# With Due Respect, I Disagree: From Crisis and Conflict to Tolerance Through Online Social Norms

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## INTRODUCTION

As communication has moved into online settings, so too have the conflicts that accompany it. In offline contexts, social norms play a fundamental role in regulating real-world disagreements. The present studies examine conversations in chatrooms where participants, who are unaware they are interacting with bots, are exposed to, or take part in constructing, an equality-based respect norm.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

01 Exposure to respect norms shifts attitudes, but interactive norm formation is untested (Estevan-Reina et al., in press; Simon, et. al. 2016)

02 Principle-implementation gap: abstract tolerance endorsement consistently exceeds support in concrete cases (Dixon et al., 2017).

03 Specific tolerance, being context-dependent, may be a stronger predictor of behavior (Gurbisz, 2025)

**RQ1** Are norms perceived in CMC? Do effects generalise?

**RQ2** Does exposure to respect norms (in CMC) shape tolerance?

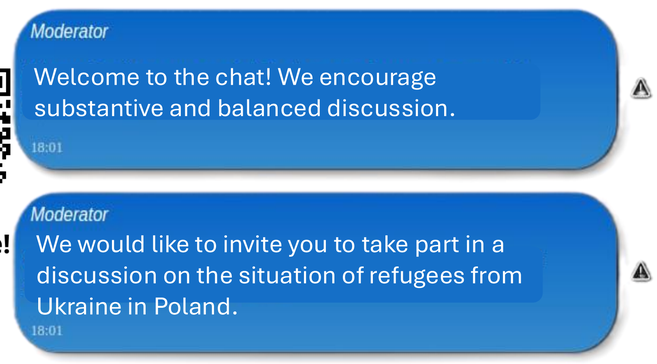
**RQ3** General vs. specific tolerance, does the implementation gap hold?

**RQ4** Behavioral translation of general vs. specific tolerance?

## METHOD

| Respect Condition | Lack of Respect Condition |
|---|---|
| It seems to me that Ukrainians livin and wrking in Poland should have access to social benefits because **after all we're all equal.** | It seems to me that Ukrainians should have access to social benefits if they meet the appropriate conditions. |
| On the one hand, this is a group that **should receive help, out of respect for another person.** | On one hand, this is a group that should receive help because of the war taking place in their country. |

**Scan me!** for walkthrough of the study



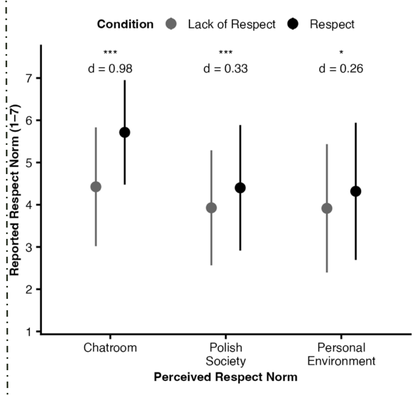

### Measures

- Respect norm perception in
  - Chatroom
  - Personal Environment
  - Polish Society e.g. "Most Poles believe that Ukrainian refugees should always be treated as individuals of equal value"
- General tolerance e.g. "Ukrainian refugees in Poland should have the freedom to live as they wish:
- Specific tolerance e.g. "Ukrainian refugees in Poland should have access to social welfare programs"
- Behaviour e.g. "Would you like to subscribe to the newsletter of a foundation supporting Ukrainian refugees to learn more about this topic? "

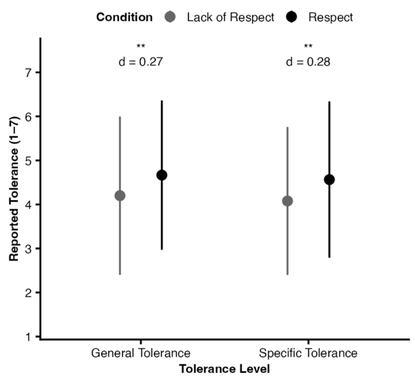
## RESULTS

### STUDY 1

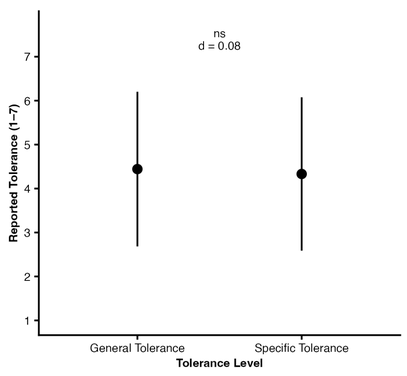
Participants exposed to respect condition, compared to the lack of respect condition of the manipulation, report **stronger perceptions of respect norms** in (a) the chatroom (b) Polish society (c) personal environment.



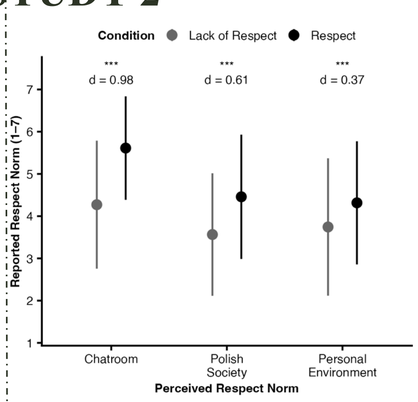

Participants exposed to the respect condition exhibit a significantly **higher level of tolerance overall** compared to participants in the lack of respect condition.

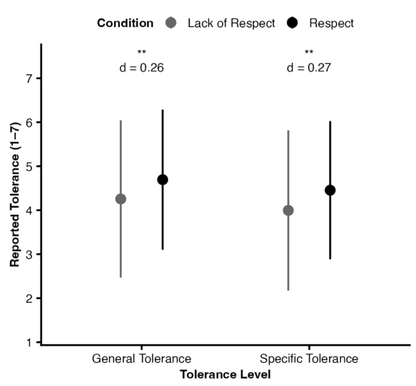


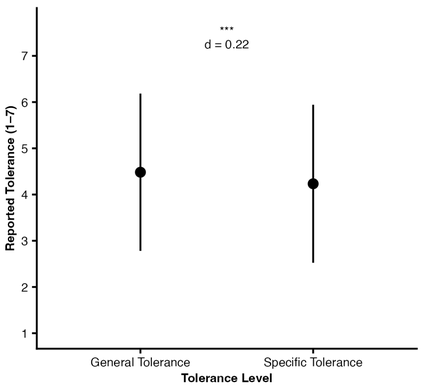

**Regardless** of the **condition**, participants **score** significantly **higher** on the **general tolerance** scale than the specific tolerance scale.



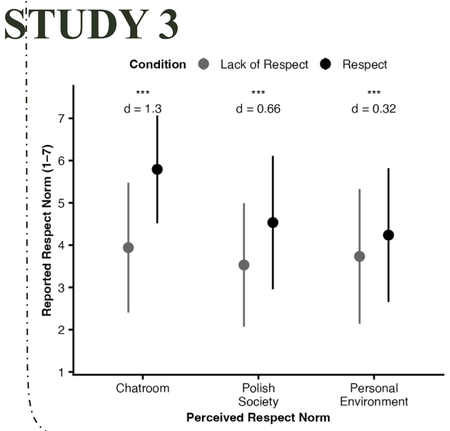

### STUDY 2

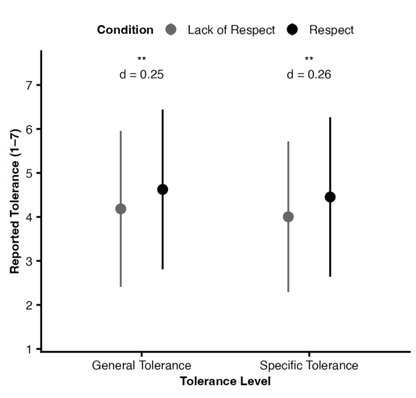


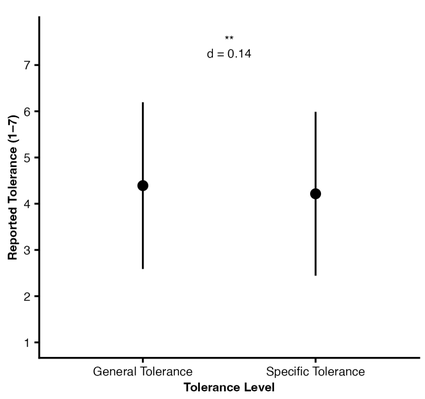




### STUDY 3




**Specific tolerance** is more **strongly linked** with active tolerant (a) **behavioral intentions** and (b) **online behavior,** than general tolerance.

| DV | Predictor | *b* | *SE* | t/z | *p* | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Behavioral Intentions** | (Intercept) | 0.63 | 0.20 | 3.17 | .002** | [0.24, 1.02] |
| | General Tolerance | 0.14 | 0.06 | 2.43 | .015* | [0.03, 0.25] |
| | Specific Tolerance | 0.55 | 0.06 | 9.81 | < .001*** | [0.44, 0.66] |
| Overall model | | $F(2, 404) = 138.8$, $p < .001$, adj.$R^2 = .40$ | | | | |
| **Behavior** | (Intercept) | -3.70 | 0.49 | -7.50 | < .001*** | [-4.73, -2.78] |
| | General Tolerance | 0.03 | 0.11 | 0.28 | .781 | [-0.18, 0.24] |
| | Specific Tolerance | 0.46 | 0.11 | 4.10 | <.001*** | [0.25, 0.69] |
| Overall model | | $\chi^2(2) = 37.55$, p < .001 | | | | |

| DV | Predictor | *b* | *SE* | t/z | *p* | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Behavioral Intentions** | (Intercept) | 1.74 | 0.25 | 7.06 | < .001*** | [1.26, 2.23] |
| | General Tolerance | 0.07 | 0.06 | 1.21 | .228 | [-0.04, 0.18] |
| | Specific Tolerance | 0.36 | 0.06 | 6.05 | < .001*** | [0.24, 0.48] |
| Overall model | | $F(3, 442) = 142.1$, $p < .001$, adj.$R^2 = .49$ | | | | |
| **Behavior** | (Intercept) | -4.37 | 0.72 | -6.05 | < .001*** | [-5.84, -3.00] |
| | General Tolerance | 0.33 | 0.15 | 2.18 | .029* | [0.04, 0.63] |
| | Specific Tolerance | 0.19 | 0.15 | 1.25 | .212 | [-0.11, 0.49] |
| Overall model | | $\chi^2(3) = 40.12$, p < .001 | | | | |

| DV | Predictor | *b* | *SE* | t/z | *p* | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Behavioral Intentions** | (Intercept) | 1.41 | 0.22 | 6.27 | < .001*** | [0.97, 1.85] |
| | General Tolerance | 0.14 | 0.05 | 3.07 | .002 | [0.05, 0.23] |
| | Specific Tolerance | 0.38 | 0.05 | 7.10 | < .001*** | [0.28, 0.49] |
| Overall model | | $F(3, 523) = 199.7$, $p < .001$, adj.$R^2 = .53$ | | | | |
| **Behavior** | (Intercept) | -3.02 | 0.59 | -5.15 | < .001*** | [-5.84, -3.00] |
| | General Tolerance | -0.05 | 0.11 | -0.46 | .648 | [0.04, 0.63] |
| | Specific Tolerance | 0.31 | 0.14 | 2.32 | .020* | [-0.11, 0.49] |
| Overall model | | $\chi^2(3) = 40.12$, $p < .001$ | | | | |

**Study 1:** Key Takeaways

Established the respect norm-tolerance link in a semi-**passive environment.**

The respect-norm manipulation **impacted both general and specific tolerance.**

Although **mean levels** of general and specific **tolerance did not differ** significantly, **specific tolerance** was more **strongly** associated with **behavioral outcomes.**

**Study 2:** Key Takeaways

**Replicated** the respect norm-tolerance relationship in a highly **interactive** environment.

**Strengthened** the **manipulation** by incorporating a **voting procedure** (participant voted last out of the 6 voters: thus potential confound)

Observed substantial participant **attrition**.

**Study 3:** Key Takeaways

**Replicated** the respect norm-tolerance relationship.

Refined the voting procedure by obtaining participant vote prior to the bots.

Examined attrition and identified reluctance to click the external link as a contributing factor.

## DISCUSSION

Across three experimental studies, we show that such norms can be identified, internalized, and generalized within CMC environments, and that they reliably increase both general and specific tolerance. The norm internalization persisted and remained stable as participants moved from passive observation (Study 1) to full conversational participation (Studies 2 and 3). Specific tolerance was generally a stronger predictor of behavioural intentions than general tolerance. Effects were less consistent for behavioural outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

These findings highlight the importance of environments that support deliberation across disagreement and enable peaceful coexistence.

**Complementary correlational evidence on respect norms and tolerance:**

**References:**

Dixon, J., Durrheim, K., & Thomae, M. (2017). The Principle-Implementation gap in attitudes towards racial equality (and how to close it). Political Psychology, 38(S1), 91–126.
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Simon, B., & Schaefer, C. D. (2015). Tolerance as a function of disapproval and respect: The case of Muslims. British Journal of Social Psychology, 55(2), 375–383.

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**Code:**

The code behind the interactive manipulation can be found on github: