What Determines Social Control?
People's Reactions to Counternormative Behaviors in Urban Environments[1]

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Social control refers to any reaction by which a bystander communicates to the "perpetrator" of an uncivil behavior that his or her action is not acceptable. In 3 field studies, we examined the factors that affect people's tendency to exert social control. Passersby in the streets were asked how they would react were they to witness different uncivil behaviors. They also rated their appraisal of the situation and the emotions they would feel. The results suggest that 3 factors are primary determinants of social control: the feeling of responsibility to exert it; the perceived legitimacy of social control in the situation; and the extent to which bystanders felt hostile emotions. These results have implications for how to reduce uncivil behaviors.

Littering, failing to clean up after one's dog, spitting on the sidewalk, urinating in public, playing loud music in the street, destroying public trashcans, aggressive begging, and parking on the sidewalk are all counternormative behaviors that occur in urban environments. Such behaviors are more and more often subsumed under the term *incivilities*, to imply that they have something to do with a lack of civility. Unlike delinquent acts, uncivil behaviors are neither serious nor dangerous enough to retain the police's attention and to be the target of systematic repression (e.g., fines, legal procedures). Yet, uncivil behaviors cause negative affect in those who suffer the consequences. Recent research has shown that urban dwellers consider uncivil behaviors to be the most important urban stressors (Robin, Matheau-Police, & Couty, 2007). Uncivil behaviors, therefore, decrease the quality of life in urban environments. Incivilities are reported frequently in the media, and politicians often outline in their campaign speeches what they would do to reduce uncivil behaviors.

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In the present research, we examine witnesses' reactions to uncivil acts. Indeed, given that most of these behaviors occur in public places, perpetrators of uncivil behaviors are often observed by others. These bystanders, then, have the option of expressing their disapproval to the perpetrator of the uncivil behavior, a reaction that has been termed *social control* (Gibbs, 1981). Brauer and Chekroun (2005; Chekroun & Brauer, 2002, 2004) have conducted a series of studies aimed at understanding people's psychological reactions to norm transgressions. This research has important theoretical and practical implications because it has been shown that social control plays a major role in the perpetuation of social norms (Davis, 1948). The frequency with which bystanders express their disapproval is, therefore, inversely related to the frequency with which others commit uncivil behaviors.

The purpose of the studies reported in this article is to identify the factors that causally affect people's tendency to exert social control. Why do some uncivil behaviors elicit, on average, more social control than others? And why are some individuals more likely to express their disapproval than are others? Given that there is virtually no prior empirical work on social control (for notable exceptions, see Dedrick, 1978; Kiesler, Kiesler, & Pallak, 1967; Kiesler, Zanna, & De Salvo, 1966; McKirnan, 1980), we necessarily had to proceed in a somewhat exploratory manner.

Here, we present a number of variables that—based on theoretical considerations and prior research on other social behaviors—might be related to social control. In generating these variables, we rely among others on the literature on helping behavior. Although helping and exerting social control are clearly different, they also share a number of common features: Both refer to people's reactions to an individual whom they generally do not know and whom they encounter in a public space. Before we present the potential predictors of social control, however, it is necessary to define some of the technical terms used in the present article.

Definitions

Deviance—and the management of deviance—has been an active area of research in the last couple decades (Heckert & Heckert, 2002; Matsueda, 1989; McKirnan, 1980). The most recent conceptualizations of deviance (Heckert & Heckert, 2002; Ogien, 1995; Osgood, Wilson, O'Malley, Bachman, & Johnson, 1996) have attempted to integrate older approaches (normative approach: Gibbs, 1981; reactive approach: Kitsuse, 1962) and have suggested a relatively general and encompassing definition. According to these conceptualizations and to Osgood et al., behaviors are considered *deviant* when they "are disapproved by conventional normative standards and . . . typically provoke attempts at social control if detected by figures of authority" (p. 636).

Ogien (1995) defined *deviant behaviors* as behaviors "the reparation of which is not decided in court houses [but that] disturb the public order and the social cohesion in a way that is just as threatening" (p. 17). Incivilities are a specific type of deviant behaviors. *Incivilities* are generally episodic and are neither very serious nor very dangerous. They transgress social norms related to community life, to the respect of others, or to the protection of public (and sometimes also private) property.

The common aspect of these definitions of deviance is that they all refer to overt disapproval reactions by the environment. An increasing number of researchers refer to these disapproval reactions as *social control* (Black, 1983; Cochran, 1974; Raven, 1999). Some researchers discuss *informal social control* in order to distinguish the disapproval reactions from more institutionalized forms of social control (e.g., fines, imprisonment). Gibbs (1981) conceptualized *(informal) social control* as any kind of disapproval reaction coming from a witness of a counternormative behavior and directed toward the person performing this behavior.

In our own work, therefore, we include relatively benign manifestations of disapproval in social control: Even a verbal comment to the perpetrator of the uncivil behavior, said in a nonaggressive manner and with a smile, is considered social control. While many research projects conducted by sociologists have dealt with formal social control, exerted by representatives of official institutions (e.g., guards, police officers; see Brewer, Lockhart, & Rodgers, 1998), research in social psychology focuses mostly on informal social control performed by bystanders in the streets or by group members; that is, by average individuals who have no official supervisory function.

Appraisal of Uncivil Behavior

What variables predict people's tendency to exert social control? Prior research on social behavior has suggested that variables related to bystanders' appraisal of the situation and of the uncivil behavior should be a major determinant of social control.

The sociological literature often emphasizes the degree of deviance (or degree of counternormativeness) of the uncivil behavior. Presumably, the more deviant a behavior, the greater the likelihood that it will be sanctioned by social control (Mudd, 1972). Our own theoretical analysis and empirical studies cast doubt on the central role of degree of deviance. First, if anything, we would predict a curvilinear relationship: Social control should increase with the degree of deviance, but only up to a certain point, because very deviant behaviors induce fear (e.g., that the deviant is crazy or dangerous)

and decrease the probability of an overt disapproval reaction on the part of the bystander. Second, our past work has shown no relationship between degree of deviance and social control (Brauer & Chekroun, 2005). Given the theoretical importance of deviance, we nevertheless include a measure of perceived degree of deviance in our studies.

Research in social psychology has suggested that the feeling of responsibility may be a major determinant of social control reactions. Moriarty (1975) already showed that people were more likely to stop the thief of a radio when they had been made responsible for the radio. A similar effect was shown by Howard and Crano (1974). Finally, our own work examined the impact of responsibility on the classic bystander effect in the realm of social control (Latané & Darley, 1968). When perceived responsibility is low, there is evidence for a bystander effect; that is, witnesses of uncivil behaviors are inhibited by the presence of others and are less likely to exert social control. When these witnesses feel, however, that it is their responsibility to exert social control, the bystander effect disappears (Chekroun & Brauer, 2004; see also Cramer, McMaster, Bartell, & Dragna, 1988).

Another important variable identified by past research is perceived personal implication (Brauer & Chekroun, 2005). The more bystanders have the impression that they suffer, personally, the consequences of the uncivil behavior, the more likely they are to express their disapproval. A closely related concept is that of self-interest. According to Miller and his colleagues (Holmes, Miller, & Lerner, 2002; Miller & Ratner, 1998; Ratner & Miller, 2001), there is a norm of self-interest in most Western societies. This norm prescribes that we should not commit behaviors unless they serve some personal interest. In agreement with this hypothesis, it has been shown that people donate more money to social causes if they receive a small gift in return (e.g., postcards, balloon), even if the gift is not very desirable to them. Applied to social control, these findings suggest that bystanders will sanction the perpetrator of an uncivil behavior only if they can justify their reaction, to themselves and to others, as serving their personal interest.

There are two other variables that are likely to play a role in social control reactions: perceived importance of the norm, and the ambiguity of the situation. Norms—or, more precisely, the valued outcomes that a norm is designed to safeguard—vary in their importance across individuals. One individual may attach greater importance to the protection of the environment (e.g., toxic waste, littering in national parks), while another individual may care more about public hygiene (e.g., urination in public places, failure to pick up after one's dog, spitting). It is quite likely that the importance attached to the norm being transgressed determines, at least to some extent, a bystander's reaction. Numerous studies of helping behavior have illustrated the effect of ambiguity on people's willingness to intervene in social situations: People are

hesitant to help when there is a doubt about whether the situation really constitutes an emergency (Latané & Darley, 1968; Latané & Rodin, 1969). Ambiguity is likely to play a similar role in social control behavior. If, for example, a person puts a car battery on the sidewalk and walks away, she may simply be going to her house to wash her hands and will pick up the battery several minutes later. In such an ambiguous situation, most of us may be hesitant to exert social control.

A final set of two variables is likely to influence the social control reaction of bystanders: perceived positive consequences, and perceived negative consequences. As with helping behavior, people may commit a cost–benefit analysis when they consider whether they should exert social control (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Anderson, 2003; Loewenstein, Weber, Hsee, & Welch, 2001; Piliavin, Piliavin, & Rodin, 1975). This cost–benefit analysis involves a comparison of the positive consequences (e.g., good mood, long-term cleanliness of the environment, the feeling of having contributed to the upholding of social norms) to the negative consequences (e.g., bad mood, lost time, possibility of an aggressive encounter). The more bystanders have the impression that the positive consequences of exerting social control outweigh the negative ones, the more likely they should be to show their disapproval to the perpetrator of the uncivil behavior.

Emotions

Emotional reactions are a powerful determinant of social behavior (Scherer, 2000). When bystanders enounter a bloodstained individual, the decision to help depends in part on their emotional reactions, whether they feel pity, disgust, or fear. Emotions are likely to play a similarly important role in social control. Exerting social control involves social risks, as it necessarily involves showing one's disapproval to another person, which may lead to an unpleasant interaction. It might be that a strong emotional reaction of a certain kind is a precondition for social control to occur.

It is likely that hostile emotions (e.g., anger, disdain) influence people's decision to exert social control. Anger has a physiological component that predisposes individuals to engage in approach behavior (Harmon-Jones, Vaughn-Scott, Mohr, Sigelman, & Harmon-Jones, 2004). This is particularly true if the uncivil act is seen as intended, negative, and unjust (Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002). Indeed, witnessing an uncivil behavior generates anger toward the deviant in the observer (Juvonen, 1991). It is possible, then, that the more someone experiences hostile emotions, the more he or she is predisposed to exert social control.

People's reactions to uncivil behaviors may also be influenced by moral emotions (e.g., embarrassment). According to Eisenberg (2000), individuals

are motivated to conform to social norms in order to avoid painful feelings of embarrassment, guilt, or shame. Recently, Chekroun and Nugier (2005) showed that self-reported moral emotions mediate the relationship between the group membership of the deviant individual (in-group vs. out-group member) and the social control reaction in an intergroup context. Deviant in-group members generate more moral emotions in bystanders than do deviant out-group members, and the more moral emotion a bystander experiences, the more likely he or she is to exert social control (see also Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988).

We also examine the importance of two other emotions. Some uncivil behaviors involve a lack of hygiene (e.g., failure to pick up after one's dog, public urination, spitting). It may be that people experience disgust and that it is this emotion that drives their social control reaction. Perhaps people exert social control more frequently to uncivil behaviors related to hygiene, and the reason for this is that they feel more disgust. Another emotion frequently cited in the context of social control is fear. Fear, however, may be a negative predictor of social control: The more people are afraid of the perpetrator of the uncivil behavior, the less they show their disapproval. After all, social control may generate an aggressive reaction in the deviant. This is especially likely when the uncivil behavior can be sanctioned by fines (e.g., graffiti, parking on the sidewalk) and the deviant wants to intimidate the bystander so that he or she does not alert the police. Also, one never knows whether the perpetrator of the uncivil behavior is not dangerous, armed, mentally deranged, temporarily unaccountable (e.g., drunk, on drugs), or trying to provoke his or her social environment. In the latter case, the deviant may simply be waiting for a bystander to show disapproval so that he or she can then verbally (or physically) aggress this bystander. Therefore, fear may be an inhibitor of social control.

The goal of the present research project is to examine the aforementioned potential determinants of social control. In Study 1, we establish a list of relevant uncivil behaviors and measure people's self-reports of their propensity to exert social control in each of the situations. In Studies 2, 3, and 4, we measure people's appraisals of the different behaviors, as well as the emotional reactions they would experience were they to witness them. Study 5 is an extension of the first two studies but here, we examine more closely people's reactions to one particular kind of problem in urban environments: failure to pick up after one's dog.

Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 is to determine the frequency with which bystanders exert social control toward the perpetrators of different kinds of

uncivil behaviors. Just as a different proportion of people help in different kinds of emergencies, we should observe marked differences in social control rate between different types of uncivil behaviors. People may show disapproval toward someone who parks his or her car on the sidewalk, but not toward someone who lets a store door swing closed in their face. In Studies 2, 3, and 4, we examine the origins of these differences. Is it because certain behaviors are more deviant than others? Or is it because certain behaviors violate norms that are more important to us than norms violated by other behaviors? But before we address these questions, we first must show that different types of uncivil behaviors differ in the extent to which naïve bystanders believe that they would react to them and exert social control.

Method

Pilot Study

In order to have a complete list of uncivil behaviors that people consider relevant and requiring social control, we conducted a pilot study in a medium-sized French city (i.e., Clermont-Ferrand). One of two female experimenters approached people in the streets ($N = 51$) and asked them to name spontaneously three "incivilities" to which they would react most strongly. The experimenter told participants that they could name an incivility even if they had never actually witnessed such a behavior. If participants had problems with the word "incivility" or did not have any ideas, the experimenter mentioned one uncivil behavior as an example.[3]

After having named three uncivil behaviors, participants were asked to rank-order them from the most shocking to the least shocking, and to indicate what reaction they would have if they were alone on an empty street with a person who committed this behavior. Participants indicated their responses to the latter question on a 7-point scale with the following options: 0 = *no reaction*; 1 = *angry look* (to the deviant); 2 = *loud audible sigh*; 3 = *alert a figure of authority*; 4 = *polite comment to the deviant*; 5 = *comment in an aggressive tone to the deviant*; or 6 = *personal insult in aggressive tone to the deviant*. This scale was adapted from Chekroun and Brauer (2002).

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[3]The experimenter randomly selected one example from a list of 15 uncivil behaviors. The list contained uncivil behaviors such as failure to pick up after one's dog, degradation of public property, graffiti, smoking in public places, or throwing trash on the ground. The respondents were free to include the example in the list of three uncivil behaviors to which they would react most strongly. No difference was found in the responses of people who were given an example and people who were not.

Table 1

Incivilities Mentioned by Pilot Study Participants

Incivility	Frequency	%	Social control rate (%)
Failure to pick up after one's dog	30	61	50
Littering	20	41	65
Illegally parked car	15	30	33
Graffiti	12	24	33
Aggressiveness toward others	11	22	64
Insults shouted at others	11	22	18
Violations of moving-traffic laws	9	18	56
Spitting, smoking in public places	6	12	50
Lack of politeness	6	12	33
Urination on walls	6	12	33
Destruction of public property	5	10	80
Cigarette butts on ground	4	8	50
Disposal of toxic waste	4	8	75
Begging	4	8	25
Loud noise in streets	3	6	33
Theft	2	4	100
Total	148		

The two independent judges grouped the 148 open responses regarding the types of uncivil behaviors into 16 relatively homogeneous categories (intercoder reliability = .98). There were between 2 and 30 responses in each category. The 16 categories of uncivil behaviors are shown in Table 1. Failure to pick up after one's dog, littering, and illegal parking were the incivilities that were mentioned by the most participants.

We also calculated an indicator of social control for which we considered all verbal signs of disapproval (Options 4, 5, and 6 on the 7-point scale) as *social control*, whereas we considered all other responses (Options 0, 1, 2, and 3) as *no social control*.[4] Note that this is a very strict definition of *social*

[4]We transformed social control into a categorical variable because it is unclear whether our response scale constitutes an interval scale. Is *loud audible sigh* necessarily a less strong reaction than *polite comment to the deviant*? All of the analyses reported in this article were conducted once with social control as a categorical variable, and once with social control as a continuous variable. In nearly all cases, the two types of analyses yielded the same results.

control, as nonverbal signs of disapproval (i.e., angry look, loud audible sigh) are considered as *no social control.* As can be seen in Table 1, most participants indicated that they would exert social control if they witnessed someone degrading public property (80%) or leaving behind toxic waste (75%). Many participants would also express their disapproval to someone who litters (65%) or who is aggressive toward other people (64%).

The purpose of the pilot study was to obtain an exhaustive list of relevant uncivil behaviors. Therefore, we decided to examine all 16 types of uncivil behaviors in Study 1.

Participants

Study participants were 100 individuals (64 female, 36 male) who agreed to participate. Their mean age was 35 years ($SD = 17$ years), and there were no participants under the age of 18. One of two female experimenters randomly approached passersby in the streets of a medium-sized French city (i.e., Clermont-Ferrand). She asked them if they would be willing to complete a questionnaire about incivilities. Approximately 400 individuals were approached, but three quarters of them refused to participate in the study.[5]

Procedure

After participants had given their consent to participate in the study, the experimenter asked them to imagine the following situation: They are walking in the city center, unaccompanied. After turning the corner of an empty street, they see another person, also unaccompanied. Obviously that person has not seen them. That person engages in one of the behaviors that would be described to them a moment later. How would the participants react?

The experimenter then read to participants 16 short scenarios that described a specific example of the 16 categories of deviant behaviors retained on the basis of the pilot study. Examples of the scenarios are "The person gets out of a car and empties the ashtray of his/her car on the ground" and "The person blows his/her nose and drops the Kleenex on the ground, 5 meters from a trashcan" (see Appendix for the full list of scenarios). Participants were asked to indicate how they would react in each of the 16 situations. They

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[5]Of course, we do not know if there is a link between someone's willingness to participate in a questionnaire study and his or her reaction to uncivil behaviors. However, the very high correlation between self-reports and people's actual social control reactions found by Brauer and Chekroun (2005; see Footnote 6) suggests that the link is moderate at best.

indicated their responses on the 7-point rating scale described earlier, ranging from 0 (*no reaction*) to 6 (*personal insult in aggressive tone to the deviant*). Finally, participants chose the three uncivil behaviors to which they would react most strongly, as well as the three uncivil behaviors most often encountered in their city.

We decided to rely on self-report measures of social control and did so for two reasons. First, prior research has shown that people are generally quite accurate in predicting their social control reactions (Chekroun, 2002). Brauer and Chekroun (2005), for example, found a correlation of .86 between self-reports based on vignettes and people's actual reactions to a confederate who engaged in the uncivil behavior.[6] Second, not all uncivil behaviors can be tested easily with a deviant confederate (e.g., urination on walls, failure to pick up after one's dog, refusal of right of way).

Results and Discussion

The different reactions to each of the 16 uncivil behaviors are reported in Table 2. As for the pilot study, we calculated a categorical indicator of social control (Options 4, 5, and 6 were considered *social control*, while all other responses were considered *no social control*). Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would exert social control for each of the 16 deviant behaviors. More than 60% of the participants indicated that they would verbally express their disapproval to an individual who disposes of a used car battery in the street, who parks on the sidewalk, or who fails to pick up after his or her dog. Other incivilities (e.g., car break-in, rude begging, loud music) generated considerably fewer social control reactions.

As predicted, there were substantial differences in social control between the different situations. The question is, then, what influences people's

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[6]Brauer and Chekroun's (2005) study involved 900 participants, whose reactions to one of five uncivil behaviors were examined. Half of the participants were in the *behavior condition*; that is, they saw a confederate engage in the uncivil behavior under consideration, and their spontaneous reactions were measured. The other half of participants were in the *questionnaire condition*; that is, the uncivil behavior was described to them, and they were asked to indicate how they would react. The data allowed us to determine the accuracy of participants' self-reports. Elevation accuracy was relatively high, but people overestimated the frequency with which they would exert social control. On average, the actual social control rate in the behavior condition was 70% of the self-reported social control rate in the questionnaire condition. Sensitivity accuracy, however, was very high ($r = .86$). There was near-perfect agreement between participants in the questionnaire condition and participants in the behavior condition as to which uncivil behaviors would make them react more than others. In other words, the rank order of the uncivil behaviors and the relative distance between them were nearly identical when one compared self-report measures and people's actual reactions. The uncivil behaviors used by Brauer and Chekroun were comparable to those in the present study.

Table 2

Reactions to Uncivil Behaviors: Study 1

	Type of reaction							Most
Uncivil behavior	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	frequent
Car break-in	16	0	0	64	4	8	8	3
Rude begging	64	3	5	5	10	11	2	19
Loud music	45	19	6	1	23	4	2	3
Failure to hold door	40	15	9	0	25	9	2	24
Spit on sidewalk	31	16	11	0	16	20	6	43
Littering	28	16	12	0	34	4	6	30
Urinating on wall	37	3	9	3	16	14	17	19
Lewd graffiti	30	6	5	11	20	23	4	8
Destroyed trashcan	28	12	5	7	17	15	15	3
Vulgar insult	34	8	1	5	27	14	11	5
Refused right of way	22	16	6	3	30	17	6	12
Rude bump	24	14	2	7	13	15	25	26
Emptied ashtray	23	13	8	0	34	15	6	9
Failure to pick up after one's dog	19	10	6	0	33	26	6	65
Car blocking sidewalk	18	12	1	4	45	11	9	25
Disposed of car battery	17	5	2	7	44	13	11	2

Note. Type of reaction: 0 = *no reaction*; 1 = *angry look* (to the deviant); 2 = *loud audible sigh*; 3 = *alert a figure of authority*; 4 = *polite comment to the deviant*; 5 = *comment in an aggressive tone to the deviant*; 6 = *personal insult in aggressive tone to the deviant*. Most frequent = percentage of respondents who ranked each uncivil behavior among the three behaviors encountered most frequently.

tendency to exert social control. This question was addressed in the following studies.

Studies 2, 3, and 4

The goal of Studies 2, 3, and 4 is to measure potential predictors of social control. As outlined in the introduction, these predictors refer either to participants' appraisal of the uncivil behavior or to their emotional reactions.
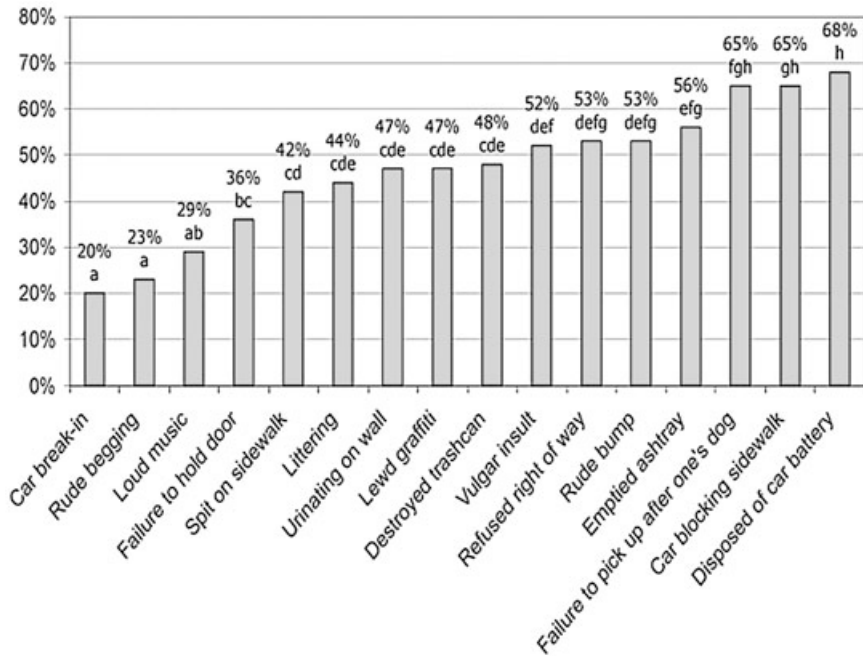
Figure 1. Percentage of respondents indicating that they would verbally express their disapproval to the perpetrator of the uncivil behavior: Study 1. Bars that share no subscript are reliably different from each other.

Given the large number of questions, we divided the predictors among three questionnaires, and each participant completed only one questionnaire.[7]

Method

Participants

There were 75 individuals (50 female, 25 male) who completed the questionnaire for Study 2. Their mean age was 33.8 years ($SD = 16.2$ years). There

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[7]If participants had evaluated each uncivil behavior on each appraisal dimension and on each emotion, they would have had to answer 224 questions. Initial tests revealed that such a procedure was unfeasible. Not only were participants unwilling to devote 45 min to our study, their answers also became very repetitive after a certain time (respondents no longer distinguished between uncivil behaviors). Therefore, we decided to have each participant respond to only a subset of the questions.

were 69 individuals (51 female, 18 male) who completed the questionnaire for Study 3 (M age = 25.7 years, SD = 9.2). Finally, 69 individuals (53 female, 16 male) completed the questionnaire for Study 4 (M age = 29.3 years, SD = 12.9). In total, 213 individuals participated in Studies 2, 3, and 4 (M age = 29.7 years, SD = 13.6).

As in the pilot study and in Study 1, one of two female experimenters randomly approached passersby in the streets of Clermont-Ferrand, France, and asked them if they would be willing to complete a questionnaire about incivilities. The experimenters approached approximately 4 times as many individuals as those who actually completed a questionnaire, but three quarters of them declined to participate.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three questionnaire conditions. Study 2's questionnaire contains the following questions: "To what extent is the behavior of this person counternormative?" (degree of deviance); "To what extent is it important to you that people respect the norm that is being transgressed by this person?" (importance of the norm); "To what extent would it be your responsibility to communicate to this person that his/her behavior is not acceptable?" (responsibility); and "To what extent would you suffer, personally, the consequences of the action of this person?" (personal implication). In Study 3, participants responded to the following questions: "To what extent would it be in your interest to communicate to this person that his/her behavior is not acceptable?" (personal interest); "To what extent could one be mistaken in their interpretation of the situation?" (ambiguity); "To what extent would the act of communicating to this person that his/her behavior is not acceptable have negative consequences for you (e.g., cause you sadness, cause you to feel aggressive)?" (negative consequences); and "To what extent would the act of communicating to this person that his/her behavior is not acceptable have positive consequences for you (e.g., improve your mood, engender greater cleanliness in the city)?" (positive consequences).

Finally, in the questionnaire for Study 4, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they would feel six emotions, were they to witness each of the counternormative behaviors under consideration. The six emotions are disdain, anger, resignation, disgust, fear, and embarrassment. Participants responded on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*enormously*). For all three studies, the participants indicated their gender and age at the end.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary Analyses

We created a new data file with the specific uncivil behavior as the unit of analysis ($N = 16$). For each uncivil behavior, we considered the percentage of participants who had indicated in Study 1 that they would verbally express their disapproval (i.e., social control; see Figure 1). We also considered the mean response to each of the four appraisal items of Study 2 (i.e., degree of deviance, importance of the norm, responsibility, personal implication) to each of the four appraisal items of Study 3 (i.e., personal interest, ambiguity, negative consequences, positive consequences) and to each of the six emotion items of Study 4 (i.e., disdain, anger, resignation, disgust, fear, embarrassment). Finally, we considered the percentage of participants who ranked each uncivil behavior among the three behaviors encountered most frequently in Study 1. The new data file thus contains 16 observations and 16 (continuous) variables.

The first analyses reveal that the uncivil behavior *car theft* was an outlier in virtually every respect. First, this situation had extreme scores on nearly every variable. Car theft was the situation in which the smallest percentage of participants would exert social control (20%). It was also the situation in which the highest percentage of people would alert an authority figure (64%, as compared to 11% for graffiti, which was the next highest situation). The mean rating for car theft was the highest (and generally more than 2 *SD* above the mean) for the dimensions of perceived deviance, importance of the norm, responsibility, personal implication, and negative consequences. In addition, the regression analyses (reported later) reveal that *theft* was frequently an outlier, according to the conventional outlier statistics (i.e., leverage values, Student-ized deleted residual, Cook's *D*). For all of these reasons, we decided to exclude the situation *theft* from the analyses ($N = 15$).

Appraisal of the Uncivil Behavior

Bivariate correlation analyses reveal that social control was strongly related to responsibility ($r = .83$), personal interest ($r = .80$), personal implication ($r = .76$), degree of deviance ($r = .73$), and importance of the norm ($r = .73$; all ps < .002). There was also a significant correlation between social control and positive consequences ($r = .52$, $p = .05$). Social control seems to be unrelated to the ambiguity of the situation ($r = .35$, *ns*), to perceived negative consequences ($r = -.17$, *ns*), and to frequency ($r = .15$, *ns*).
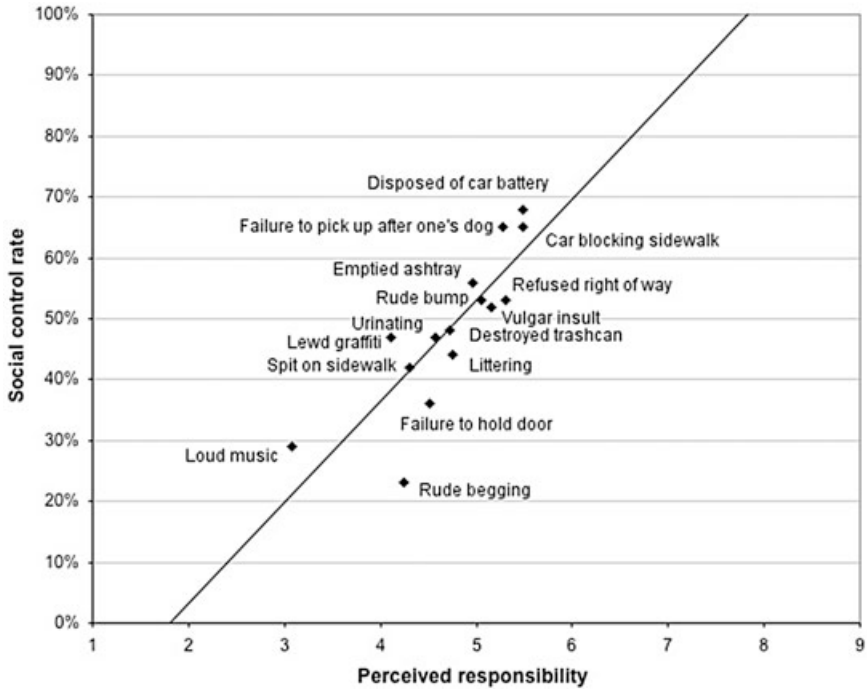
Figure 2. Relationship between propensity to exert social control and perceived responsibility: Study 2.

We conducted a multiple regression analysis in which we regressed the social control rate on all eight appraisal predictors. Although the predictors, as a set, explained 79% of the variance, neither the entire model nor any of the individual predictors were statistically significant.[8]

We then conducted a forward regression analysis in which predictors are entered one by one (starting with the predictor that explains the most variance) until there are no more predictors that are statistically significant. This analysis yields a model with a single predictor, *responsibility*, $F(1, 13) = 27.76$, $p < .001$ ($r^2 = .68$). We also ran a backward regression analysis. In this analysis, all predictors were entered and then removed one by one (starting with the predictor that explains the least variance) until the model only contains significant predictors. Again, this analysis yields a model with *responsibility* as a single predictor. The bivariate relationship between social control and

[8]This null result may be a result, in part, of high correlations among predictors. For example, responsibility was strongly correlated with importance of the norm ($r = .85$) and personal implication ($r = .88$).

responsibility is shown in Figure 2. The more an uncivil behavior generates the feeling of being responsible in bystanders, the more people tend to verbally express their disapproval.

It should be noted that none of the other appraisal dimensions was a significant predictor of social control after statistically controlling for responsibility. Degree of deviance, for example, is strongly related to social control ($\beta = .73$), $F(1, 7) = 15.05$, $p < .002$ ($r^2 = .54$); but this relationship disappears when one adds responsibility as an additional predictor to the model ($\beta = .28$), $F(1, 6) = 1.51$, $p = .24$ (partial $r^2 = .11$). Taken together, these analyses suggest that the feeling of responsibility plays a central role in social control reactions. Other variables (e.g., degree of deviance, perceived positive consequences) are not proximal causes of social control. A forward regression of responsibility on the other predictors reveals that responsibility was predicted by personal implication, $F(1, 12) = 22.04$, $p < .001$; and perceived negative consequences, $F(1, 12) = 7.03$, $p = .021$.

Emotions

Bivariate correlational analyses show that social control was strongly related to disdain ($r = .78$, $p < .001$) and anger ($r = .70$, $p < .004$). There was a marginally significant relationship between social control and disgust ($r = .48$, $p = .069$). Resignation ($r = .33$), fear ($r = -.01$), and embarrassment ($r = .10$) were not correlated with social control (all $ps > .22$). Additional analyses with the emotion scores reveal that participants did not distinguish between disdain and anger. The correlation between the two variables was .96.

A multiple regression analysis, in which social control was regressed on all six emotion scores, reveals that only disdain was a reliable predictor ($\beta = 1.94$), $F(1, 8) = 5.91$, $p < .05$ (partial $r^2 = .43$).[9] As with the appraisal dimensions, we conducted a forward and a backward regression analysis in which we regressed the social control rate on the six emotion scores. Both analyses produce the same result, in that they both retained a model with disdain as a single predictor ($\beta = .78$), $F(1, 13) = 19.61$, $p < .001$ ($r^2 = .60$).[10]

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[9]There were, however, two marginally significant effects for disgust and fear. These effects are somewhat difficult to interpret. The bivariate relationship between disgust and social control was positive ($\beta = .48$), $F(1, 13) = 3.94$, $p = .069$ ($r^2 = .23$), but this relationship became negative after statistically controlling for the other emotions ($\beta = -.89$), $F(1, 8) = 4.42$, $p = .069$ (partial $r^2 = .36$). Similarly, there was no bivariate relationship between fear and social control ($\beta = -.01$), $F(1, 13) = .001$, *ns* ($r^2 = .000$); but there was a negative relationship when the effects of the other five emotions are partialed out ($\beta = -.85$), $F(1, 8) = 5.12$, $p = .053$ (partial $r^2 = .39$).

[10]If social control is regressed on all emotions except disdain, the forward and backward regression analyses retain a model with anger as a single predictor ($\beta = .70$), $F(1, 8) = 12.64$, $p < .001$ ($r^2 = .49$).
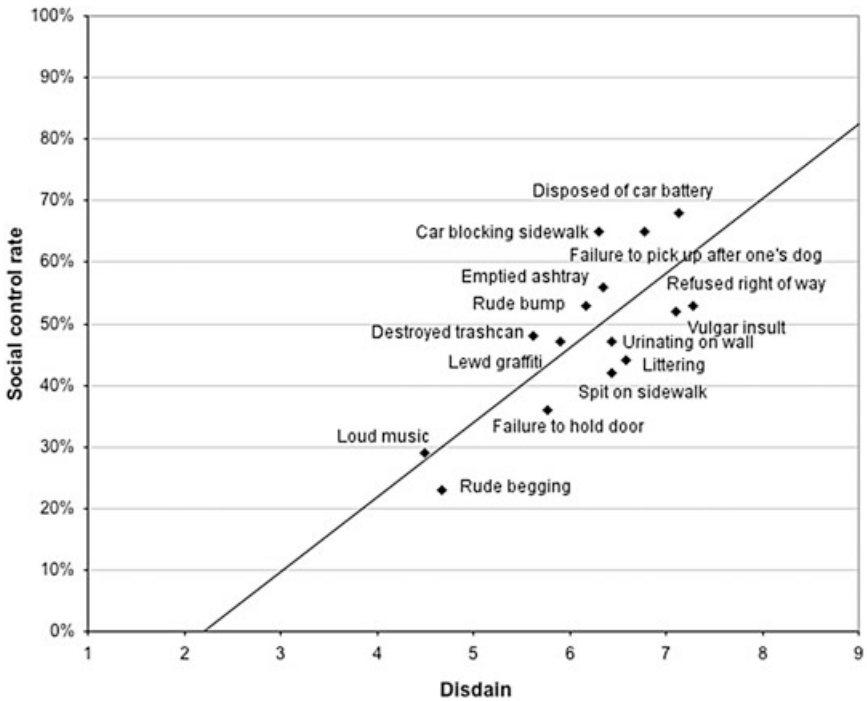
Figure 3. Relationship between propensity to exert social control and extent to which respondents experienced disdain: Study 4.

The relationship between disdain and social control is graphically represented in Figure 3. Given the high correlation between disdain and anger, it seems that the most appropriate interpretation of Figure 3 is that the more a situation generates hostile emotions in the bystander, the more he or she is likely to exert social control and to verbally communicate his or her disapproval to the author of the uncivil behavior. A regression of hostile emotions on the other predictors shows an effect of the degree of deviance, $F(1, 6) = 9.58$, $p < .021$. The more deviant the behavior was perceived, the more hostile emotions were felt toward the author.

Taken together, the analyses on the appraisal dimensions and the emotions suggest that two variables are strongly related to people's tendency to exert social control: the extent to which they feel that it is their responsibility to communicate to the deviant that his or her behavior is not correct; and the extent to which they feel hostile emotions (e.g., disdain, anger). Note that in the analyses reported previously, the unit of analysis was the

uncivil behavior. We averaged across participants and examined differences between different types of uncivil behaviors. As such, we attempted to answer the question "Why do some uncivil behaviors elicit, on average, more social control than other uncivil behaviors?" It appears that the difference is a result of the fact that some uncivil behaviors generate, to a greater extent, the feeling in bystanders that it is their responsibility to exert social control, and cause them to feel more hostile emotions than do other uncivil behaviors.

Study 5

Study 5 has three purposes. First, we wanted to establish the generalizability of our results by using an experimental design in which the participant, and not the uncivil behavior, was the unit of analysis. As such, we could address the question of why certain bystanders, but not others, express their disapproval in the same situation.

In Study 5, we focus on one particular uncivil behavior: failure to pick up after one's dog. Each participant evaluated this behavior on all appraisal dimensions and all emotions. We chose this uncivil behavior for two reasons. First, it is the uncivil behavior that was mentioned by the most participants in the pilot study. Second, it is one of the behaviors that elicited the most social control in Study 1.

The second purpose of Study 5 is to examine a wider range of emotions. Only six emotions were used in Study 4 (which was done in order to limit the number of questions to which participants responded). Given the central role of moral emotions demonstrated by Chekroun and Nugier (2005), we were somewhat surprised that the moral emotion *embarrassment* was relatively unrelated to social control in Study 4. In Study 5, therefore, we examine a greater variety of emotions, including several hostile emotions (e.g., disdain, anger, annoyance) and moral emotions (e.g., embarrassment, guilt, shame).

A third aim of this study is to test the role of perceived legitimacy of social control as a new appraisal dimension. Several participants in Study 2 mentioned to the experimenter that they sometimes do not exert social control because, inasmuch as they have no official authority, they feel that they have no legitimacy to do so. A study by Piccinin, McCarrey, Fairweather, Vito, and Conrad (1998) testifies to the important role of perceived legitimacy in interpersonal feedback (see also Nugier, Niedenthal, Brauer, & Chekroun, 2005). In Study 2 of the present article, responsibility emerged clearly as the most important appraisal dimension. Therefore, we reduced the number

of *other* appraisal dimensions and added perceived legitimacy to the list in Study 5.

Method

Participants

Adult men and women were recruited in the streets of Clermont-Ferrand, France, using the same procedure as in the previous studies. Approximately 1 passerby out of 4 accepted the offer to participate in the study. The final sample contained 101 individuals (52 female, 49 male). Participants' mean age was 43.4 years ($SD = 15.8$). Approximately one third of the participants ($n = 31$) owned a dog, whereas the remainder did not ($n = 70$).

Procedure

Participants completed a questionnaire with numerous questions related to dogs and canine defecation. At the beginning of the questionnaire, participants were asked to imagine themselves in a situation in which they were witnessing a person who failed to pick up after his or her dog in the street. They were then asked to indicate the extent to which they would feel the following emotions: disdain, distaste, anger, shame, embarrassment, guilt, fear, annoyance, and *others*.

Participants also responded to four questions measuring different appraisal dimensions. The first two questions measure responsibility and personal interest (see Study 3). The third question measures perceived legitimacy ("To what extent do you consider it legitimate for you to tell this person that he or she should pick up after his or her dog?"), while the fourth question measures perceived long-term impact of the social control ("To what extent do you think that a reaction from you would have a long-term beneficial effect on the behavior of the dog owner?"). Participants indicated their responses on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*enormously*).

The next question addresses participants' reaction to the uncivil behavior. We used the same scale as in Study 1, except that we dropped the response category *alert a figure of authority*. The new scale includes the following options: 0 = *no reaction*; 1 = *angry look* (to the deviant); 2 = *loud audible sigh*; 3 = *polite comment to the deviant*; 4 = *comment in an aggressive tone to the deviant*; or 5 = *personal insult in aggressive tone to the deviant*. The remainder of the questionnaire deals with different issues (e.g., responsibility of the municipal employees, image of dogs in the society, people's reactions if they were the target of social control), but those findings will not be discussed here.

Results and Discussion

As in Study 1, we calculated a categorical indicator of social control (Options 0–2 were designated as *no social control*, while Options 3–5 were designated as *social control*). We performed a series of four simple logistic regression analyses in which we regressed the indicator of social control (coded as 0 and 1) on each of the appraisal scores ($N = 101$). All four analyses yield a significant effect: responsibility, Wald's test $= 26.82$, $p < .001$; personal interest, Wald's test $= 14.59$, $p < .001$; perceived legitimacy, Wald's test $= 17.03$, $p < .001$; and perceived long-term efficacy, Wald's test $= 6.69$, $p < .01$. These indicators were all reliably related to social control.

A multiple logistic regression, in which the categorical indicator of social control was regressed on all four appraisal dimensions simultaneously, reveals that responsibility (Wald's test $= 14.44$, $p < .001$) and perceived legitimacy (Wald's test $= 9.36$, $p < .002$) were reliable predictors of social control (all other ps $> .10$). In order to examine the emotions, we estimated a series of eight simple logistic regression analyses in which we regressed the categorical indicator of social control on each of the emotion scores. Only one of these analyses yielded a significant result: Anger was a reliable predictor of whether or not people would exert social control (Wald's test $= 6.78$, $p < .008$; all other ps $> .10$). Not surprisingly, anger was also the only significant predictor in a multiple logistic regression analysis in which the social control reaction was regressed on all eight emotion scores (anger, Wald's test $= 3.85$, $p < .05$; all other ps $> .10$). None of the effects reported in this section were moderated by whether or not the participant was a dog owner (all ps $> .10$).

General Discussion

The purpose of the studies reported in this paper was to examine the factors that facilitate or inhibit social control reactions to uncivil behaviors. There are three factors that seem to play a crucial role: responsibility, legitimacy, and hostile emotions. We will discuss each of these factors in turn.

In certain situations, bystanders feel that it would be their responsibility to communicate to the perpetrator of the uncivil behavior that his or her behavior is not acceptable. This feeling is a strong predictor of whether bystanders intend to express their disapproval verbally to the perpetrator of the uncivil behavior. This result mirrors similar findings in the helping literature in which personal responsibility is frequently considered to be a precondition for helping (Berkowitz, 1978; Darley & Latané, 1968; Latané & Darley, 1968). This finding also replicates earlier work by Chekroun and Brauer (2004) that showed that there was no bystander effect (i.e., inhibition

by the presence of others) in social control situations in which participants felt highly responsible.

Studies 2, 3, and 4 of the present article show that uncivil behaviors differ in the extent to which they generate the feeling of responsibility, and that this difference in responsibility is a strong predictor of why certain uncivil behaviors are reacted to more frequently than are others. Finally, Study 5 shows that individuals differ in the extent to which the same uncivil behavior (i.e., failure to pick up after one's dog) generates the feeling of responsibility in them and that this difference in responsibility allows us to predict which individuals will show overt disapproval and which ones will not. Independent of whether the feeling of responsibility is caused by the situation or by interindividual differences, it increases the likelihood that a bystander will exert social control.

The more bystanders feel that they have the legitimacy to tell the perpetrator of an incivility that his or her behavior is not acceptable, the greater is the probability that they will exert social control. This is a new finding. For the moment, the effect of perceived legitimacy has been shown in only one study (Study 5 of the present manuscript) and with only one type of uncivil behavior (failure to pick up after one's dog). Although it would be necessary to replicate this finding with other uncivil behaviors, we can already draw some initial conclusions.

Legitimacy is an issue in social control. After all, there is a norm in Western society that we should respect other people's freedom and let them behave as they wish, unless their behavior limits our own freedom. When people exert social control, it sometimes happens that the perpetrator of the uncivil behavior tells the bystander that he or she has no supervisory function and, therefore, has no right to express his or her disapproval. Some people feel that being citizens who pay local taxes, who regularly use the public property that is being degraded by an uncivil behavior, and who personally suffer the consequences from the behavior gives them the legitimacy to express their disapproval verbally to the perpetrator of the uncivil behavior. Other people may disapprove of an uncivil behavior but, at the same time, not feel that they have legitimacy to exert social control. They may think that only figures of authority (e.g., police officers, guards) should sanction the perpetrators of uncivil behaviors. As such, it is not surprising that the feeling of legitimacy is a strong predictor of people's tendency to exert social control.

The more bystanders feel hostile emotions (e.g., disdain, anger), the more they tend to show their disapproval to the perpetrators of uncivil behaviors. This finding underlines the important role of emotions in social control. As mentioned in the introduction, it is not without risk to express one's disapproval to the perpetrator of an uncivil behavior. In addition, most perpetrators of uncivil behaviors probably do not appreciate receiving public

scrutiny. Some deviants may feel shame when others comment on their uncivil behaviors. Other deviants may react aggressively and verbally (or even physically) attack the bystander who just expressed his or her disapproval (for an empirical examination of the different kinds of reactions to social control, see Nugier et al., 2005). The unknown outcome creates a strong tendency not to react, to remain passive, and not to exert social control. This passivity can only be overcome if bystanders feel a strong emotional reaction of some kind that predisposes them to take action. Our research suggests that hostile emotions fulfill this role. They can cause bystanders to take action and to express their disapproval toward the perpetrator of an uncivil behavior.

The exploratory nature of the studies reported in this article can be considered a shortcoming. Neither of the article's authors usually adopts an approach that limits itself to measuring numerous variables and then testing the ones that are correlated. However, it is difficult to proceed otherwise, given that there is virtually no empirical work on social control. In a new area of research, one must begin by establishing which variables predict and which variables do not predict the phenomenon of interest. After that, it is possible to suggest theoretical models that can account for the initial findings, and then test the predictions derived from these models in randomized experiments. This is how research on helping behavior proceeded, and this is how research on any new topic in social psychology has proceeded over the last 100 years. In order to reduce the exploratory aspect of the present research project, we only included variables for which we had theoretical reasons to believe that they might predict social control.

One may speculate why responsibility, legitimacy, and hostile emotions are determinants of social control. As we have explained elsewhere (Brauer, 2004), it seems to us that the explanation lies in the definition of the self. For certain people, the neighborhood (or the town) in which they live is part of their self. And if someone degrades this neighborhood by committing an uncivil behavior, it is as if this person is stepping on their feet. The self is violated, and this is why they feel hostile emotions. Defending oneself is socially acceptable, and this is why they feel that it is legitimate for them to exert social control and that they have the responsibility to do so. For other people, the neighborhood is simply the area in which they live. These people do not feel personally implicated when they witness an uncivil behavior in public places. Given that the self is not violated, they may not feel angry, and they may have the impression that they have neither the legitimacy nor the responsibility to intervene and to express their disapproval.

The goal of public institutions, then, should be to increase the feeling of personal implication or, put more formally, the inclusion of public property into the definition of the self. One way to do that would be to show people

that incivilities cost money and—given that people pay local taxes—concern them personally. An example for such a measure is an advertisement campaign that the city of Aix-en-Provence, France, launched in 2003. All over town, there were posters with a picture of an incivility and the amount of money that City Hall spends each year to repair this type of incivility. For example, one poster contained a photo of a canine defecating and the sentence "Letting dogs poop on the public sidewalks costs you 300,000 euros per year" ("Prendre les trottoirs pour des crottoirs vous coûte 300 000 euros par an").

Another way to include the public property into the definition of the self is to strengthen the emotional and psychological link between people and their urban environment. Block parties, local associations, neighborhood meetings, small businesses, architectural tours in a subarea of town, community centers, and informational brochures about cultural and sporting events taking place close by are all likely to heighten people's feelings of personal implication.

In certain cities, streets are designed to be a place for traffic circulation (at reduced speed) and, at the same time, a leisure and living space where children play and adults talk among themselves. These streets generally have speed bumps and alternating parking places (e.g., five places on the right, five places on the left) in order to force cars to drive slowly. At the same time, there are benches, tables, installations for games, goals, and basketball hoops so that people will find it pleasant to spend time in the street. Therefore, they will extend their lives and their self-definition beyond the door of the house or apartment. According to our analysis, such measures not only lead people to commit fewer uncivil behaviors, they also increase the feeling that the public property is part of citizens' selves; thus increasing their tendency to exert social control when they witness one of their fellow citizens engaging in an uncivil behavior.

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Appendix

Uncivil Behavior Scenarios Used in Studies 1, 2, 3, and 4

You are walking alone in the downtown area. After turning into an empty street, you run into an unaccompanied person who obviously has not seen

you and who is committing one of the behaviors I will read to you. How would you react? From the behaviors on the list I just gave you, which one would you engage in?

1. The person bumps rudely into another person. (rude bump)
2. The person has a tape player on his/her shoulder, the volume turned up high, and the sound is unbearable. (loud music)
3. The person gets out of a car and empties the ashtray of his/her car on the ground. (emptied ashtray)
4. The person fails to pick up after his/her dog in the middle of the sidewalk. (failure to pick up after one's dog)
5. The person disposes of a used car battery in the middle of the street. (disposed of car battery)
6. The person blows his/her nose and drops the used Kleenex on the ground, 5 meters from a trashcan. (littering)
7. The person tries to tear off the lid of a trashcan. (destroyed trash can)
8. The person spits an enormous ball of spit right in the middle of the sidewalk. (spit on sidewalk)
9. The person is driving a car. She/He does not yield to another driver who has right of way and who has to slam on the brakes. Then, the person parks not far from you and gets out of the car. (refused right of way)
10. The person yells vulgar insults to another person who doesn't defend himself/herself. (vulgar insult)
11. While leaving a store, the person lets the door close on the person behind him/her. (failure to hold door)
12. The person begs for money in a rude manner. (rude begging)
13. The person is drawing lewd graffiti on a wall. (lewd graffiti)
14. The person is urinating on a wall. (urinating on wall)
15. The person is driving a car. She/He parks on the sidewalk blocking pedestrian traffic, gets out of the car and walks away. (car blocking sidewalk)
16. The person is breaking into a car. (car break-in)