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The pathway to accepting derogatory ingroup norms: The roles of compartmentalization and legitimacy

Catherine E. Amiot, Marina Doucerain, Winnifred R. Louis



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Running Head: COMPARTMENTALIZATION PROCESSES AMONG HOCKEY FANS

The Pathway to Accepting Derogatory Ingroup Norms:

The Roles of Compartmentalization and Legitimacy

Catherine E. Amiot

Université du Québec à Montréal

Marina Doucerain

Université du Québec à Montréal

Winnifred R. Louis

The University of Queensland

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Running Head: COMPARTMENTALIZATION PROCESSES AMONG HOCKEY FANS

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## Abstract

**Objectives.** The current experiment was conducted among ice hockey fans, and brings together theories of intergroup relations and self and identity literatures. It investigated if perceiving strong norms in favor of derogating against fans of outgroup teams, and engaging in these behaviors oneself, leads to an increased compartmentalization of these behaviors (i.e., such that they are restricted to a particular compartment within the self). This association was expected to be especially strong when derogatory behaviors are portrayed as illegitimate. We also explored whether this compartmentalization then flows on to vitality as a well-being indicator. **Method and Design.** Ice hockey fans supporting a diversity of NHL teams were recruited ( $N=116$ ). The legitimacy of the derogatory behaviors was manipulated by making salient either: that these behaviors have harmful consequences for outgroup members (illegitimate condition) vs. that such behaviors can benefit the ingroup (legitimate condition). **Results.** The expected mediated model was supported among the entire sample. The association between engaging in the derogatory behaviors and their compartmentalization in the self was also moderated by the experimental manipulation: While participants in the illegitimate condition reported a positive link between engaging in these behaviors and their compartmentalization, participants in the legitimate condition did not show a significant association between these variables, suggesting no need for them to restrict these behaviors within themselves. **Conclusions.** Results are discussed in light of normative approaches, intergroup theories, and the self.

Keywords: Social norms; Intergroup relations; Outgroup derogation; Compartmentalization; Ice hockey.

## The Pathway to Accepting Outgroup Derogation Norms:

### The Roles of Compartmentalization and Legitimacy

Strong motivational and affective processes take place in sports contexts. At the group level, sport teams represent important identities that convey meaning and belongingness to their members (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Bruner, Boardley, & Côté, 2014; Rees et al., 2015; Wann, 2006). Players, coaches, and fans are all affected by the sports they engage in and by the teams they identify with, even if this sporting context represents “just” a game. Some also display strong emotional reactions to their team’s wins and losses (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). In fact, sports can be seen as a microcosm of society, where strong motivational and social identity processes operate (Wann, 2006). At an intergroup level, sport fans may also engage in derogatory behaviors that involve downgrading and denigrating the outgroup teams (e.g., laughing at, insulting, being violent against the outgroup team; Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2003, 2006). Some sporting contexts can be quite strong and elicit particularly detrimental norms as part of their subcultures (e.g., hooliganism; Dunning, Murphy, & Williams, 2014; Stott, Hutchison, & Drury, 2001; Van Hiel, Hautman, Cornelis, & De Clercq, 2007).

Given the detrimental consequences that outgroup derogation and discrimination can have, in sporting contexts but also beyond (Smitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia, 2014), and in light of the variability in fans’ endorsement of pro-derogatory norms, it becomes particularly important to understand how such pro-derogatory norms develop and operate among sports fans. In the current research, we investigate the role of group norms in predicting fans’ derogatory behaviors against outgroup teams and the extent to which such behaviors represent the self (or not) – i.e., whether these behaviors are compartmentalized in the self. We also test if portraying derogatory behaviors as illegitimate (vs. as legitimate) amplifies (vs. buffers against) the need to compartmentalize these behaviors in the self-concept. Investigating how sports fans embed and represent their derogatory behaviors in themselves represents a key novelty of this research that also has the potential to test how

these self and identity processes operate in competitive sporting contexts. To this aim, we bring together intergroup theories based on the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and a novel notion from the self and identity literature, namely, the notion of compartmentalization. Figure 1 presents an overview of the associations investigated in the current research.

### **Social Identity Theory Applied to the Realm of Sports**

Social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) is increasingly recognized as a highly relevant theory to understand the intergroup processes that operate in the realm of sports (Bruner et al. 2014; Rees et al., 2015). From SIT's point of view, individuals in intergroup contexts seek a distinct and positive social identity. In the sports context, discriminatory behaviors against members of an outgroup sports team (e.g., wanting the referees to favor one's ingroup team rather than the outgroup team; talking up one's ingroup team but not the outgroup team) allow group members to compare positively with this outgroup. Acquiring or maintaining a positive social identity through discriminatory behaviors then reflects positively on group members' sense of self, and contributes favorably to their self-esteem (e.g., their identity as a member/fan of their sport team; for a review see Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). From a SIT point of view, discrimination can be seen as functional, fulfilling the need for differentiation from outgroups and contributing to group members' positive social identity (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Research has shown however, that behaviors that involve inflicting harmful consequences to outgroup members – such as derogatory behaviors – require more than just the motivation to gather a more positive identity. Indeed, derogatory behaviors against an outgroup not only involve evaluating one's ingroup team more positively than the outgroup team (Wann & Branscombe, 1993), but can also imply engaging in name calling and singing denigrating songs about the outgroup team (Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2003, 2006) and even in behaviors such as overt aggression (e.g., Stott et al., 2001). Inflicting such harmful outcomes onto outgroup members does not necessarily flow on predict to a more positive social identity (e.g., Amiot & Bourhis, 2005; Brewer, 1999). What is needed

to engage in harm against an outgroup are some ‘aggravating conditions’; i.e., conditions that provide an additional impetus and motivations for engaging in harmful actions against the outgroup (Mummendey & Otten, 1999). One such aggravating factor refers to group norms, which are defined as group-based social standards or rules for behavior (Terry & Hogg, 1996; Turner, 1991), and which play a pivotal role in influencing people’s behaviors (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004).

Based on SIT, derogatory and harmful social behaviors against an outgroup can potentially be accepted and enacted by individual group members, especially if such behaviors are promoted and encouraged within an important and relevant ingroup, such as their proximal group of sports fans, and if they identify strongly with this group (Terry & Hogg, 1996). Individuals who personally endorse the ideological justifications that support harmful behaviors such as inflicting more aversive stimuli to outgroup (compared to ingroup) members are indeed more likely to engage in these behaviors themselves (Amiot & Bourhis, 2003). When applying these principles in the realm of derogatory behaviors among sports fans, we hence predict, on the basis of SIT and normative approaches, that the more fans perceive strong norms stemming from a relevant ingroup that are in favor of derogatory behaviors against fans of outgroup teams, the more they will themselves engage in such behaviors (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

### **The Notion of Compartmentalization**

While theories of intergroup relations postulate that norms should make acceptable harmful intergroup behaviors such as outgroup derogation, other theoretical approaches – such as those stemming from humanistic psychology and the self and identity literature (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000; Linville, 1987) – offer a different viewpoint. According to these approaches, and because of an inherent human inclination to relate positively to others and to devalue harming, acts that have the potential to harm others – such as derogatory actions – are likely to be more difficult to fully endorse by individual group members. Such behaviors are also more likely to be associated with a fragmentation of the self and with ill-being (Ryan, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2003).

**Defining compartmentalization.** To capture such a self-fragmentation, in the current work, we focus on the notion of compartmentalization. Compartmentalization is formally defined as taking place when distinct elements within the self (i.e., identities, values, behaviors) are kept separated from each other in the overall self-concept (Amiot, de la Sablonnière, Terry, & Smith, 2007; Harter, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2003; Showers, 2002). In the current research, we focus specifically on the compartmentalization of behaviors, which occurs when the person's behaviors are seen to emerge in a particular context and are restricted to this context, without considering them as representative of one's overall self (Amiot, Louis, Bourdeau, & Maalouf, 2017). In this sense, behaviors that are compartmentalized are more likely to be context-specific and susceptible to situational influences. Compartmentalization is hence more likely to take place, for instance, when the individual behaves in a way that fits with the social identity and the social norms that are salient in one specific social context (e.g., the norms endorsed by their group of fans; Turner, 1991), but without linking back these behaviors to other life contexts and identities (e.g., the values promoted within their family or their workplace, for example; Ryan & Deci, 2003), or to more abstract and global parts of the self, such as their more general values or personality (e.g., being a nice person; Cervone, 2005). For example, consider an ice hockey fan who laughs at fans of a rival team, or posts demeaning messages about them on social media. This fan could compartmentalize the derogatory behaviors by perceiving that these acts are associated only with the context of hockey, but that such behaviors do not represent him/her as a person nor his/her more general values.

While this compartmentalization process may entail a fragmentation of the self-concept, given that diverse parts of the self can feel very different, this differentiation of self-elements is also proposed to serve as a psychological buffer, which reduces the probability that the negativity associated with the compartmentalized action spreads to another part of the self (e.g., Linville, 1987; Showers, 2002). In this sense, compartmentalization can be seen as protective: By isolating and restricting specific negative self-aspects (e.g., one's derogatory actions) within themselves, individuals can cognitively



dissociate these aspects of themselves and protect their overall self from this negativity. Prior research has indeed shown that the more harmful (i.e., discriminatory) types of behaviors are more likely to be compartmentalized compared to the more pro-social types of intergroup behaviors (e.g., proportional distribution of resources between social groups; Amiot et al., 2017). On this basis, we expect that the more group members engage in derogatory behaviors against fans of outgroup teams, the more they may then need to compartmentalize such behaviors within themselves.

**The attenuating role of legitimacy in the association between derogatory behaviors and compartmentalization.** Despite this expected association between derogatory behaviors and compartmentalization, it is likely that under certain social conditions, derogatory behaviors will lead to compartmentalization, whereas under other conditions, they will not. Research conducted on intergroup relations and conflict has indeed found that people can ideologically glorify ingroups such as nationals and religions, and justify aggression and discrimination against outgroups by framing these acts as being heroic and virtuous (e.g., Post, 2001; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006) – in other words, as being legitimate. In these ideologically justified contexts, derogatory behaviors may not trigger any compartmentalization, given that such behaviors are portrayed as being positive and legitimate. Under such circumstances, the self may not need to be protected from engaging in such actions; instead these acts can fully represent the self. It is when the negativity and the illegitimacy of the derogatory acts are made salient that these derogatory actions will need to be compartmentalized such that this negativity does not spread across the self-concept.

Whereas different bases for legitimacy exist (i.e., procedural legitimacy: Tyler, 2001; legitimacy of the group's status: Bettencourt, Charlton, Dorr, & Hume, 2001; legitimacy of the intergroup structure: Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004), herein we focus on how legitimate an intergroup behavior is based on the salient consequences of this action (i.e., positive-legitimate vs. harmful-illegitimate). We specifically expect that making salient experimentally the legitimate (vs. illegitimate) nature of the derogatory actions should inhibit (vs. promote) the need to compartmentalize these

behaviors in the self. Investigating this interplay between legitimacy and the compartmentalization of intergroup behaviors in the self represents a novel contribution of the current work. Using an experimental paradigm to induce legitimacy vs. illegitimacy allows us to test the moderating role of this variable systematically.

### **Exploring Well-Being as an Outcome of Normative and Compartmentalization Processes**

Although identifying with a social group – including with sports teams (Wann, 2006) – has been linked to higher global psychological well-being (e.g., Amiot, Terry, Wirawan, & Grice, 2010; Jetten, Haslam, & Haslam, 2012), very few studies to date have directly investigated if engaging in outgroup derogation per se predicts lower vs. higher levels of well-being among individual group members (Louis, Amiot, & Thomas, 2015). And no studies, to our knowledge, have tested this association among sport fans. However, case studies have revealed that some perpetrators of extremely aversive derogatory acts show no psychopathology but rather act out of collective identities and norms, to promote their group's interests (e.g., terrorism; Louis, 2009). It hence appears that engaging in derogation against members of an outgroup – especially if it is normative within a relevant ingroup – is not necessarily uniformly tied to lower psychological well-being. Still, and given the dearth of prior research that directly investigates these questions, we adopt an exploratory approach to these links. We also specifically focus on well-being as a consequence of following derogatory norms.

It is possible that the notion of compartmentalization, because it involves buffering processes that seek to protect the self from negativity (i.e., from harming others) could play specific roles when predicting well-being. A logical prediction to make would be that compartmentalized derogatory behaviors should show a non significant association with well-being, given its buffering/attenuating role. However, the framing of the legitimacy of derogatory behaviors may also come into play in this association. Specifically, when fans are reminded of the legitimate and beneficial nature of their derogatory acts, compartmentalizing these behaviors may actually be detrimental to their well-being, given there is no need to restrict and engage in self-fragmentation in this context. In contrast, when fans

are reminded of the illegitimate and harmful nature of their derogatory acts, then compartmentalization may not be detrimental to well-being, but instead could be particularly adaptive, and actually lead to increased well-being in this context (e.g., Linville, 1987; Showers, 2002).

#### The Present Research

To address these questions, an experimental study was conducted among ice hockey fans. Conducting this experiment among this particular population was considered an ideal setting to test our research questions. In fact, the violence perpetrated by sports fans is considered a social issue worthy of investigation and interventions (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001). Methodologically, the sport context may be perceived as more informal (i.e., as being “just a game”), and hence less likely to elicit social desirability responses that often take place when investigating intergroup relations and outgroup derogation.

As illustrated in Figure 1, it is hypothesized that a mediation sequence will be observed among the entire sample (i.e., across the legitimate vs. illegitimate conditions), whereby pro-derogatory norms will predict a greater tendency for fans to engage in these behaviors themselves, which should then flow on to predict an increased tendency to compartmentalize their derogatory behaviors (H1). We will also explore the link between compartmentalization and vitality as a specific indicator of psychological well-being that captures its energization component (see also Ryan & Frederick, 1997). Figure 1 illustrates this mediation sequence. In terms of the moderating role of legitimacy, we expect that when making salient the harmful and illegitimate nature of derogatory behaviors against outgroup fans (i.e., illegitimate condition), this mediation sequence should hold, and compartmentalization may play a potentially beneficial role, thereby possibly predicting higher vitality in this context (H2a). In contrast, when making salient the beneficial and legitimate nature of the derogatory behaviors (i.e., legitimate condition), a positive association should again be observed between perceiving strong pro-derogatory norms and the frequency of fans’ own derogatory behaviors, but also a weaker or non-significant (statistically) association between the frequency of such behaviors and compartmentalization, given

that in this context these behaviors need not be compartmentalized (H2b). Further, it is possible that the compartmentalization of such legitimate behaviors could actually harm well-being (i.e., by predicting lower vitality).

## Method

### Participants and Design

Participants were recruited through the official Facebook pages regrouping the fans of the different NHL teams. Advertisements about the study were placed on these pages. A total of 116 fans (62.1% men, 37.9% women) participated in an online survey with an experimental manipulation. Part of the data presented in the current manuscript were also presented as part of a prior publication (Amiot, Sansfaçon, & Louis, 2014, Study 3). The age distribution of participants was as follows: 39 participants were 18 to 24 years old (34%), 35 were 25-34 (30%), 18 were 34-44 (16%), 16 were 45-54 (14%), 5 were 55-64 (4%), and 3 were 65 or older (3%). The most frequently supported teams included the Washington Capitals (with 12% of participants supporting this team), the Boston Bruins (8.6%), the New York Rangers (6%), the Philadelphia Flyers (5.2%), the Montréal Canadiens (5.2%), the Pittsburgh Penguins (5%), the Vancouver Canucks (4.3%) and the Detroit Red Wings (4.3%). This study used an experimental between-participants subject design with two conditions. Using a computer program that randomly assigned participants to experimental conditions, 55 participants were assigned to the legitimate condition and 61 participants were assigned to the illegitimate condition. The two versions of the questionnaire allowed us to present different information to participants and hence manipulate the illegitimacy vs. illegitimacy of derogatory behaviors displayed in the context of hockey.

### Procedures and Measures

Participants were first asked to identify which hockey team from the NHL they support. Participants were then asked to think of a group of fans that they know. Participants next completed a measure of pro-derogatory norms regarding four derogatory behaviors that the hockey fans that they

know and who are proximal to them engage in: namely, insulting (in their presence and absence) the players and fans of other teams, making fun of the players and fans of other teams, and affirming the superiority of one's team by putting other teams down. A manipulation making salient either the harmful/illegitimate nature of these derogatory actions vs. the beneficial/legitimate nature of these derogatory behaviors followed. Finally, participants completed measures assessing perceptions of the legitimacy of these derogatory behaviors (in terms of how harmful, beneficial, moral, and legitimate they are), the frequency at which they engage in derogatory behaviors themselves, their compartmentalization of these behaviors, and their psychological vitality, as an indicator of well-being. Each of these measures are described in detail below, in the order presented to participants.

**Pro-derogatory norms.** To assess pro-derogatory norms (Amiot et al., 2014), participants were presented with four relevant derogatory behaviors (e.g., Wann & Grieve, 2005; Scheepers et al., 2003, 2006): Making fun of the other team's players and fans; In their absence, insulting players and fans of other teams; In their presence, insulting players and fans of other teams; Affirming the superiority of your team by putting other teams down. For each behavior, and to assess descriptive norms specifically (Smith & Louis, 2009), participants were asked: "How often do fans of the hockey team that you know engage in this behavior?" (1 = *never*; 7 = *always*). An overall measure for the pro-derogatory norms was created by averaging across these four behaviors ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

**Experimental manipulation of legitimacy vs. illegitimacy salience.** To then manipulate legitimacy, two conditions were created. In both conditions, participants were first provided with a definition of derogatory behaviors, which involve denigrating, insulting, making fun of the fans of other teams, and affirming the superiority of one's team. Following this definition, participants in the illegitimate condition were asked to think of the derogatory behaviors in terms of negative consequences that they can have on other hockey fans. They were then invited to write at least two sentences describing how their behaviors toward fans of other hockey teams can be harmful. An example of one such answer was: "It can increase hostility and possibly violence (especially when

mixed with alcohol)". In contrast, participants in the legitimate condition were asked to think about the beneficial and desirable consequences that these derogatory behaviors have on other hockey fans. Then, they were invited to write at least two sentences describing how their derogatory behaviors toward fans of other hockey teams can be useful and beneficial. An example from one such answer was: "It's part of the sport. A lot of talk, fun, etc."

**Manipulation checks: Perceived legitimacy of the derogatory behaviors.** Following this manipulation, participants completed four items assessing how harmful, beneficial, moral, and legitimate these behaviors really are, using a 1 to 7 scale adapted to each item (e.g., 1=*not harmful at all* to 7=*extremely harmful*).

**Frequency of derogatory behaviors.** We then assessed the frequency at which participants personally engage in the four derogatory behaviors mentioned above (i.e., Making fun of the other team's players and fans; In their absence, insulting players and fans of other teams; In their presence, insulting players and fans of other teams; Affirming the superiority of your team by putting other teams down). For each of these behaviors, participants indicated the frequency at which they engage in this behavior (1 = *never*; 7 = *always*;  $\alpha = .89$ ).

**Compartmentalization.** Then, participants were asked to think about these derogatory behaviors and to what extent they agree with four items assessing compartmentalization: 'I engage in these behaviors only in specific contexts'; 'These behaviors do not represent who I am generally as a person'; 'These behaviors are related only to the context of hockey'; 'These behaviors represent only a small part of who I am as a person' (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *completely*;  $\alpha = .78$ ).

**Vitality.** Finally, we measured participants' psychological vitality using the 6 following items of the Vitality Scale (Ryan & Frederick, 1997): 'I felt alive and vital'; 'I had energy and determination'; 'I felt alert and awake'; 'I looked forward to each new day'; 'I felt stimulated'; 'I didn't feel very energetic' (1 = *Not correspond at all*; 7 = *Very strongly correspond*;  $\alpha = .85$ ).

## Results

## Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Univariate outliers (4 for the frequency of derogatory behavior variable, and 3 for the vitality variable) were winsorized to three deviations around the median (Leys et al. 2013). No multivariate outliers were detected. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations among all variables. Means for the measures were in the moderate to strong range. When inspecting the correlations, we found significant associations between the frequency of the derogatory behaviors and all of the items assessing perceived legitimacy of these derogatory behaviors (i.e., manipulation checks). Some of these perceptions (namely, the beneficial and illegitimate perceptions) were also statistically significantly related to pro-derogatory norms. Moreover, we found significant positive associations among pro-derogatory norms, the frequency of the derogatory behaviors, and the compartmentalization of these behaviors.

## Manipulation Checks: Perceived Legitimacy of the Derogatory Behaviors

To assess the impact of the experimental manipulation (legitimate vs. illegitimate) on participants' subjective perceptions of the legitimacy of the derogatory behaviors, one way ANOVAs were conducted on these four perception measures. Results showed that the experimental manipulation influenced perceptions of harmfulness of the derogatory behaviors ( $F(1, 102)=28.31, p < .001, \eta^2=.22$ ), beneficial perceptions ( $F(1, 104)=15.51, p < .001, \eta^2=.13$ ), perceptions of morality ( $F(1, 103)=15.47, p < .001, \eta^2=.13$ ), and perceptions of legitimacy ( $F(1, 103)=4.58, p = .03, \eta^2=.04$ ). Inspection of the means confirmed that participants in the illegitimate condition perceived derogatory behaviors as indeed more harmful ( $M=4.18; SD=1.59$  vs.  $M=2.55; SD=1.53$ ), less beneficial ( $M=2.02; SD=1.37$  vs.  $M=3.18; SD=1.53$ ), less moral ( $M=2.77; SD=1.26$  vs.  $M=3.82; SD=1.47$ ), and less legitimate ( $M=3.37; SD=1.74$  vs.  $M=4.06; SD=1.55$ ) than participants in the legitimate condition.

## Main Analyses: Mediation and Moderation Analyses

Hypotheses of mediation and moderation (Figure 1) were tested using path analysis in the R structural equation modelling (SEM) package lavaan (version 0.5-17; Rosseel 2012) with bootstrapped

(5,000 samples) standard errors. We used Full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation to deal with missing data, which were few (<5% overall: specifically, 0 missing data points for pro-derogatory norms, 3 for frequency of derogatory behaviors, 7 for compartmentalization, and 3 for vitality) and missing completely at random (Little's test:  $\chi^2(df) = 10.37(14), p = .73$ ).

**Mediation hypothesis (single group analysis): H1.** A first model tested the mediating role of the frequency of derogatory behaviors in the relationship between pro-derogatory norms and compartmentalization, and how compartmentalization predicted vitality (model shown in Figure 1). Following conventional guidelines (Matsunaga, 2010), goodness of fit of the model is indicated by CFI (Comparative Fit Index) or TLI (Tucker Lewis Index) values greater than .95, an RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) value lower than .06, an SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) value lower than .10, and a statistically non significant chi-square value. Fit indices revealed an excellent fit of the model (CFI = 1.00; TLI = 1.00; RMSEA = .00; SRMR = .03;  $\chi^2(df = 2) = 1.57, p = .46$ ), although this is to be expected given the small number of degrees of freedom remaining in the model. Table 2 shows the estimated unstandardized path coefficients and Figure 2 displays the standardized solution in a more visual form.

As expected, the positive relationship between pro-derogatory norms scores and the frequency of derogatory behaviors was significant, with a fairly large effect size ( $\beta = .55$ ). This indicates that the more participants perceive that their ingroup of fans considers derogatory behaviors as normative, the more likely they are to engage in such behaviors frequently themselves. Similarly, the frequency of derogatory behaviors was positively associated with compartmentalization, with a more moderate effect size ( $\beta = .38$ ), indicating that the more participants engage in derogatory behaviors frequently, the more likely they are to also compartmentalize these behaviors.

Supporting our first mediation hypothesis (H1), the indirect effect of pro-derogatory norms on compartmentalization through frequency of derogatory behaviors was statistically significant ( $B = 0.26, SD = 0.09, p = .004, 95\% CI = [0.11; 0.45]$ ). In addition, the direct effect of pro-derogatory norms on



compartmentalization was not statistically significant ( $B = 0.05$ ,  $SD = 0.15$ ,  $p = .72$ , 95%  $CI = [-0.25; 0.36]$ ) and removing this direct effect did not change the proportion of explained variance in compartmentalization ( $R^2 = .17$  in both cases). These results suggest that the frequency of derogatory behaviors fully mediated the relationship between pro-derogatory norms and compartmentalization. Together, pro-derogatory norms and the frequency of the derogatory behaviors accounted for 17% of the variance in compartmentalization.

In turn, the overall relation between compartmentalization and vitality was not statistically significant. These more exploratory results suggest that overall across all participants, compartmentalizing one's derogatory behaviors is not linked to – i.e., does not impede nor help – one's psychological vitality. However, it is possible that this association is moderated by the experimental condition, i.e., whether the legitimate vs. illegitimate nature of derogatory behaviors is made salient. We explore this possibility in the next section, with a test of our moderation hypotheses (H2a,b).

**Moderation hypothesis (multiple groups analysis): H2a,b.** A second model testing the same mediation sequence and its role in predicting vitality, but within a multiple groups framework (comparing these links in the legitimate vs. illegitimate conditions), was fitted to the data. As for model 1, model fit was excellent ( $CFI = 1.00$ ;  $TLI = 1.00$ ;  $RMSEA = .00$ ;  $SRMR = .03$ ;  $\chi^2(df = 4) = 1.30$ ,  $p = .86$ ). Table 3 shows the estimated unstandardized path coefficients and Figure 3 displays the standardized solution in a more visual form.

As expected, stronger pro-derogatory norms were associated with higher frequency of derogatory behaviors in both experimental conditions. More frequent derogatory behaviors were also linked to greater compartmentalization of these behaviors, but only in the illegitimate condition (H2a), confirming that when the beneficial and positive aspects of derogatory behaviors were highlighted, participants did not perceive the need to compartmentalize these behaviors (H2b). In addition, the indirect effect of pro-derogatory norms on compartmentalization through frequency of derogatory behaviors was statistically significant in the illegitimate condition ( $B = 0.35$ ,  $SD = 0.15$ ,  $p = .02$ , 95%

CI = [0.09; 0.66]), but not in the legitimate condition ( $B = 0.15$ ,  $SD = 0.10$ ,  $p = .15$ , 95% CI = [-0.03; 0.38]). Further, pro-derogatory norms and compartmentalization accounted for 23% in the illegitimate condition vs. only 8% in the legitimate condition.

In line with the conceptual model shown in Figure 1, it should be noted that the experimental condition did not moderate the relation between ingroup norms and behaviour frequency. Indeed, constraining the path coefficient for this relation to be equal across conditions resulted in a statistically non significant change in model fit ( $\chi^2(df = 1) = 2.90$ ,  $p = .09$ ). Still, these results support our hypotheses (H2a, b) that the compartmentalization process is attenuated when people are asked to think of the benefits associated with derogatory behaviors (legitimate condition), while they are fully activated when they are asked to think of the detrimental consequences of these acts (illegitimate condition).

Regarding the implications of this process for well-being, we found evidence that the experimental condition moderated the relation between compartmentalization and vitality. Specifically, constraining the path coefficient for this relation to be equal across conditions resulted in a statistically significantly worse model fit ( $\chi^2(df = 1) = 3.98$ ,  $p < .05$ ), indicating a significant moderation effect. Indeed, greater compartmentalization appears to be associated with different vitality outcomes depending on the experimental condition: Compartmentalization predicts lower vitality when the beneficial aspects of derogatory behaviors are made salient (legitimate condition), but higher vitality when the harmful aspects of these behaviors are highlighted (illegitimate condition) – although neither path coefficients was statistically significant on its own.

## Discussion

The objective of this research was to investigate the role of group norms in predicting fans' derogatory behaviors against fans and players of outgroup teams and the extent to which such behaviors represent the overall self (or not) – i.e., whether these behaviors are kept separated and compartmentalized in the self. We also tested if portraying derogatory behaviors as illegitimate (vs. as

legitimate) amplifies (vs. buffers against) the need to compartmentalize these behaviors in the self-concept. Legitimacy (vs. illegitimacy) was operationalised specifically by making salient the beneficial (vs. harmful) consequences of one's derogatory actions against members of outgroup teams. To investigate these questions, we integrated traditionally distinct theoretical approaches, namely, theories of intergroup relations – which are becoming increasingly employed and recognized as useful to understand a variety of phenomena in the realm of sports (Rees et al., 2015) – with humanistic and self and identity approaches, focusing particularly on the novel notion of compartmentalization, as a form of self-fragmentation. The current research also explored the role of these normative and identity variables in predicting psychological well-being.

An experimental design was employed to manipulate legitimacy and we recruited sports fans who were supporting hockey teams from a highly competitive league – the national hockey league (NHL). This represents an ecologically sound and engaging context to test these research questions (e.g., Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Wann, 2006). On the basis of theories of intergroup relations and the social identity approach to group norms (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Terry & Hogg, 1996), we expected that the more group members perceive strong ingroup norms in favor of derogatory behaviours, the more frequently they should engage in these behaviors themselves. Based on the humanistic and self and identity approaches (e.g., Linville, 1987; Showers, 2002), we also expected that engaging in derogatory behaviors would, in turn, predict an increased need to compartmentalize these behaviors, such that they are restricted to a certain 'compartment' within the self and do not spill over other dimensions of the self (H1).

Engaging in derogatory behaviors was not expected to always lead to more compartmentalization, however (H2a, b): When the harmfulness and illegitimacy of the derogatory actions are made salient (i.e., in the illegitimate condition), we expected a positive link between engaging in derogatory behaviors and compartmentalization, as well as a potentially beneficial role for compartmentalization when predicting well-being (H2a). In contrast, when making salient the benefits

and the legitimate nature of the derogatory actions (i.e., in the legitimate condition), we expected a reduced and possibly non significant link between such behaviors and compartmentalization (attesting to no need, in this condition, to compartmentalize these behaviors), as well as a potentially detrimental role for compartmentalization on well-being (H2b). Figure 1 presents an overview of these hypotheses. The current research specifically focused on vitality as a particular indicator of well-being (Ryan & Frederick, 1997).

The results from the mediation analyses conducted in the SEM framework as well as from multiple groups analyses provided support for these hypotheses: The more fans perceived strong ingroup norms in favor of derogatory behaviors against an outgroup team, the more they themselves engaged in such behaviors frequently, but the more this elicited the need to compartmentalize such behaviors (supporting H1). Intriguingly, compartmentalization did not predict more vs. less vitality in the overall sample. This mediation sequence also held most clearly among participants in the illegitimate condition (compared to participants in the legitimate condition) (H2a, b), confirming that derogatory behaviors do indeed elicit more compartmentalization when such behaviors are portrayed as negative and illegitimate. Participants in the illegitimate condition also derived (even if non significant) well-being benefits from compartmentalizing their derogatory behaviors (H2a). In comparison, among participants in the legitimate condition, engaging in compartmentalization tended to be detrimental to their well-being; even if this link was not significant, its direction significantly differed from that observed for participants in the illegitimacy condition, hence supporting H2b.

The current experiment builds on prior work on the notion of compartmentalization (Amiot et al., 2017) yet also brings further nuances to this novel construct and how it operates in group and in sporting contexts. This prior work had uncovered that different types of intergroup behaviors (i.e., pro-social or parity-based vs. harmful or discriminatory) are associated with different levels of compartmentalization, with the more harmful behaviors being more compartmentalized in the self compared to the more pro-social behaviors. Herein we extended these prior findings by showing that

engaging in derogatory behaviors –as harmful intergroup behaviors – is not uniformly associated with more compartmentalization. Indeed, we found that this association emerged significantly when the derogatory behaviors were portrayed as illegitimate, but disappeared when the derogatory behaviors were portrayed as legitimate. Furthermore, the benefits associated with compartmentalization – as a cognitive process employed specifically to manage and deal with negative self-elements (Linville, 1987) – were not uniform either: While compartmentalization tended to predict more vitality when the illegitimacy of derogatory behaviors was made salient, compartmentalization actually tended to impede vitality when the legitimacy of derogation was salient.

Future research should systematically investigate the temporal and developmental factors that may elicit (vs. lessen) the need to compartmentalize one's derogatory behaviors and the well-being outcomes associated with compartmentalization. Normative processes seem to operate efficiently among group members who already had the time and experiences to make sense of such behaviors and fully incorporate them in their sense of self (Gatto, Dambrun, Kerbrat, & de Oliveira, 2010; Kelman, 1961; Rutland, Killen, & Abrams, 2010). Future longitudinal research could investigate these temporal dynamics directly and test how compartmentalization of these normative behaviors may, over the longer-term, given way to a fuller integration and internalization of these norms and behaviors in the overall self (Amiot et al., 2007), as well as the social factors promote (e.g., endorsing a competitive ideology; deficits in other life domains; Wann, 2006) vs. block (e.g., anti-derogation norms stemming from other ingroup) this integration. For example, compartmentalization may be less likely among groups or teams which glorify their own status at the expense of others, as this ideology serves to legitimise intergroup harmdoing (Leidner, Castano, Zaiser, & Giner-Sorolla, 2010; Roccas et al., 2006).

Future research could also replicate the current findings among fans of other team sports (other than ice hockey) and among other actors within the sporting context (i.e., athletes, coaches). Doing so would allow researchers to test the generalizability and external validity of the current findings and

ensure the derogatory behaviors we assessed are not only normative for ice hockey nor sports fans. The findings should also be replicated by using other methodological tools, including observed (rather than self-reported) measures of derogatory behaviors. Observational studies in the realm of hockey could be highly informative in this regard and would directly capture the intergroup dynamics as they unfold in a strong and engaging real-life context (Stott & Reicher, 1998; Stott et al., 2001, 2007).

In sum, this paper brings together theories of intergroup relations with humanistic and self and identity approaches to investigate an important social phenomenon: How normative and self-related variables encourage group members to engage in harmful social behaviors, and how the framing of such behaviors (i.e., as legitimate vs. illegitimate) also comes into play in this processes. These questions were investigated using an experimental design and in an involving and relevant real-life context among invested sports fans. Providing answers to these questions will inform interventions that aim to deactivate potentially harmful intergroup behaviors before they become fully accepted and endorsed by group members themselves.

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Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	M(SD)
1. Pro-derogatory norms	<b>2.06</b>	1.08	0.72	0.05	0.02	0.89	0.36	0.81	3.57(1.43)
2. Frequency of derogatory behaviors	.55***	<b>1.86</b>	1.00	0.13	-0.59	1.01	0.56	0.87	2.86(1.36)
3. Compartmentalization	.28**	.41***	<b>3.20</b>	-0.02	-0.54	0.33	0.47	0.45	4.11(1.79)
4. Vitality	.03	.10	-.01	<b>1.11</b>	0.13	-0.16	0.15	-0.09	5.20(1.05)
5. Perceptions - harmful	.01	-.25*	-.18	.07	<b>3.08</b>	-0.90	-1.37	-0.89	3.41(1.75)
6. Perceptions - beneficial	.38***	.46***	.11	-.09	-.32*	<b>2.63</b>	1.04	1.18	2.56(1.62)
7. Perceptions - immoral	.17	.29**	.18	.09	-.53***	.44***	<b>2.12</b>	1.11	3.26(1.45)
8. Perceptions - illegitimate	.33***	.40***	.15	-.05	-.30*	.43***	.45***	<b>2.83</b>	3.69(1.68)

Note. Diagonal (boldfaced): variances; lower triangle: correlations; upper triangle: covariances. \*\*\* $p < .001$ ;

\*\* $p < .01$

Table 2

*Path Coefficients of the Hypothesized Mediation Model – Single Group Analysis*

Path		<i>B</i>	SE	<i>p</i>	CI low	CI high	R <sup>2</sup>
Pro-derogatory norms	→ Frequency of derogatory behaviors	0.52	0.09	<0.001	0.34	0.69	.30
Frequency of derogatory behaviors	→ Compartmentalization	0.50	0.15	0.001	0.20	0.81	.17
Pro-derogatory norms	→ Compartmentalization	0.05	0.15	0.72	-0.25	0.36	
Compartmentalization	→ Vitality	-0.03	0.06	0.95	-0.12	0.12	.00

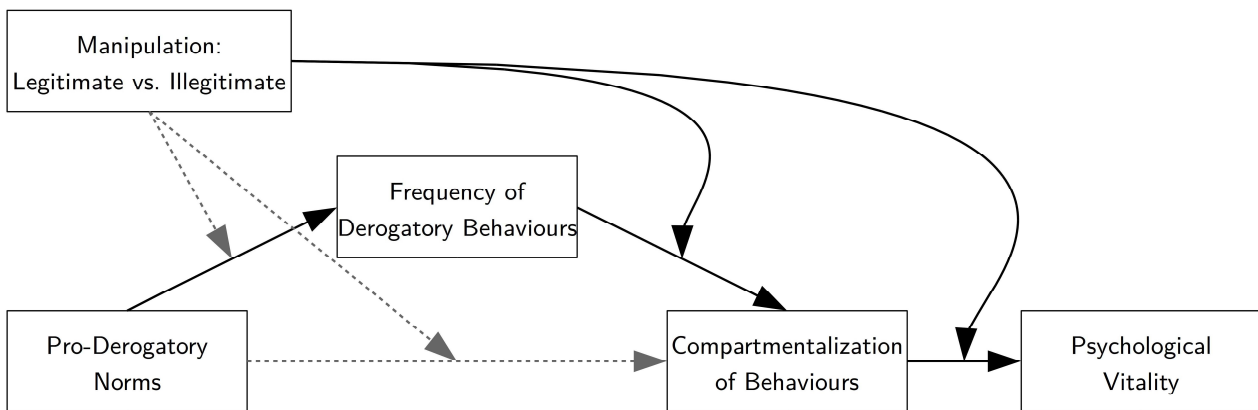
*Note.* B = unstandardized path coefficients; CI = 95% confidence interval

Table 3

*Path Coefficients of the Hypothesized Mediation Model – Multiple Group Analysis*

Path	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>p</i>	CI low	CI high	R <sup>2</sup>
<i>Legitimate Experimental Condition</i>						
Pro-derogatory norms → Frequency of derogatory behaviors	0.39	0.11	<0.001	0.19	0.61	.24
Frequency of derogatory behaviors → Compartmentalization	0.38	0.25	0.13	-0.07	0.87	.08
Pro-derogatory norms → Compartmentalization	0.03	0.23	0.88	-0.41	0.47	
Compartmentalization → Vitality	-0.15	0.10	0.12	-0.32	0.03	.04
<i>Illegitimate Experimental Condition</i>						
Pro-derogatory norms → Frequency of derogatory behaviors	0.64	0.13	0.00	0.36	0.89	.36
Frequency of derogatory behaviors → Compartmentalization	0.54	0.20	0.01	0.13	0.93	.23
Pro-derogatory norms → Compartmentalization	0.10	0.21	0.63	-0.28	0.54	
Compartmentalization → Vitality	0.09	0.07	0.22	-0.05	0.23	.03

Note. *B* = unstandardized path coefficients; CI = 95% confidence interval



*Figure 1.* Hypothesized mediation-moderation model. The solid black arrows represent effects hypothesized to be statistically significant; the dashed grey arrows represent effects hypothesized not to be statistically significant.



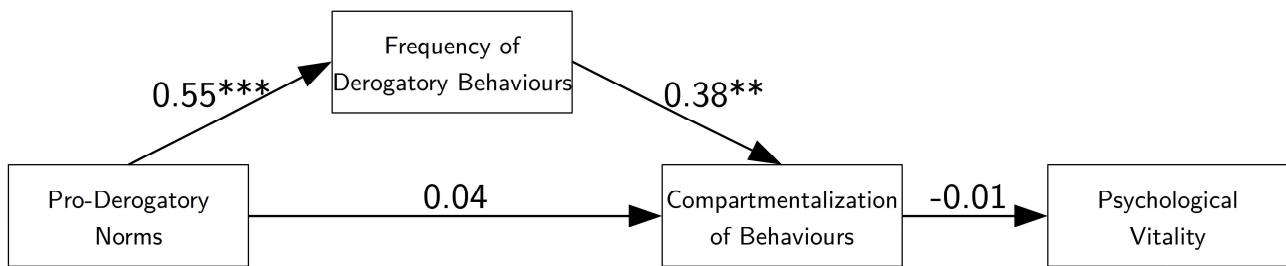


Figure 2. Results of the single group mediation analysis. Values represent standardized path coefficients. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

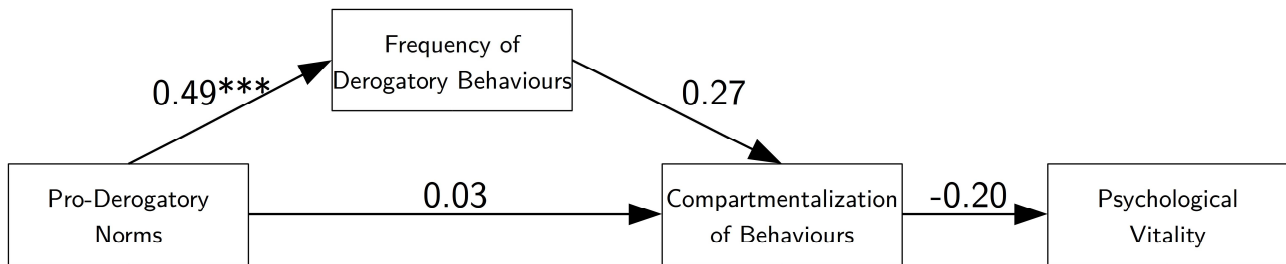
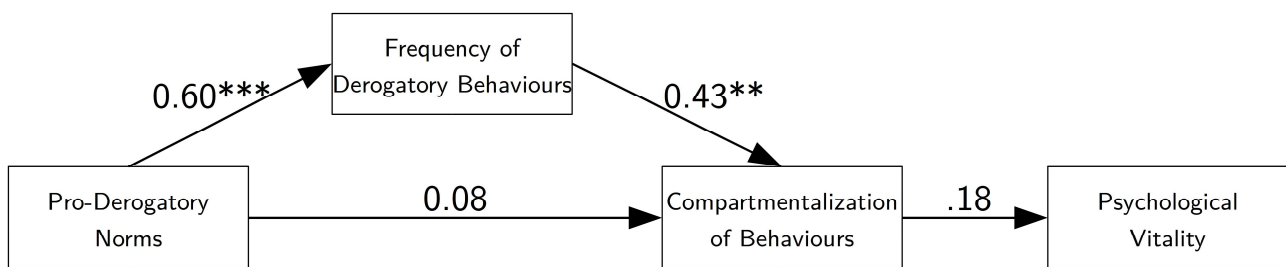
**Legitimate condition****Illegitimate condition**

Figure 3. Results of the multiple group mediation analysis (per experimental condition). Values represent standardized path coefficients. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Highlights**

-This article bring together theories of intergroup relations and notions from the self and identity literatures, namely the phenomenon of compartmentalization.

-We tested a mediational model whereby perceptions of ingroup norms in favor of derogatory behaviors against outgroup teams should positively predict fans' derogatory own behaviors, which in turn should predict an increased tendency to compartmentalize these behaviors in the self-concept. This sequence was expected to emerge significantly when fans are reminded of how illegitimate derogatory behaviors against outgroup teams can be, but not when the derogatory behaviors are portrayed as legitimate. Well-being (i.e., vitality) was explored as an outcome of this sequence.

-An experiment was conducted among ice hockey fans which manipulated the legitimacy of the derogatory behaviors (legitimate vs. illegitimate condition).

-We obtained support for the hypothesized mediational sequence, and for an attenuation of the need to compartmentalize the derogatory behaviors when these behaviors are portrayed as legitimate (vs. illegitimate).