Check for updates

Received: 6 April 2020 | Revised: 28 August 2020 | Accepted: 26 December 2020

DOI: 10.1111/jasp.12739

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Journal of Applied Social Psychology WILEY

"A right to lead": The role of leader legitimacy on group reactions to transgressive leadership

André G. Marques[1] | Isabel R. Pinto[2] | Ana C. Leite[3] | Georgina Randsley de Moura[1] | Jan-Willem van Prooijen[4] | José M. Marques[2]

[1]School of Psychology, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK

[2]Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

[3]Department of Psychology, Durham University, Durham, UK

[4]VU University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Correspondence
André G. Marques, Centre for the Study of Group Processes, School of Psychology, University of Kent, CT2 7NP Canterbury, UK.
Email: afgm2@kent.ac.uk

Funding information
University of Kent, Grant/Award Number: GTA Scholarship; Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, Grant/Award Number: EXCL/MHC-PSO/0800/2012

Abstract

Research on the transgression credit shows that groups may sometimes turn a blind eye to ingroup leaders who transgress moral norms. Although there is substantial research investigating the underlying criteria of what makes a "good" leader, research often neglects to investigate the role of followers in leader-group dynamics. In this paper, we offer a novel approach to transgressive leadership by proposing that leader legitimacy is a key factor that determines whether followers' reactions to transgressive leaders are positive or negative. Across two experiments, participants ascribed transgression credit only to transgressive ingroup leaders perceived as legitimate (Studies 1–2, total $n = 308$). Transgressive illegitimate leaders were viewed as more threatening to the group, were targeted for formal punishment, received less validation for their behavior, triggered negative emotions (anger and shame), and raised higher consensus for their removal from the leadership position than did legitimate leaders. This effect also occurred irrespective of the absence of formal social control measures implemented toward the transgressive leader (Study 2). Mediation analysis showed that leader illegitimacy triggered stronger feelings of group threat and stronger negative emotions which, consequently, fuelled agreement with collective protest against the transgressive leader. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

KEYWORDS

collective protest, group dynamics, leader legitimacy, leadership, social control, transgression credit, transgressive leaders

1 | INTRODUCTION

There are many instances in which leaders' dishonesty, unfairness, corruption, or immorality are at the centre of the public agenda (Hoyt et al., 2013; Kellerman, 2004). Even though such behavior is regarded as unambiguously "bad" (Abrams et al., 2013), followers do not always perceive these leaders that clearly transgress important norms as undesirable or harmful to the group. For instance, research has shown that these leaders have more leeway to deviate from norms when they have accumulated idiosyncratic credits (Hollander, 1958, 1992, 2006), are prototypical (e.g., Hogg, 2001; van Knippenberg, 2011), or have been recently appointed and endowed with the conferral to lead (Abrams et al., 2008, 2018). However, there is less research accounting for the situations where groups actually reject immoral and harmful actions from their leaders (e.g., Abrams et al., 2014; Karelaia & Keck, 2013). As such, there is a gap in

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.
© 2021 The Authors. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* published by Wiley Periodicals LLC.

understanding which processes drive groups to accept versus punish their own transgressive leaders. In this paper, we report two studies testing the hypothesis that leader legitimacy shapes followers' perceptions of leader transgressions which, in turn, affect the acceptance versus punishment of transgressive leaders.

1.1 | Transgressive leadership

Transgressive leadership is perceived as morally questionable behavior that goes beyond mere opinion deviance, which may involve breaking laws or rules within a common social context (Abrams et al., 2013). These transgressions can be perceived to be driven by leaders' selfish, dishonest, or discriminatory attitudes (Kim et al., 2006; Mayer et al., 1995). However, whereas followers are usually punished for adopting similar behavior, ingroup leaders are often exempt from the same punishment (Abrams et al., 2013). Indeed, research on the transgression credit demonstrated that transgressive ingroup leaders tend to be treated leniently compared to similarly transgressive outgroup leaders and ingroup or outgroup regular members (Abrams et al., 2013; Randsley de Moura & Abrams, 2013). Considering that leaders usually embody the group prototype (e.g., Hogg, 2001; Hogg et al., 1998, 2012), a negative reaction toward ingroup leaders could be perceived as a negative reaction toward the group itself. In this sense, tolerating an ingroup leader's transgression may be seen as an act of group loyalty (Abrams et al., 2013).

This is not always the case. For example, transgressive ingroup leaders are depreciated when they are perceived to threaten members' social identity (Abrams et al., 2014). This might be because disruptions in leadership, like challenges or violations of the group's values, can reflect a flaw of the group itself and threaten the group's identity (Balser & Carmin, 2009). These feelings of threat can elicit hostile emotions, like anger (Lerner et al., 2003; Sadler et al., 2005), subsequently fuelling spontaneous and impulsive aggressive behaviors (van Stekelenburg et al., 2011). This suggests that followers can sometimes perceive transgressive ingroup leaders as threatening to their group, which may elicit derogatory and punitive reactions from the group. However, it is not yet clear what leads followers to feel threatened by transgressive leaders as opposed to tolerating their transgression. Based on previous evidence highlighting the importance of leader legitimacy on leader evaluation and endorsement, we propose that leader legitimacy will function as an important boundary condition for understanding how and when transgressive ingroup leaders pose a threat to the group.

1.2 | Leader legitimacy

Legitimacy is a psychological attribute that allows leaders to gather the support of followers, because their power is seen as both deserved and justified (Caddick, 1982; Tyler, 2006). This attribute constitutes the basis for leader selection in democratic systems (e.g., election of political leaders), and it is ultimately linked with leaders' standing with their followers (Bass & Bass, 2009). Some have initially argued that the process of legitimacy begins with the form of ascension to the leadership role, as elected leaders generally create higher expectations than appointed leaders (Julian et al., 1969). However, significant research has also shown that leaders' legitimacy is acknowledged by followers through the display of trustworthiness, credibility, competence, fairness, and previous task success, rather than by simply exercising authority (Ratcliff & Vescio, 2017; Tyler, 2006; Vial et al., 2016; Willis et al., 2010).

The crucial aspect of legitimacy is the underlying belief that decisions made by the legitimate authorities are considered valid and entitled to be obeyed by virtue of the legitimate figure (Tyler, 2006). In this sense, legitimacy becomes a requirement for a leader's ability to exert influence and power, which ultimately creates a sense of duty and obligation amongst followers (Levi et al., 2009). This readiness to accept and comply with legitimate leaders (Magee & Frasier, 2014; Tyler, 2002) can even overcome followers' moral standards, such as when followers give leaders the power to determine what is right and wrong (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989). Therefore, it is possible that transgressive leaders escape punishment when they are legitimated within the group. In contrast, it is likely that followers are motivated to challenge illegitimate leaders' authority and support more punitive measures toward their transgressive behavior.

1.3 | Social control and collective protest

Social control is typically the act of punishing group members who violate important social or group-specific norms (e.g., ingroup deviants), which can be a major way for a group to control and attenuate the potential damage caused to the group, and to reinforce adherence to social norms (Erikson, 1964; Gibbs, 1977; Levine, 1989; Marques et al., 2001; van Prooijen, 2018). However, when the group's social control mechanisms are perceived to be ineffective, group members shift to participation and endorsement of non-normative collective actions–informal measures to control or punish the offenders, often using unconventional means (Campos et al., 2017; Tausch et al., 2011). Such informal social control actions can range from participation in peaceful collective demonstrations to participation in civil disorder (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Tausch et al., 2011). They can also encompass intense informal punitive reactions aimed at compensating for the sources' inability to ensure or restore a perceived state of justice (Strelan & van Prooijen, 2013).

Collective protest is a form of collective action in which highly identified group members engage when they perceive their group to be a target of social injustice (Abrams & Randsley de Moura, 2002; Klandermans et al., 2002). Contrasting with normative collective actions that aim to protect and reinforce social norms, nonnormative actions exist to threaten the existing social order (Wright et al., 1990). These nonnormative actions are strongly predicted by negative emotions, such as: (1) anger, as it induces a tendency to punish people who violate norms (Smith & Kessler, 2004; Van Zomeren et al., 2004), and (2) shame, as the transgression could reflect a flaw in

the group's identity (Lickel et al., 2005). In this sense, such emotions function as accelerators or amplifiers of protest (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2017), connected to the goal of challenging and confronting targets responsible for injustice (Frijda et al., 1989). As such, group members then express their anger and shame directed at leaders who violate the group's shared beliefs and values by protesting against these leaders (van Stekelenburg et al., 2011; see also, Páez et al., 2013; Stürmer & Simon, 2009; Thomas et al., 2009; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2010). Thus, collective protest should reflect a group reaction through which group members demand the punishment of a transgressive illegitimate leader.

2 | THE PRESENT RESEARCH

In the present research, we investigate the impact of leader legitimacy on group reactions to transgressive leaders. Building on the notion that illegitimate leaders generally obtain less support from followers than do legitimate leaders (Ratcliff & Vescio, 2017), we test the role of leader legitimacy as an important contextual boundary of transgressive leadership. Specifically, we suggest that leader legitimacy should explain the differential outcomes between support versus rejection of leaders who break moral norms. In this sense, we propose that leader legitimacy allows for greater transgression because followers abdicate moral authority to their legitimate leaders. We will also test how followers react to (il)legitimate leaders that depending on whether they have been punished by the ingroup or not. We use an experimental vignette methodology across studies to construct organizationally relevant scenarios whilst also maintaining experimental control (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). First, we manipulate leader legitimacy and measure how threatening to the group and punishable an illegitimate versus legitimate leader is (Study 1). Second, we investigate whether the presence or absence of social control (punishment measures) moderates the effect of leader legitimacy on the acceptance versus support for punishment of transgressive leaders (Study 2).

3 | STUDY 1

Previous research has suggested that ingroup leaders are given transgression credit, compared to ingroup regular members (i.e., non-leaders; Abrams et al., 2013). Study 1 tests the prediction that ingroup leaders are given transgression credit only when they are perceived as legitimate as opposed to illegitimate. Given that illegitimate leaders lack trust and loyalty from group members (Hollander, 2009), we predict that their transgressions are more likely to be perceived as highly threatening to the group and, therefore, in need of being controlled. As such, we expect participants to support measures of formal punishment more (i.e., higher social control) when judging transgressive illegitimate (versus legitimate) leaders. We hypothesize that transgressive illegitimate leaders will trigger more negative reactions (group threat and formal punishment), compared to transgressive legitimate leaders.

3.1 | Method

3.1.1 | Participants and design

In order to reach a broad population, participants were recruited in public spaces with pen and paper questionnaires in a large city in mainland Portugal. The sample consisted of 116 Portuguese respondents (42 men, 65 women, and 9 who did not report gender), aged from 18 to 69 years old ($M = 25.84$; $SD = 10.12$). A Post hoc power analysis with $\alpha = 0.05$ revealed that this sample size afforded approximately 80% power to detect effect sizes of $r = 0.25$ (G*Power; Faul et al., 2007) for the main effect of leader legitimacy on the dependent variables. The experiment was a Legitimate versus Illegitimate between-participants design.

3.1.2 | Procedure

A positive social group identity is a necessary condition for the transgression credit (Abrams et al., 2013; Travaglino et al., 2015), thus implying that we require a highly salient group to test our hypothesis. For this purpose, we created a scenario in a national (Portuguese) context and we started the study by measuring participants' national identification. Then, participants were presented with the scenario of a transgressive leader from a public national level organization, which included the Leader Legitimacy manipulation, presented through a piece of (fictitious) news. Participants read about a Portuguese leader, "Vítor Almeida," of a Portuguese public-private venture (an organization that was ostensibly part of the Ministry of Health) who was managing the construction of a hospital that would cover a significant part of Portugal with implications on the country's health system. This information was designed to make the Portuguese national identity salient and ensure that participants engaged with the scenario, by perceiving the organization's goals as relevant to the ingroup. The scenario was followed by measures of perceived legitimacy, group threat, and formal punishment.

3.1.3 | Leader legitimacy manipulation

The Leader Legitimacy manipulation was based on whether the group elected the leader or whether the leader was nominated (adapted from Julian et al., 1969), alongside attributes known to endow leaders with legitimacy, such as perceived competence, trustworthiness, and previous task success (e.g., Hollander, 2006).

3.1.4 | Legitimate condition

Vítor Almeida is the current President responsible for the project "More and Better Health" of the partnership between the Ministry of Health and the Hospital of Tomar, role he obtained through election by absolute majority from his partners and workers.

We collected opinions among the workers and partners of this organization about Vítor Almeida and they seem highly expectant about his performance. According to his business partners, "The choice of Vítor Almeida represents a strong commitment on our part" and "We believe that this partnership will be successful." Similarly, his employees commented that "He has our trust (…) the president seems to make understandable and reasonable decisions" and that "We know the past record of President Vítor Almeida and we know that we can count on him."

3.1.5 | Illegitimate condition

Vítor Almeida is the current President responsible for the project "More and better health" of the partnership between the Ministry of Health and the Hospital of Tomar, role he obtained through appointment by the government.

We collected opinions among the workers and partners of this organization about Vítor Almeida and they seem uncertain about his performance. According to his business partners, "Vítor Almeida's appointment was not our choice, it was a Government decision" and that "We do not believe this partnership will succeed." Similarly, his employees commented that "He does not have our support (…) the president seems to make disconcerting and unreasonable decisions," and that "We don't know the past record of President Vítor Almeida or even that much about him."

3.1.6 | Leader transgression induction

Following the Leader Legitimacy manipulation, participants learned of some of the leader's transgressions, specifically the way he ignored a few safety measures to spare time and how he made reductions to employees' wages in order to compensate for the costs of the construction of the hospital.[1]

3.2 | Control measures/manipulation check

3.2.1 | National identification

National identification was measured by the following items (adapted from Abrams et al., 1998) (1 = *Completely disagree;* 7 = *Completely agree*): (1) "Being Portuguese is important to define who I am"; (2) "Portuguese citizens are valuable people"; (3) "I am glad to have been born in Portugal"; (4) "I am proud to be Portuguese." We used a mean score of the items (Cronbach's α = 0.83).

[1]The leader's transgression was tested through a pilot study. Participants (N = 26) were asked to evaluate several actions supposedly implemented by leaders of projects related to PPP (Public-Private Partnerships) institutions [*1 = Completely wrong; 7 = Completely right*]. Results showed that the statements "He ignored a few safety measures to save time" and "He made reductions to the workers' wages in order to compensate for the costs of the construction of the hospital" were the most negatively evaluated, (M = 2.15, DP = 1.46) and (M = 2.42, DP = 1.27), respectively. Thus, these statements were selected for the transgression manipulation for the experiment.

3.2.2 | Perceived legitimacy (Manipulation check)

Participants were asked to judge leader legitimacy on four bipolar items: "I believe that Vítor Almeida is": (1 = *Untrustworthy*, *Illegitimate*, *Not credible*, *Not Acknowledged*; 7 = *Trustworthy*, *Legitimate*, *Credible*, *and Acknowledged*). We used a mean score of the items (Cronbach's α = 0.94).

3.3 | Dependent measures

3.3.1 | Group threat

Participants gave their opinion about the threatening character of the transgressive leader to the group in three items (1 = *Completely disagree*; 7 = *Completely agree*): (1) "This individual jeopardizes the country"; (2) "These situations threaten our country's image"; (3) "The content of this news report undermines my confidence in the Portuguese political system." We used a mean score of the items (Cronbach's α = 0.84).

3.3.2 | Formal punishment

Participants gave their agreement on several possible punitive reactions that the group could implement toward the target (1 = *Completely disagree*; 7 = *Completely agree*): (1) "Vítor Almeida should maintain his role of President in the project" (reversed); (2) "Authorities should carry out an audit of the activities of the President and the accounts of the company"; (3) "Authorities should initiate a disciplinary procedure to Vítor Almeida"; (4) "Vítor Almeida should be demoted and become an integrated member without exerting management decisions"; (5) "Vítor Almeida should be fired"; (6) "Authorities should open a judicial inquiry regarding Vítor Almeida." A Principal Components Factor Analysis with Varimax rotation showed that the six items saturated on a single factor explaining 53.63% of variance. We used a mean score of the items (Cronbach's α = 0.82).

4 | RESULTS

Tables 1 and 2 provide descriptive statistics and correlations for measures in Study 1.

4.1 | Control measures/manipulation check

4.1.1 | National identification

Participants were on average highly identified with the ingroup (M = 5.67; SD = 1.08), as this mean was higher than the mid-point of the scale (4), $t(115)$ = 16.58, p < .001. There were no a priori

TABLE 1 Correlations between variables (Study 1)

	1	2	3	4
Leader Legitimacy	–			
National identification	0.051	–		
Perceived legitimacy (MC)	−0.527***	0.082	–	
Group threat	0.375***	0.088	−0.386***	–
Formal punishment	0.273**	0.107	−0.482***	0.440***

Note: $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$.
Leader Legitimacy coded: Legitimate = −1; Illegitimate = 1.

differences in terms of national identification between experimental conditions, $F(1,114) = 0.301$, $p = .584$.

4.1.2 | Perceived legitimacy

An analysis of variance showed that participants perceived greater legitimacy in the Legitimate condition than in the Illegitimate condition, $F(1,114) = 43.85$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.278$, which confirms the effectiveness of the Leader Legitimacy manipulation.

4.2 | Dependent measures

4.2.1 | Group threat

As expected, an analysis of variance showed a significant effect of Leader Legitimacy, whereby participants perceived the transgressive leader as more threatening to the group in the Illegitimate condition than in the Legitimate condition, $F(1,114) = 18.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.141$.

4.2.2 | Formal punishment

As predicted, the analysis revealed a significant effect of Leader Legitimacy on Formal punishment, $F(1,114) = 9.15$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.074$. Specifically, participants agreed that the transgressive illegitimate leader should be punished more harshly by the group than the transgressive legitimate leader.

5 | DISCUSSION

Results support our hypothesis that group members only accept transgressions from *legitimate* ingroup leaders. Indeed, group members perceive transgressive *illegitimate* leaders to be more threatening to the group and agree more with the implementation of formal punishment measures toward such leaders. These results extend previous evidence by showing that perceived leader's (il)legitimacy is a significant determinant of follower reactions to leaders who engage in transgression. Thus, it is possible that transgressions committed by legitimate leaders are more validated by followers. We will test this directly in Study 2. Furthermore, Study 2 also tests whether reactions to illegitimate transgression leaders vary according to whether the leader has or not been formally punished by the group (i.e., whether mechanisms of social control are present and working).

6 | STUDY 2

Study 1 showed that followers warrant formal social control toward transgressive illegitimate leaders, as these leaders are perceived as more threatening to the group than legitimate ones. However, it is possible that participants might have assumed that the leader would go unpunished for their transgressions, which could be (at least partly) responsible for the observed feelings of threat and need for punishment. Therefore, in Study 2, we address this possibility by examining whether the absence (versus presence) of clear social control mechanisms over the transgressive leader moderates the effects of leader illegitimacy on the intent to punish the transgressive leader. An important test to determine whether the acceptance of transgressive legitimate leaders is driven by legitimacy is to consider whether groups will still accept those leaders' transgressions in the absence of social control–that is, in threatening situations in which clear group mechanisms to punish a leader's transgressions are absent. If, as we hypothesize, leaders are given transgression credit when they have gained legitimacy, then this effect should not disappear in the absence of social control. In addition to the measures used in Study 1, we also measure validation of the leader's behavior, negative emotions (i.e., anger and shame), and collective protest. Overall, we test the idea that transgressive illegitimate leaders are perceived as more threatening to the ingroup and thus raise more negative emotions among followers than legitimate leaders do, which, in turn, can trigger collective protest from group members to remove such leaders from power. Given that perceived threat to the group elicits negative emotional responses (e.g., Levin et al., 2013), which, in turn, comprise strong predictors of engagement in nonnormative collective actions (Lickel et al., 2005; Van Zomeren et al., 2004), we believe that the negative emotions triggered by the threat of an illegitimate leader will predict collective protest. Therefore, we test the role of group threat and negative emotions as mediators (in sequence) of the relationship between leader legitimacy and collective protest.

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics – Means (Standard Deviations) – per condition (Study 1)

	National identification	Perceived legitimacy (MC)	Group threat	Formal punishment
Legitimate	5.61 (1.12)	4.03 (1.24)	4.23 (1.44)	3.57 (1.29)
Illegitimate	5.72 (1.05)	2.55 (1.16)	5.29 (1.19)	4.30 (1.31)
All conditions (Total)	5.67 (1.08)	3.31 (1.41)	4.74 (1.42)	3.93 (1.34)

6.1 | Participants and design

A sample of U.S. citizens ($N = 192$, 71 men, 120 women, and 1 did not report gender), aged from 19 to 75 years old ($M = 38.77$; $SD = 12.41$) participated in this study via Amazon Mechanical Turk. A Post hoc power analysis with $\alpha = 0.05$ revealed that this sample size afforded approximately 80% power to detect effect sizes of $r = 0.25$ (G*Power; Faul et al., 2007) for the main effects and interactions between leader legitimacy and social control on the dependent variables. The experiment was a 2 (Leader Legitimacy: Legitimate versus Illegitimate) × 2 (Social Control: Present versus Absent) between-participants design.

6.2 | Procedure

Similar to Study 1, we first measured National identification to assess the condition of a positive social identity as a requirement for the transgression credit (e.g., Abrams et al., 2013). This condition is also essential for people's readiness to engage in collective action, when they are threatened or treated unjustly (Reicher, 1996; De Weerd & Klandermans, 1999). This was followed by a scenario of a transgressive leader, which included the Leader Legitimacy and Social Control manipulations, both presented through pieces of (fictitious) news, and finally followed by all the dependent measures. Participants read about Senator Michael Jones who led the U.S. representatives on the International Health Committee.

6.2.1 | Leader Legitimacy manipulation

The Leader Legitimacy manipulation was similar to the previous study, though now adapted to the 2017 U.S. context.

6.2.2 | Legitimate condition

Senator Michael Jones was recently elected by absolute majority as the U.S.'s leading representative of the International Health Committee, whose responsibility is to oversee and make vital decisions on health policies which, in turn, have a strong impact on Health care of the United States. Several co-workers and staff members from the Committee working under Senator Jones hold him in high regard and have high expectations for his performance. Some of the comments from co-workers included: "Michael Jones was a great bet on our part" and "He has shown to be very successful on his past work, so we truly believe in him."

Accordingly, a recent poll involving U.S. citizens included comments like: "He earned our trust (...) Senator Jones seems to make understandable and reasonable decisions" and "We give him credibility due to his past, and we know we can count on him."

6.2.3 | Illegitimate condition

Senator Michael Jones was recently appointed by the government as the U.S.'s leading representative of the International Health Committee, whose responsibility is to oversee and make vital decisions on health policies which, in turn, have a strong impact on Health care of the United States. Several co-workers and staff members from the Committee working under Senator Jones do not hold him in high regard and have low expectations for his performance. Some of the comments from co-workers included: "Michael Jones was a terrible bet on our part" and "He has shown to be very unsuccessful on his past work, so we do not believe in him at all."

Accordingly, a recent poll involving U.S. citizens included comments like: "He did not earn our trust (...) Senator Jones seems to make incomprehensible and unreasonable decisions" and "We do not give him credibility due to his past, and we know we cannot count on him."

6.2.4 | Leader transgression induction

Following the Leader Legitimacy manipulation, participants learned of some of the leader's transgressions.

Recently, Senator Jones seems to have taken some "unconventional measures" during his mandate. In particular, there were reports stating that he has been ignoring some safety measures in U.S. hospitals as he considered them as "minor problems." Also, he has provided a report to the Government to support their proposed changes to the pay and support of hospital work. The report states that to ensure the provision of health services for longer hours, in a cost saving way, changes need to be made to all hospital worker contracts, increase the number of work hours, yet reducing the provision of their overtime pay.

6.2.5 | Social control manipulation

After reading the Leader Legitimacy manipulation, and learning about the leader's transgression, participants read a second piece of the newspaper manipulating the presence (or absence) of effective social control mechanisms. This piece stated, for all participants,

that Senator Jones had been under investigation by the Attorney-General due to the "administrative decisions" recently adopted by the Senator, speculated as a misuse of public funds. In the Present condition, the piece also referred that after an initial investigation, the Attorney-General stated that "This case is already brought to trial, and the Senator will be prosecuted and judged according to the law," while in the Absent condition, the Attorney-General referred that "The Senator will not be prosecuted and brought to court, and the case will be dismissed."

6.3 | Control measures/Manipulation checks

6.3.1 | National identification and Perceived legitimacy

These measures were identical to those employed in Study 1, we created a National identification mean score (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$) and a Perceived legitimacy mean score (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.98$).

6.3.2 | Perceived effectiveness of social control (Manipulation check)

Participants answered three items (adapted from Pinto et al., 2016) to check their perception regarding the group's effectiveness in dealing with the transgressive leader (1 = *Completely disagree*; 7 = *Completely agree*): (1) "I believe in the efficacy of the Attorney General to deal with this case"; (2) "The Attorney General's decision in dealing with this decision was fair and appropriate"; (3) "The course of action taken by the Attorney General was responsible and in compliance with its duties." We used a mean score of the items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.97$).

6.4 | Dependent measures

6.4.1 | Group threat and formal punishment

Participants indicated their opinion about the threatening impact of the transgressive leader to the group and their agreement with several possible formal punishment reactions to the leader. These items were similar (adapted to the U.S. context) to those employed in Study 1. We used a mean score of the items for Group threat (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$), and for Formal punishment (Cronbach's $\alpha =$. 87).

6.4.2 | Validation of leader's behavior

In order to assess tolerance regarding the leader's misconduct, participants indicated how much they validated the leader's behavior in four bipolar traits: 1 = *Unnecessary, Not valid, Unacceptable and Unjustifiable*; 7 = *Necessary, Very valid, Acceptable and Justifiable*. This concept was based on Vala et al. (2011)'s research on behavior validation. We used a mean score of the items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$).

6.4.3 | Negative emotions

We asked participants to indicate how much anger and shame they felt regarding the transgressive leader (1 = *None*; 7 = *A lot of*). We used a mean score of the items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$).

6.4.4 | Collective protest

Finally, participants indicated their agreement (1 = *Completely disagree*; 7 = *Completely agree*) with four items measuring intention for punitive collective protest toward the leader: (1) "Help organize a petition to limit Senator Jones' decisive power within the Committee"; (2) "Participate in raising our collective voice demanding Senator Jones to be fired from the Committee"; (3) "Participate in an organized rally to force Senator Jones to be removed from office"; (4) "I would campaign on social media to raise awareness regarding Senator Jones' transgressions." We used a mean score of the items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$). These measures were inspired and developed to be consistent with the process of collective protest action (based on Machado et al., 2011).

7 | RESULTS

Results were analysed with a Leader Legitimacy × Social Control ANOVA on all the dependent measures. Tables 3 and 4 provide descriptive statistics and correlations for measures in Study 2.

7.1 | Control measures/Manipulation checks

7.1.1 | National identification

Participants were on average highly identified with the ingroup ($M = 5.72$; $SD = 1.17$), and this mean was higher than the mid-point of the scale (4), $t(191) = 20.39$, $p < .001$. There were no differences in terms of national identification between experimental conditions, all $Fs(1,188) \leq 1$, $p \geq .342$.

7.1.2 | Perceived legitimacy

There was a significant main effect of Leader Legitimacy, where participants perceived greater legitimacy in the Legitimate condition, than in the Illegitimate condition, $F(1,188) = 405.38$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.683$. Thus, the Leader Legitimacy manipulation was effective. As expected, we found no effect of Social Control, $F(1,188) = 2.55$ $p = .112$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.013$, or interaction, $F(1,188) < 1$.

TABLE 3 Correlations between variables (Study 2)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Leader legitimacy	–								
Social control	−0.012	–							
National identification	0.048	−0.072	–						
Perceived legitimacy (MC)	−0.825***	0.074	−0.001	–					
Perceived effectiveness of SC (MC)	−0.104	0.551***	0.150	0.173*	–				
Group threat	0.276***	0.031	−0.020	−0.243**	−0.243**	–			
Formal punishment	0.262***	0.081	0.016	−0.305***	−0.148*	0.672***	–		
Validation of leader's behaviour	−0.205**	0.003	0.006	0.319***	0.236**	−0.503***	−0.645***	–	
Negative emotions	0.303***	0.062	−0.012	−0.295***	−0.184*	0.668***	0.600***	−0.433***	–
Collective protest	0.193**	0.009	−0.021	−0.225**	−0.152*	0.476***	0.495***	−0.295***	0.555***

Note: $^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$.

Leader Legitimacy coded: Legitimate = −1; Illegitimate = 1; Social Control coded: Absent = −1; Present = 1.

TABLE 4 Descriptive statistics – Means (Standard Deviations) – per condition (Study 2)

	National identification	Perceived legitimacy (MC)	Perceived effectiveness of SC (MC)	Group threat	Formal punishment	Validation of leader's behaviour	Negative emotions	Collective protest
Legitimate × Absent	5.80 (1.18)	5.67 (1.17)	3.86 (1.59)	4.69 (1.32)	4.77 (1.16)	3.01 (1.53)	4.60 (1.39)	3.99 (1.63)
Legitimate × Present	5.53 (1.18)	5.86 (1.19)	5.15 (1.39)	4.93 (1.20)	5.24 (1.24)	2.77 (1.65)	5.03 (1.42)	3.86 (1.61)
Illegitimate × Absent	5.80 (1.17)	2.10 (1.04)	2.84 (1.54)	5.52 (1.18)	5.68 (1.24)	2.14 (1.31)	5.69 (1.24)	4.46 (1.78)
Illegitimate × Present	5.75 (1.15)	2.46 (1.39)	5.52 (1.18)	5.43 (0.92)	5.59 (0.97)	2.41 (1.45)	5.59 (1.13)	4.68 (1.45)
Legitimate (Total)	5.66 (1.18)	5.76 (1.18)	4.50 (1.62)	4.81 (1.26)	5.00 (1.22)	2.89 (1.59)	4.81 (1.42)	3.92 (1.62)
Illegitimate (Total)	5.77 (1.15)	2.27 (1.23)	4.13 (1.92)	5.48 (1.06)	5.63 (1.11)	2.27 (1.38)	5.64 (1.18)	4.57 (1.63)
Absent (Total)	5.80 (1.17)	3.96 (2.11)	3.37 (1.64)	5.09 (1.31)	5.21 (1.28)	2.59 (1.49)	5.12 (1.42)	4.21 (1.72)
Present (Total)	5.63 (1.16)	4.27 (2.13)	5.32 (1.30)	5.17 (1.10)	5.40 (1.13)	2.60 (1.56)	5.29 (1.32)	4.24 (1.58)
All conditions (Total)	5.72 (1.17)	4.11 (2.12)	4.33 (1.77)	5.13 (1.21)	5.30 (1.21)	2.60 (1.52)	5.21 (1.37)	4.23 (1.65)

7.1.3 | Perceived effectiveness of social control

Participants perceived formal social control mechanisms as more responsive to the leader's transgressive behavior in the Present condition than in the Absent condition, $F(1,188) = 90.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.326$. Thus, the Social Control manipulation was effective. We found no effect of Leader Legitimacy, $F(1,188) = 2.54$, $p = .112$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.013$, but we found a significant interaction, $F(1,188) = 11.11$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.056$. Participants perceived the social control to be significantly less effective in the Illegitimate-Absent condition, as compared to the Legitimate-Absent one, $t(96) = 3.24$, $p = .002$, $d = 0.66$, 95% CI = [0.40, 1.65] (see Table 4 for means). Although unexpected, these findings suggest that participants' views on the ineffectiveness of the social control mechanisms may have also been influenced by the leader's legitimacy.

7.2 | Dependent measures

7.2.1 | Group threat

As predicted, the analysis of variance showed a significant effect of Leader Legitimacy, indicating that participants perceived the illegitimate transgressive leader to be more threatening to the group than the legitimate transgressive leader, $F(1,188) = 15.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.076$. There was no significant effect of Social Control or interaction, $Fs(1,188) \leq 1$.

7.2.2 | Formal punishment

As predicted, participants agreed that the transgressive illegitimate leader should be punished more severely than the transgressive legitimate leader, $F(1,188) = 13.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.069$. There was no significant effect of Social Control, $F(1,188) = 1.24$, $p = .268$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.007$, or interaction, $F(1,188) = 2.72$, $p = .101$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.014$.

7.2.3 | Validation of leader's behavior

As predicted, participants perceived the leader's behavior as more valid when the transgressive leader was legitimate than when he was illegitimate, $F(1,188) = 8.14$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.041$. We found no effect of Social Control, $F < 1$, or interaction, $F(1,188) = 1.40$, $p = .239$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.007$.

7.2.4 | Negative emotions

As predicted, participants reported significantly more anger and shame when the transgressive leader was perceived as illegitimate as opposed to legitimate, $F(1,188) = 19.13$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.092$. There was no significant effect of Social Control, $F < 1$, or interaction, $F(1,188) = 1.98$, $p = .161$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.010$.

7.2.5 | Collective protest

As predicted, participants agreed more with collective protest in the Illegitimate condition, than in the Legitimate condition, $F(1,188) = 7.64$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.039$. There was no significant effect of Social Control or interaction, $Fs(1,188) < 1$.

7.3 | Mediation analysis

Considering that Social Control did not show a main effect or significant correlations with the dependent variables ($r \leq 0.062$, $p \geq .392$), we proceeded with our hypothesized mediation analysis. As such, we tested a sequential mediation model in which Leader Legitimacy (Legitimate = −1 and Illegitimate = 1) is associated with higher levels of Group threat, which in turn is associated with Negative emotions and, finally, with agreement with Collective protest. The Pearson's product-moment correlations between all measures were all significant ($r \geq 0.196$, $p \leq .006$). We proceeded to a sequential mediation analysis (Model 6, with 10,000 bootstraps; see Hayes, 2013) to test our prediction (see Figure 1). The total model significantly explained Collective protest, $F(3, 188) = 30.60$, $p < .001$, accounting for 32.81% of the variance. In line with our prediction, Group threat and Negative emotions significantly sequentially mediated the association between Leader Legitimacy and Collective protest: total indirect effect: $b = 0.30$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI = [0.16, 0.45]; total effect: $b = 0.32$, $SE = 0.12$, $t = 2.76$, $p = .006$, 95% CI = [0.09, 0.55]; direct effect: $b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.10$, $t = 0.25$, $p = .806$, 95% CI = [−0.18, 0.23]. In sum, the model shows that participants perceived the transgressive illegitimate leader as more threatening, and the more threatening the leader was perceived to be, the more anger and shame participants felt and, consequently, the stronger agreement with collective protest toward the leader. Conversely, the legitimate leader triggered less group threat, which was associated with less anger and shame, which in turn were associated with less willingness to engage in collective protest toward the legitimate leader.

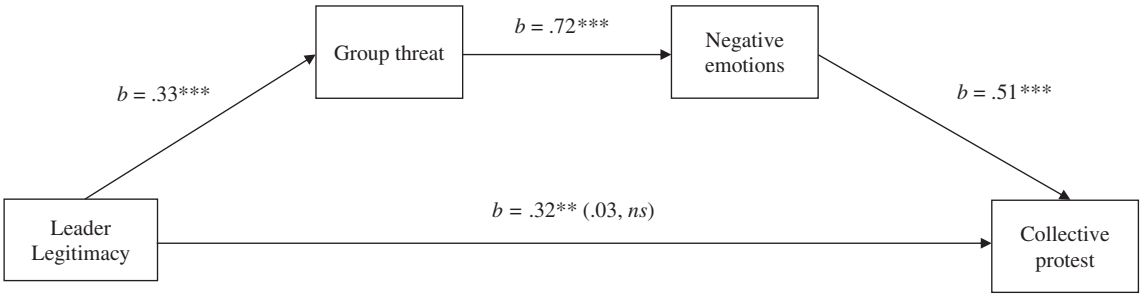

FIGURE 1 The mediating effect of Group threat and Negative emotions on the association between Leader Legitimacy and Collective protest (Study 2). Leader Legitimacy coded: Legitimate = −1; Illegitimate = 1. *$p < .05$ **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

7.4 | DISCUSSION

Overall, Study 2 provides further support to the idea that a leader's perceived (il)legitimacy determines how threatening the group perceives the leader's transgression to be, and, consequently, the extent to which participants agree with the implementation of formal punitive measures. Study 2 also extends previous findings, by showing that illegitimate leaders obtain less validation from group members, trigger more negative emotions and higher agreement with collective protest, compared to a transgressive legitimate leader. In sum, Study 2 found that only legitimate leaders are awarded transgression credit, and that they gather more validation for their decisions than illegitimate leaders do. Moreover, results also show that anger and shame (triggered by the threat posed by a transgressive illegitimate leader) are associated with increased willingness to engage in punitive collective protest aiming at removing the transgressive leader from the leadership role. In contrast, transgressive legitimate leaders were perceived as less threatening to the group, which resulted in a lower negative emotional state, and a relatively tolerant response from the group.

Additionally, Study 2 also tested the idea that participants view the group's social control inaction toward a transgressive leader as an acceptable reaction, if they perceive such leader as legitimate. In this sense, we found that legitimate leaders that engaged in transgressive behavior still benefit from transgression credit, even when it became clear that such leaders would not suffer consequences for their misconduct. Indeed, even in the absence of formal social control mechanisms, followers reacted more favorably toward transgressive legitimate leaders, compared to illegitimate leaders. Interestingly, we observed that in the absence of social control, participants perceived social control as less ineffective in controlling transgressive behavior from legitimate leaders, compared to illegitimate ones. This finding could be partly accounted by the influence that leader legitimacy can have on people's perceptions, and it could potentially explain why people at times seem indifferent toward transgressive leaders who go unpunished.

8 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

Both studies consistently showed that leader legitimacy is key in determining either favorable or unfavorable reactions toward a transgressive leader. A transgressive legitimate leader came across as less threatening to the ingroup and was more tolerated than a transgressive illegitimate leader. Study 1 demonstrated that punitive reactions to transgressive leaders were higher when they were perceived as illegitimate by their followers, as compared to legitimate leaders. In contrast, the transgressive legitimate leader was perceived as less threatening and raised less agreement with formal punishment measures (transgression credit), than the illegitimate leader. These results clarify the transgression credit given to leaders (Abrams et al., 2013), by showing that legitimate (but not illegitimate) leaders are considered worthy of the "benefit of the doubt" and forgiven for their transgressive behavior. Consequently, leader legitimacy allowed for greater transgression because followers abdicated moral authority to their leaders.

Study 2 showed that transgressive illegitimate leaders received less validation for their actions, raised feelings of anger and shame among group members and gathered higher agreement with collective protest. Specifically, the threat caused by illegitimate leaders triggered negative emotions that acted as fuel for collective actions to remove such leaders from their role. Considering the implications of an absence of leadership in groups, it is interesting to find that groups prefer to remove their leader (and become leaderless until a replacement is found), than accepting transgressive illegitimate leadership. Moreover, initial acknowledgment of leaders acts as a buffer for transgressive behavior, possibly giving such leaders a high degree of leniency for misconduct (Abrams et al., 2013; Randsley de Moura & Abrams, 2013). Furthermore, participants' reactions were fundamentally dependent on whether the leader was legitimate or not, even when presented with different outcomes of social control (i.e., the leader was facing punishment or would remain unpunished by authorities). Interestingly, in the absence of social control mechanisms, individuals showed more distrust in the group's social control system when the transgressive leader was perceived as illegitimate. In a sense, once deemed illegitimate, leaders' actions might be more easily perceived as transgressive. Future research could further explore whether people's opinions on the effectiveness of the justice system are influenced by the leader's legitimacy.

8.1 | Theoretical and applied implications

Results suggest that group members rely on a leader's (il)legitimacy in order to decide how to interpret the transgression, and consequently, how to react. These data shed light on why some leaders are pressured to resign from their position after their misconducts become public, while others are allowed to remain in office. In fact, our results show that disinvestment from the group (Pinto et al., 2016) may not be the only reaction group members adopt. Alternative responses such as tolerance (and validation/ acceptance) of the transgression behavior or informal punitive reactions can be implemented toward the transgressors. Future research could consider the impact that these responses have on commitment to the group and on group cohesion.

The current paper provides novel insights into the drivers of tolerance for transgressive leaders, but its findings also have important applied implications. Ensuring an ethical environment is of importance for many organizations and promoting ethical conduct is key to effective corporate governance (Jamali et al., 2008). This is especially relevant, given that leaders have a key role in shaping ethical organizational culture (Ciulla, 1998; Freeman et al., 1988; Treviño, 1990) and are likely to modulate their followers' behavior (Brown et al., 2005). In fact, our studies suggest that judgments of unethical leaders seem to depend more on how legitimate leaders are perceived to be than their actual behavior. Indeed, demonstrations

across several countries are filled with social frustration toward their countries' leaders; some of them are even violent in requesting for leaders' resignation. The current European socioeconomic crisis weighs heavily on the people, and in many countries, leaders appear to be failing in restoring common well-being. Such failure may deem leaders as illegitimate, for not being competent or motivated enough, by failing to meet the promises made, and therefore, losing credibility among the people. These leaders are ultimately seen through a filter of negative expectations that can easily unchain perceptions that these leaders' behaviors are less valid, while triggering punitive collective attitudes toward them, namely claiming for their removal.

The presented manipulation of legitimacy consisted in two parts: (1) leader emergence (or selection by employees/peers) versus leader appointment and the granting of leadership; (2) Combination of positive (versus negative) traits and interactions with the group. Although previous research has equated leader selection by peers with granting of leadership (Ben-Yoav et al., 1983; Hollander & Julian, 1970; Julian et al., 1969), in most workplaces, leaders are appointed and not elected. In fact, the notion that a president of a company was elected by employees or peers is unrealistic. Naturally, leaders can be appointed, and still be granted leadership. Because of this, we adjusted our scenarios to more public organizations in an attempt to create a more realistic scenario. Nevertheless, we argue that the process behind leader selection is not the only factor contributing to one's legitimacy. That is, in an attempt to pin down the factor of leader legitimacy, we focused on positive impressions/interactions between the leader and "other group members" (Phillips et al., 2009), along with other relevant traits, such as trust and competence (Hollander, 2009; Julian et al., 1969; Shapiro et al., 2011). In fact, even the manipulation check of leader legitimacy might conflate perceptions of purely trust and perceptions legitimacy (granting of leadership). While related, they are not necessarily the same. In that regard, the concept of leader legitimacy might share similarities with other relevant concepts in leadership research. Future research should focus on a more detailed conceptualization to explore these differences.

In the present research we used experimental vignettes, as this has been shown to be a valid and appropriate method (e.g., Aguinis & Bradley, 2014), and is a mechanism which allows to test research questions that might pose ethical complexities in typical organizational research methods (e.g., manipulating leader transgression in a real organizational context would not be possible). Furthermore, this research was conducted in two different countries (Portugal and the United Kingdom), and consistently showed the legitimacy effect. Nonetheless, future research could extend the generalizability of these findings using alternative methods (e.g., longitudinal surveys, particularly when considering the role of perceived leader legitimacy as a predictor of socially relevant outcomes), varied normative contexts and settings (e.g., politics, organizations, sports).

In summary, leader legitimacy seems to be essential to account for reactions to transgressive leaders, as legitimate leaders are given more credit for moral transgressions. In a sense, the group seems to enter a validation process of the leader's misconduct, as legitimate leaders are perceived to have earned the right to lead and, thus, deserve a "second chance." Above all, it seems that a leader's formal role is not the only aspect that defines their power, as leadership seems to be of little use without the group's acknowledgment and validation of the leader's legitimacy.

ORCID

André G. Marques https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7656-0977
Isabel R. Pinto https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5788-4140
Ana C. Leite https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7829-5641
Georgina Randsley de Moura https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6285-6128
Jan-Willem van Prooijen https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6236-0819

REFERENCES

Abrams, D., Ando, K., & Hinkle, S. (1998). Psychological attachment to the group: Cross-cultural differences in organizational identification and subjective norms as predictors of workers' turnover intentions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *24*(10), 1027–1039. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672982410001

Abrams, D., & Randsley de Moura, G. (2002). The psychology of collective political protest. In V. C. Ottati, R. S. Tindale, J. Edwards, F. B. Bryant, L. Health, D. C. O'Connell, Y. Suarez-Balzacar, & E. J. Posavac (Eds.), *The social psychology of politics* (pp. 193–214). Springer US.

Abrams, D., Randsley de Moura, G., Marques, J. M., & Hutchison, P. (2008). Innovation credit: When can leaders oppose their group's norms? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *95*(3), 662–678. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.95.3.662

Abrams, D., Randsley de Moura, G., & Travaglino, G. A. (2013). A double standard when group members behave badly: Transgression credit to ingroup leaders. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *105*(5), 799–815. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033600

Abrams, D., Travaglino, G. A., Marques, J. M., Pinto, I., & Levine, J. M. (2018). Deviance credit: Tolerance of deviant ingroup leaders is mediated by their accrual of prototypicality and conferral of their right to be supported. *Journal of Social Issues*, *74*(1), 36–55. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12255

Abrams, D., Travaglino, G. A., Randsley de Moura, G., & May, P. J. (2014). A step too far? Leader racism inhibits transgression credit. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *44*(7), 730–735. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2063

Aguinis, H., & Bradley, K. J. (2014). Best Practice recommendations for designing and implementing experimental vignette methodology studies. *Organizational Research Methods*, *17*(4), 351–371. 10.1177/1094428114547952

Balser, D. B., & Carmin, J. (2009). Leadership succession and the emergence of an organizational identity threat. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, *20*(2), 185–201. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.248

Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. R. (2009). *The bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*. New York: Free Press.

Becker, J. C., & Tausch, N. (2015). A dynamic model of engagement in normative and non-normative collective action: Psychological antecedents, consequences, and barriers. *European Review of Social Psychology*, *26*(1), 43–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2015.1094265

Ben-Yoav, O., Hollander, E. P., & Carnevale, P. J. D. (1983). Leader legitimacy, leader-follower interaction, and followers' ratings of the leader. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *121*(1), 111–115. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1983.9924472

Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K., & Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing.

Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, *97*(2), 117–134. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2005.03.002

Caddick, B. (1982). Perceived illegitimacy and intergroup relations. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Social identity and intergroup relations* (pp. 137–154). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Campos, M., Marques, A. G., Aguiar, T., Cardoso, S. G., Pinto, I. R., & Marques, J. M. (2017). Popular justice on bullies: Attributions of responsibility, anger, and ineffective social control as fuel for non-normative collective action. *Psicologia*, *31*, 47–56. https://doi.org/10.17575/rpsicol.v31i2.1144

Ciulla, J. B. (1998). *Ethics, the heart of leadership* (Q. Books Ed). Westport, Conn: Quorum Books.

De Weerd, M., & Klandermans, B. (1999). Group identification and political protest: Farmers' protest in the Netherlands. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *29*(8), 1073–1095. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(199912)29:8<1073:AID-EJSP986>3.0.CO;2-K

Erikson, E. H. (1964). *Insight and responsibility: Lectures on the ethical implications of psychoanalytic insight*. New York: W Norton & Co.

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, *39*(2), 175–191. https://doi.org/10.3758/bf03193146

Freeman, R. E., Gilbert, D. R., & Hartman, E. (1988). Values and the foundations of strategic management. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *7*(11), 821–834. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00383045

Frijda, N. H., Kuipers, P., & ter Schure, E. (1989). Relations among emotion, appraisal, and emotional action readiness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *57*, 212–228. 10.1037/0022-3514.57.2.212

Gibbs, J. P. (1977). Social control, deterrence, and perspectives on social order. *Social Forces*, *56*(2), 408–423. https://doi.org/10.2307/2577733

Hayes, A. F. (2013). Methodology in the social sciences. *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hogg, M. A. (2001). A social identity theory of leadership. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *5*(3), 184–200. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0503_1

Hogg, M. A., Hains, S. C., & Mason, I. (1998). Identification and leadership in small groups: Salience, frame of reference, and leader stereotypicality effects on leader evaluations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *75*(5), 1248–1263. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.75.5.1248

Hogg, M. A., van Knippenberg, D., & Rast, D. E. (2012). The social identity theory of leadership: Theoretical origins, research findings, and conceptual developments. *European Review of Social Psychology*, *23*(1), 258–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2012.741134

Hollander, E. P. (1958). Conformity, status, and idiosyncrasy credit. *Psychological Review*, *65*(2), 117–127. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0042501

Hollander, E. P. (1992). Leadership, followership, self, and others. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *3*(1), 43–54. https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(92)90005-Z

Hollander, E. P. (2006). Influence processes in leadership–followership: Inclusion and the idiosyncrasy credit model. In: D. A. Hantula (Ed.), *Advances in social and organizational psychology: A tribute to ralph rosnow* (pp. 293–312). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Hollander, E. P. (2009). *Inclusive leadership: The essential leader-follower relationship*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Hollander, E. P., & Julian, J. W. (1970). Studies in leader legitimacy, influence, and innovation. In B. Leonard (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 5, pp. 33–69): Academic Press.

Hoyt, C. L., Price, T. L., & Poatsy, L. (2013). The social role theory of unethical leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *24*(5), 712–723. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.07.001

Jamali, D., Safieddine, A. M., & Rabbath, M. (2008). Corporate governance and corporate social responsibility synergies and interrelationships. *Corporate Governance: An International Review*, *16*(5), 443–459. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8683.2008.00702.x

Julian, J. W., Hollander, E. P., & Regula, C. R. (1969). Endorsement of the group spokesman as a function of his source of authority, competence, and success. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *11*(1), 42–49. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0027043

Karelaia, N., & Keck, S. (2013). When deviant leaders are punished more than non-leaders: The role of deviance severity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *49*(5), 783–796. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2013.04.003

Kellerman, B. (2004). *Bad leadership: What it is, how it happens, why it matters*. Harvard Business Press.

Kelman, H. C., & Hamilton, V. L. (1989). *Crimes of obedience: Toward a social psychology of authority and responsibility*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Kim, P. H., Dirks, K. T., Cooper, C. D., & Ferrin, D. L. (2006). When more blame is better than less: The implications of internal vs. external attributions for the repair of trust after a competence- vs. integrity-based trust violation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *99*(1), 49–65. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2005.07.002

Klandermans, B., Sabucedo, J. M., Rodriguez, M., & De Weerd, M. (2002). Identity processes in collective action participation: Farmers' identity and farmers' protest in the Netherlands and Spain. *Political Psychology*, *23*(2), 235–251. https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00280

Lerner, J. S., Gonzalez, R. M., Small, D. A., & Fischhoff, B. (2003). Effects of fear and anger on perceived risks of terrorism: A national field experiment. *Psychological Science*, *14*(2), 144–150. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9280.01433

Levi, M., Sacks, A., & Tyler, T. (2009). Conceptualizing legitimacy, measuring legitimating beliefs. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *53*(3), 354–375. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764209338797

Levin, S., Pratto, F., Matthews, M., Sidanius, J., & Kteily, N. (2013). A dual process approach to understanding prejudice toward Americans in Lebanon: An extension to intergroup threat perceptions and emotions. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *16*(2), 139–158. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430212443866

Levine, J. M. (1989). Reaction to opinion deviance in small groups. In *Psychology of group influence*. , 2nd ed. (pp. 187–231). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Lickel, B., Schmader, T., Curtis, M., Scarnier, M., & Ames, D. R. (2005). Vicarious shame and guilt. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *8*(2), 145–157. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430205051064

Machado, F., Scartascini, C., & Tommasi, M. (2011). Political institutions and street protests in Latin America. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *55*(3), 340–365. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002711400864

Magee, J. C., & Frasier, C. W. (2014). Status and power: The principal inputs to influence for public managers. *Public Administration Review*, *74*(3), 307–317. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12203

Marques, J. M., Abrams, D., Páez, D., & Hogg, M. A. (2001). *Social categorization, social identification, and rejection of deviant group members Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Group Processes* (pp. 400–424). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *The Academy of Management Review*, *20*(3), 709–734. https://doi.org/10.2307/258792

Páez, D., Javaloy, F., Wlodarczyk, A., Espelt, E., & Rimé, B. (2013). El movimiento 15-M: Sus acciones como rituales, compartir social, creencias, valores y emociones. *Revista De Psicología Social*, *28*(1), 19–33. https://doi.org/10.1174/021347413804756078

Phillips, K. W., Rothbard, N. P., & Dumas, T. L. (2009). To disclose or not to disclose? Status distance and self-disclosure in diverse environments. *The Academy of Management Review*, *34*(4), 710–732.

Pinto, I. R., Marques, J. M., & Paez, D. (2016). National identification as a function of perceived social control: A subjective group dynamics

analysis. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *19*(2), 236–256. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430215577225

Randsley de Moura, G., & Abrams, D. (2013). Bribery, blackmail, and the double standard for leader transgressions. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, *17*(1), 43–52. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031287

Ratcliff, N. J., & Vescio, T. K. (2017). The effects of leader illegitimacy on leaders' and subordinates' responses to relinquishing power decisions. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *48*(3), 365–379. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2335

Reicher, S. D. (1996). The battle of Westminster: Developing the social identity model of crowd behaviour in order to explain the initiation and development of collective con¯ict. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *26*, 115–134.

Sadler, M. S., Lineberger, M., Correll, J., & Park, B. (2005). Emotions, attributions, and policy endorsement in response to the September 11th terrorist attacks. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, *27*(3), 249–258. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15324834basp2703_6

Shapiro, D. L., Boss, A. D., Salas, S., Tangirala, S., & Von Glinow, M. A. (2011). When are transgressing leaders punitively judged? An empirical test. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *96*(2), 412–422. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021442

Smith, H. J., & Kessler, T. (2004). Group-based emotions and intergroup behavior: The case of relative deprivation. In *The social life of emotions* (pp. 292–313). Cambridge University Press.

Strelan, P., & van Prooijen, J.-W. (2013). Retribution and forgiveness: The healing effects of punishing for just deserts. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *43*(6), 544–553. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.1964

Stürmer, S., & Simon, B. (2009). Pathways to collective protest: Calculation, identification, or emotion? A critical analysis of the role of group-based anger in social movement participation. *Journal of Social Issues*, *65*(4), 681–705. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2009.01620.x

Tausch, N., Becker, J. C., Spears, R., Christ, O., Saab, R., Singh, P., & Siddiqui, R. N. (2011). Explaining radical group behavior: Developing emotion and efficacy routes to normative and nonnormative collective action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *101*(1), 129–148. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022728

Thomas, E. F., McGarty, C., & Mavor, K. I. (2009). Aligning identities, emotions, and beliefs to create commitment to sustainable social and political action. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *13*(3), 194–218. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309341563

Travaglino, G. A., Abrams, D., Randsley de Moura, G., & Russo, G. (2015). That is how we do it around here: Levels of identification, masculine honor, and social activism against organized crime in the south of Italy. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *45*(3), 342–348. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2100

Treviño, L. K. (1990). A cultural perspective on changing and developing organizational ethics. In P. W. E. Woodman (Ed.), *Research in organizational change and development* (Vol. 4, pp. 195–230). JAI Press.

Tyler, T. R. (2002). Leadership and cooperation in groups. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *45*(5), 769–782. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764202045005003

Tyler, T. R. (2006). Psychological perspectives on legitimacy and legitimation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *57*(1), 375–400. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.57.102904.190038

Vala, J., Drozda-Senkowska, E., Oberlé, D., Lopes, D., & Silva, . (2011). Group heterogeneity and social validation of everyday knowledge. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *14*(3), 347–362.

van Knippenberg, D. (2011). Embodying who we are: Leader group prototypicality and leadership effectiveness. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *22*(6), 1078–1091. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.09.004

van Prooijen, J.-W. (2018). *The moral punishment instinct*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190609979.001.0001

van Stekelenburg, J., & Klandermans, B. (2010). Individuals in movements: A social psychology of contention. In B. Klandermans & C. Roggeband (Eds.), *Handbook of social movements across disciplines* (pp. 157–204). Springer US.

van Stekelenburg, J., & Klandermans, B. (2017). Individuals in movements: A social psychology of contention. In C. Roggeband & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Handbook of social movements across disciplines* (pp. 103–139). Springer International Publishing.

van Stekelenburg, J., Klandermans, B., & van Dijk, W. W. (2011). Combining motivations and emotion: The motivational dynamics of protest participation. *Revista De Psicología Social*, *26*(1), 91–104. https://doi.org/10.1174/021347411794078426

Van Zomeren, M., Spears, R., Fischer, A. H., & Leach, C. W. (2004). Put your money where your mouth is! Explaining collective action tendencies through group-based anger and efficacy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *87*(5), 649–664.

Vial, A. C., Napier, J. L., & Brescoll, V. L. (2016). A bed of thorns: Female leaders and the self-reinforcing cycle of illegitimacy. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *27*(3), 400–414. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.12.004

Willis, G. B., Guinote, A., & Rodríguez-Bailón, R. (2010). Illegitimacy improves goal pursuit in powerless individuals. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *46*(2), 416–419. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2009.10.009

Wright, S. C., Taylor, D. M., & Moghaddam, F. M. (1990). Responding to membership in a disadvantaged group: From acceptance to collective protest. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *58*(6), 994–1003. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.58.6.994

How to cite this article: Marques AG, Pinto IR, Leite AC, de Moura GR, van Prooijen J-W, Marques JM. A right to lead": The role of leader legitimacy on group reactions to transgressive leadership. *J Appl Soc Psychol*. 2021;51:350–362. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12739