

# Evaluation of Ingroup Disloyalty Within a MultiGroup Context

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**Abstract.** The present research sought to determine if group vulnerability to ingroup norm violations moderated evaluations of these disloyal acts. Specifically, it tested the notion that smaller groups, groups organized around a moral cause, and groups demanding relatively high sacrifice from members would most harshly evaluate instances of ingroup disloyalty because such actions may be more likely to dissolve the group, undermine its message, or tempt other members to deviate. A first experiment found that the most distinct and vulnerable group – vegans – devalued disloyal ingroup behavior more than others, particularly when the mainstream was salient. A second experiment also found that vegans rated ingroup disloyalty more negatively than vegetarians when the disloyal act was unconcealed, that is, committed in front of outgroup members who knew the violator’s group membership. In addition, this effect was found to be primarily mediated by concerns that disloyalty would undermine intergroup distinctiveness and the ingroup’s message.

**Keywords:** ingroup disloyalty, disloyal group members, vegans, ethical vegetarians, health vegetarians, intergroup judgments

The boundaries between intragroup and intergroup differentiation are easily blurred, and this is apparent in research on how members who bring ignominy to the ingroup are evaluated. According to the black sheep effect, individuals derogate such unlikeable ingroup members compared with their outgroup counterparts, regardless of the source of their undesirability. This phenomenon is especially strong when a positive social identity requires validation. For example, Marques, Abrams, and Serodio (2001) have shown that ingroup members were rated more extremely when uncertainty existed about the ingroup’s superiority relative an outgroup, but not when reassurances were made of the ingroup’s superiority. While varying intergroup contexts may make groups more or less sensitive to the black sheep phenomenon, enduring characteristics of groups may also moderate such judgments of unfavorable ingroup members. We tested this basic proposition by focusing on a distinct type of disgraced individual: a group member who violates a central ingroup norm or criteria for membership. These hereafter labeled *disloyal* group members are perhaps closest to what Abrams, Marques, Bown, and Henson (2000) call anti-norm ingroup deviants. In their research though, deviancy was related to trait or attitude dissimilarity from the ingroup; for our purposes, it relates to violating a more core ingroup norm.

To some extent, actions of disloyal members may be devalued for similar reasons as acts of imposters (i.e., those who publicly claim to be a group member while privately failing to fulfill key criteria for membership), chiefly that they threaten group distinctiveness and blur intergroup boundaries (see Hornsey & Jetten, 2003; Warner, Hornsey, & Jetten, 2007). Although not directly testing their assump-

tion, Warner et al. (2007) reasoned that such concerns with imposters should be greatest among minority groups, for whom well-defined boundaries would facilitate collective action and minority influence. In terms of disloyalty, we propose more generally that the evaluation of disloyal members should be moderated by a group’s vulnerability to nonnormative ingroup behavior. Specifically, the present research focused on three group characteristics expected to contribute to disloyalty vulnerability: *group size*, in that smaller groups can least afford to lose a member; *moral commitment*, in that disloyalty harms the ability of groups organized around a moral cause to convert new members from the mainstream; and *sacrifice*, in that groups requiring greater sacrifice may find that disloyalty calls into question each member’s adherence to demanding ingroup norms.

To elaborate on each, there are several reasons why ingroup disloyalty may be particularly threatening to smaller groups. First, except in the unusual case of “constructive deviance” (see Jetten & Hornsey, 2014), a member who commits a disloyal act is more likely to defect, and such defections would disproportionately impact groups that have fewer members. With too many defections, the group may cease to exist at all. A disloyal member also represents a potential loss of social support and solidarity and increased isolation, disproportionately affecting smaller groups. The respect provided by like-minded group members is also disrupted by disloyalty, and again, this loss should be especially felt in individuals with fewer like-minded associates in the first place.

The strategic success of groups motivated by moral concerns may also be significantly undercut by disloyal group members (see Hornsey & Jetten, 2003 for parallel

reasoning on imposters) in large measure, because disloyalty undermines their message. Members who violate ingroup norms create inconsistency in the group's message, known to severely lower approval and support from the majority (Moscovici, Mucchi, & Maass, 1994). Because disloyal group members can be cast as hypocrites, and hypocrisy in others is cited as a main reason people resist pro-social messages (Booth-Butterfield, Anderson, & Williams, 2000; Whitcomb, 1998), disloyalty may damage the veracity of the group's moral position and make it harder to recruit new members. Violations of central ingroup norms may also impede the development of politicized collective identity (Simon & Klandermans, 2001) making it more difficult for these groups to take collective action promoting their cause.

Finally, disloyal ingroup members may be troubling for groups that require substantial sacrifice or effort to maintain membership. In these instances, learning that an individual has resorted back to the less demanding behavior of the mainstream may tempt group members to do the same. In short, disloyalty may threaten the ability of vulnerable groups to maintain existing members and recruit new members, both vital for the longevity of the group.

These concerns with being a distinct and thriving group should be accentuated by contextual manipulations that make following normative behavior more essential. One factor that vulnerable groups are particularly sensitive to is the salience of the dominant group. White, Schmitt, and Langer (2006) found that when the mainstream group was a salient part of the intergroup context, normative behaviors that positively distinguished vulnerable groups from the mainstream became raised in value and importance. In such a psychological context, disloyalty would be perceived as even more egregious and offensive than usual. Thus, in addition to group vulnerability exerting a main effect, it may interact with factors heightening the importance of the group-defining norm in affecting evaluations of disloyalty.

In the first study, I examined these claims within a multigroup context that required each group to evaluate a disloyal act from an ingroup member and members of two outgroups. The challenge was to locate groups varying in size, degree of moral commitment, and membership sacrifice while controlling for nonnormative behavior. That is, in the real world, norm violations for morally based groups or groups requiring its members to make greater commitment may objectively be more serious or destructive in nature than norm violations for other groups. To remedy this, we examined a certain type of disloyalty, meat abstainers who eat meat, and in doing so utilized a paradigm developed by Hussar and Harris (2010) to study moral reasoning in children. In their research, 6–10 year old independent vegetarians (raised in nonvegetarian families), vegetarian children raised by vegetarian families, and nonvegetarian children rated how bad it would be if a morally-committed vegetarian, personally-committed (i.e., health) vegetarian, and nonvegetarian consumed meat. The results demon-

strated that the same behavior was evaluated differently depending on the target's group membership: Transgressions by the morally-committed vegetarian were judged most harshly, followed by health vegetarian transgressions.

The current research made four modifications to the above procedure: I used adult participants rather than children; I measured participants' motives (ethical vs. health) for being vegetarian; I included vegans as participants and targets; and participants evaluated disloyalty when the mainstream omnivore group was salient or not. This allowed for a direct comparison of ratings of ingroup and outgroup disloyalty by members of groups varying in size, moral commitment, and sacrifice when the disloyal act (i.e., eating meat) was identical in each case.

Of the three groups, vegans are the most numerically (2% of the US population identified as vegan vs. 5% as vegetarian; Gallup, 2012), attitudinally, and behaviorally distinct. By adhering to a more restrictive diet – in addition to not eating meat/fish, they avoid all animal products including dairy and eggs – veganism requires an even bigger sacrifice than vegetarianism. Most often this added disruption is fueled by a concern for animal welfare (Rothgerber, 2013); vegans believed that animals were more similar in their emotionality to humans (Rothgerber, 2013), expressed greater concern over the impact of their diet on animal welfare (Ruby, 2008), demonstrated more pro-animal attitudes (Ruby, Cheng, & Heine, 2011), and offered more animal-related explanations for their diet than did vegetarians (Rothgerber, 2013). The moral opposition to the exploitation of animals is strong enough that vegans indicated that their diet was more of a lifestyle than a diet (Fox & Ward, 2008), and for some, these convictions were felt so powerfully that they refused sexual intimacy with non-vegans (Potts & Parry, 2010).

Because of their small size and strong commitment to a distinct moral cause, it was expected that vegans would judge ingroup disloyalty more negatively than would vegetarians to protect the vulnerable ingroup from dissolution. Secondly, because disloyalty was thought especially threatening to groups defined by a moral issue or cause, vegetarians motivated by ethical concerns should evaluate ingroup disloyalty more negatively than those motivated by individual health concerns. The third prediction concerned the effect of mainstream salience. Rothgerber (in press) and White et al. (2006) found that by priming participants to think of themselves as part of a large undifferentiated majority, distinctiveness motives (promoting hostility toward similar but less distinct minority groups – i.e., horizontal hostility) and ingroup identification were heightened. These effects were asymmetric and disproportionately affected vulnerable groups whose normative behavior deviated the greatest from the majority (i.e., vegans). Because these effects were most strongly seen in vegan participants, making the mainstream omnivore group salient was expected to remind vegan participants in particular how important their ingroup was to them and to increase negativity toward disloyalty.

Table 1. Vegetarians' and vegans' ingroup and outgroup evaluations of meat violations under low and high mainstream salience

Participants	Target evaluations					
	Health vegetarian		Ethical vegetarian		Vegan	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Low mainstream salience						
Health vegetarians	3.91	0.94	3.64	1.36	3.55	1.37
Ethical vegetarians	3.78	1.28	2.90	1.53	2.90	1.54
Vegans	3.19	1.39	2.73	1.43	2.64	1.41
High mainstream salience						
Health vegetarians	3.80	0.84	3.30	1.10	3.30	1.30
Ethical vegetarians	3.68	1.29	2.53	1.32	2.43	1.40
Vegans	2.90	1.31	2.21	1.12	1.63	1.07

Notes. Lower means represent worse perceived violations. 1 = very, very bad; 2 = very bad; 3 = bad; 4 = a little bad; 5 = okay.

## Study 1

### Method

Participants were recruited primarily through the Vegetarian Resource Group (<http://www.vrg.org>), a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public on vegetarianism and the interrelated issues of health, nutrition, ecology, ethics, and world hunger. A brief recruitment notice for a study on vegetarians and vegans was posted on the organization's blog, facebook and twitter accounts, and in national and local newsletters along with a link to the survey monkey website hosting the survey.

During a fifteen day period in November 2012, 515 individuals responded to the survey. After excluding respondents who did not self-identify into one of the three groups under study, or who reported that they occasionally ate beef, chicken, or pork, the final dataset included 404 participants. In total, combining diet and motives, 4% of respondents were health vegetarians ( $n = 16$ ), 23% ethical vegetarians ( $n = 94$ ), and 73% vegans ( $n = 294$ ). The final sample was predominately female (83%), American (81%), and well educated (80% reported having a college degree or more). The mean age of participants was 39.7 ( $SD = 12.39$ ).

The salience of the majority group was manipulated by creating alternative survey versions. In the *high mainstream salience* condition, respondents were first asked to evaluate omnivores on several measures before judging the three non-meat eating minority groups, whereas in the *low mainstream salience* condition, respondents rated the three minority groups first without reference to omnivores. To assess judgments of disloyalty, for each group participants were asked "How bad would it be if a \_\_\_\_\_ ate meat?" with response options ranging from 1 (= *very, very bad*) to 5 (= *okay*).

### Results and Discussion

A repeated-measures ANOVA with participants' dietary group (health vegetarian, ethical vegetarian, vegan) and

mainstream salience (low, high) as between-subjects factors, and target (health vegetarian, ethical vegetarian, vegan) as a within-subjects factor revealed overall main effects for target,  $F(2, 796) = 37.22$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .11$ , and participants' dietary group,  $F(2, 398) = 9.91$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .05$ , marginally significant effects for mainstream salience,  $F(1, 398) = 2.73$ ,  $p = .099$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ , and a significant participants' Dietary Group  $\times$  Target Interaction,  $F(4, 796) = 4.33$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ . Post hoc tests using Bonferroni correction revealed that health vegetarians were rated less harshly for eating meat than were ethical vegetarians ( $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .29$ ) and vegans ( $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .35$ ). In addition, vegans rated violations as more serious than did health ( $p = .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .05$ ) and ethical vegetarians ( $p = .002$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .27$ ). Means appear in Table 1. The interaction revealed a different pattern for each participant group: Vegans judged vegan violations worse than those by ethical vegetarians ( $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .14$ ), which were deemed worse than those by health vegetarians ( $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .29$ ); ethical vegetarians rated their own and vegan violations as significantly worse than violations by health vegetarians ( $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .35$ ;  $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .39$ ); and health vegetarians rated violations by the three groups similarly ( $p = .395$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .16$ ;  $p = .315$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .14$ ).

To assess the chief prediction that vegans would evaluate ingroup disloyalty more negatively than vegetarians, a 3 (participants' dietary group)  $\times$  2 (mainstream salience) between-subjects ANOVA was conducted on ratings of ingroup disloyalty. Results revealed significant main effects for dietary group,  $F(2, 398) = 17.04$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .08$ , and mainstream salience,  $F(1, 398) = 3.85$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ , with Tukey tests indicating that vegans were more negative toward ingroup disloyalty than ethical vegetarians ( $p = .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ ), who in turn were more negative than health vegetarians ( $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .07$ ). In addition, the interaction was marginally significant,  $F(2, 398) = 2.64$ ,  $p = .072$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ . Under mainstream salience, vegans rated ingroup disloyalty more negatively than did ethical vegetarians ( $p = .000$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .10$ ), who judged ingroup disloyalty more harshly than did health vegetarians ( $p = .046$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .09$ ). In the absence of mainstream

salience, vegans and ethical vegetarians did not differ in their evaluation of ingroup disloyalty ( $p = .497$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ ), but both were rated at least marginally more negatively than ingroup violations by health vegetarians ( $p = .013$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .06$  and  $p = .086$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .07$ , respectively). Approached differently, vegans were more critical of vegan violations when the mainstream was salient than when not,  $t(292) = 46.93$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .14$ , but the other evaluations of ingroup disloyalty were not dependent on mainstream salience (ethical:  $p = .207$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ ; health:  $p = .828$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .00$ ).

The present results replicated Hussar and Harris (2010), in that disloyal acts involving groups characterized by moral commitment (vegans and ethical vegetarians) were judged more harshly than disloyalty from groups defined by personal commitment. Not only was this shown to be true for adults, but we also demonstrated the importance of the participant's group membership in these evaluations. Consistent with our main premise, groups did not judge disloyalty in the same manner.

As expected, vegans – noted for their relatively small size and strong dedication to a moral purpose requiring extensive disruption of conventional eating habits – rated disloyalty the most negatively, and this was especially true when committed by another vegan. We have suggested that disloyalty threatens such groups in particular because of the increased possibility of group dissolution, resulting from either member defections or the inability to recruit new members. Study 2 attempted to gain direct evidence for this explanation by measuring the processes underlying judgments of ingroup disloyalty. It also remedied several other limitations of the first study by obtaining more equal cell sizes (i.e., more health vegetarians) and using a multiitem measure of disloyalty evaluation that not only addressed the seriousness of the norm violation but also evaluations of norm-violating members.

The study also included an additional manipulation, whether group membership was concealed to the public or not. This inclusion was influenced by research on the intergroup sensitivity effect, which has shown that negative comments about the ingroup are judged less favorably when made to an outgroup rather than ingroup audience (Elder, Sutton, & Douglas, 2005; Homsey et al., 2005). One lesson of this research is that threats to the ingroup will not be tolerated if they make the group vulnerable to attacks from outgroups; when shared publicly, outgroups may develop more negative impressions of the group and use such information to their advantage. This suggests that it is not violations per se, but how violations affect the group's standing relative to outgroups that may be important when considering reactions to disloyalty; it may not simply be *what* was said or done, but in front of *whom* the disloyalty transpired.

When others are ignorant of the norm violator's group membership, the violation reflects less seriously on the group because outgroup members cannot use the violation to jeopardize the standing of the ingroup. The more that groups are concerned with intergroup distinctiveness, the promotion of their message, the reduction of temptation among members, and the overall survival of their group,

the more that they should be sensitive to situational cues threatening these factors. Therefore, it was predicted that vegans would rate ingroup disloyalty the most negatively because of their endorsement of these concerns, and that these ratings would be most negative when the violator's group membership was known to others.

## Study 2

### Method

Participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online labor market where requesters post jobs and workers choose which jobs to do for pay. There are numerous studies that show correspondence between the behavior of workers on MTurk and behavior offline or in other online contexts (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). Buhrmester et al. (2011) noted several advantages to MTurk: Participants are slightly more demographically diverse than standard internet samples and significantly more diverse than typical American university samples; realistic compensation rates do not affect data quality; and the data obtained are at least as reliable as those obtained via traditional methods, a conclusion shared by Mason and Suri (2012) in a review.

A brief recruitment notice for a study on attitudes toward animals was posted on MTurk along with a link to the survey monkey website hosting the survey. Participants were paid \$0.75 for their participation. Four-hundred individuals responded to the survey. In total, combining diet and motives, 30% of respondents were health vegetarians ( $n = 120$ ), 36% ethical vegetarians ( $n = 145$ ), and 34% vegans ( $n = 135$ ). The final sample was predominately female (76%) and American (78%). The mean age of participants was 36.62 ( $SD = 13.23$ ).

Participants were asked to imagine that a member of their dietary group (i.e., health vegetarian, ethical vegetarian, vegan) violated their diet and consumed meat. In the *unconcealed condition*, this violation was said to occur in front of a group of omnivores that knew the person was either vegetarian or vegan. In the *concealed condition*, the violation was said to occur in front of a group of omnivores who were ignorant of the person's dietary status. To assess judgments of how bad this action and actor would be, participants were asked nine questions including "I think this violation is bad (reverse scored)," and "I like this person's character" (see the Appendix for a complete listing of all the questions used in study 2) with response options ranging from 1 (= *not at all*) to 7 (= *very much*);  $\alpha = .89$ . Lower scores, then, indicated more negative evaluations of ingroup disloyalty. Within ratings of action and actor, the measures were highly correlated (all at  $p < .001$ ). In addition, a principal component factor analysis with varimax (orthogonal) rotation yielded a one factor solution (eigenvalue = 4.79; 53% of variance explained). As a result, responses were combined to create an overall

measure of disloyalty evaluation. Participants were also asked two items measuring the extent to which they believed the violation undermined intergroup distinctiveness (“To what extent does their behavior blur the boundary between your group and omnivores?”;  $r(396) = .73, p < .001$ ); two items measuring how much they believed the violation threatened ingroup existence (“To what extent does their behavior threaten the existence of your group?”;  $r(396) = .53, p < .001$ ); three items assessing the degree to which they perceived the violation to harm the ingroup’s message (“To what extent does their behavior undercut the message of your group?”;  $r(396)$  ranging from  $.57-.73, p < .001$ ;  $\alpha = .86$ ); and two items evaluating how much the violation led to temptation (“To what extent does their behavior tempt you to violate your diet?”;  $r(396) = .61, p < .001$ ).

### Results and Discussion

A participants’ dietary group (health vegetarian, ethical vegetarian, vegan)  $\times$  violation (concealed, unconcealed) two-way ANOVA indicated a main effect for dietary group,  $F(1, 394) = 8.58, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = .04$ . Tukey tests revealed that vegans more negatively evaluated ingroup violations than did health ( $p = .000, \eta_p^2 = .06$ ) and ethical vegetarians ( $p = .039, \eta_p^2 = .02$ ). In addition, there was a significant Dietary Group  $\times$  Violation interaction,  $F(2, 394) = 5.27, p = .006, \eta_p^2 = .03$ . Vegans gave harsher evaluations to unconcealed violations of diet than concealed violations,  $F(1, 394) = 10.72, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .09$ , but health vegetarians,  $F(1, 394) = 0.17, p = .679, \eta_p^2 = .00$ , and ethical vegetarians,  $F(1, 394) = 0.882, p = .348, \eta_p^2 = .01$ , were not affected by type of violation. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations.

To test whether participants’ dietary group makes judgments of violators more negative via threats to ingroup distinctiveness, group existence, group message, and individual temptation, the author followed the recommendations of Preacher and Hayes (2004) and conducted a bootstrapped mediation analysis with multiple mediators and multilevel predictors. First, the author collapsed across type of violation (concealed vs. unconcealed) and using dummy coding, created two contrasts, the first involving health vegetarians (coded as 0) and vegans (coded as 1)

Table 2. Vegetarians’ and vegans’ evaluations of ingroup meat violations when ingroup identity is concealed or unconcealed

Participants	Type of violation			
	Unconcealed		Concealed	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Health vegetarians	3.44	1.24	3.34	1.36
Ethical vegetarians	3.22	1.18	3.03	1.31
Vegans	2.41	1.09	3.10	1.13

Note. Lower means represent worse perceived violations.

and the second comparing ethical vegetarians (coded as 0) to vegans (coded as 1). The first contrast revealed a significant total effect ( $B = -.49, p = .001$ ), with vegans more likely to evaluate disloyalty negatively than health vegetarians. Next, the author regressed the four mediators onto dietary group, revealing a significant relationship for ingroup distinctiveness ( $B = .54, p = .011$ ), group message ( $B = .47, p = .028$ ), and albeit in the opposite direction, temptation ( $B = -.52, p = .000$ ). The author then entered the mediators and dietary group as predictors of judgments of disloyalty. This revealed that while the mediators were significant or marginally significant predictors (distinctiveness:  $B = -.11, p = .005$ ; existence:  $B = -.06, p = .092$ ; message:  $B = -.28, p = .000$ ; and temptation:  $B = .20, p = .000$ ), dietary group was not ( $B = -.18, p = .141$ ). Examining the confidence intervals revealed that in total, the four process measures significantly mediated the harsher evaluation of disloyalty by vegans relative to health vegetarians as evidenced by a 95% confidence interval which did not include zero ( $-.49, -.15$ ); in addition, distinctiveness ( $-.15, -.01$ ), message ( $-.27, -.02$ ), and temptation ( $-.19, -.04$ ) were shown to be significant mediators. This model is summarized in Figure 1.

For the ethical vegetarian-vegan contrast, there was a significant total effect ( $B = -.30, p = .001$ ), with vegans more likely to evaluate disloyalty negatively than ethical vegetarians. Ingroup distinctiveness ( $B = .40, p = .045$ ), group existence ( $B = .42, p = .036$ ), and group message ( $B = .38, p = .057$ ) were significantly or marginally significantly related to participants’ dietary group. The direct effect of participants’ dietary group was not significant when the mediators were entered ( $B = -.12, p = .290$ ). Examining the confidence intervals revealed that in total, the four process measures significantly mediated the harsher evaluation of disloyalty by vegans relative to

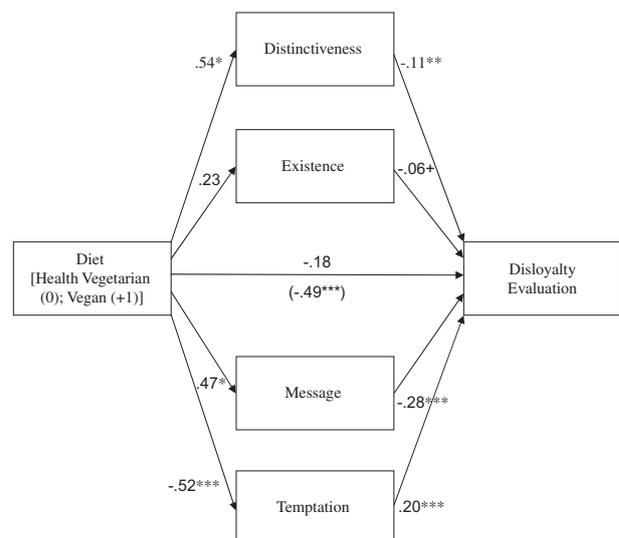


Figure 1. Mediation model for the effect of diet (health vegetarian vs. vegan) on disloyalty evaluation via intergroup distinctiveness, group existence, group message, and temptation.

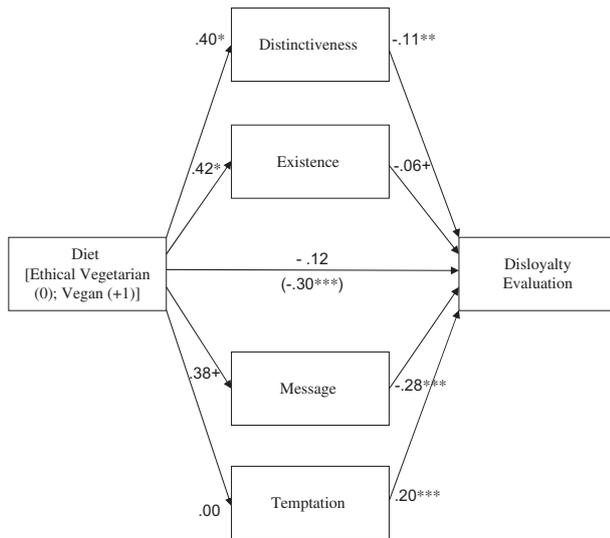


Figure 2. Mediation model for the effect of diet (ethical vegetarian vs. vegan) on disloyalty evaluation via intergroup distinctiveness, group existence, group message, and temptation.

ethical vegetarians as evidenced by a 95% confidence interval which did not include zero ( $-.36, -.01$ ); in addition, distinctiveness ( $-.13, -.01$ ) and message ( $-.25, -.00$ ) were shown to be significant mediators. This model is summarized in Figure 2.

Overall, the results were largely consistent with the notion that vulnerability to nonnormative ingroup behavior would moderate reactions to ingroup disloyalty. Consistent with predictions, the smallest group and the one demanding the most sacrifice from its members – vegans – evaluated ingroup disloyalty in the most negative way. That these judgments were especially negative when others knew the violation was committed by an ingroup member suggests that vegans are concerned with how disloyal acts reflect on the ingroup. Even more directly, this study demonstrated that such reactions are mediated by concerns particularly relevant to vulnerable groups, chiefly threats to intergroup distinctiveness and the effectiveness of the group's message. Controlling for these factors, vegans were no more negative in their evaluation of disloyalty than were health or ethical vegetarians.

Although vegans displayed concern that disloyal ingroup members would blur the line between their group and omnivores and undercut their unique message, there was no evidence that they condemned disloyalty because they feared it would compromise the very existence of the group. It is possible that such concerns are latent, but that the vignette method used in the study did not threaten participants enough to believe that ingroup continuation was in peril. There was also no evidence that vegans evaluated ingroup disloyalty most negatively because such actions increased temptation to violate a strict ingroup norm. In fact, contrary to expectations, they were *less* likely

than health vegetarians to report being tempted by nonnormative members. It may be that with demanding ingroup norms, veganism requires such a dedicated commitment and intense convictions in the first place that its members are less prone to temptation.

## General Discussion

The author proposed that the impact of disloyal members violating a defining ingroup norm would disproportionately impact groups more concerned with dissolution and for whom recruiting new members was imperative. Accordingly, vulnerable groups – identified by small size, and high degree of moral commitment and sacrifice – were predicted to evaluate ingroup disloyalty more negatively. Using real-world groups varying in their vulnerability but controlling for the seriousness of the norm violation, the chief hypothesis was generally supported across two studies. Vegans, the smallest, most distinct group in the study requiring the strongest sacrifice and commitment to a moral cause, were more critical of ingroup members who consumed animal flesh than were health and ethical vegetarians in evaluating such acts of disloyalty. Because veganism represents more than a diet but also embodies a lifestyle organized around moral principles (Fox & Ward, 2008), ingroup norms likely serve as central aspects of identity. As in the case with other groups sharing these characteristics, violations of ingroup norms are an affront to self-standards and constitute threats to social identity.

Consistent with this explanation, situations that made norm violations more damaging to the ingroup intensified vulnerable groups' negativity toward disloyalty, specifically mainstream salience, because norms differentiating vulnerable groups from the mainstream become more important when the mainstream is salient, and whether the violation was concealed, because unconcealed violations may be more damaging to the group and used by outgroup members to undercut its survival. These results show that the effect of group vulnerability on evaluations of ingroup disloyalty are not fixed but are sensitive to social context. The second study extended the first by statistically demonstrating that concerns that disloyal members would undermine intergroup distinctiveness and undercut the message of the group were central to the disapproval shown to norm violators. It also demonstrated that in addition to evaluations of disloyal actions, appraisals of the violators themselves are impacted by group status and these mechanisms.

The present studies were intended as an initial test of the idea that group vulnerability would impact reactions to ingroup disloyalty. It intentionally used relatively simple descriptions of disloyalty in an effort to control extraneous factors. This is not to suggest that future research should ignore how these factors may differentially impact groups most concerned with achieving distinctiveness and longevity. To list a few, the reason for disloyalty, characteristics of the dissenter, including their status, and degree of the respondent's ingroup identification may all interact with

the group's susceptibility to be harmed by disloyal members in affecting evaluations of disloyalty.

Jetten and Hornsey (2014) identified five reasons why members would violate group norms including disloyalty/disrespect, loyalty (i.e., constructive deviance), moral rebellion, individuality, and tangible rewards. Group vulnerability may interact with type of deviant motive in evaluating disloyalty; for example, vulnerable groups may evaluate deviant members motivated by loyalty more positively than less vulnerable groups out of a stronger sensitivity to group preservation. The present results suggest that motives for disloyalty would be important to the extent that they activate concerns (e.g., intergroup distinctiveness, undercutting the group message, etc.) found to mediate disloyalty evaluations. These ideas remained untested in the present studies, as the motives for targets' nonnormative behavior were unclear and may have included a lack of self-control, avoiding unwanted social attention (see Jabs, Devine, & Sobal, 1998; Jabs, Sobal, & Devine, 2000), disrespect for the ingroup, etc.

Individuating information about the dissenter was also unavailable in the present studies, and such information (e.g., number of prior violations, whether remorse was expressed, length of time as group members, etc.) has been shown to affect evaluations of deviancy (see Jetten & Hornsey, 2014). Again, a critical question is whether group vulnerability would moderate how each of these factors impacts responses to norm violators. To consider a single example, one might expect vulnerable groups to have relatively less tolerance for repeat offenders because ongoing deviance poses a greater threat to group identity than a single disloyal act.

No information was provided about how long the target violator had been following their diet, and this factor too, may potentially be more important for groups highly affected by identity and message concerns. For example, Pinto, Marques, Levine, and Abrams (2010) hypothesized that deviancy from long-standing group members poses a more meaningful threat to group identity than deviancy from new or marginal members. Three experiments confirmed that actions from full members evoked the strongest reactions. In addition, because full members have greater knowledge of the group's values and beliefs and their deviant actions are perceived to harm the group more, participants expressed greater desire to punish them for negative deviancy; participants preferred to discuss the situation more with and socialize new members. Had they been given the opportunity here, it may be that smaller, more vulnerable groups would have in particular increased socialization efforts because they could least afford to lose a member.

It should be noted that by discarding any potential participant who admitted to occasionally violating the central ingroup norm, the present study only tested committed group members' evaluations of disloyalty. Others studies on disgraced members may have unintentionally combined more and less loyal group members into a single category, possibly obscuring important effects. This is not merely an academic point to the present results, as studies have

indicated that a sizeable percentage of individuals defining themselves as vegetarian consume meat on a regular basis (Jabs, Sobal, & Devine, 2000; Willetts, 1997). Indeed, Willetts found that nearly two-thirds of participants who claimed a vegetarian identity ate meat occasionally or regularly. Because these members regularly exhibit disloyalty themselves, it is unclear how they would evaluate others doing the same. Future research should explicitly examine this question.

Given its importance to social identity concerns, it may also be useful to measure the impact of ingroup identification on evaluations of ingroup disloyalty. Based on results of a study examining responses to imposters (Hornsey & Jetten, 2003), high ingroup identification may foretell more negative reactions to ingroup disloyalty. In contrast, another study found that when the ingroup had taken the moral high ground, high identifiers responded to seriously damaging, nonnormative actions less negatively, evaluations mediated by lower perceived damage such actions caused the ingroup (Iyer, Jetten, & Haslam, 2012). Whether ingroup identification would produce more or less negative reactions to disloyalty in groups more susceptible to damage is unclear, then, and suggests yet another promising area for future research.

Although the sample for the first study was recruited from a source that probably indicates greater ingroup commitment and identification, these two concepts may be distinct. For example, one could display low commitment by regularly violating ingroup norms (e.g., eating meat), but still maintain that the ingroup (i.e., being vegetarian) is important to their self-definition. The relative importance of each component then, in addition to interactive effects, would further clarify how ingroup disloyalty is evaluated.

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## Appendix

### Scale Items, Study 2

#### Disloyalty Evaluation

1. I think this violation is bad.
2. Their breaking their diet is a big deal.
3. I like this person's character.
4. How disappointed in them would you be for violating their diet?
5. How disgusted in them would you be for violating their diet?
6. How pleased in them would you be for violating their diet?
7. How amused in them would you be for violating their diet?
8. Is this someone that you are likely to be friends with?
9. How favorable do you feel toward this person?

#### Distinctiveness

1. To what extent does their behavior blur the boundary between your group and omnivores?
2. To what extent do their actions threaten differences between your group and omnivores?

#### Existence

1. To what extent does their behavior threaten the existence of your group?
2. To what extent does their behavior make it harder to recruit new members for the group?

#### Message

1. To what extent does their behavior make your group's message less believable?
2. To what extent does their behavior undercut the message of your group?
3. To what extent does their behavior make your group's message vulnerable to criticism?

#### Temptation

1. To what extent does their behavior tempt you to violate your diet?
2. To what extent might their behavior tempt others in your group to violate their diet?