.57			-.075
Persistence (TCI)	.70			.176*
Harm Avoidance (TCI)	.80			-.171*
Reward Dependence (TCI)	.76			.080
Self-Directedness (TCI)	.74			.237**
Cooperativeness (TCI)	.77			.121
Self-Transcendence (TCI)	.87			.093
Locus of Control – Internal	.48			.077
Locus of Control – Powerful Others	.74			-.115
Locus of Control – Chance	.67			-.062
Emotion Regulation – Cognitive Reappraisal	.86			.172*
Emotion Regulation – Expressive Suppression	.83			.097
Demographic information				
Age		-.001	.089	.163**
Gender		.149*	-.010	.004
Size of town (childhood)				.074
Size of town (current)				.054
Occupation <sup>b</sup>				.129**
Educational Level				.008
Monthly Salary				.131*

Notes. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup>The reliability of the scale was computed using Kuder–Richardson reliability coefficient KR-20, a special case of Cronbach's alpha for binary variables.

<sup>b</sup>Because occupation is a categorical variable with three levels, the reported coefficient is partial eta, a measure of effect size computed from the  $F$ -value and its degrees of freedom.



$r(289) = .20, p < .001$ , a finding we had not anticipated. Participants' social control scores were unrelated to the remaining three dimensions of the Big Five, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism, all  $r$ 's  $< .07$ , all  $p$ 's  $> .26$ .

Social control was also unrelated to *social desirability*, people's tendency to respond in a socially desirable way,  $r(289) = .01, p = .83$ . Not surprisingly, then, the relationships between social control and the personality traits of interest remained virtually identical when social desirability was statistically controlled for, partial  $r$ 's = .18 (altruism), .64 (moral outrage), and .12 (extraversion).

We conducted a backward regression analysis in which we included all 'true' individual differences, that is, all constructs except moral outrage. The final model retained two significant predictors, *altruism* and *openness to experience* ( $p$ 's  $< .05$ ).

Taken together, the findings provided support for the well-adjusted leader hypothesis, but not for the bitter complainer hypothesis.

## STUDY 2

Study 2 had multiple purposes. First, we wanted to see whether the main results from Study 1 would replicate in another study. Like before, we predicted that the individuals' tendency to confront perpetrators of uncivil behaviours would be related to altruism and moral outrage. Despite the null results in Study 1, we continued to be interested in whether low self-esteem might be related to social control.

Second, we wanted to test our hypotheses with a different presentation method of the uncivil behaviours. In Study 1, participants saw short video clips of an actor engaging in an uncivil behaviour. In Study 2, participants saw a picture and read a vignette describing the uncivil behaviours. The vignette made it more explicit that the behaviour in question was actually an incivility.

Third, we wanted to examine our main hypotheses with a different population and with different uncivil behaviours. Study 1 took place in Austria, whereas Study 2 took place in France. Five of the six uncivil behaviours we used in Study 1 were different from those we asked participants about in Study 2. We implemented these changes to examine the generalizability of our effects.

Fourth, we wanted to examine another individual difference implicated by the well-adjusted leader hypothesis: *Personal implication* refers to the bystander's feeling that the uncivil or immoral behaviour affects them personally. Personal implication has been shown to be a situational determinant of social control: If bystanders feel that uncivil behaviour A personally affects them more than behaviour B, then they will intervene more when witnessing behaviour A rather than behaviour B (Brauer & Chekroun, 2005). We expected that personal implication as an individual difference would play a similar role.

## Method

### Participants

In total, 322 participants took part in Study 2. One hundred and ninety-seven students participated in Study 2 in exchange for partial course credit at a French public university. Among them were 177 women and 17 men (3 unreported), and the average age was  $M = 19.21$  ( $SD = 1.88$ ). The students filled out the questionnaire in large groups during one of the discussion sessions of their Psychology Introduction course. An additional 125 individuals volunteered to participate in the study after having been approached by a

female experimenter in the waiting room of a public administration building in a medium-sized city in France. The experimenter asked them whether they would be willing to fill out a short questionnaire on 'social behaviour'. Approximately 85% of the approached individuals agreed to participate in the study, and among them were 77 women and 43 men (5 unreported) with an average age of  $M = 33.10$  ( $SD = 12.16$ ).

### **Material**

All participants filled out two questionnaires. The first questionnaire contained several scales measuring individual differences. *Self-esteem* and *altruism* were assessed with the same scales as in Study 1 (Rosenberg, 1965; Rushton *et al.*, 1981). We included one item measuring *political conservatism* because Graham *et al.*'s (2011) research suggests that conservatives are less concerned about harm and fairness, two moral foundations that are violated by most uncivil behaviours. Participants also indicated their age and their gender. There were two additional items that we included for exploratory purposes (see Supporting Information).

The second questionnaire allowed us to measure moral outrage and personal implication, as well as participants' tendency to confront the perpetrator of two specific uncivil behaviours. The questionnaire started out with a picture of the first uncivil behaviour (e.g., someone throwing used batteries in a flowerpot in a pedestrian area). Next to the picture, there was a short vignette describing the situation. The vignette emphasized that participants were to imagine that they observed this behaviour in a residential neighbourhood, that there were only two individuals present in the situation (the person on the picture and them), and that the 'perpetrator' had not noticed their presence. The vignette also contained a short description of the uncivil behaviour and what happened just before and just after the moment the picture was taken.

Participants were first asked about their psychological reactions to the uncivil behaviour. We measured *personal implication* with three items (e.g., 'To what extent do you personally suffer the consequences of this behaviour?'). *Moral outrage* was also assessed with three items. We asked participants to what extent they would feel anger, disdain, and shame, respectively, when witnessing the behaviour under consideration (Nugier, Niedenthal, Brauer, & Chekroun, 2007). Participants made their responses on 9-point scales with endpoints labelled 1 = 'not at all' and 9 = 'very much so'.

Finally, we asked participants how they would react in this situation. We used a 6-point response scale with the following labels: 0 = 'You don't do anything and keep walking', 1 = 'while you and the person look at each other, you give him an angry look', 2 = 'you make an audible sigh, loud enough so that the person can hear it', 3 = 'you tell the person politely that his behaviour is unacceptable', 4 = 'you tell the person aggressively that he can't do that', and 5 = 'you insult the person'. Unlike in Study 1, participants were instructed to choose one answer (their most likely reaction). After participants had responded to all items about the first uncivil behaviour, they did exactly the same thing for the second uncivil behaviour: They saw a picture and a short description of the uncivil behaviour, then responded to the six items measuring personal implication and moral outrage, and finally indicated their likely reaction on the 6-point social control scale.

The uncivil behaviours were not the same for all participants. The student participants were asked about someone drawing a graffiti on a building in the streets and someone throwing batteries in a flowerpot in a pedestrian area. The non-student participants indicated their reactions to a person throwing a Kleenex on the sidewalk right next to a trash can and to a person emptying the cigarette butts of his car ashtray on a sidewalk in a

residential neighbourhood. In all cases, the ‘perpetrator’ on the picture was a young man who appeared to be approximately 25 years old and who was dressed in neutral clothes.

### **Procedure**

The student participants filled out the first questionnaire at the beginning of the academic year and filled out the second questionnaire 2 months later. No link was ever established between the questionnaires, and the students probably thought that they belonged to two separate studies. Participants wrote their student identification number on both questionnaires, and these were used to combine the data from the first and the second questionnaire. The non-student participants who were recruited in the waiting room of a public administration building received a single package that contained both questionnaires. No explanation was given for why there were two questionnaires. All participants were fully debriefed.<sup>2</sup>

### **Results and Discussion**

All scales had satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach’s alphas > .70; see Table 1). Because the 6-point social control scale does not constitute an interval scale, and also to be consistent with prior research (Chaurand & Brauer, 2008), we dichotomized the scale: All responses 0 were considered ‘no social control’ (coded 0), and all responses 1 and higher were considered ‘social control’ (coded 1). As such, a response is coded as social control when the participant expresses his or her disapproval in any form, verbally or non-verbally. On average, 39% of the participants indicated that they would exert social control and express their disapproval to the perpetrator (17% graffiti, 37% batteries, 44% Kleenex, and 57% ashtray). Additional analyses revealed that the relationships between the independent and dependent variables were not affected by the particular uncivil behaviour under consideration. We therefore averaged participants’ responses to the two uncivil behaviours and created one personal implication score, one moral outrage score, and one social control score for each participant (in addition to the individual difference measures assessed in the first questionnaire).

Like in Study 1, we computed correlations between social control and the individual difference variables. However, because social control rates were higher among participants who saw the uncivil behaviours ‘Kleenex’ and ‘ashtray’ than among participants who saw ‘graffiti’ and ‘batteries’, we computed partial correlations, statistically controlling for stimulus material. The correlation coefficients are reported in Table 1. *Altruism* was reliably related to social control,  $r(279) = .24, p < .001$ . The more altruistic individuals were, the more they indicated that they would express their disapproval to the ‘perpetrator’. Like in Study 1, *self-esteem* was not significantly related to people’s tendency to exert social control,  $r(272) = -.04, p = .49$ . There was also a reliable effect of *political conservatism*,  $r(238) = -.14, p < .05$ . The more conservative respondents rated themselves, the less likely they were to exert social control. *Moral outrage* was related to participants’ social control responses,  $r(318) = .17, p < .001$ . The more intensely participants experienced negative emotions, the more they said they

<sup>2</sup> There were numerous missing values in the data file. In the student sample, there were 40 individuals for whom we could not establish the link between the two questionnaires (and these individuals thus have missing values on all questionnaire 1 variables). Among the remaining 282 participants, 41 did not fill out the item measuring political liberalism. Discrepancies in degrees of freedom between the analyses reported in the article are due to missing values.

would react to the uncivil behaviour. Finally, participants' *personal implication* reliably predicted their social control reactions,  $r(319) = .37, p < .001$ . The more participants felt personally implicated by the uncivil behaviour, the more they said they would express their disapproval. Note that moral outrage and personal implication are specific to the stimuli we presented, which is likely to be the reason for why they correlate so highly with self-reported social control.

We conducted a backward regression analysis in which we included all three 'true' individual differences, that is, altruism, self-esteem, and political conservatism (statistically controlling for stimulus material). There was only one significant predictor in the final model, *altruism* ( $p < .001$ ).

Like Study 1, Study 2 provides evidence for the well-adjusted leader hypothesis and no support for the bitter complainer hypothesis.

## STUDIES 3A AND 3B

Studies 3a and 3b extend the previous studies in two important ways. First, we wanted to examine a larger array of individual difference variables. According to the well-adjusted leader hypothesis, one would expect the following constructs to be related to a person's tendency to 'speak up': the feeling of being well-accepted by one's peers (social capital); an independent self-construal and instrumentality (lack of hesitation to openly express that one sees things differently); being socially responsible (similar to altruism); persistence and self-directedness (characteristics of leaders who 'get things done'); emotion regulation (a skill that allows leaders to effectively influence others); the belief that oneself, rather than powerful others or chance control one's outcomes (the belief that one can influence the occurrence of uncivil and immoral behaviour in one's social environment); and high social status (being older, having a more prestigious occupation, having a greater salary).

According to the bitter complainer hypothesis, one would expect the following constructs to be related to a person's tendency to 'speak up': lack of social acceptance (depleted social resources), high social dominance orientation (the belief that society is hierarchically structured and one can move up in the hierarchy by 'putting down' others), low self-esteem (see Studies 1 and 2), high aggressiveness ('speaking up' as an indirect form of interpersonal hostility), impulsive nonconformity, and poor emotion regulation skills (openly disapproving of others as an indicator of a dysfunctional, poorly adjusted personality). We also included an empathy scale, because prior research on this construct yielded contradictory predictions (see Introduction). Finally, we measured participants' social desirability (to examine whether the correlations persisted if social desirability was statistically controlled for) and political conservatism (because the exploratory item included in Study 2 suggested that politically conservative individuals are less likely to speak up; see also Van Lange, Bekkers, Chirumbolo, & Leone, 2012).

## Method

### Participants

Five hundred adults (172 men, 295 women, 33 unidentified, mean age = 24.28, age range: 16–64 years) voluntarily took part in the studies that were conducted online. Half of the participants were recruited on campus. Another half of participants answered to flyers distributed in the city centre and to ads in the local newspaper. The studies were

conducted in a medium-sized French city. Participants had the chance to win 50 euros for their participation. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the two questionnaires (see below).

### **Material**

We located scales that measure our constructs of interest. When there were multiple scales, we chose the more established scale and/or the one that had been validated in the French language. When the constructs of interest were part of a larger scale, we included the entire scale. For example, although we only had hypotheses for instrumentality we included the entire *Personal Attributes Questionnaire* that assesses both instrumentality and expressivity (see below).

Pilot tests revealed that it took some participants up to 2 hr to fill in the initial version of the questionnaire. We decided that 2 hr was too long and split the questionnaire in half. Each participant thus completed only half of the personality scales, but provided answers to all of the uncivil and immoral items and the demographic questions. As explained in more detail below, the first questionnaire consisted of scales measuring impulsive nonconformity, relatedness feelings, empathy, self-construal, social dominance orientation, social responsibility, politic orientation, and aggressiveness (Study 3a). The second questionnaire contained scales assessing personal attributes, social desirability, self-esteem, temperament and character, locus of control, and emotion regulation (Study 3b). Participants responded to all items on 7-point response scales labelled 1 = 'Don't agree at all' and 7 = 'Agree entirely'.

### **The questionnaire in Study 3a**

This questionnaire contained eight scales (see Table 1 for Cronbach's alphas). Chapman *et al.*'s (1984) *Impulsive Nonconformity Scale* (51 items) measures respondents' failure to internalize social norms and their tendency to react instantly to internal or external stimuli. The *Social Belongingness Scale* (Richer & Vallerand, 1998) assesses respondents' perceived closeness to their social environment with two subscales, *Acceptance* and *Intimacy* (five items per subscale). Empathy was assessed with the 15-item Empathy Subscale of *Eysenck's I-7 Questionnaire* developed by Eysenck, Pearson, Easting, and Allsopp (1985). To measure participants' self-construal, we used the *Self-Construal Scale* developed by Singelis (1994); two subscales with 12 items each measure respondents' *Independent* and *Interdependent Self-Construal*. *Social Dominance Orientation* was assessed with the *SDO Scale* developed by Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin (2006). This scale consists of two subscales that assess *Group-Based Social Dominance* (eight items) and *Opposition to Inequality* (eight items). We also included Berkowitz and Lutterman's (1968) *Social Responsibility Scale* comprising 21 items and measured *political conservatism* with four items. The *Aggression Questionnaire* (Buss & Perry, 1992) measures four aggression-related dimensions, each of which is assessed through one subscale: *Verbal Aggression*, *Physical Aggression*, *Anger*, and *Hostility*.

Besides these personality scales, the questionnaire consisted of a short description of 26 uncivil, discriminatory, and immoral behaviours. Participants were asked to imagine themselves being the only bystander of each of the behaviours. They were told that unless otherwise indicated, the perpetrator of the behaviour was a young, ordinary-looking man who was by himself and did not notice their presence. Participants were asked to rate the likelihood that they would intervene and express their disapproval, in one way or another,



to the perpetrator of each of the 26 behaviours. They responded on 7-point scales labelled 1 = 'Definitely not', 2 = 'Probably not', 3 = 'Maybe not', 4 = 'I don't know', 5 = 'Maybe yes', 6 = 'Probably yes', and 7 = 'Definitely yes'. Some of the behaviours were relatively minor transgressions such as 'A person leaves his dog's droppings on the sidewalk and walks away without picking it up' and 'You are in the library. You observe a person tearing out a page from a book that belongs to the library'. Other behaviours included violence or blatant acts of racism. Sample items include 'At the zoo, a big, tall man violently hits his 3-year-old son in the face' and 'You are in a train compartment. Four teenagers make jokes about homosexuals and handicapped people'.

The final part of the questionnaire assessed the following demographic information: gender, age, participant nationality, mother's nationality, father's nationality, size of the town the participant grew up in, size of the town the participant currently lived in, occupation, civil status, highest educational degree, and net monthly income.

### **The questionnaire in Study 3b**

This questionnaire contained six scales. We used the 24-bipolar item *Personal Attributes Questionnaire*, developed by Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1974), to assess two constructs of interest: Instrumentality and *Expressivity*. The items take the form of opposite characteristics, and participants are asked to locate themselves at some point in-between these extremes using a 7-point response scale. Both constructs are measured with eight items each, and the remaining eight items are filler items. The Short Form of the *Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale* developed by Reynolds (1982) measures social desirability with 13 True/False items. Like in previous studies, we also included the 10-item *Self-Esteem Scale* (Rosenberg, 1965). To assess a variety of individual characteristics, we used the *Temperament and Character Inventory* (56 items) created by Cloninger, Svrakic, and Przybeck (1993). This instrument allows researchers to measure four dimensions of temperament – *Novelty Seeking*, *Persistence*, *Harm Avoidance*, and *Reward Dependence* – and three dimensions of character – *Self-Directedness*, *Cooperativeness*, and *Self-Transcendence*. *Locus of Control* was assessed with Levenson's scale (1974) which has three subscales that measure *Internal Locus of Control* (eight items); *External Locus of Control – Powerful Others* (eight items); and *External Locus of Control – Chance* (eight items). The *Emotion Regulation Questionnaire* was developed by Gross and John (2003). It assesses people's tendency to use two strategies to regulate both negative and positive emotions: *Cognitive Reappraisal* (six items) and *Expressive Suppression* (four items).

Like the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire also contained the 26 uncivil, discriminatory, and immoral behaviours, and the demographic questions (see the previous section for a detailed description of these items).

### **Procedure**

Participants completed the questionnaire online. They were told that it would take them about 40 min to answer all questions. An informed consent form was presented to them, and they were aware that by clicking 'OK', they would give their consent to participate in the study.

Both questionnaires were structured in the same way. The first part contained the personality scales, the second part the social control items, and the third part the demographic information. The order of the items and the order of the scales were the



same for all participants. The order of the items within a given scale was the same as the order of the items in the original scale. The order of the personality scales in the questionnaire was the one in which we described the scales above.

## Results and Discussion

The data from the two questionnaires were combined into a single data set. As previously mentioned, all participants completed the social control items and demographic questions, but any given personality scale was completed by only half of the participants. We excluded participants who were not French themselves or who had one or more parents with a foreign nationality, yielding a final  $N$  of 390 participants. In most cases, the exclusion of these participants did not alter the results. Differences in degrees of freedom from one analysis to the next are due to missing values.

We averaged the 26 behaviour items to form a social control score (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .92$ ). We then examined our hypotheses by computing the bivariate correlations between the personality scales and the social control score. The results that most directly test our two hypotheses are reported in the last column of Table 1: *Participants with higher overall intervention scores tended to score high on acceptance, independent self-construal, social responsibility, instrumentality, expressivity, social desirability, persistence, self-directedness, and cognitive reappraisal as an emotion regulation strategy. They also tended to score low on social dominance orientation and harm avoidance, tended to be older, and generally had higher salaries.* The social control score was unrelated to empathy, interdependent self-construal, aggressiveness, self-esteem, locus of control, gender, and all demographic information except age, occupation, and monthly salary.

Overall, the results are *inconsistent with the bitter complainer hypothesis*: People's self-reported tendency to confront the perpetrator of an uncivil/immoral behaviour was unrelated to their level of aggressiveness. Neither the total aggressiveness scale nor any of the four subscales – physical aggressiveness, verbal aggressiveness, anger, and hostility – were related to the social control score, all  $p$ 's  $> .09$  (see Table 1). Speaking up against uncivil/immoral behaviours also does not appear to be a means to boost one's low self-esteem, as indicated by the non-significant correlations between self-esteem and social control. There was a marginally positive correlation between self-esteem and social control,  $r(192) = .13, p = .08$ , suggesting that high, rather than low, self-esteem may be related to one's tendency to intervene. The positive correlations of the social control score with age,  $r(379) = .16, p < .001$ , monthly salary,  $r(331) = .13, p < .02$ , and occupation,  $\eta_p = .12, p < .01$ , are also inconsistent with the idea that having a tendency to intervene is characteristic of individuals with low self-esteem.

The data are *highly consistent with the well-adjusted leader hypothesis*: Individuals who intervene when witnessing an uncivil/immoral behaviour are generally those who vote in national elections, can be relied upon, and do not cheat with their taxes, as evidenced by very high correlations between the social control score and the 'social responsibility' scale. They also seem to be well-balanced: They feel understood, respected, and trusted by their colleagues and fellow students (see the positive correlation with 'acceptance'); they try harder, push themselves more, and give up less quickly than their peers (see the positive correlation with 'persistence'); they solve their own problems, decide what has to be done, and do not feel controlled by others (see the positive correlation with 'self-directedness'); and they are independent, active, competitive, self-confident, and persistent, and they make decisions easily and stay calm under

pressure (see the positive correlation with ‘instrumentality’). Above all, they know how to regulate their emotions, as evidenced by high correlations between the social control score and the cognitive reappraisal subscale. Given this last finding, one might even speculate that certain individuals speak up and express their opposition as a means to regulate their emotions: They witness an uncivil or immoral behaviour, they feel bad about it, and intervening causes them to reduce the negative emotions they are experiencing (see also Brandstätter, Jonas, Koletzko, & Fischer, 2016).

Like in Studies 1 and 2, we conducted backward regression analyses to determine the relative importance of predictors. In Study 3a, *social responsibility*, *independent self-construal*, and *social dominance orientation (group-based)* were significant predictors (all  $p$ 's < .04). In Study 3b, *self-directedness (TCI)*, *expressivity/femininity*, and *emotion regulation (cognitive reappraisal)* were retained as significant predictors of social control (all  $p$ 's < .02).

Because bystander intervention to instances of prejudice and discrimination has been studied extensively in the social psychological literature (Czopp, Monteith, & Mark, 2006), we computed three separate social control scores, one for minor norm transgressions (= uncivil behaviours, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .89$ ), one for major norm transgressions (= immoral behaviours, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .74$ ), and one for blatant acts of prejudice (= discriminatory behaviours, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .72$ ). According to the self-reports, participants who confront prejudice are also more likely to speak up when they witness uncivil behaviours,  $r(382) = .58, p < .0001$ , and (prejudice-unrelated) immoral behaviours,  $r(382) = .75, p < .0001$ . The correlation between the latter two scores was  $r(382) = .58, p < .0001$ . It appears that someone's tendency to confront prejudice is one aspect of a larger individual difference: his/her tendency to speak up when witnessing all sorts of uncivil and immoral behaviours. We present the correlations between each of the three social control scores and the individual differences in the Supporting Information.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

In the current study, we examined the relationships between a variety of individual difference measures and people's self-reported tendency to confront the perpetrators of uncivil or immoral behaviours. We tested two theoretically plausible hypotheses, the ‘bitter complainer hypothesis’ and the ‘well-adjusted leader hypothesis’. The results provided support for the latter but not for the former hypothesis. Individuals who confront perpetrators of uncivil and immoral behaviours tend to score high on altruism and social responsibility. As bystanders, they feel morally outraged and personally implicated. They are extraverted, are well accepted by their peers, and effectively regulate their emotions. They also tend to score high on independent self-construal, instrumentality, expressivity, persistence, and self-directedness and generally score low on social dominance orientation and harm avoidance. Our results show that people's self-reported tendency to intervene is unrelated to empathy, interdependent self-construal, aggressiveness, self-esteem, locus of control, gender, and all other demographic variables. Individuals who exert social control are thus more likely to be well-adjusted leaders who use their psychological resources and social capital to enforce social norms, rather than bitter complainers who vent their frustrations by verbally aggressing others.

Despite its theoretical plausibility, the bitter complainer hypothesis received no empirical support. Aggressiveness was consistently unrelated to self-reported social control. So was neuroticism in Study 1. The bitter complainer hypothesis predicts a

correlation with low self-esteem, but we failed to find such a relationship in three separate studies. If anything, the correlations were consistently positive and one was even marginally significant. This latter result is consistent with recent research showing that high-self-esteem individuals are more likely to speak up in a constructive/challenging way in a work team (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998) and defend the victims of bullying (Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Kaistaniemi, & Lagerspetz, 1999). Those who speak up and confront perpetrators of uncivil and immoral behaviours are not dysfunctional, aggressive individuals. Quite the contrary, they are individuals who care about others, have much social capital, and feel outraged by behaviours that threaten social harmony.

Our findings are consistent with earlier work on 'speaking up' and confronting norm transgressors. Bystanders who feel personally responsible to do something about the norm transgression are more likely to speak up (Brauer & Chekroun, 2005). Recent research by Fonseca, Brauer, Moiscu, and Nugier (2013) showed that individuals with depleted cognitive resources react ineffectively to others' norm transgressions. Our findings echo those of Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) who describe 'whistle-blowers' as employees who are satisfied and valued members of organizations, have the role responsibility to report wrongdoing, are older and better educated, and tend to be better paid (see also Bjørkelo, Einarsen, & Matthiesen, 2010).

Studies 3a and 3b also show that people's tendency to confront the perpetrators of discrimination and acts of racism is highly correlated with their tendency to speak up against other immoral and uncivil behaviours. Those who openly disapprove of transgressors of traffic laws (e.g., parking on sidewalk, reckless driving), hygiene-related norms (e.g., canine defecation, urinating in street), and widely shared efforts to protect the environment (e.g., batteries in trash, recycling) are also the ones who intervene when witnessing discrimination. It appears, then, that the research on 'confronting prejudice' examines a particular aspect of a more general phenomenon: people's tendency to intervene when witnessing uncivil and immoral behaviours. If bystanders of discriminatory behaviour take into account the costs and benefits before intervening, as suggested by Ashburn-Nardo, Blanchar, Petersson, Morris, and Goodwin (2014), then it is not surprising that those with more psychological, social, and material resources (i.e., well-adjusted leaders) are more likely to confront perpetrators of discriminatory (and other uncivil/immoral) behaviours. According to Rattan and Dweck (2010), individuals who believe that people can change (incremental theorists) are more likely to confront prejudice than individuals who believe that people have fixed traits (entity theorists). Based on the findings presented in this study, one might hypothesize that those with an incremental theory of personality will be more likely to confront all sorts of uncivil and immoral behaviours, not just prejudice.

We found no relationship between empathy as a personality trait and people's tendency to intervene when witnessing uncivil or immoral behaviour. This null result was not predicted, but it is consistent with Greitemeyer *et al.* (2006) who showed that felt empathy plays a role in helping in low-cost but not in high-cost situations. Likewise, Baumert *et al.* (2013) and Niesta Kayser, Greitemeyer, Fischer, and Frey (2010) found that empathy was not reliably associated with helping in high-cost situations, whereas the experience of anger has been identified as a significant predictor (Halmburger, Baumert, & Schmitt, 2015). Speaking up against uncivil and immoral behaviours is not about helping someone who is suffering. It is about 'setting things straight' and enforcing social norms. And empathy as a personality trait does not seem to play an important role in this process (see also Weng *et al.*, 2015).

Our findings show that anger as a personality trait is not predictive of people's tendency to intervene (see the Anger Subscale of the Aggression scale in Study 3a). At first sight, this result contrasts with the positive correlation between moral outrage and self-reported social control. After all, anger was one of the emotions we asked participants about when assessing their moral outrage. We suggest that these results are not contradictory. Anger as a trait, that is, being chronically angered, does not help individuals build the social capital that is needed to enforce social norms. However, anger as a state, that is, having a strong negative reaction to a person who commits an uncivil or immoral behaviour, contributes to a bystander's capacity to overcome inertia and to confront the perpetrator (Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012). Anger as a state has been shown to be an approach-related affect that helps individuals take action to address a perceived injustice (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009).

Somewhat surprisingly, we found a rather strong correlation between *openness to experience* and social control in Study 1. Openness to experience is one of the dimensions of the Big Five. It describes individuals who show general appreciation for art and science, are interested in learning and exploring, are curious, and can have unusual ideas. Being creative and insightful, individuals high in openness to experience tend to score high on transformational leadership (Judge & Bono, 2000). It is noteworthy that Baumert *et al.* (2013; Study 1) found a similar correlation between openness to experience and participants' self-reported reactions when witnessing a cell phone theft. We have a hard time interpreting this relationship that may well be a type I error. One possible explanation is that it is a spurious relationship caused by political liberalism (see Studies 2 and 3a). Indeed, previous research conducted by Gosling, Rentfrow, and Swann (2003) shows that political liberalism positively correlates with openness to experience.

As already mentioned in the introduction, one major limitation of the present research is the use of self-reports. We attempted to use common norm transgressions, hoping that respondents had experienced similar situations before and were able to base their predicted likely reaction on their experience with how they had reacted to the same behaviour in the past. But nevertheless, one may wonder whether our results generalize to actual reactions in daily life (Kawakami *et al.*, 2009). Future studies may benefit from the inclusion of behavioural measures of people's actual reactions to norm transgressions. It would also be insightful to examine whether individuals are accurate in their predictions regarding the reactions they would have when witnessing real uncivil and immoral behaviours.

Our findings underline the importance of individual differences that guide people's reactions to inappropriate behaviours. Confronting norm transgressors is crucial when their behaviour has serious consequences, such as in airline crews (Bienefeld & Grote, 2012), medical operation teams (Okuyama, Wagner, & Bijnen, 2014), or when deviant individuals threaten or harm an innocent victim (Greitemeyer *et al.*, 2006). The tendency to openly express disapproval to norm transgressors has been linked to the perpetuation (Gibbs, 1981) and change (Nolan, 2013; Paluck, 2011) of social norms. Given that social norms approaches have been proven to be highly successful in promoting desirable and prosocial behaviours (Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Griskevicius, 2007), social control belongs to the essential toolkit of every researcher designing social interventions. Whether the goal is peer-to-peer positive influence or to simply make salient that those who fail to adopt the desirable behaviours might become the target of disapproval reactions, it is essential to know who is more likely to speak up. Our research shows that well-adjusted leaders with more psychological resources and social capital are most likely to confront perpetrators of uncivil and immoral behaviours.

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### **Supporting Information**

The following supporting information may be found in the online edition of the article:

**Appendix S1.** Study 1.

**Appendix S2.** Study 2.

**Appendix S3.** Studies 3a and 3b.