

# Intergroup Bias in Selfish and Other Benefitting Dishonesty

**Jareef Martuza**

Norwegian School of Economics

**Hallgeir Sjøstad**

Norwegian School of Economics & SNF (Center for Applied Research at NHH)

**Helge Thorbjørnsen**

Norwegian School of Economics & SNF (Center for Applied Research at NHH)

**Jay Van Bavel**

New York University

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### **Abstract**

We examined whether the tendency to cheat depends on the group identity of the victim or beneficiary by incentivizing over 5,000 participants to lie anonymously to double their own or another participant's earnings. In Experiment 1 ( $N = 1,177$ ), Democrats and Republicans could lie to increase their earnings at the cost of either a political ingroup or outgroup participant. Surprisingly, participants cheated ingroup and outgroup members at similar rates. In Experiment 2 ( $N = 1,710$ ), Democrats and Republicans could lie to benefit a political ingroup, outgroup, or ingroup at the expense of an outgroup participant—without personal incentives. Participants lied significantly more to benefit an ingroup than an outgroup member (9 percentage points). Experiment 3 ( $N = 2,341$ ) replicated the main findings of Experiments 1 and 2 using a  $2 \times 2$  between-subjects design. These findings suggest that group identity does not influence selfish dishonesty but increases other-benefitting dishonesty.

**Keywords:** intergroup bias; morality; economic games; behavioral dishonesty.