

---

## **From Moral Advocacy to Coercive Protest: A Six-Dimensional Normative Framework Grounded in Mill's Harm Principle for Evaluating Vegan Activism**

### ***Dari Advokasi Moral menuju Protes Koersif: Kerangka Normatif Enam Dimensi Berlandaskan Prinsip Kerugian Mill untuk Mengevaluasi Aktivisme Vegan***

---

**Nethio Putra Perraudau<sup>1</sup>**  
Cendekia Harapan School, Bali

[nethio@cendekiaharapan.sch.id](mailto:nethio@cendekiaharapan.sch.id)

**Juwaria Muqtadir<sup>2</sup>**  
Cendekia Harapan School, Bali

[juwaria@cendekiaharapan.sch.id](mailto:juwaria@cendekiaharapan.sch.id)

**ABSTRACT:** This study examines the ethical boundary between persuasive advocacy, disruptive protest, and fanatical coercion in vegan activism by analysing how moral identity, stigma, movement boundaries, digital representation, and public responses shape activist practices and their ethical evaluation. It employs a structured narrative literature review, thematic synthesis, and philosophical analysis of twelve purposively selected peer-reviewed publications issued between 2017 and 2025 and identified through Google Scholar, publisher databases, and academic library catalogues. The themes were evaluated primarily through Mill's Harm Principle, supplemented by Rousseau's account of civic freedom and Voltaire's theory of tolerance. Six themes emerged: moral and social identity; lifestyle and collective activism; perceived moral threat, prejudice, and stigma; movement-boundary disputes; digital mediation and contested representation; and public responses to vegan protest. The findings show that strong moral commitment and public disapproval do not independently constitute fanaticism. Rather, the ethical threshold is crossed when tactics seriously restrict agency or safety through intimidation, threats, confinement, dangerous obstruction, or sustained personalized harassment. Building on this normative analysis, the study develops a conduct-based account of fanatical coercion and constructs a six-dimensional normative framework encompassing severity, agency, responsibility, proportionality, safeguards, and reciprocity. Developed in this study rather than directly formulated by Mill, the framework is grounded primarily in Mill's Harm Principle and supplemented by Rousseau's account of civic freedom and Voltaire's theory of tolerance. It distinguishes morally unsettling or disruptive advocacy from coercive interference and may assist activists, public authorities, and media institutions in evaluating tactics while regulating harmful conduct rather than political viewpoints.

**Keywords:** Fanatical Coercion; Harm Principle; Moral Identity; Protest Ethics; Vegan Activism

**ABSTRAK:** Penelitian ini mengkaji batas etis antara advokasi persuasif, protes disruptif, dan pemaksaan fanatik dalam aktivisme vegan dengan menganalisis bagaimana identitas moral, stigma, batas gerakan, representasi digital, dan respons publik membentuk praktik aktivisme serta penilaian etis terhadapnya. Penelitian menggunakan tinjauan literatur naratif terstruktur, sintesis tematik, dan analisis filosofis terhadap dua belas publikasi ilmiah yang telah melalui telaah sejawat, diterbitkan pada 2017–2025, dan dipilih secara purposif melalui Google Scholar, basis data penerbit, serta katalog perpustakaan akademik. Tema-tema yang ditemukan dievaluasi terutama melalui Prinsip Kerugian Mill, dengan dukungan konsep kebebasan sipil Rousseau dan teori toleransi Voltaire. Enam tema diidentifikasi: identitas moral dan sosial; gaya hidup dan aktivisme kolektif; ancaman moral yang dipersepsikan, prasangka, dan stigma; perselisihan batas gerakan; mediasi digital dan

representasi yang diperdebatkan; serta respons publik terhadap protes vegan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komitmen moral yang kuat dan penolakan publik tidak dengan sendirinya merupakan fanatisme. Batas etis terlampaui ketika taktik secara serius membatasi agensi atau keselamatan melalui intimidasi, ancaman, pengurungan, penghalangan berbahaya, atau pelecehan personal berkelanjutan. Berdasarkan analisis normatif tersebut, penelitian ini mengembangkan konsep pemaksaan fanatik berbasis perilaku dan membangun kerangka normatif enam dimensi yang mencakup tingkat keparahan, agensi, tanggung jawab, proporsionalitas, perlindungan, dan resiprositas. Kerangka ini dikembangkan oleh penelitian ini, bukan dirumuskan langsung oleh Mill, dan berlandaskan terutama pada Prinsip Kerugian Mill dengan dukungan Rousseau dan Voltaire. Kerangka ini membedakan advokasi disruptif dari intervensi koersif tanpa menganggap seluruh disrupsi sebagai tindakan yang merugikan.

**Kata Kunci:** Aktivisme Vegan; Etika Protes; Identitas Moral; Pemaksaan Fanatik; Prinsip Kerugian.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Veganism has developed beyond a dietary preference into a moral, social, and political position. For many individuals, avoiding animal products expresses opposition to animal exploitation and concern about environmental sustainability, food systems, and social responsibility. Vegan practice can therefore become part of personal identity while also functioning as everyday participation in wider social change.<sup>1</sup> Rosenfeld and Burrow's<sup>2</sup> Unified Model of Vegetarian Identity further conceptualizes dietary identity as multidimensional, involving motivation, centrality, strictness, and public expression. These dimensions help explain why veganism may be experienced not only as a private consumption choice but also as a publicly meaningful commitment.

Such commitments are expressed through consumption, cooking, education, digital communication, community involvement, institutional advocacy, demonstrations, and other forms of collective action. The distinction between private lifestyle and public activism is consequently not always clear. Everyday conduct may acquire political meaning when it intentionally challenges established practices, while organized activism may extend from persuasion and lobbying to disruptive protest. Judge et al.<sup>3</sup> connect vegan activism with social identity, moral conviction, group-based emotion, and perceived collective efficacy, whereas Torres et al.<sup>4</sup> show that vegan activism encompasses both routine practices and organized participation. Strong identity

<sup>1</sup> Eva Haifa Giraud, *Veganism: Politics, Practice, and Theory* (Bloomsbury, 2021); Susana Pickett, "Veganism, Moral Motivation and False Consciousness," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 34, no. 3 (April 2021): 15, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-021-09857-0>; Rodrigo Torres et al., "Social Change as a Lifestyle: Identifying Actions and Practices of Vegan Activism among Young Adults," *Frontiers in Political Science* 7 (September 2025): 1477573, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2025.1477573>.

<sup>2</sup> "The Unified Model of Vegetarian Identity: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Plant-Based Food Choices," *Appetite* 112 (May 2017): 78–95, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2017.01.017>.

<sup>3</sup> "Dietary Behaviour as a Form of Collective Action: A Social Identity Model of Vegan Activism," *Appetite* 168 (January 2022): 105730, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2021.105730>.

<sup>4</sup> "Social Change as a Lifestyle."

commitment may therefore motivate public advocacy without independently constituting fanaticism or coercion.

The growing visibility of veganism has also generated social conflict. Vegans may be perceived as judgmental, deviant, or threatening to established values even when they do not directly condemn others. Studies have documented systematic bias toward vegans and vegetarians, associations between negative evaluations and ideological orientations concerning authority and social hierarchy, and anticipated stigma that discourages identification with veganism.<sup>5</sup> Nezelek et al.<sup>6</sup> similarly show that dietary identities shape spontaneous social descriptions of vegans, vegetarians, and omnivores. These findings suggest that resistance to veganism may arise from symbolic and intergroup processes rather than from confrontational activism alone.

Veganism is also contested within the movement itself. Disagreements concerning waste, markets, responsibility, and ethical consistency reveal that the boundaries of acceptable vegan practice are not fixed.<sup>7</sup> Such disputes may clarify principles but may also encourage judgments about purity or insufficient commitment. Digital communication adds another layer to these negotiations because lifestyle content, dietary information, political advocacy, and movement identity may circulate within the same platform environment. Şen<sup>8</sup> found that veganism on X could be represented either as dietary practice or political activism, while Torres et al.<sup>9</sup> identified digital content creation as part of a broader activist repertoire. Digital platforms therefore influence which dimensions of veganism become publicly visible, although available vegan-specific research does not establish that platform algorithms directly cause activist escalation.

Public controversy becomes especially significant when activism moves from persuasion to disruption. Demonstrations, occupations, graphic displays, and temporary obstruction may attract attention to practices that activists regard as unjust, but they may

<sup>5</sup> Madeline Judge and Marc S. Wilson, "A Dual-Process Motivational Model of Attitudes towards Vegetarians and Vegans," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 49, no. 1 (2019): 169–78, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2386>; Cara C. MacInnis and Gordon Hodson, "It Ain't Easy Eating Greens: Evidence of Bias toward Vegetarians and Vegans from Both Source and Target," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 20, no. 6 (November 2017): 721–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430215618253>; Kelly L. Markowski and Susan Roxburgh, "If I Became a Vegan, My Family and Friends Would Hate Me: Anticipating Vegan Stigma as a Barrier to Plant-Based Diets," *Appetite* 135 (April 2019): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2018.12.040>.

<sup>6</sup> "Spontaneous Verbal Descriptions of Vegans, Non-Vegan Vegetarians, and Omnivores and Relationships between These Descriptions and Perceivers' Diets," *PLOS ONE* 18, no. 12 (December 2023): e0293899, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0293899>.

<sup>7</sup> Josh Milburn and Bob Fischer, "The Freegan Challenge to Veganism," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 34, no. 3 (June 2021): 17, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-021-09859-y>; Pickett, "Veganism, Moral Motivation and False Consciousness."

<sup>8</sup> "An Overview of Veganism on X: Is Veganism a Political Activism or a Dietary Style in the Turkish Case?," *Asya Studies* 8, no. 28 (June 2024): 109–16, <https://doi.org/10.31455/asya.1405715>.

<sup>9</sup> "Social Change as a Lifestyle."

also inconvenience or unsettle people who are not directly responsible for those practices. Menzies et al.<sup>10</sup> found that exposure to vegan protest could produce less favorable evaluations of vegans even when the protest was peaceful, while the additional effect of disruption was inconsistent across their experiments. Public disapproval may therefore reflect responses to the cause, the activists, or the tactic and cannot independently determine whether a protest is ethically illegitimate.

Broader social-movement research presents a similar tension. Extreme or violent tactics may reduce identification with a movement and weaken public support, whereas nonnormative but nonviolent action may sometimes create constructive pressure and encourage institutional concessions.<sup>11</sup> Historical evidence also indicates that nonviolent protest can shape media coverage, elite attention, public opinion, and political agendas.<sup>12</sup> These findings illuminate the activist's dilemma, but strategic effectiveness must remain distinct from ethical legitimacy. An unpopular protest may still be morally defensible, just as an attention-generating tactic may impose disproportionate burdens.

Disruption should therefore not be treated as automatically equivalent to harm. Protest frequently interrupts established routines because conventional communication has failed to secure attention or institutional response. A Millian analysis distinguishes among offense, limited inconvenience, and serious harm or coercive interference. Offense includes exposure to disturbing arguments, criticism, graphic advocacy, or moral discomfort and remains presumptively protected. Limited inconvenience includes temporary delay, noise, or disruption and may remain defensible when it is proportionate and accompanied by appropriate safeguards. Harm or coercive interference involves serious nonconsensual burdens, including credible threats, confinement, dangerous obstruction, or substantial restrictions on another person's security and agency. These categories cannot be applied mechanically; ethical evaluation must also consider severity,

<sup>10</sup> "The Vegan Dilemma: Do Peaceful Protests Worsen Attitudes to Veganism?," *Appetite* 186 (July 2023): 106555, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2023.106555>.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew Feinberg, Robb Willer, and Chloe Kovacheff, "The Activist's Dilemma: Extreme Protest Actions Reduce Popular Support for Social Movements," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (US) 119, no. 5 (2020): 1086–111, <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000230>; Eric Shuman et al., "Disrupting the System Constructively: Testing the Effectiveness of Nonnormative Nonviolent Collective Action," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (US) 121, no. 4 (2021): 819–41, <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000333>; Brent Simpson, Robb Willer, and Matthew Feinberg, "Does Violent Protest Backfire? Testing a Theory of Public Reactions to Activist Violence," *Socius* 4 (January 2018): 2378023118803189, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023118803189>.

<sup>12</sup> Omar Wasow, "Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion and Voting," *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 3 (August 2020): 638–59, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305542000009X>.

duration, reversibility, target responsibility, foreseeable consequences, and safeguards for third parties.

Existing scholarship provides valuable but fragmented perspectives on vegan activism. Research on identity explains how vegan commitments become integrated into the self-concept; empirical studies of activism examine the motivations and practices that support individual and collective action; stigma research investigates public resistance and anticipated social costs; work on movement boundaries and digital representation examines how veganism is negotiated internally and represented publicly; and protest research evaluates public responses to different tactics. Within the literature synthesized here, however, these strands primarily explain how vegan activism is constituted, practiced, represented, contested, and received. They do not by themselves provide an integrated normative account of when morally forceful or disruptive action remains ethically defensible and when it becomes coercive interference with the agency of others. This study addresses that unresolved problem by shifting the analytical focus from the formation, practice, and reception of vegan activism to the normative evaluation of activist conduct. It develops a six-dimensional normative framework encompassing severity, agency, responsibility, proportionality, safeguards, and reciprocity, grounded primarily in Mill's Harm Principle and supplemented by Rousseau's account of civic freedom and Voltaire's theory of tolerance. The framework is developed in the present study as an analytical construction for distinguishing criticism from intimidation, offense from harm, proportionate disruption from dangerous interference, and democratic pressure from imposed conformity. Vegan activism therefore serves as a contemporary case through which the broader philosophical boundary between ethically defensible advocacy and coercive interference can be examined.

A related conceptual problem concerns the meaning of fanaticism. The term is often used pejoratively to dismiss intense, emotional, unpopular, or uncompromising commitments. Yet intensity alone is insufficient because uncompromising conviction has also sustained democratic resistance to entrenched injustice.<sup>13</sup> Katsafanas<sup>14</sup> similarly distinguishes strong commitment from the psychological, epistemic, and behavioral

---

<sup>13</sup> Joel Olson, "The Freshness of Fanaticism: The Abolitionist Defense of Zealotry," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 4 (December 2007): 685–701, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707072179>.

<sup>14</sup> "An Introduction to the Philosophy of Fanaticism," in *Fanaticism and the History of Philosophy* (Routledge, 2023).

distortions associated with fanaticism. Tietjen<sup>15</sup> instead locates the problem in identity-defining devotion to a value that demands universal recognition and is accompanied by hostile antagonism toward dissenters. These accounts caution against defining fanaticism solely through the strength, strictness, or popularity of a moral commitment.

Applied to vegan activism, strict practice, moral anger, identity centrality, and participation in disruptive protest do not independently establish fanaticism. This study consequently treats fanatical coercion as a conduct-based category rather than a label for strong vegan commitment. It arises when moral certainty is converted into claimed authority to intimidate, humiliate, threaten, confine, or seriously restrict the agency of others. This definition protects moral conviction, unpopular expression, and forceful criticism while recognizing that ethical commitment does not provide unlimited permission to control other persons. It also avoids treating dominant consumption practices as ethically neutral merely because they are socially conventional.

John Stuart Mill's Harm Principle provides the primary theoretical foundation for evaluating the boundary between ethically defensible advocacy and coercive interference. Mill's account protects freedom of thought, expression, association, and experimentation in living while permitting restrictions on conduct that seriously harms the legitimate interests of others<sup>16</sup>. The present study uses this principle as the principal normative basis for assessing harm, interference with agency, and the limits of activist conduct. Rousseau's account of civic freedom provides a supplementary perspective on democratic legitimacy by emphasizing that binding restrictions require publicly justifiable political authority oriented toward the common good rather than private moral command<sup>17</sup>. Voltaire's account of tolerance provides a further supplementary perspective on reciprocal disagreement by preserving the standing of others to dissent and respond rather than replacing argument with humiliation, persecution, or punitive treatment<sup>18</sup>. Accordingly, Mill supplies the primary philosophical foundation of the analysis, while Rousseau and Voltaire contribute complementary considerations concerning democratic legitimacy and tolerance that inform the six-dimensional normative framework developed in this study.

<sup>15</sup> "Fear, Fanaticism, and Fragile Identities," *The Journal of Ethics* 27, no. 2 (June 2023): 211–30, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10892-023-09418-9>.

<sup>16</sup> John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays* (1859; Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings* (1762; Cambridge University Press, 2019).

<sup>18</sup> Voltaire, *Voltaire: Treatise on Tolerance* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Accordingly, this study addresses the following question: How can a six-dimensional normative framework developed in this study and grounded primarily in Mill's Harm Principle distinguish ethically defensible advocacy and disruption from fanatical coercion in vegan activism, in light of recent scholarship on its identity-based, social, communicative, and protest-related dynamics? The question requires both descriptive synthesis and normative evaluation because public reaction, activist intention, and tactical disruption do not independently determine ethical legitimacy.

The study makes three contributions. First, it conceptualizes fanatical coercion through conduct and its effects on others rather than through the intensity or popularity of a belief. Second, it develops a six-dimensional normative framework comprising severity, agency, responsibility, proportionality, safeguards, and reciprocity for evaluating the boundary between defensible disruption and coercive interference. The framework is an analytical construction of the present study, grounded primarily in Mill's Harm Principle and informed by supplementary considerations from Rousseau and Voltaire. Third, it integrates scholarship on vegan identity, everyday and collective activism, stigma, movement boundaries, digital representation, and public responses to protest to ground this normative evaluation in the contemporary dynamics of vegan activism. The framework is intended to evaluate controversial protest tactics without assuming either that all disruption is harmful or that moral urgency justifies every method.

## **B. METHODS**

This study employed a structured narrative literature review, thematic synthesis, and philosophical analysis. It examined peer-reviewed scholarship on vegan identity, activism, public stigma, movement boundaries, digital representation, and responses to vegan protest. The resulting themes were subsequently subjected to normative analysis grounded primarily in John Stuart Mill's Harm Principle, with Rousseau's account of civic freedom and Voltaire's theory of tolerance serving as supplementary philosophical perspectives. This normative analysis provided the philosophical basis for the six-dimensional framework developed in the present study.

This design addressed two related objectives: evaluating when forceful advocacy or disruptive protest becomes coercive interference, and grounding that normative evaluation in a synthesis of the social, moral, and communicative dynamics of vegan activism. A structured narrative review was appropriate because the study integrated

heterogeneous empirical, conceptual, and philosophical publications rather than estimating a single effect. The review therefore used explicit eligibility criteria, staged screening, data extraction, and thematic coding while making no claim of exhaustive coverage.<sup>19</sup>

A purposively constructed core corpus of twelve peer-reviewed publications published between 2017 and 2025 formed the basis of the thematic synthesis. The corpus was selected to provide conceptually diverse evidence across the six analytical domains rather than to represent an exhaustive sample of the literature. Supplementary literature was used to contextualize the themes through broader research on social identity, stigma, collective action, digital communication, and protest effects. Mill, Rousseau, and Voltaire were included outside the temporal boundary as normative sources.

The thematic corpus was used to identify recurring patterns, whereas the philosophical framework was used to interpret their ethical implications. It did not assume that the selected publications had directly measured fanaticism or empirically tested the philosophical theories applied in this study.

The literature search was initially conducted between December 2025 and January 2026 and updated in June 2026. Google Scholar, publisher databases, and academic library catalogues were searched for English-language publications issued between 2015 and 2025. Search terms combined “veganism” or “vegetarianism” with “identity,” “activism,” “collective action,” “advocacy,” “stigma,” “prejudice,” “moral threat,” “digital activism,” “protest,” “disruption,” and “movement boundaries” using the Boolean operators AND and OR.

A purposive core corpus was selected to represent six domains relevant to the research question: moral and social identity, lifestyle and collective activism, public stigma and prejudice, movement-boundary disputes, digital representation, and responses to vegan protest. Publications were eligible when they were peer-reviewed, available in English, and directly examined veganism or mixed vegetarian–vegan populations with findings substantively applicable to vegan identity, advocacy, or activism.

---

<sup>19</sup> Rossella Ferrari, “Writing Narrative Style Literature Reviews,” *Medical Writing* 24, no. 4 (December 2015): 230–35, <https://doi.org/10.1179/2047480615Z.000000000329>; Hannah Snyder, “Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines,” *Journal of Business Research* 104 (November 2019): 333–39, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>.

Publications focusing exclusively on nutrition, physical health, dietary prevalence, or general personality differences were excluded from the core corpus. Studies of protest or social movements without a direct connection to vegan or animal advocacy were used only as supplementary comparative literature. Duplicate records, non-peer-reviewed commentary, inaccessible full texts, and publications unrelated to the research question were excluded. Table 1 summarizes the Review Scope and Purposive Corpus-Selection Framework.

Table 1. Review Scope and Purposive Corpus-Selection Framework

| ELEMENT                  | SPECIFICATION                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| REVIEW DESIGN            | Structured narrative literature review, thematic synthesis, and philosophical analysis                                                                                                     |
| SEARCH PERIOD            | Initial search conducted between December 2025 and January 2026; updated in June2026                                                                                                       |
| PUBLICATION PERIOD       | English-language publications issued between 2015 and 2025                                                                                                                                 |
| SEARCH SOURCES           | Google Scholar, publisher databases, and academic library catalogues                                                                                                                       |
| SEARCH CONCEPTS          | Veganism or vegetarianism combined with identity, activism, collective action, advocacy, stigma, prejudice, moral threat, digital activism, protest, disruption, and movement boundaries   |
| CORE ANALYTICAL DOMAINS  | Moral and social identity; lifestyle and collective activism; public stigma and prejudice; movement-boundary disputes; digital representation; and responses to vegan protest              |
| CORE THEMATIC CORPUS     | Twelve purposively selected peer-reviewed publications published between 2017 and 2025                                                                                                     |
| CORE-CORPUS INCLUSION    | Publications directly examining veganism or mixed vegetarian–vegan populations in relation to identity, activism, advocacy, stigma, movement practices, digital representation, or protest |
| CORE-CORPUS EXCLUSION    | Nutrition-only, health-only, dietary-prevalence, or general personality studies without substantive analysis of identity, activism, stigma, movement practices, or protest                 |
| SUPPLEMENTARY LITERATURE | Broader scholarship on moral minorities, social identity, collective action, digital communication, protest effects, and political philosophy                                              |

|                          |                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PHILOSOPHICAL<br>SOURCES | Mill, Rousseau, and Voltaire, included outside the temporal<br>boundary as normative frameworks          |
| SYNTHESIS                | Thematic coding of the core corpus followed by contextual<br>interpretation and philosophical evaluation |

Because the review was designed for conceptual integration rather than exhaustive evidence retrieval, the search process was used to identify a broad pool of relevant literature from which the core thematic corpus was purposively constructed. Candidate publications were assessed in two stages. Titles and abstracts were first examined for relevance to the research question and the six analytical domains, followed by full-text examination of publications considered potentially suitable for the core corpus.

From this literature, twelve peer-reviewed publications published between 2017 and 2025 were purposively selected. Selection prioritized publications that provided direct, substantively relevant, and conceptually distinctive evidence for one or more of the six analytical domains while collectively representing empirical, qualitative, experimental, digital, conceptual, and philosophical approaches. The purpose of this selection was not to produce an exhaustive or statistically representative sample of the literature, but to construct a conceptually diverse corpus capable of supporting thematic synthesis and subsequent normative philosophical evaluation.

For each publication, the review extracted the author and year, research objective, study context, methodological approach, principal findings, analytical limitations, and contribution to the relevant domain. Information concerning participants, data sources, and research setting was recorded where applicable.

Because the corpus included empirical, conceptual, and philosophical publications with heterogeneous designs, no common numerical quality-appraisal instrument was applied. Source quality was instead considered through peer-review status, direct relevance to the analytical domains, methodological transparency, evidentiary scope, and the limitations reported for each publication. The core corpus included survey-based, experimental, qualitative, digital, conceptual, and philosophical studies, including preregistered empirical research, thereby providing methodological diversity while also requiring caution in comparing evidentiary strength across designs. Accordingly, the publications were not treated as providing equivalent evidence for every analytical claim.

The heterogeneity of the corpus did not support statistical aggregation. The extracted findings were therefore integrated through thematic synthesis rather than meta-analysis. The analysis proceeded in two stages.

*First*, the extracted findings were coded, grouped into descriptive categories, and refined into six themes: moral and social identity; lifestyle and collective activism; perceived moral threat, prejudice, and stigma; movement-boundary disputes; digital mediation and contested representation; and public responses to vegan protest and disruption. The synthesis drew on principles of thematic analysis and thematic synthesis while maintaining a transparent connection between the themes and the findings of the selected publications.<sup>20</sup>

*Second*, the thematic findings were subjected to normative analysis grounded primarily in Mill's Harm Principle. Rather than adopting an established taxonomy formulated by Mill, the present study articulated the normative concerns arising from this analysis into six evaluative dimensions: severity, agency, responsibility, proportionality, safeguards, and reciprocity. These dimensions were developed by the authors as an analytical construction for assessing when activist conduct moves from protected advocacy or proportionate disruption toward coercive interference. Mill's account of harm and liberty provided the principal philosophical basis for assessing serious burdens and interference with agency, while Rousseau's account of civic freedom supplied supplementary considerations concerning public justification and legitimate authority, and Voltaire's account of tolerance informed the evaluation of reciprocal disagreement, humiliation, and punitive treatment. The six dimensions therefore constitute a contemporary normative framework developed in the present study rather than a taxonomy directly formulated by Mill.

The philosophical framework was interpretive rather than quantitative. It did not treat fanaticism as a variable measured by the selected publications or assume that the publications had empirically tested Mill, Rousseau, or Voltaire. Examples of intimidation, confinement, threats, dangerous obstruction, and personalized harassment were used only

---

<sup>20</sup> Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "One Size Fits All? What Counts as Quality Practice in (Reflexive) Thematic Analysis?," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 18, no. 3 (July 2021): 328–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>; James Thomas and Angela Harden, "Methods for the Thematic Synthesis of Qualitative Research in Systematic Reviews," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 8, no. 1 (July 2008): 45, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-45>.

to illustrate the proposed ethical threshold unless directly documented in the reviewed studies.

The concept of fanaticism may reproduce bias when applied indiscriminately to minority beliefs, emotional expression, or unconventional protest. To reduce this risk, the analysis did not classify strict vegan practice, moral intensity, graphic advocacy, or disruption as automatic evidence of fanaticism. The classification concerned conduct involving nonreciprocal reasoning, intimidation, denial of agency, or serious coercive interference. The analysis also considered the stigma and institutional pressures experienced by vegans to avoid treating dominant practices as ethically neutral.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The review relied on Google Scholar, publisher databases, and academic library catalogues rather than a predefined set of comprehensive bibliographic databases. The purposive selection of twelve publications supported conceptual breadth but did not provide exhaustive coverage and may have reflected author judgment. The restriction to accessible English-language publications may have excluded relevant cultural and regional perspectives.

The corpus also combined heterogeneous empirical, conceptual, and philosophical publications, and no common formal quality-appraisal instrument was applied across these different designs. Although source quality was considered through methodological transparency, evidentiary scope, direct relevance, and reported limitations, the publications should not be treated as providing equivalent or directly comparable evidence.

The findings should therefore be interpreted as a structured conceptual synthesis followed by normative philosophical evaluation, rather than as a systematic estimate of activist behavior. The framework identifies criteria for evaluating protest tactics but does not establish how frequently fanatical coercion occurs within vegan activism.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Overview of the Core Corpus and Thematic Synthesis**

The purposively selected core corpus comprised twelve peer-reviewed publications published between 2017 and 2025. The corpus included conceptual and philosophical analyses, survey-based studies, experimental research, focus-group research, social media analysis, and longitudinal qualitative interviews. Together, the

publications addressed six analytical domains: moral and social identity; lifestyle and collective activism; perceived moral threat, prejudice, and stigma; movement-boundary disputes; digital mediation and contested representation; and public responses to vegan protest and disruption.

The publications differed in design, population, and evidentiary scope. They were therefore used to identify recurring conceptual patterns rather than to estimate prevalence or statistically combine effects. Table 2 summarizes the methodological orientation, primary focus, and analytical contribution of each publication. The thematic synthesis generated six themes.

**Table 2.** Characteristics of the Expanded Core Thematic Corpus

| PUBLICATION                                | APPROACH OR CONTEXT                                                               | PRIMARY FOCUS                                                           | CONTRIBUTION TO THE SYNTHESIS                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ROSENFELD AND BURROW<sup>21</sup></b>   | Conceptual identity framework.                                                    | Multidimensional vegetarian identity.                                   | Explains how dietary commitments become internalized and expressed as personal and social identity. |
| <b>MACINNIS AND HODSON<sup>22</sup></b>    | Three empirical studies involving omnivores and vegetarian or vegan participants. | Bias toward vegetarians and vegans from source and target perspectives. | Establishes perceived threat, prejudice, and experienced stigma as relevant intergroup processes.   |
| <b>JUDGE AND WILSON<sup>23</sup></b>       | Survey of 1,326 nonvegetarian participants in New Zealand.                        | Ideological foundations of attitudes toward vegetarians and vegans.     | Connects political and social worldviews with evaluations of dietary minorities.                    |
| <b>MARKOWSKI AND ROXBURGH<sup>24</sup></b> | Five focus groups with vegan, vegetarian, and                                     | Anticipated vegan stigma.                                               | Identifies social and behavioral distancing as responses to vegan stigma.                           |

<sup>21</sup> "The Unified Model of Vegetarian Identity."

<sup>22</sup> "It Ain't Easy Eating Greens."

<sup>23</sup> "A Dual-Process Motivational Model of Attitudes towards Vegetarians and Vegans."

<sup>24</sup> "If I Became a Vegan, My Family and Friends Would Hate Me."

|                                         |                                                                                 |                                                                          |                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                         | omnivorous college students.                                                    |                                                                          |                                                                                           |
| <b>GRÜNHAGE AND REUTER<sup>25</sup></b> | Quantitative examination of diet, political orientation, and moral foundations. | Political and moral dimensions of vegan and vegetarian diets.            | Connects dietary identity with moral foundations and political orientation.               |
| <b>PICKETT<sup>26</sup></b>             | Philosophical and moral-psychological analysis.                                 | Vegan moral motivation and false consciousness.                          | Interprets veganism as a challenge to normalized assumptions about animal consumption.    |
| <b>MILBURN AND FISCHER<sup>27</sup></b> | Philosophical analysis of veganism and freeganism.                              | Ethical disagreement concerning waste, consumption, and animal products. | Reveals contested movement boundaries and competing standards of ethical consistency.     |
| <b>JUDGE ET AL.<sup>28</sup></b>        | Two preregistered studies of self-identified vegans.                            | Social Identity Model of Vegan Activism.                                 | Connects identity, moral conviction, anger, and collective efficacy with vegan activism.  |
| <b>NEZLEK ET AL.<sup>29</sup></b>       | Analysis of spontaneous descriptions of dietary groups.                         | Perceptions of vegans, nonvegan vegetarians, and omnivores.              | Demonstrates how diet functions as a basis for social identity and intergroup evaluation. |
| <b>MENZIES ET AL.<sup>30</sup></b>      | Two preregistered experiments comparing protest conditions.                     | Responses to disruptive and nondisruptive vegan protest.                 | Provides direct evidence concerning public reactions to vegan protest and disruption.     |

<sup>25</sup> "What Makes Diets Political? Moral Foundations and the Left-Wing-Vegan Connection," *Social Justice Research* 34, no. 1 (March 2021): 18–52, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-020-00361-w>.

<sup>26</sup> "Veganism, Moral Motivation and False Consciousness."

<sup>27</sup> "The Freegan Challenge to Veganism."

<sup>28</sup> "Dietary Behaviour as a Form of Collective Action."

<sup>29</sup> "Spontaneous Verbal Descriptions of Vegans, Non-Vegan Vegetarians, and Omnivores and Relationships between These Descriptions and Perceivers' Diets."

<sup>30</sup> "The Vegan Dilemma."

|                             |                                                                                          |                                                      |                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ŞEN <sup>31</sup>           | Analysis of representations of veganism on X in the Turkish context.                     | Veganism as political activism or dietary lifestyle. | Shows how lifestyle expression, political advocacy, and vegan identity coexist digitally.                                          |
| TORRES ET AL. <sup>32</sup> | Longitudinal qualitative study involving 73 interviews with 40 young vegans in Santiago. | Everyday and collective forms of vegan activism.     | Identifies cooking, communication, professional activity, digital content, and organizational participation as activist practices. |

*Note:* The corpus was purposively selected to represent the six analytical domains. Menzies et al. <sup>33</sup> was the only publication in the corpus that directly compared public responses to disruptive and nondisruptive vegan protest. None of the publications measured fanaticism as a psychological or behavioral variable.

**2. Veganism as Moral and Social Identity: Commitment and the Boundary of Fanatical Coercion**

Across the corpus, veganism was represented as a moral and social identity rather than merely a dietary preference. Rosenfeld and Burrow’s<sup>34</sup> Unified Model of Vegetarian Identity explains how dietary commitments may be incorporated into the self-concept through contextual, internalized, and externalized dimensions. Although the model addresses vegetarian identity broadly, it provides a relevant framework for understanding variation in the centrality, motivation, strictness, and public expression of vegan identity.

Grünhage and Reuter<sup>35</sup> further connected vegan and vegetarian dietary preferences with political orientation and moral foundations, while Pickett<sup>36</sup> interpreted veganism as a moral challenge to socially normalized animal consumption. Together, these publications indicate that vegan practice may express broader commitments concerning animal welfare, justice, responsibility, and political change.

<sup>31</sup> “An Overview of Veganism on X.”

<sup>32</sup> “Social Change as a Lifestyle.”

<sup>33</sup> “The Vegan Dilemma.”

<sup>34</sup> “The Unified Model of Vegetarian Identity.”

<sup>35</sup> “What Makes Diets Political?”

<sup>36</sup> “Veganism, Moral Motivation and False Consciousness.”

Identity may also contribute to collective action. Judge et al.<sup>37</sup> found that vegan activism was associated with social identification, moral conviction, emotion, and perceived collective efficacy. These findings explain how strong vegan identity can motivate public advocacy, but identity centrality, moral intensity, emotion, and collective efficacy do not by themselves establish fanaticism or coercive conduct.

The relevant distinction is therefore between the strength of a commitment and the manner in which it governs relations with others. Devotion to a moral value may provide meaning and sustain collective action, but it approaches fanatical coercion when the value is treated as demanding universal recognition and dissenters are met with hostile antagonism or imposed conformity.<sup>38</sup> Intensity, sacrifice, or refusal to compromise alone remains insufficient, particularly because uncompromising commitment has also supported resistance to entrenched injustice.<sup>39</sup>

This study consequently uses fanatical coercion as a conduct-based category. It concerns the conversion of moral certainty into claimed authority to intimidate, humiliate, threaten, confine, or seriously restrict the agency of others. These examples are normative applications of the framework rather than behaviors established across the entire corpus. The analysis must also consider institutional and cultural pressures supporting dominant consumption practices rather than treating the existing social order as ethically neutral.

### 3. Activism as Lifestyle and Collective Action

The corpus showed that vegan activism included both everyday lifestyle practices and organized collective action. Based on 73 interviews with 40 young vegans in Santiago, Torres et al.<sup>40</sup> identified ethical consumption, cooking, commensality, professional engagement, online content creation, participation in organizations, lobbying, and demonstrations as interconnected forms of activism. These practices crossed the boundaries between individual and collective action and between interpersonal and public influence.

---

<sup>37</sup> "Dietary Behaviour as a Form of Collective Action."

<sup>38</sup> Katsafanas, "An Introduction to the Philosophy of Fanaticism"; Tietjen, "Fear, Fanaticism, and Fragile Identities."

<sup>39</sup> Olson, "The Freshness of Fanaticism."

<sup>40</sup> "Social Change as a Lifestyle."

Judge et al.<sup>41</sup> similarly conceptualized vegan activism as action intended to promote vegan lifestyles beyond the individual. Across two preregistered studies, more frequent activism was associated with stronger moral convictions, collective efficacy, group-based anger associated with the reasons for being vegan, and identification with both vegans and animals. These findings indicate how personal dietary commitment can develop into collective action oriented toward wider social change.

Together, the publications show that vegan activism cannot be reduced either to private consumption or to public protest. Everyday practices may acquire activist significance when they are intentionally connected to broader social change, while collective activism may extend from community engagement to institutional advocacy and demonstration. This continuum provides the basis for distinguishing persuasive advocacy, disruptive protest, and coercive interference according to conduct and its effects rather than according to whether an action is private or public.

#### **4. Perceived Moral Threat, Prejudice, and Stigma**

The corpus showed that negative reactions to veganism may arise from intergroup perceptions rather than confrontational activism alone. MacInnis and Hodson<sup>42</sup> identified systematic bias toward vegetarians and vegans, particularly when veganism was perceived as threatening established values and social norms. Judge and Wilson<sup>43</sup> similarly found that evaluations of vegans were associated with broader ideological beliefs concerning authority and social hierarchy.

Stigma also influenced social interaction and dietary choices. Markowski and Roxburgh<sup>44</sup> found that anticipated stigma encouraged social and behavioral distancing, while Nezlek et al.<sup>45</sup> showed that dietary identities shaped how vegans, vegetarians, and omnivores were socially described. Together, these findings indicate that veganism may be interpreted as an implicit moral challenge even without direct

---

<sup>41</sup> "Dietary Behaviour as a Form of Collective Action."

<sup>42</sup> "It Ain't Easy Eating Greens."

<sup>43</sup> "A Dual-Process Motivational Model of Attitudes towards Vegetarians and Vegans."

<sup>44</sup> "If I Became a Vegan, My Family and Friends Would Hate Me."

<sup>45</sup> "Spontaneous Verbal Descriptions of Vegans, Non-Vegan Vegetarians, and Omnivores and Relationships between These Descriptions and Perceivers' Diets."

condemnation. Negative public reactions therefore do not necessarily demonstrate that vegan advocacy is aggressive or coercive.

This interpretation is consistent with Minson and Monin<sup>46</sup>, who found that meat eaters evaluated vegetarians more negatively when anticipated moral reproach became salient. The finding helps explain why vegan advocacy may encounter resistance independently of the aggressiveness of its message.

Stigma may also strengthen identification with a minority community. The rejection-identification model proposes that perceived group-based rejection can increase in-group identification, although it was originally developed in a different social context and has not been directly tested within the present vegan corpus.<sup>47</sup> Its application to veganism therefore remains interpretive rather than conclusive. These processes may intensify identity-based disagreement, but they do not independently produce fanatical coercion.

## 5. Movement-Boundary Disputes and Internal Coercion

The corpus revealed disagreements concerning the boundaries and requirements of vegan practice. Milburn and Fischer<sup>48</sup> examined whether consuming discarded animal products can be compatible with vegan commitments, demonstrating tensions between avoiding participation in animal exploitation, reducing waste, and maintaining ethical consistency.

Pickett<sup>49</sup> situated vegan moral motivation within dominant social systems that normalize animal consumption, indicating that responsibility cannot always be reduced to isolated individual choices. Together, these publications show that vegan identity contains competing interpretations of obligation, consistency, and appropriate responses to existing food systems.

Such disputes may clarify ethical principles but may also produce judgments about purity or insufficient commitment. Internal disagreement does not itself constitute fanaticism; the ethical concern arises when contested standards are enforced

<sup>46</sup> "Do-Gooder Derogation: Disparaging Morally Motivated Minorities to Defuse Anticipated Reproach," *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 3, no. 2 (March 2012): 200–207, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550611415695>.

<sup>47</sup> Nyla R. Branscombe, Michael T. Schmitt, and Richard D. Harvey, "Perceiving Pervasive Discrimination among African Americans: Implications for Group Identification and Well-Being," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (US) 77, no. 1 (1999): 135–49, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.77.1.135>.

<sup>48</sup> "The Freegan Challenge to Veganism."

<sup>49</sup> "Veganism, Moral Motivation and False Consciousness."

through humiliation, intimidation, threats, or other forms of coercion. The normative boundary therefore depends on the manner of enforcement rather than on the existence of disagreement or strict ethical standards.

## 6. Digital Mediation and Contested Representation

Digital platforms shaped how veganism was represented as either a lifestyle or a form of political activism. Şen<sup>50</sup> found that sampled mainstream news accounts on X primarily framed veganism through nutrition and lifestyle, while its political and activist dimensions received less attention. This framing may obscure the movement's broader concerns with animal exploitation, consumption, and social change.

Torres et al.<sup>51</sup> similarly identified online content creation and digital communication as part of a wider activist repertoire that also included everyday practices, organizational participation, and public action. Together, these findings show that digital communication influences which meanings of veganism become publicly visible.

Research outside the vegan context indicates that engagement-based ranking can amplify emotionally charged and out-group-hostile political content compared with chronological presentation.<sup>52</sup> However, neither this supplementary evidence nor the core corpus establishes that algorithms specifically amplify confrontational vegan activism or directly cause activist escalation. Digital mediation may intensify identity-based disagreement, but it does not independently constitute fanatical coercion. Reciprocal activism should preserve reasoned and accountable pressure while allowing activists to refuse abusive engagement, moderate online spaces, and protect themselves from harassment.

## 7. Public Responses to Vegan Protest and the Millian Threshold

Menzies et al.<sup>53</sup> directly examined public responses to disruptive and nondisruptive vegan protests through two preregistered experiments. In the first study, disruptive protest produced more negative attitudes toward vegans only among female

---

<sup>50</sup> "An Overview of Veganism on X."

<sup>51</sup> "Social Change as a Lifestyle."

<sup>52</sup> Smitha Milli et al., "Engagement, User Satisfaction, and the Amplification of Divisive Content on Social Media," *PNAS Nexus* 4, no. 3 (March 2025): pgaf062, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgaf062>.

<sup>53</sup> "The Vegan Dilemma."

participants. In the second study, protest type did not significantly affect attitudes; instead, exposure to vegan protest generally produced less favorable evaluations of vegans and stronger defenses of meat consumption than exposure to fast-fashion protest. These responses were associated with perceptions of protester immorality and reduced identification with the activists.

The findings indicate that public resistance may arise from the cause being advocated as well as from the tactic used. Because exposure to peaceful vegan protest could also produce negative evaluations and the additional effect of disruption was inconsistent, public opposition is an insufficient ethical criterion. Negative attitudes toward protesters do not establish that a protest is ethically harmful or coercive; public approval and normative legitimacy must therefore remain analytically distinct.

Under Mill's Harm Principle, the ethical status of protest depends not on disruption alone but on the severity and duration of its burden, the responsibility of the target, safeguards for third parties, and foreseeable consequences. Public dislike, offense, or moral disagreement is insufficient to justify restriction unless the conduct seriously interferes with the legitimate interests or agency of others.<sup>54</sup>

Moral criticism, graphic advocacy, and peaceful protest may provoke anger or defensiveness without constituting harm. Limited disruption may also remain defensible when it is temporary, proportionate, directed toward responsible actors, and accompanied by appropriate safeguards. Nonnormative but nonviolent action can create constructive pressure, while disruptive protest may possess democratic significance when it communicates an intelligible demand and seeks institutional change.<sup>55</sup>

The ethical threshold is crossed when a tactic substantially restricts another person's ability to choose, leave, respond, access essential services, or remain secure. Threats, assault, confinement, sustained personalized harassment, and dangerous obstruction become coercive when they seek compliance through fear or serious interference with agency. The assessment must remain contextual, considering duration, location, emergency access, reversibility, target responsibility, and foreseeable risk.

---

<sup>54</sup> Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays*.

<sup>55</sup> Oscar Berglund, "Disruptive Protest, Civil Disobedience & Direct Action," *Politics* 45, no. 2 (May 2025): 239–57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02633957231176999>; Shuman et al., "Disrupting the System Constructively."

Taken together, the six themes show that vegan activism is shaped by moral identity, everyday and collective practices, public stigma, movement-boundary disputes, digital representation, and reactions to protest. Table 3 consolidates the principal evidence and observable implications identified across the core corpus. These implications remain descriptive and do not independently determine whether a particular activist tactic is ethically legitimate.

**Table 3.** Thematic Findings and Observable Implications

| THEME                                                 | EVIDENCE IN THE CORE CORPUS                                                                                                              | OBSERVABLE IMPLICATION                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MORAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITY</b>                      | Moral conviction, identity centrality, political orientation, and identification with vegans and animals shape vegan commitment.         | Veganism may become part of the self-concept and motivate collective action.                 |
| <b>LIFESTYLE AND COLLECTIVE ACTIVISM</b>              | Activism includes consumption, cooking, communication, professional practice, organizational participation, lobbying, and demonstration. | Vegan activism extends from everyday conduct to organized public action.                     |
| <b>MORAL THREAT, PREJUDICE, AND STIGMA</b>            | Vegans may be perceived as threatening established values and may experience negative evaluation or anticipated stigma.                  | Conflict may arise from intergroup perceptions even without confrontational advocacy.        |
| <b>MOVEMENT-BOUNDARY DISPUTES</b>                     | Vegan and freegan perspectives differ concerning markets, waste, responsibility, and ethical consistency.                                | Movement membership and acceptable practice remain internally contested.                     |
| <b>DIGITAL MEDIATION AND CONTESTED REPRESENTATION</b> | Digital communication presents veganism through overlapping lifestyle, dietary, and political frames.                                    | Platform-based representation influences which meanings of veganism become publicly visible. |

### RESPONSES TO PROTEST AND DISRUPTION

Exposure to vegan protest may produce negative evaluations, although the additional effect of disruptive tactics was inconsistent.

Public disapproval may reflect reactions to both the cause and the tactic and does not independently establish ethical illegitimacy.

*Note:* The themes summarize descriptive patterns within the purposively selected corpus. Public responses to protest were examined directly only by Menzies et al.<sup>56</sup> None of the publications measured fanaticism or established the prevalence of coercive conduct. The descriptive synthesis indicates that moral intensity, stigma, digital visibility, disruption, and public disapproval do not independently determine ethical legitimacy. A cross-cutting evaluation must also consider proportionality, target responsibility, democratic authorization, and the preservation of agency.

## 8. Proportionality, Strategy, and Democratic Legitimacy

Protest tactics have both ethical and strategic consequences. Actions perceived as severely harmful or excessively disruptive may reduce identification with a movement and weaken public support.<sup>57</sup> However, disruption is not necessarily counterproductive. Nonnormative but nonviolent action may generate constructive pressure when it communicates the injustice clearly and encourages responsible actors to consider concessions.<sup>58</sup>

Strategic effectiveness and ethical legitimacy should nevertheless remain distinct. A tactic may attract attention without being proportionate, while an ethically defensible action may initially receive little public approval. Historical research also shows that protest tactics can influence media framing, public opinion, and political agendas, with nonviolent mobilization producing different consequences from violence.<sup>59</sup>

A proportionate tactic should have a clear relationship to the alleged injustice, direct its principal burden toward actors with relevant responsibility, limit foreseeable harm to third parties, and communicate an intelligible demand. Institutional advocacy

<sup>56</sup> "The Vegan Dilemma."

<sup>57</sup> Feinberg, Willer, and Kovacheff, "The Activist's Dilemma."

<sup>58</sup> Shuman et al., "Disrupting the System Constructively."

<sup>59</sup> Wasow, "Agenda Seeding."

is therefore generally more defensible when activists pursue publicly justifiable rules rather than claiming private authority to impose immediate obedience.

From a Rousseauian perspective, activists may seek substantial legal and institutional change, but binding restrictions require civic authorization and orientation toward the common good rather than the preferences of a particular faction. Democratic legitimacy therefore does not require activists to abandon radical demands; it requires those demands to remain open to public justification, contestation, and institutional decision-making.

## **9. From Thematic Synthesis to a Six-Dimensional Normative Framework**

The six-dimensional normative framework was developed through the second stage of analysis rather than extracted directly from the thematic corpus or adopted as a taxonomy from Mill. The six descriptive themes were subjected to cross-cutting normative evaluation concerning the seriousness of imposed burdens, preservation of agency, target responsibility, proportionality, protection of third parties, and openness to public justification and disagreement. These recurring concerns were organized by the authors into six evaluative dimensions: severity, agency, responsibility, proportionality, safeguards, and reciprocity.

The dimensions constitute an analytical construction developed in the present study and do not correspond one-to-one with the descriptive themes. Mill's Harm Principle provides the primary philosophical foundation for evaluating harm, liberty, and coercive interference, while Rousseau and Voltaire contribute supplementary considerations concerning legitimate authority, public justification, and tolerance.

Severity concerns the seriousness and duration of physical, psychological, economic, or liberty-related burdens. Agency assesses whether affected persons retain a meaningful ability to leave, refuse, respond, or seek protection, while responsibility concerns whether the target is meaningfully connected to the alleged injustice. Proportionality considers whether the burden is commensurate with the objective of the action. Safeguards concern measures to minimize foreseeable risks to vulnerable or uninvolved third parties, while reciprocity assesses whether the tactic remains open to public justification, criticism, and revision rather than demanding conformity through intimidation.

No single dimension independently determines legitimacy. A disruptive action may remain defensible when it targets responsible institutions, limits unnecessary harm, and preserves essential access. Conversely, an apparently minor tactic may become coercive when it repeatedly targets a vulnerable person or substantially restricts that person's agency. Fanatical coercion becomes more evident when severe or disproportionate burdens are combined with denial of agency, weak target responsibility, inadequate safeguards, and hostility toward criticism. The framework is therefore an interpretive normative synthesis developed in the present study, grounded primarily in Mill's Harm Principle and supplemented by considerations of democratic legitimacy and tolerance from Rousseau and Voltaire.

## 10. Practical Implications

Vegan organizations can combine education, community activities, digital communication, lobbying, boycotts, and nonviolent direct action within a layered campaign strategy. Organizational standards should prohibit threats, personalized harassment, physical intimidation, and unsafe obstruction. Protest planning should incorporate de-escalation, emergency access, communication with bystanders, and safeguards for vulnerable or uninvolved persons.

Campaigns should distinguish responsible institutional targets from wider public audiences. Pressure is more defensible when directed toward actors with relevant authority, while communication with the public should provide accessible forms of participation and connect moral concerns with specific, achievable demands. Because negative reactions may arise from the vegan cause as well as from the tactic, public approval should not be treated as the sole measure of either effectiveness or legitimacy.<sup>60</sup>

The framework also applies to internal movement relations. Disagreements concerning consumption, waste, ethical consistency, and strategy should not automatically be treated as betrayal or insufficient commitment.<sup>61</sup> Vegan organizations can preserve their opposition to animal exploitation while recognizing that participants may adopt different routes toward social change.

---

<sup>60</sup> Menzies, Ruby, and Dar-Nimrod, "The Vegan Dilemma."

<sup>61</sup> Milburn and Fischer, "The Freegan Challenge to Veganism."

Public authorities should regulate harmful conduct rather than political viewpoints and should preserve meaningful opportunities for peaceful assembly. Journalists and social media users should similarly distinguish isolated confrontational incidents from the wider vegan movement by reporting the tactic, target, duration, risks, demands, and organizational context. International guidance on peaceful assembly likewise emphasizes that authorities should facilitate peaceful protest and ensure that restrictions are narrowly justified rather than based on disagreement with its message.<sup>62</sup>

#### D. CONCLUSION

This study examined the ethical boundary between persuasive advocacy, disruptive protest, and fanatical coercion in vegan activism through a structured narrative review, thematic synthesis, and philosophical analysis. The purposively selected corpus of twelve publications generated six themes: moral and social identity; lifestyle and collective activism; perceived moral threat, prejudice, and stigma; movement-boundary disputes; digital mediation and contested representation; and public responses to vegan protest.

The findings show that strong vegan commitment may arise from moral conviction, social identification, emotional concern, and perceived collective efficacy. Vegan activism also extends beyond demonstrations to everyday consumption, communication, professional engagement, organizational participation, and institutional advocacy. These dynamics may intensify disagreement but do not independently constitute fanaticism. Public resistance may similarly reflect reactions to veganism itself rather than proof that a particular protest is harmful or coercive.

The ethical distinction lies primarily in how activist tactics affect the agency and legitimate interests of others. Moral criticism, unsettling advocacy, and proportionate nonviolent disruption may remain defensible when they preserve safety, essential access, and the capacity to respond. Activism approaches fanatical coercion when moral certainty is used to justify intimidation, credible threats, confinement, dangerous obstruction, personalized harassment, or other serious restrictions on agency.

Based on the thematic synthesis and subsequent normative analysis, this study develops a six-dimensional normative framework comprising severity, agency,

---

<sup>62</sup> UN. Human Rights Committee, ed., *General Comment No. 37 (2020) on the Right of Peaceful Assembly (Article 21): Human Rights Committee* (Geneva: UN, 2020), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3884725>.

responsibility, proportionality, safeguards, and reciprocity. The framework is an analytical construction of the present study, grounded primarily in Mill's Harm Principle and supplemented by Rousseauian considerations of democratic legitimacy and Voltairean tolerance. It evaluates conduct rather than the intensity or popularity of a belief and therefore avoids treating either all disruption as harmful or all morally urgent action as justified.

The review remains limited by its purposive and non-exhaustive corpus, reliance on accessible English-language publications, methodological heterogeneity, and the small number of studies directly examining vegan protest. The framework therefore does not establish the prevalence of coercive conduct within vegan activism. Future research should compare protest tactics across cultural settings and examine how target responsibility, duration, safeguards, and levels of disruption influence perceived legitimacy, movement support, and actual harm.

## REFERENCES

- Berglund, Oscar. "Disruptive Protest, Civil Disobedience & Direct Action." *Politics* 45, no. 2 (May 2025): 239–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02633957231176999>.
- Branscombe, Nyla R., Michael T. Schmitt, and Richard D. Harvey. "Perceiving Pervasive Discrimination among African Americans: Implications for Group Identification and Well-Being." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (US) 77, no. 1 (1999): 135–49. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.77.1.135>.
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. "One Size Fits All? What Counts as Quality Practice in (Reflexive) Thematic Analysis?" *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 18, no. 3 (July 2021): 328–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>.
- Feinberg, Matthew, Robb Willer, and Chloe Kovacheff. "The Activist's Dilemma: Extreme Protest Actions Reduce Popular Support for Social Movements." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (US) 119, no. 5 (2020): 1086–111. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000230>.
- Ferrari, Rossella. "Writing Narrative Style Literature Reviews." *Medical Writing* 24, no. 4 (December 2015): 230–35. <https://doi.org/10.1179/2047480615Z.000000000329>.
- Giraud, Eva Haifa. *Veganism: Politics, Practice, and Theory*. Bloomsbury, 2021.

- Grünhage, Thomas, and Martin Reuter. "What Makes Diets Political? Moral Foundations and the Left-Wing-Vegan Connection." *Social Justice Research* 34, no. 1 (March 2021): 18–52. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-020-00361-w>.
- Judge, Madeline, Julian W. Fernando, and Christopher T. Begeny. "Dietary Behaviour as a Form of Collective Action: A Social Identity Model of Vegan Activism." *Appetite* 168 (January 2022): 105730. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2021.105730>.
- Judge, Madeline, and Marc S. Wilson. "A Dual-Process Motivational Model of Attitudes towards Vegetarians and Vegans." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 49, no. 1 (2019): 169–78. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2386>.
- Katsafanas, Paul. "An Introduction to the Philosophy of Fanaticism." In *Fanaticism and the History of Philosophy*. Routledge, 2023.
- MacInnis, Cara C., and Gordon Hodson. "It Ain't Easy Eating Greens: Evidence of Bias toward Vegetarians and Vegans from Both Source and Target." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 20, no. 6 (November 2017): 721–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430215618253>.
- Markowski, Kelly L., and Susan Roxburgh. "'If I Became a Vegan, My Family and Friends Would Hate Me': Anticipating Vegan Stigma as a Barrier to Plant-Based Diets." *Appetite* 135 (April 2019): 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2018.12.040>.
- Menzies, Rachel E., Matthew B. Ruby, and Ilan Dar-Nimrod. "The Vegan Dilemma: Do Peaceful Protests Worsen Attitudes to Veganism?" *Appetite* 186 (July 2023): 106555. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2023.106555>.
- Milburn, Josh, and Bob Fischer. "The Freegan Challenge to Veganism." *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 34, no. 3 (June 2021): 17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-021-09859-y>.
- Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty, Utilitarianism, and Other Essays*. 1859; Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Milli, Smitha, Micah Carroll, Yike Wang, Sashrika Pandey, Sebastian Zhao, and Anca D. Dragan. "Engagement, User Satisfaction, and the Amplification of Divisive Content on Social Media." *PNAS Nexus* 4, no. 3 (March 2025): pgaf062. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgaf062>.

- Minson, Julia A., and Benoît Monin. "Do-Gooder Derogation: Disparaging Morally Motivated Minorities to Defuse Anticipated Reproach." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 3, no. 2 (March 2012): 200–207. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550611415695>.
- Nezlek, John B., Catherine A. Forestell, and Harini Krishnamurti. "Spontaneous Verbal Descriptions of Vegans, Non-Vegan Vegetarians, and Omnivores and Relationships between These Descriptions and Perceivers' Diets." *PLOS ONE* 18, no. 12 (December 2023): e0293899. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0293899>.
- Olson, Joel. "The Freshness of Fanaticism: The Abolitionist Defense of Zealotry." *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 4 (December 2007): 685–701. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707072179>.
- Pickett, Susana. "Veganism, Moral Motivation and False Consciousness." *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 34, no. 3 (April 2021): 15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-021-09857-0>.
- Rosenfeld, Daniel L., and Anthony L. Burrow. "The Unified Model of Vegetarian Identity: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Plant-Based Food Choices." *Appetite* 112 (May 2017): 78–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2017.01.017>.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*. 1762; Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Şen, A. Fulya. "An Overview of Veganism on X: Is Veganism a Political Activism or a Dietary Style in the Turkish Case?" *Asya Studies* 8, no. 28 (June 2024): 109–16. <https://doi.org/10.31455/asya.1405715>.
- Shuman, Eric, Tamar Saguy, Martijn van Zomeren, and Eran Halperin. "Disrupting the System Constructively: Testing the Effectiveness of Nonnormative Nonviolent Collective Action." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (US) 121, no. 4 (2021): 819–41. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000333>.
- Simpson, Brent, Robb Willer, and Matthew Feinberg. "Does Violent Protest Backfire? Testing a Theory of Public Reactions to Activist Violence." *Socius* 4 (January 2018): 2378023118803189. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023118803189>.

- Snyder, Hannah. "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research* 104 (November 2019): 333–39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>.
- Thomas, James, and Angela Harden. "Methods for the Thematic Synthesis of Qualitative Research in Systematic Reviews." *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 8, no. 1 (July 2008): 45. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-45>.
- Tietjen, Ruth Rebecca. "Fear, Fanaticism, and Fragile Identities." *The Journal of Ethics* 27, no. 2 (June 2023): 211–30. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10892-023-09418-9>.
- Torres, Rodrigo, Camila Joustra, Juan Figueroa, and Claudia Giacomani. "Social Change as a Lifestyle: Identifying Actions and Practices of Vegan Activism among Young Adults." *Frontiers in Political Science* 7 (September 2025): 1477573. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2025.1477573>.
- UN. Human Rights Committee, ed. *General Comment No. 37 (2020) on the Right of Peaceful Assembly (Article 21): Human Rights Committee*. Geneva: UN, 2020. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3884725>.
- Voltaire. *Voltaire: Treatise on Tolerance*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Wasow, Omar. "Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion and Voting." *American Political Science Review* 114, no. 3 (August 2020): 638–59. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305542000009X>.