

BUYING IN: SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION AND THE
ARCHITECTURE OF CHOICE

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I'll keep this short, as completing a doctorate has not been.

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ABSTRACT

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Academics, marketers, and the general public share a growing interest in socially conscious products that claim to support (or oppose) a variety of causes and issues, from protecting the environment to objecting to free trade agreements between countries. Although the presence of such products has grown both in the US and abroad, both academics and marketers assume that niche audiences have—and will continue to—consume the vast majority of socially conscious products. This logic implies that socially conscious products have limited political impact due to their constrained market share, and that socially conscious consumption is a generic behavior similar to “volunteering” in which consumers do not discriminate between the issues that products support.

This dissertation proposes a new way to think about this emergent form of non-traditional political participation. Specifically, it argues that socially conscious consumption has a broader appeal when people are properly targeted with products that support the issues they care about (the “Issue Importance – Product Match,” or IIPM). Further, it conceptualizes socially conscious consumption as both an active and reactive form of political behavior. Although consumers’ choices are influenced by context (“top down” choices made by private or public institutions), behaviors such as socially

conscious consumption have the potential to shape future choices made by institutions from the “bottom-up.”

Several pre-tests were conducted to (1) identify distinct clusters of socially conscious consumers; (2) develop good-fitting measures of IIPM; and (3) hypothetical product pairs that would force participants to choose between a socially conscious product and a similar generic alternative. Study 1 tests the hypothesis that IIPM drives socially conscious consumption, and that this relationship persists even when there is a cost differential. Having generated supportive results for both propositions in Study 1, Study 2 tests the effect of normative appeals (“nudges”) on socially conscious consumption. Results from Study 2 show that normative appeals tapping the social identity of “issue supporters” may enhance the likelihood of socially conscious consumption among supporters of that issue, nearly closing the gap created by a 20% difference in cost. Implications of these findings for researchers, practitioners, and the public are discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
CHAPTER 1.....	1
Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER 2.....	11
Literature Review.....	11
Methodology.....	13
Findings.....	14
Discussion.....	31
CHAPTER 3.....	32
Theory and Hypotheses.....	32
Socially Conscious Consumption as Active and Reactive.....	36
Optimizing Nudges: The Theoretical and Empirical Underpinnings of <i>Nudge</i>	40
CHAPTER 4.....	47
Identifying Issue Supporters, Measuring Issue Importance, and Developing Product Pairs.....	47
.....	47
Method.....	47
Measuring Issue Importance (Pretest 1).....	48
Developing Product Images (Pretest 2).....	68
CHAPTER 5.....	85
Investigating the Relationship Between IIPM and Socially Conscious Consumption.....	85
Method.....	85
Results.....	88
Data Analysis.....	92
Discussion.....	103
CHAPTER 6.....	104
Exploring the Effect of Normative Appeals on Socially Conscious Consumption.....	104
Method.....	105
Results.....	107

Data Analysis	108
Discussion	118
CHAPTER 7	120
Conclusion	120
Developing a Theory of Socially Conscious Consumerism	121
Summary of Findings.....	124
Conclusions.....	127
APPENDIX A.....	136
Classification of Journals and Studies	136
APPENDIX B	150
Survey Items Included in Pre-test 1	150
APPENDIX C	151
Full Measurement Models of IIPM Indicators.....	151
APPENDIX D.....	155
The Demographic Makeup of Study Participants.....	155
APPENDIX E.	156
Descriptive Statistics from Study 1.....	156
APPENDIX F.....	161
Robustness Check of IIPM's Predictive Power Within Individuals.....	161
APPENDIX G.....	163
Descriptive Statistics from Study 2.....	163
REFERENCES	177

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 2.1. Segment Size and Premia for Socially Conscious Products By Issue	19
TABLE 4.1. Correlations between Issue Rankings ($N=138$).....	52
TABLE 4.2. Demographic Characteristics of Issue Clusters ($N=138$).....	57
TABLE 4.3. Observed Differences between Product Pairs	71
TABLE 5.1 Pearson’s Correlations Between IIPM Measures.....	91
TABLE 5.2. Predicting the Effect of Cost and IIPM on Socially Conscious Consumption	94
TABLE 5.3. IIPM as a Mediator of Demographic and Political Attributes	101
TABLE 6.1. Mean IIPM score based on random assignment to condition ($N=1320$)....	109
TABLE 6.2. Issue rankings for all screened participants ($N=2091$).....	109
TABLE 6.3. Predicting the Effect of Cost, IIPM, and Normative Appeals on Socially Conscious Consumption	111
TABLE A1. Studies Included in Review of Empirical Literature (Chapter 2)	141
TABLE D1. Sample Demographics	155
TABLE F1. Mismatching IIPM Values and Product Choice	161
TABLE F2. Predicting the Effects of Mismatched IIPM Values on Socially Conscious Consumption	162
TABLE G2. Robustness Check of Significant Differences Between Joint Effect of Experimental and Non-Experimental Factors.....	164
TABLE G3. Socially Conscious Consumption of Animal-Friendly Products by Product, IIPM Tercile, and Cost.....	165
TABLE G4. Socially Conscious Consumption of Products with Humane Labor by Product, IIPM Tercile, and Cost	166
TABLE G5. Socially Conscious Consumption of “Made in the USA” Products by Product, IIPM Tercile, and Cost	167

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 4.1. Display of Survey Items for Potential Measure of IIPM.....	50
FIGURE 3.2. Within-groups Sum of Squares by Number of Clusters ($N=138$)	54
FIGURE 4.3. Mean Ranking of Issues by Cluster ($N=138$)	55
FIGURE 4.4. Indicators of IIPM Regarding Animal Rights	61
FIGURE 4.5. Indicators of IIPM Regarding Labor Conditions.....	63
FIGURE 4.6. Indicators of IIPM Regarding Outsourcing	65
FIGURE 4.7. Indicators of IIPM Regarding Small Business	67
FIGURE 4.8. Shampoo Relating to Animal Rights	73
FIGURE 4.9. Household Cleaner Relating to Animal Rights	74
FIGURE 4.10. T-Shirts Relating to Labor Conditions	76
FIGURE 4.11. Chocolate Relating to Labor Conditions	77
FIGURE 4.12. Coffee Relating to Outsourcing.....	79
FIGURE 4.13. Batteries Relating to Outsourcing	80
FIGURE 4.14. Strawberry Jam Relating to Small Business.....	82
FIGURE 4.15. Glycerin Soap Relating to Small Business.....	83
FIGURE 5.1. Distribution of IIPM Measures ($N=315$)	90
FIGURE 5.2. Marginal probabilities of choosing a socially conscious product	98
FIGURE 6.2. The Effect of Normative Appeals on Socially Conscious Consumption	118
FIGURE A1. Number of Studies by Year and Methodology ($N=271$)	139
FIGURE A2. Methodology by Field ($N=271$).....	140
FIGURE C1. Indicators of Labor Conditions IIPM.....	151
FIGURE C2. Indicators of Animal Rights IIPM	152
FIGURE C3. Indicators of Outsourcing IIPM	153

FIGURE E1. Animal-Friendly Product Choices by Cost and IIPM Tercile.....	157
FIGURE E2. “No Sweat” Product Choices by Cost and IIPM Tercile	158
FIGURE E3. Small Business Product Choices by Cost and IIPM Tercile.....	159
FIGURE E4. “Made in the USA” Product Choices by Cost and IIPM Tercile.....	160
TABLE G1. Socially Conscious Consumption of Animal-Friendly Products by Product, IIPM, and Cost	163
FIGURE G2. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Cleaner by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal	169
FIGURE G3. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Shampoo by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal.....	169
FIGURE G4. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Chocolate by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal.....	171
FIGURE G5. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious T-Shirts by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal	172
FIGURE G6. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Coffee by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal	173
FIGURE G7. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Batteries by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal	174
FIGURE G8. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Jelly by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal.....	175
FIGURE G9. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Soap by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal	176

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The recent controversy over Ralph Lauren's outsourcing of uniforms for the 2012 U.S. Olympic team is only one of many examples pointing to Americans' deep investment in the politics of products. At face value, the outrage expressed by lawmakers and the public at the decision to manufacture the uniforms in China is consistent with the American tradition of boycotting, which spans from citizens' refusal to buy British tea during the American Revolution, to avoiding goods from segregationist shop owners during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s or Nike shoes during the "no-sweat" movement of the 1990s (Glickman, 2008). Indeed, the sentiments expressed by Senator Harry Reid's desire to "take all the uniforms, put them in a big pile and burn them and start all over again" (O'Keefe, 2012) are not a far cry from those that motivated the Boston Tea Party. However, the related bill introduced by Senator Kristen Gillibrand requiring the U.S. Olympic Committee to garb Olympic athletes in ceremonial uniforms "sewn or assembled in the United States" is less consistent with the ethos of previous consumer-oriented social movements. Bolstered by the growing acceptability of what some scholars call "political consumerism," Gillibrand's proposed legislation raises a logical corollary to boycotting: that, in addition to *refusing* goods with objectionable political ties, people should *purchase* goods that are compatible with their political beliefs. In the terminology of this dissertation, Gillibrand is calling upon Congress to

“boycott,” or to consume “socially conscious” products¹ for ethical, social, or political reasons.

I have chosen this specific example to introduce my dissertation for three reasons. First, it captures more fully the way that elites and the public conceptualize the relationship between consumer behavior and political behavior, which not only includes rejecting consumer goods (i.e., boycotting) but the *affirmative* behavior of selectively buying them (i.e., socially conscious consumption). Secondly, I have chosen it because it highlights an issue that is unlikely to be associated with an ideological “niche” because it cuts across partisan lines. Although the Senators I have quoted above are both Democrats, this demand for products “Made in the U.S.A.” also appeals to conservatives or Republicans². In fact, House Speaker John Boehner also spoke out against the outsourcing of uniforms, commenting, “You’d think they’d know better.” This contrasts with much of the extant literature about socially conscious consumption which both implicitly and explicitly conceptualizes it as the product of citizens’ sociodemographic and attitudinal attributes, thus only appealing to certain portions of the polity (e.g. liberals, union members, environmentalists, etc.). This dissertation conceptualizes the appeal of socially conscious consumption more broadly as a behavior available to *everyone* who possesses an interest in one or more public issues. I argue that the relevant

¹ While I use the term “products” throughout this dissertation, the logic of socially conscious consumption can apply equally to the purchase of “services.”

² However, Democrats appear most likely to introduce legislation relating to socially conscious consumption. Two additional and related pieces of legislation introduced by Democrats include the “All-American Flag Act,” which mandates that all American flags purchased by the government should be produced within the U.S., and the “Make It In America” initiative which relates to more general topics such as infrastructure development, tariffs, and more (Little, 2012).

dimension is not demography, ideology or an overt interest in politics writ large; rather the key dimensions are the ability to see consumer behavior as a potentially political act, the nature of the issue(s) and product(s) involved, and the way the product or issue is presented to consumers.

The third (and least obvious) reason that I have chosen this example is because Gillibrand's bill advocates "socially conscious consumption" on an institutional, rather than individual, level. This contrasts with the extant literature, which views socially conscious consumption almost exclusively as a "bottom up," individual-level phenomenon that is designed to achieve prosocial results³ by influencing the behavior of (largely commercial) institutions. My example adds another layer to this conceptualization by suggesting that there is a "top down" component to socially conscious consumption in which both private and public sector groups and institutions shape the way that people negotiate the relationship between political and consumer behavior⁴. By this logic, socially conscious consumption is a combination of "top-down" and "bottom-up" processes, with the relationship between individuals and institutions being more *iterative* than *unidirectional*.

³ "Prosocial behavior" is defined in the *Handbook of Child Psychology* as "voluntary behavior intended to help another." When I use the word "prosocial," I describe the probable intentions of the individuals designing choice scenarios. This descriptor is not meant to indicate agreement with whether or not any particular policy is normatively positive or negative.

⁴ To return to my example, although it does not *directly* affect individual behavior, Gillibrand's bill clearly communicates a normatively desirable behavior to citizens as well as the Olympic steering committee (i.e. support "Team U.S.A" by buying products "Made in the U.S.A."), which in turn shapes decisions made in the private sector (i.e. discouraging outsourcing).

The three observations I have drawn from the example above guide my research, which elaborates on the premise that socially conscious consumption is an important emergent political behavior that is conceptually similar to, but distinct from, the rich American tradition of boycotting. In particular, I argue that socially conscious consumption occurs when people are presented with the opportunity to buy products that support issues they care about. I call this necessary condition for socially conscious consumption the “Issue Importance- Product Match” (IIPM). I define IIPM as the convergence of (1) personal concern over or interest in a specific public issue; (2) the relevance of the product in question to this issue or concern; and (3) the availability of a product that makes the claim that using it addresses the issue/concern in a way consonant with the consumer/citizen’s preferred solution.

Although my claim that IIPM drives socially conscious consumption may seem obvious, it opens the door to two more subtle points. First, it runs counter to the popular belief that cause-related products only appeal to a politically interested, participatory, post-materialist, and/or liberal niche of the U.S. consumers. Taken to its logical extreme, this rationale not only suggests that socially conscious consumers share similar political profiles, but that they may fail to discriminate *between* causes, thus buying an array of socially conscious products (e.g. Fair Trade *and* organic *and* eco-friendly *and* local products) regardless of the varying importance they may ascribe to specific issues. Second, my assertion also challenges the separate (but related) belief that socially conscious consumption is motivated by exogenous demographic characteristics such as gender, income, or age. This is a key point because, unlike demographic characteristics,

attitudes can be changed (in direction, salience, strength, accessibility, etc.). If IIPM is the key causal mechanism behind socially conscious consumption, the door is thus open to persuasion. This leads to the communication-based component of my theory to which I now turn.

The final observation that I drew from my example of the 2012 U.S. Olympic uniforms controversy is that socially conscious consumption is a behavior that results from a combination of individual attitudes and cognitions (about politics broadly as well as about specific issues and products) and the behavior of both political (e.g., advocacy groups, government) and non-political (e.g., commercial businesses, the media) institutions. In other words, socially conscious consumption occurs within an iterative process in which the behavior of political and commercial institutions influences the behavior of citizens, and vice versa. The logic underpinning this argument draws from the theories and research of behavioral economics and social psychology popularized by Thaler and Sunstein (2008) in their book *Nudge*. This approach sees individuals' political and economic behavior as occurring within larger "choice structures" designed by "architects" within public or private groups or institutions. In arguing that socially conscious consumption results from the interaction of individual characteristics and the behavior of institutions, I thus conceptualize it as both *active* – driven by the choices made by individuals – and *reactive* – driven by the choices made by institutions. As I later demonstrate in my review of the academic literature related to and supporting *Nudge*, the potential for institutions to influence behavior via "nudges" often occurs through traditional approaches to persuasion that are deeply rooted in communication

theory and research. My theory relating to “socially conscious consumption and the architecture of choice” is thus also a theory of message effects.

In this dissertation, I empirically investigate the two-part theory I have outlined above using an online survey and two web survey experiments. Using the online survey, I identify clusters of supporters who prioritize certain issues above all other participants. I then use a psychometric approach to develop and validate scales tapping “issue importance.” When coupled with a product supporting the same issue, these scales capture IIPM, or the degree to which issue importance “matches” the product. My first experiment then tests the proposition that IIPM drives socially conscious consumption by asking respondents to rate the importance of a variety of political issues, and then choose between pairs of products that only vary in their support of a cause (e.g. Fair Trade, local, eco-friendly, etc.) and their price. The extent to which expressed issue importance is related to product choice—as well as the posited lack of correlations between such behavior and demographic or overtly political traits—supports my argument regarding the key role of IIPM as a necessary condition for socially conscious consumption. Building upon this first experiment, my second experiment evaluates Thaler and Sunstein’s argument that the most effective nudges employ normative appeals. Specifically, I compare the effects of nudges including descriptive norms tied to two different kinds of reference groups against a control group including no descriptive norm. By testing Thaler and Sunstein’s theory-driven suggestions for effective nudges, my experiments will provide insight into the different kinds of “choice architecture” that institutions might deploy to encourage prosocial consumer behavior among citizens.

The remainder of this dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 provides a review of the extant empirical literature on socially conscious consumption, emphasizing those findings most relevant to my argument and highlighting areas of theoretical, methodological and/or substantive disagreement, shortcomings, and gaps in the research. This review illustrates the growing impact of studies of socially conscious consumption across diverse range of disciplines. It also highlights the imbalance between experimental and observational studies, suggesting that the bulk of existing knowledge about socially conscious consumption is built upon correlational rather than causal evidence. Chapter 2 also weakens the commonly held belief that certain segments of the population comprise the lion's share of socially conscious consumers based on their demographic characteristics. Rather, my review suggests that—across issues, disciplines, and methodologies—a person's attitudes regarding a certain issue are the most consistent predictor of choosing a product supporting those values, with a small number of studies also suggesting that social identity and injunctive or descriptive norms also factor into these decisions.

Whereas Chapter 2 reviews the empirical literature most topically relevant to my dissertation, Chapter 3 provides an overview of the most *theoretically* relevant literature to further develop its unique perspective. Specifically, I use Thaler and Sunstein's *Nudge* and the supporting academic literature from behavioral economics and social psychology to elaborate on the overarching rationale for my studies. Building on my observation that socially conscious consumption is both active (driven by individuals) and reactive (driven by institutions), I argue that choice architecture is equally important to individually-held

attitudes in facilitating (or preventing) socially conscious consumption. Drawing from social identity theory and the focus theory of normative conduct, I hypothesize that nudges encouraging consumers to think about the normative behavior of issue supporters (e.g. “people like you who care about Fair Trade”) enhance the appeal of socially conscious products. However, I do not predict that the rising tide lifts all boats equally: rather, I argue that normative “nudges” will be most effective among individuals with high IIPM.

Chapter 4 outlines my preliminary efforts to empirically investigate this phenomenon. Before testing the hypotheses and research questions outlined in Chapter 3, I elaborate on my research design, sample, data collection process, and analytic procedures. I then detail the procedures and findings from a series of pre-tests identifying the best way to measure IIPM, as well as the fine-tuning of product images used in my experiments. The psychometric component of this chapter first identifies four clusters of issue-supporters who prioritize an issue above all other respondents. Specifically, this cluster analysis indicates that distinct groups of individuals support animal rights, humane labor conditions, small businesses, and/or products “Made in the USA.” I then establish good-fitting measures of “Issue Importance” using an “EFA within a CFA” framework for each of these four issues. Finally, online surveys are used to refine images of product pairings that couple a socially conscious product and its generic alternative. Specifically, these pre-tests ensure that respondents notice the subtle difference between the products attributable to their support of a *cause*, not the subtle differences in their packaging that designed to make the choice realistic.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the findings from my web survey experiments. Chapter 5 addresses the fundamental argument made by this dissertation: that people choose socially conscious products—even at a higher cost—when targeted with the issues that they care about. This first study establishes that IIPM exerts a strong influence on product choice, and that it almost closes the choice gap created by a 20% difference in cost. In this chapter I also demonstrate that IIPM mediates the effect of many demographic traits and political values on product choice, with the only demographic trait *directly* tied to product preference being income. However, Chapter 5 also demonstrates that there is a high baseline probability of choosing socially conscious products when no material disadvantage is posed-- even among individuals who explicitly say that they don't care about an issue. This ceiling effect indicates that there are other processes at play impacting socially conscious consumption, above and beyond IIPM.

Having established IIPM as a robust predictor of many forms of socially conscious consumption, Chapter 6 revisits my argument about optimizing “nudges” by making certain aspects of social identity salient by using descriptive norms. The findings presented in this chapter suggest that normative appeals—specifically, those encouraging people to identify with a group of issue supporters—increase the odds of choosing a socially conscious product. In fact, the individuals who are most positively impacted by “nudges” are those who do not identify themselves as supporters of that issue.

The final chapter, Chapter 7, reviews the major conclusions emerging from my dissertation. Some of these conclusions have broad social import, such as those pertaining

to the transitivity of socially conscious consumers across issues and products. Others bring to the table a more pragmatic approach focused on discrete outcomes such as the effectiveness of normative appeals (“nudges”) at encouraging socially conscious consumption. I also discuss the limitations of my research designs and analyses, and make suggests for areas of future research. Finally, this concluding chapter closes by returning to questions about the implications of socially conscious consumers for scholars, marketers, and citizens.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Although citizens' political decision-making is often likened to the choices they make as consumers, research on if and how people's ethical, social and political values influence their actual decisions about what products and services to purchase is relatively sparse. Of course, *boycotting*⁵ has been studied in historical and sociological research on political and social movements from the American and Industrial Revolutions to the Civil Rights movement, to more recent anti-globalization protests (e.g. Glickman, 2009). However, research on the individual-level determinants of this behavior and its corollary, "boycotting" and/or "socially conscious consumption"⁶, is much less well developed. The evidence that does exist suggests that over a third of the American public reports having used boycotting or socially conscious consumption as an alternative (or in addition) to more traditional forms of political participation, but these estimates are based on survey self-reports to very general questions (e.g. Baek, 2010; Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Delli Carpini, 2006). Those studies which have used more specific measures to link political and consumer behavior – for example, Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti's (2005) "political consumerism" index which attempts to capture the frequency with which people think about ethical issues when they are shopping for different kinds of products –

⁵ Boycotting is defined by Merriam Webster as "a concerted refusal to have dealings with a person, store, or organization....to express disapproval or to force acceptance of certain conditions."

⁶ To reiterate, this dissertation defines socially conscious consumption as the purchasing of products and services in support of ethical, social or political causes.

are rare, and to date most current empirical research has failed to adopt their methodological contributions.

A review of the larger literature on consumer preferences for ethically produced and/or socially beneficial goods is informative in this regard. Over the past decade there has been exponential growth in studies exploring people’s willingness to purchase “ethical” products, as well as the attitudinal and demographic determinants of such behavior. This literature is spread across fields as diverse as economics, agriculture, environmental science, communication, political science, marketing, management, social psychology, and sociology—not to mention the many interdisciplinary studies that straddle various domains. The aim of this review is to summarize and assess this research by first aggregating and then evaluating the topical foci and findings from this diverse body of literature. The following questions will guide this process⁷:

- What questions are examined empirically in the literature? How are key constructs operationalized, and how have they evolved over time?
- What are the results of this research? Where is there conclusive and consistent evidence and where are there inconsistencies?
- What should be the main focus of future research?

⁷ These questions are adapted from the literature review conducted by Papaiconomou, Ryan, and Valverde (2011).

Methodology

Given the wide range of disciplines that have at least touched on the topic of socially conscious consumption, it was first necessary to develop a systematic methodology for identifying relevant studies across the social sciences. To do so I first conducted a computerized search using the online search engine Google Scholar. Recent studies were located using keywords relating to “political,” “ethical,” “socially responsible,” “environmentally responsible,” or “green” “consumer behavior.” Among the studies obtained using Google Scholar were four recent meta-analyses pertaining to “ethical consumer behavior” (Papaoikonomou, Ryan, & Valverde, 2011), “fair trade consumption” (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2010), and “pro-environmental behavior” (Osbaldiston & Schott, 2011; Steg & Vlek, 2009). Three relevant literature reviews (Andorfer & Liebe, 2011; Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Newholm & Shaw, 2007) were also identified. The reference lists from these meta-analyses and literature reviews were used to supplement the existing list of sources located using Google Scholar. I also examined the *curriculum vitae* of scholars who authored multiple articles on the list to identify working papers and publications not located using Google Scholar.

Due to the cross-disciplinary nature of this review, further efforts were made to generate a more comprehensive bibliography by compiling keywords from my first search (274 sources) into a list of 637 unique terms. The most-used keywords and their frequencies were as follows: *consumer behavior* (39); *fair trade* (34); *ethical consum** (23); *corporate social responsibility/CSR* (18); *green consum*/marketing* (13); *ethics* (12); *political consumer** (12); *willingness-to pay* (11); *organic* (9); and *social*

*responsib** (5)⁸. These keywords were subsequently incorporated into a Boolean query used to search the scholarly databases EBSCO Megafile, EBSCO Academic Search Premier, Communication and Mass Media Complete, ComAbstracts, GREENfile, Health Business FullTEXT, AB/INFORM Global, PsychInfo, EconLit, Sociological Abstracts, Digital Dissertations, and SSRN. Whereas the first search included qualitative works for the purpose of constructing a comprehensive set of keywords, my second search was constrained to empirical works employing quantitative methods. This yielded a database of more than 500 scholarly works, 271 of which were both substantively “on topic” and used quantitative methods (i.e., experimental, quasi-experimental, or survey designs). Appendix A presents a brief overview of all studies reviewed⁹.

Findings

Methodologies and contexts. Even on a purely descriptive level, the data gleaned from this body of research are revealing. First, it is clear that the topic of socially conscious consumption is of growing interest to the behavioral social sciences (see Figure 2.1). For example, there was an 81% increase in the number of journal articles, conference papers, dissertations, and working papers about socially conscious

⁸ Words marked with an asterisk (*) included variants with different suffixes. For example, *green consum** includes “green consumers,” “green consumption,” and “green consumerism.” The term *boycott** was included 7 times in this list, but omitted from the second iteration of this search, given this study’s specific focus on socially conscious consumption as a behavior distinct from boycotting.

⁹ In reviewing the 271 eligible empirical studies, the following information was recorded about each study: (1) the number of sub-studies; (2) the number of citations in Google Scholar; (3) the year of publication; (4) the field⁹; (5) the mode of interview (for surveys); (6) the setting (for experiments); (7) the key dependent variable(s); (8) the ethical, social, and political issues included in questions or manipulations; (9) the products included in questions or manipulations; (10) the country(s) of origin; (11) the sampling framework; (12) the type of subjects; (13) the type of publication; and (14) the key findings for each (sub)study.

consumption between 2009 ($n=26$) and 2011 ($n=47$). This recent growth in quantitative studies of individual-level behavior contrasts with the vast majority of earlier research, which used more qualitative approaches and focused on more aggregate effects such as the role in and impact of consumer behavior in social movements. Second, the increase in individual-level, quantitative research over the past 13 years appears to be driven by survey—and largely cross-sectional—data and designs. Whereas the number of studies using surveys more than doubled between 2008 ($n=13$) and 2011 ($n=33$), the number of experimental studies remained the same ($n=14$).

A related, and perhaps unsurprising, finding is that disciplines vary in their attention to socially conscious consumption, and tend to favor different methodologies for studying it¹⁰. In terms of the gross amount of research produced, marketing dominates, generating more than twice as many studies as any other field ($n=85$). Following marketing are the fields of agriculture ($n=36$), business ($n=31$), economics ($n=31$), and environmental studies ($n=24$). Tellingly given my research interests, the fields with the fewest individual-level empirical studies are communication ($n=18$), political science ($n=18$), management ($n=18$), sociology ($n=3$), and social psychology ($n=3$).

The patterns in methodological approaches and disciplinary attention to socially conscious consumption, described above, help provide direction to my own research. The

¹⁰ This leads naturally to the related observation that certain methodologies are often associated with distinct subject pools. As one would also expect, the experimental studies draw more from convenience samples of college students, whereas surveys offer the benefit of casting a wide net including municipal, regional, national, or multinational subject pools.

proliferation of cross-sectional studies indicates that much of what is known about socially conscious consumption is built on correlational rather than causal evidence. Additionally, despite socially conscious consumption's multidisciplinary appeal, almost one third of those studies (31%) were generated by a single discipline (marketing) whereas the fields most related to the theoretical development of this dissertation—communication, political science, social psychology, and sociology—were among the least represented. This suggests that research on socially conscious consumption's relevance to larger societal issues trails significantly behind that focusing on its utility as a marketing or business tool, and thus that the findings generated by my dissertation will make a useful contribution to the former.

Willingness-to-pay. Of the 271 independent samples used in the empirical studies I evaluated, 195 used behavioral constructs as a dependent variable¹¹. The most common construct used within these 195 studies was self-reported past behavior (28%). These self-reports ranged in complexity, from dichotomous codings (“yes” or “no”) to estimates of the frequency with which a behavior was carried out. One in four studies (of the 195 behavioral studies) examined intended behavior (24%), with more than twice as many surveys ($n=33$) using this construct than experiments ($n=14$). Roughly one in five studies looked at willingness-to-pay (WTP) in either hypothetical (16%) or observational (5%) settings. Beyond those studies that used WTP or self-reported

¹¹ The careful reader will note that although the goal of this review was to identify and evaluate only *behavioral* studies, almost one in three studies ($n=76$) did not directly evaluate behavioral constructs.

behavioral measures were the 17% of studies that looked at observed behavior in naturalistic settings. Many of these studies collected scanner data from stores (Anders & Moeser, 2008; Bezençon & Blili, 2011; Cailleba & Casteran, 2010; Zhang, Huang, Biing-Hwan Lin, & Epperson, 2008) for the purpose of time series analysis. Finally, 9% of studies used the “catch-all” measures mentioned in the introduction to this review. Similar versions of these measures were deployed in both the United States and Europe. In the United States, respondents were asked whether they had purchased a “certain product or service because [they] like the social or political values of the company that produces or provides it” (NCES, 2002). In Europe, people reported whether they had “deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons” to try to “improve things in [their] country” or “help prevent things from going wrong” (ESS, 2002, 2003). It is using the former measure that Baek (2010) generates the estimate that more than one third of the U.S. population “buycotts.” This population is comprised of the roughly one quarter of Americans who use *both* socially conscious consumption and boycotting as political tools, plus the one tenth of the population who boycott *without* boycotting (p. 1073).

As I have indicated above, a number of studies have generated estimates of willingness-to-pay for cause-related products. I will focus my review of behavioral findings on this subset of the extant literature for two reasons. First, they facilitate direct comparison insofar as they operate within the same conceptual framework and use similar behavioral measures. Although there is a great deal of variety in both methods and measures, all WTP studies are fundamentally concerned with how people make

simple choices between a cause-related product and its alternative(s) when each product is associated with some sort of monetary cost. This sidesteps the difficult task of comparing studies that are not only interested in different aspects of socially conscious consumption behavior, but use different constructs entirely—for example, comparing “intended behavior” with self-reports of past behavior. Secondly, they decisively establish that many people are willing to buy cause-related products, even when it runs counter to their immediate material self-interest. Whether the motives to override self-interest are selfish (e.g. a sign of status) or selfless (e.g. the product of altruistic attitudes), willingness-to-pay thus offers strong evidence that people do not merely choose ethical products by chance, which could be argued to be the case were prices equal or unstipulated.

Within studies of willingness-to-pay, there are two main foci: how *many* consumers are willing-to-pay more, and how *much* they are willing-to-pay. The former construct provides an estimate for the overall appeal of socially conscious products across a variety of populations and market segments. By manipulating the premia attached to socially conscious products, the latter tests the degree to which consumers are willing to sacrifice their self-interest to purchase such products. Table 2.1 illustrates the relevant estimates produced by the extant research for both foci, with findings clustered by topical areas of research. I turn first to discuss the findings related to the broader appeal of socially conscious products.

TABLE 2.1. Segment Size and Premia for Socially Conscious Products By Issue

	<u>Segment size</u>	<u>Premium</u>
Fair Trade		
Arnot, Boxall, & Cash (2006).	21%	
Langen (2011)	14%	
De Pelsmacker, Driesen, & Rayp (2005)	40%	
De Pelsmacker, Driesen, & Rayp (2005)	10%	27%
Rousu & Corrigan (2008a, 2008b)	10%	\$.050-\$1.25
Yang and Hu (2012)		\$.05
Hertel, Scruggs, & Heidkamp (2009, p. 455)	50%-75%	\$.50-\$1.00
De Pelsmacker, Driesen, et al. (2005)		
De Pelsmacker, Janssens, et al. (2005)		10%
Hiscox & Smyth (2006)		20%
Rotaris & Danielis (2011)		120%
Basu & Hicks (2009)		75%
Briggeman & Lusk (2011)		15%
Environment		
Kang, Stein, Heo, & Lee (n.d.)	37%	1-5%
Kang, Stein, Heo, & Lee (n.d.)	24%	5-10%
Ha-Brookshire & Norum (2011)	25%	18%
Roe, Teisl, Levy, & Russell (2001)		<2%
Sammer & Wüstenhagen (2006)		30%
Organic		
Sanjuán, Sánchez, Gil, Gracia, & Soler (2003)		10-24%
Ureña, Bernabéu, & Olmeda (2008)	83.7%	5%
Ureña, Bernabéu, & Olmeda (2008)	42.2%	20%
Charitable donations		
Elfenbein and McManus (2010)		2-6%
McManus & Bennet (2010)		10%
Gneezy et al.(2010)	4-8%	
Labor conditions		
Hertel et al. (2009)	68%	25%
Rode, Hogarth, & Le Menestrel (2008)	25%	
Prasad, Kimeldorf, Meyer, & Robinson (2004)	24%	40%

Note. Direct comparisons of estimated segment size and premia were not possible across all WTP studies based on the data made available in published studies.

How many consumers are willing-to-pay more? The number of consumers who say that they are willing-to-pay for socially conscious products varies both within and between issues. The number of people who are willing to pay (WTP) more for Fair Trade products typically ranges between 10% and 40% of various convenience samples, whereas the number of people who are willing to pay more for environmentally-friendly products is even larger (between 24%-37%). Good labor conditions appeal to an even larger number of consumers: in one case, 68% of a national probability sample of U.S. respondents said that they would pay at least \$5 more for a \$20 sweater not made using sweatshop labor (Hertel et al., 2009), although other research on this topic has generated estimates closer to 25% of the population (Prasad et al., 2004; Rode, Hogarth, & Le Menestrel, 2008). However, the issue attaining the greatest market share of concern consumers pertains to organic production, with 83.7% of subjects in one study saying that they would pay 5% more for organic products. Even when this premium was increased by fourfold, almost half of respondents still said that they would choose the organic product (Ureña et al., 2008).

How much are consumers willing to pay? As the study cited above suggests, the number of people who say that they are willing-to-pay for a product may be contingent upon the extra cost. Just as there is heterogeneity in estimates of the number of people who are interested in socially conscious products both within and between issues, there is a great deal of variation in the actual amount that consumers are willing to pay for socially conscious products. Studies of Fair Trade have generated estimates ranging from anywhere between paying \$.05 more for a banana (with an unspecified baseline cost) to

paying 120% more for a package of coffee. Similarly, studies of the environmentally friendly products have ranged from spending an additional \$.50 per monthly electric bill to up to 30% for a green washing machine.

The joint effect of segment size and premia. There are several possible external factors affecting both the heterogeneity in the size of premia as well as the number of consumers who would pay more for socially conscious products. First, the premia attached to products is contingent upon the baseline cost of a product as well as the perceived utility of that product. In other words, some ethical products may be associated with additional material benefits that offset higher cost. For example, consumers are WTP a much larger premium (30%) for green washing machine based on the expectation that costs savings will be exceeded over the product's lifetime (Sammer & Wüstenhagen, 2006), and many individuals who choose organic products may be doing so for personal health reasons rather than ethical concerns. Thus, the extant research indicates that socially conscious consumption is motivated by pragmatic as well as ideological concerns.

Second, the information coupled with the Fair Trade logo used by different studies may affect consumers *in conjunction with cost*. For example, two recent studies have found that the premium consumers are WTP for Fair Trade coffee decreases as growers became more successful (Basu & Hicks, 2009), estimating that 15% of WTP is attributable to fairness concerns (Briggeman & Lusk, 2011). By this logic, differences in the estimated size of premiums and populations may be attributable to the information

coupled with the Fair Trade label (for experiments) or the wording of questions (for surveys) as well the characteristics of any given sample.

Finally, studies may fail account for differences in premia between market segments within a population, as there may be substantial divergence between kinds of customers based on their issue involvement and frequency of purchase. For example, Langen (2011) finds that overall, Germans' WTP for Fair Trade products is €0.58. However, this statistic conceals the fact that individuals who are only interested in cheap products (41% of all respondents) have an average WTP of €0.29 for Fair Trade, whereas price is *insignificant* for individuals who say that they care about FT products (or 14% of the sample). This finding is consistent with a field experiment conducted in the United States which found that the Fair Trade label boosted sales of coffee by 10% when price was held constant, but that only people buying a more expensive brand continued to buy Fair Trade when price increased. It is also consistent with findings showing that while the *prevalence* of socially conscious consumption environmental products may be high, but the tolerance for higher prices (and thus the additional dividends generated by green products) may be modest.

Demographic correlates. As my previous summary of the willingness-to-pay literature suggests, there may be substantial differences between individuals that drive certain kinds of people to boycott. One popularly held conception is that demographic traits fully predict a person's proclivity to boycott a product, either through main effects (e.g. "women boycott") or when mediated by attitudinal and ideological differences between demographic groups (e.g. "women boycott because they are more liberal"). If

there are consistent patterns in the demographic predictors of socially conscious consumption across issues, one might argue that such individuals are not only likely to buy one cause-related product, but an entire array of them (e.g. Fair Trade *and* organic *and* green *and* “no-sweat”). I turn now to evaluate the existing evidence relating to demographic correlates of various forms of socially conscious consumption behavior.

Although some studies have found demographics to be predictive of Fair Trade purchasing, these findings are far from consistent. For example, two studies published by the same researchers generated seemingly conflicting findings, with one arguing that older, highly educated, and high income demographics should be targeted with Fair Trade products. (De Pelsmacker, Janssens, Sterckx, & Mielants, 2006), and the other indicating that preference for Fair Trade coffee over eco- and bio- labels is consistent across demographics (De Pelsmacker, Janssens, et al., 2005). Similar discrepancies have arisen relating to gender, with conflicting findings suggesting that white males (Hertel et al., 2009) or women (Carlsson, García, & Löfgren, 2010) are the target audience for Fair Trade. Finally, while there is some evidence that religious affiliations shapes group identity, which in turn motivates Fair Trade behavior, overall non-religious individuals are more likely than the religious to buy Fair Trade (Caroline Josephine Doran & Natale, 2010). On the related topic of labor issues, “no-sweat” labels have been shown to appeal to unmarried women with lower levels of education (Dickson, 2001) or to Hispanic consumers (Hertel et al., 2009).

There is also a lack of consistency when it comes to the demographic correlates of green or eco-friendly products. Carlsson et al (2010) finds that men have an overall

preference for eco-friendly products, whereas Lee (2009) reports that female adolescents are more ostensibly concerned with the environment than males, including green consumerism. Dodd (2012) finds that educated women with lower income are more likely to be green consumers, whereas Mostafa (2007a) finds that women are less aware of environmental issues than men, and men show more environmental concern and positively view green consumption (with the latter contradicting research from the West). Ha-Brookshire and Norum (2011) find that WTP is influenced by age, with younger people being more likely to support green products. Welsch and Kuhling (2009) find that higher income also increases the likelihood of socially conscious consumption, although they suggest that this behavior occurs through self-comparison to reference groups rather than simply having greater financial resources. Finally, Fisher and Bashyal (2012) find that only *specific* behaviors, in contrast to general statements or attitudes, are sensitive to the effects of demographics. There are similarly conflicting findings when it comes to organic food. Although women are more likely to purchase and consume of organic food than men, men are inclined to pay a higher price for organic food than women (Ureña et al., 2008).

Perhaps the most consistent finding regarding demographic correlates relating to (lack of) support for cause-related products relates the humane treatment of animals. Two studies suggest that living in a rural environment is associated with less support for animal-friendly products (Howard & Allen, 2010; McEachern, Schröder, Willock, Whitelock, & Mason, 2007). One of these studies further suggests that customers of “humane” products are also frequent organic consumers or high-income consumers

(Howard & Allen, 2010). An extensive study of German citizens similarly concludes that socio-demographic variables are less important than consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior in predicting organic food consumption (Bravo et al, 2013).

Where, then, does the idea that socially conscious consumers fit a certain demographic profile originate from? My review of the extant literature suggests that those studies using catch-all measures of “political consumerism” that I mentioned in my introduction are the (academic) source of this belief. Studies using these catch-all measures have generated consistent results indicating that socially conscious consumers are more likely to be young (Newman & Bartels, 2010; Sandovici & Davis, 2010; D. Stolle & Hooghe, 2009; Zukin et al., 2006), well-educated or better informed (Newman & Bartels, 2010; Shah, McLeod, Kim, & others, 2007; Stromnes, 2004), and women (Neilson, 2010; Sandovici & Davis, 2010). As a function of these and other exogenous characteristics, they are posited to be post-materialist in their worldview (Baek, 2010; D. Stolle & Hooghe, 2009) and politically active (Baek, 2010; Neilson, 2010; D. Stolle & Hooghe, 2009; Ward & de Vreese, 2011).

Attitudinal correlates. As my review of the above literature suggests, there is mixed evidence as to whether or not demographic characteristics predict socially conscious consumption on individual issues. I turn now to the attitudinal correlates of socially conscious consumption, with a focus on “issue importance” and the role of issue-relevant attitudes as predictors of socially conscious consumption behavior. The role of attitudinal precursors is critical to newer models of customer value, such as that proposed by Papista and Krystallis (2013), who for example make a point of including

psychographic predictors in their “customer value” model of how to target customers to build loyalty for green brands.

Studies suggest that attitudes relating to animal welfare and/or the use of animals for food influences product preferences and/or brand choice (Hoogland, de Boer, & Boersema, 2005; Hustvedt, Peterson, & Chen, 2008; McEachern et al., 2007). A number of studies have also found various attitudes to be correlated with intended or realized Fair Trade purchases, such as feeling an ethically obligation when making consumer decisions (G. S. Kim, Lee, & Park, 2010; Ozcaglar-Toulouse, Shiu, & Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Shiu, 2002) or the idea of being a morally concerned individual (Salami & Lätteenmäki, 2009). Finally, many studies suggest that attitudes relating to Fair Trade are predictive of intended or actual behavior (Cranfield, Henson, Northey, & Masakure, 2010; Salami & Lätteenmäki, 2009), although one study indicates that Fair Trade information influences attitudes in the direction of pre-existing beliefs, thus individuals who start out as opposed to Fair Trade may become even less likely to buy such products (Poelman, Mojet, Lyon, & Sefa-Dedeh, 2008).

Studies of environmental products are by far the most likely to include issue-relevant attitudinal or behavioral correlates in their models of behavior. This generates a substantial body of literature indicating that environmental knowledge or awareness (Junaedi, 2007; Mostafa, 2007; Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2010; van Birgelen, Semeijn, & Keicher, 2009; Welsch & Kühling, 2009), interest and information seeking (Mostafa, 2007; Oliver & Seung-Hee Lee, 2010), and beliefs or attitudes about environmental issues (Fraj & Martinez, 2007; Gerpott & Mahmudova, 2010; J. Jansson, Marell, &

Nordlund, 2009; Johan Jansson, 2011; Tanner & Wölfling Kast, 2003) all predict green consumerism. There is also evidence regarding past or current behavior as a predictor of future behavior (Gerpott & Mahmudova, 2010; Honabarger, 2011). Environmental consciousness also positively influence attitudes toward buying organic personal care products (H. Y. Kim & Chung, 2011), as do positive attitudes towards organic food (De Magistris and Gracia, 2008). Only one study finds that consumers that are sympathetic to environmental issues do *not* necessarily adopt green electricity because they may lack strong social norms and personal relevance (Ozaki, 2011).

An interesting point that is made by several studies is that not all causes are created equal. This is both directly addressed by the literature, and indirectly evident through the occasional blurring of topics: for example, one study of the effects of messages emphasizing “corporate social responsibility”(CSR) on WTP for an athletic shoe suggests that Peruvian customers care more about the environment than labor practices (Marquina, 2010). Studies of organic products seem particularly likely to combine multiple ethical dimensions, such as those investigating WTP for local organic food cooperatives (Seyfang, 2008). Others contrast these dimensions, such as by asking consumers to choose between free range *or* organic meat (Hoogland et al, 2005) or between Fair Trade, shade grown, and organic coffee (Loureiro & Lotade, 2005). This “zero sum” mentality that purchasing one cause-related product occurs at the expense of other cause-related products is also evident in a choice experiment comparing the dimensions of charitable giving, organic, and Fair Trade attributes. In this study, Langen

(2011) finds that 27% of consumers using ethical consumption as a substitute for charitable giving.

Finally, many studies simply include a variety of issue-related attitudes as predictors of socially conscious consumption in their statistical models. Using such an approach, Honkanen et al (2006) shows that environmental attitudes and animal rights are strong motivators to buying organic food. The ethical attributes, ‘animal welfare’, ‘regional production’ and ‘fair prices to farmers’ have also been shown to be the most important “add-ons” to organic food, as consumers are WTP more for organic products with additional ethical attributes (Zander and Hamm, 2010). Some even go so far as concluding that attitudes towards cause-related items are not discrete: for example, Atkinson (2010) claims that issues such as the environment and worker's health are equally important factors when consumers opt for socially conscious products such as organic food because consumers are not inclined to rank their motivations or to parse them out individually (p. 134).

Normative influence and social identity. As my above review indicates, there is substantial evidence that issue-relevant attitudes are associated with socially conscious consumption behavior. Further evidence suggests that such attitudes influence behavior in conjunction with subjective, injunctive, and descriptive norms. I turn now to review the evidence relating to the role of norms as motivators of socially conscious consumption behavior, as well as those studies that have manipulated normative influence to increase the prevalence of socially conscious consumption on various issues.

The social pressure of a consumers' environment has been shown using TPB to influence intentions to purchase Fair Trade coffee (Salami & Lättheenmäki, 2009), although this may only affect people who "rarely" purchase such products rather than frequent buyers (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2006). Although it has been posited that consumers that are sympathetic to environmental issues do not necessarily adopt green electricity because they may lack strong social norms and personal relevance (Ozaki, 2011), there is limited support for the idea that perceived norms motivate adoption of green behavior (Ek & Söderholm, 2008)¹². Subjective norms have been shown to differentially affect adopters and non-adopters of Alternative Fuel Vehicles (Johan Jansson, 2011). Subjective norms, rather than attitudes or perceived behavioral control, have also been shown to motivate organic food consumption (Ruiz de Maya, López-López, & Munuera, 2011). One of the major predictors of buying a hybrid car is seeing that car as having social value (Oliver & Seung-Hee Lee, 2010), and in a survey of Swedish car owners, Jansson (2011) finds support for the hypothesis that individuals who own alternative fuel vehicles will report higher levels of environmentally relevant personal norms while also being more influenced by environmentally related social norms. In fact, some studies have even shown that the positive association between consumer behavior and status perceptions may even bleed into more general forms of environmentally friendly behavior outside of the consumer realm (Zabkar & Hosta, 2013).

¹² Nonetheless, attitudes towards environmental protection and the influence of strong ties have been shown to be the strongest predictors of adopting green power (Gerpott & Mahmudova, 2010).

In part, subjective norms may be influential because they are associated with self-identity and group identification. For example, religious affiliation has been shown to shape group identity, which in turn motivates FT behavior (Doran & Natale, 2010; see also Doran, 2009 for a discussion of in-group and out-group identification). Similarly, group identity has been shown to be one of the factors differentiating green buyers from non-green buyers (Gupta & Ogden, 2009) and organic consumers from non-organic consumers (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008). In fact, the salience of identity may even impact the effectiveness of appeals: consumers become more loyal to companies with CSR initiatives when identity is made salient (Marin, Ruiz, & Rubio, 2009).

While there are not many studies that manipulate self-identity or normative influence in the realm of socially conscious consumption, two exemplars illustrate the potential power of doing so. Carlsson et al (2010) manipulate descriptive norms in a choice experiment where they also vary the price, the share of Fair Trade beans, and the share of eco-friendly beans. Respondents received three messages that varied the described number of individuals who chose the 100% eco-friendly alternative as 10%, 50% or 90% of other respondents. Women who received the 10% message were less likely to be WTP for eco-friendly coffee beans than women who received the 90% message. In a field experiment relating to a stand selling Fair Trade foodstuffs, D'Astous and Mathieu (2008) also found that "social validation" (descriptive norms describing the popularity of Fair Trade items among other people) positively influenced WTP, but only when other forms of feedback (i.e. direct contact with the vendor) were not possible.

Discussion

The literature reviewed above offers a number of insights regarding socially conscious consumption across a variety of cause-related products. First, the vast majority of studies suggest that consumers are willing to purchase cause-related products—even when these products are more expensive. Second, there is mixed evidence regarding the influence of demographic traits on socially conscious consumption behavior, both across issues and within the specific bodies of literature pertaining to a single cause-related product. Third, there is some evidence that attitudes relating to the issue(s) connected to a product influence socially conscious consumption behavior. These attitudes may either motivate people to purchase specific products, or support of cause-related products in general. Fourth, there is suggestive evidence that norms and social identity play an important role in socially conscious consumption, although there is little consistency across the various approaches to understanding the role of norms and/or normative appeals. Building upon this last point, a small number of studies suggest that the likelihood of socially conscious consumption may increase when self-identity or social norms are made salient.

The next section of this proposal draws together the empirical research reviewed above as well as the theory and research of social psychology and behavioral economics underpinning *Nudge* to more fully develop the theory briefly outlined in my introduction. The extant literature will guide its logic and necessary assumptions, which in turn leads to the development of specific research questions and testable hypotheses that stem from my theory.

CHAPTER 3

Theory and Hypotheses

Drawing from the extant literature reviewed above, I now present my theory of socially conscious consumption as well as the relevant hypotheses that stem from this theory. First, I argue that key to someone engaging in socially conscious consumption is the “Issue Importance-Product Match” (IIPM). As the name implies, I define IIPM as the convergence of (1) personal concern over or interest in a specific public issue; (2) the relevance of the product in question to this issue or concern; and (3) the availability of a product that makes the claim that using it addresses the issue/concern in a way consonant with the consumer/citizen’s preferred solution. For example, an individual for whom an environmental issue such as water pollution is important should be more likely to purchase “eco-friendly” laundry detergent or lawn care products (both of which are implicated in this problem) if such products are available. If, however, environmental issues such as water pollution are not salient, then it is less likely he or she will include a product’s eco-friendly claims as part of his or her purchasing calculus. Further, I argue that when people are offered the opportunity to buy a product that supports a cause they care about, they will choose that product even in situations when this choice might be seen as running counter to their material self-interest, such as when the cause-related product is more expensive than the alternative.

Importantly, my theory does not go so far as to say that individuals who are uninterested in an issue will not ever choose a socially conscious product relating to that issue. Rather, my theory of IIPM suggests that they are probabilistically less likely to do

so (1) in comparison to a person who cares a great deal about the issue at hand, or (2) in comparison to their own behavior regarding a product supporting an issue that they cared a great deal about.

While this argument may seem obvious, it represents a view of socially conscious consumption that challenges the assumption that this behavior is motivated by a broader political profile characterized by such factors as news consumption, general political interest and knowledge, and a more liberal or post-materialist ideological worldview. From this perspective, socially conscious consumption is a political behavior that is (1) likely to be limited to a small and identifiable portion of the public (i.e., politically engaged liberals), but (2) that for this segment of the population it is a behavior that will be engaged in regardless of the underlying issue(s) involved. In short one can talk about “socially conscious consumers” in a sense similar to the way one might talk about “voters” or “volunteers”¹³.

While I argue that demographic or sociopolitical variables do not critically shape prosocial consumer behavior, it is nonetheless reasonable to suggest that IIPM may stem (at least in part) from a person’s sociodemographic background and political preference. In other words, IIPM is the primary pathway to socially conscious consumption, and thus can be seen as mediating the relationship between sociodemographic traits and political preference on product choice. From this line of reasoning I hypothesize the following:

¹³ As I have previously noted in my review of the extant literature, there are few studies that simultaneously consider the appeal of multiple socially conscious products. Rather, the evidence suggesting that socially conscious consumers will purchase such products regardless of the issue at hand is based on the findings produced in relation to broad measures of political consumerism that I discuss in detail in Chapter 2.

H1a: All else being equal, the greater the IIPM, the greater the likelihood of socially conscious consumption.

H2: IIPM mediates the effect of overtly political attitudes (such as political ideology or partisanship) on socially conscious consumption.

H3: IIPM mediates the effect of demographic traits (such as age, income, or education) on socially conscious consumption.

The Issue of Cost

As discussed in my literature review, much of the existing research on socially conscious consumption focuses on people's willingness to pay additional costs in exchange for products that address a public issue. While the assumption that cause-related products are by definition more costly is open to debate (Hunt, 2011) and my central focus in this dissertation is not on issues of cost differentials, it is common enough that it needs to be addressed. My argument is that the relationship hypothesized in H1 will exist even under the conditions of increased costs:

H1b: The greater the IIPM, the greater the likelihood of socially conscious consumption, even under conditions where the matched product is more costly.

Further, I argue that while the *absolute amount* of socially conscious consumption hypothesized in H1 may be reduced by introducing cost differentials, the *magnitude* of the relationships between IIPM and socially conscious consumption will increase. I suggest this because while I expect socially conscious consumption to decline in conditions of IIPM to some degree, I expect this decline to be even greater among those

for whom IIPM is not present. In conditions of equal cost, non-concerned consumers should be indifferent to a product's social-good claims, but in conditions of cost differential, they should be significantly more likely to choose the cheaper product:

H1c: The magnitude of the relationship between IIPM and socially conscious consumption will be greater under conditions of product cost differential than when costs are equal.

The hypotheses above all relate to a consumer's issue concerns and the relationship of product qualities (and costs) to these concerns. But I further explore how certain characteristics of the way products are marketed can be manipulated to enhance the strength of these relationships through specific "nudges." In particular, I draw on both the extant literature about socially conscious consumption *and* Thaler and Sunstein's *Nudge* to argue that the "normative appeal" and timing of targeted communications can be manipulated to increase the prevalence of socially conscious consumption within those segments of people who attribute some importance to the cause associated with a product.

Given the importance of *Nudge* to the development of my hypotheses regarding the effects of normative appeals and feedback on socially conscious consumption behavior, it is first necessary to elaborate on the specifics of Thaler and Sunstein's theory as well as the related empirical research backing their claims. In the next three subsections, I do the following: first, I provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical framework provided by *Nudge* as well as the research underpinning it to clarify both its relevance to my dissertation and its unique contribution to normative theory. Then, I elaborate on the specific theories of normative appeals and feedback that

both (a) pertain to the argument made by *Nudge* and (b) guide the empirical component of my dissertation research to demonstrate the applicability of “nudges” to a normatively desirable prosocial behavior such as socially conscious consumption.

Socially Conscious Consumption as Active and Reactive

I begin with the observation that most individual political and economic behaviors are about “choice” – among policies, candidates, products, services, and so forth. In the particular case of “socially conscious consumption,” the task of choosing involves discriminating between products based on attributes that are (at least perceived) as providing an additional sociopolitical good (or limiting the harm done) above and beyond the utility of the product or service itself. However, all of these political and economic choices occur within a “choice structure.” In the case of voting, the decision to register and/or vote depends not only on the motivations, attitudes, and knowledge of citizens, or on the qualities of the candidates, but also on the larger choice structure: for example, voter registration laws and processes, the information environment produced by the news media and candidate organizations, whether mail voting is allowed, and the number and location of polling stations. These contextual factors-- i.e., branches within a choice structure--have just as much impact on the decision to vote as whether a citizen is politically knowledgeable or a candidate particularly attractive. Similarly, the decision to purchase one breakfast cereal over another depends not only on the preferences of the consumer and the qualities of the product, but also on external factors: how available the product is, product marketing, the number of other choices, its location in the store, whether it is available online, etc.

The study of how variations in the contexts in which consumer choices are made is relatively well developed, especially in marketing research (e.g. Ross & Nisbett, 1991; Berger & Fitzsimons, 2008; North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick, 1997). However, while such studies can be found in the study of politics and political communication (e.g., comparative studies of turnout and vote choice based on election laws or party systems; studies of how the expansion of media choice influences news consumption; research on differences between online and “real world” political engagement, etc.), by and large most research on individual political behavior either takes the larger environment within which choices are made as given, or ignores this issue entirely (although see Berger, Meredith, and Wheeler (2008)). This criticism is also applicable to the extant research on socially conscious consumption: while it has explored various aspects of the choice to boycott (e.g., its prevalence, the individual psychological, political, and demographic attributes correlated with it, how price affects it, etc.), this research focuses primarily on attributes of socially conscious consumers, rather than the context in which a product is chosen or how the attributes of the product in question are cognized by consumers (with the notable exception of price).

Given that it blends consumer and political behavior, our understanding of socially conscious consumption would seem to benefit from a closer engagement with theories and findings regarding the importance of choice structure from the fields of marketing, behavioral economics, social psychology, and, as relevant, political science and political communication. Here, the recent work of Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein is particularly instructive. In their book *Nudge*, Thaler and Sunstein begin from the

assumption (supported through numerous studies) that most citizens suffer from decision-making biases that lead to suboptimal choices (i.e., choices different from what they would make if they were “fully informed” and “rational” decision makers) that are counterproductive to their individual and collective “health, wealth, and happiness.” They further argue that in the study and practice of public decision making, this shortcoming is addressed by efforts (or calls) to increase the knowledge and/or rationality of citizens, or by efforts (e.g., regulations and laws) designed to curtail or eliminate choice. The former approach, to their way of thinking, is unrealistic and thus doomed to fail. The latter is expensive, often unenforceable, and politically divisive.

In place of these approaches they suggest a third way, drawn from behavioral economics and built on three core concepts: “nudging,” “choice architecture,” and “paternalistic libertarianism.” Rather than making unrealistic assumptions about the capacity of citizens to do what is individually and collectively best for themselves, or depending on laws and regulations that try to force people to behave in their presumed own interests, Thaler and Sunstein suggest that institutions and policymakers encourage citizens to make “better” decisions by designing choice structures that “nudge” people towards those that will produce outcomes such as increased savings, wiser investments, improved health care coverage, more healthy or environmentally-friendly lifestyles, etc. In this model, the central role of individuals, groups, and institutions (including the government) interested in advancing their notion of the public good is that of a “choice architect” – i.e., a designer of the systems in which individual choices are made.

I argue that, appropriately adapted, Thaler and Sunstein's notions of nudging and choice architecture can inform our understanding of socially conscious consumption in several ways. Research to date tends to conceptualize socially conscious consumption as an individual-level phenomenon engaged in by citizens either as one of several ways to influence the public good or as an alternative venue born out of frustration with traditional avenues for engagement such as voting and other efforts to influence government. Drawing on Thaler and Sunstein, I add another layer to this conceptualization, suggesting a "top down" component to socially conscious consumption in which both private and public sector groups and institutions can act as choice architects, nudging citizen-consumers towards particular behaviors. Unlike Thaler and Sunstein, however, I see nudging, choice architecture, and paternalistic libertarianism as normatively neutral. By this I mean it describes an institutional approach to encouraging specific consumer behaviors that may or may not be motivated by a "true" public interest on the part of the institution in question (e.g., "green washing"), and that, regardless of the motivation, may or may not serve the public interest. Rather, my use of their model is to develop a more comprehensive model of socially conscious consumption; one that sees it as resulting from the intersection of both bottom-up (individual characteristics) and top-down (structured choice) processes.

Conceptualized in this way the relationship between individuals and institutions as regards socially conscious consumption becomes more iterative than unidirectional. *Nudge* focuses on institutional solutions to problems that are defined at an individual-level. Socially conscious consumption is generally described as a way of employing

individual solutions to solve an *institutional* problem. My approach is to suggest that the decision to buy socially conscious products is necessarily affected by the choice architecture in which it occurs, but in turn socially conscious consumption can collectively change this choice architecture. In other words, socially conscious consumption is both *active*—driven by individuals—and *reactive*—driven by institutions. If socially conscious consumption is purely active, then individuals do not need nudges to behave ethically, and to represent their political beliefs through their consumer behavior¹⁴. However, the bulk of existing evidence regarding product choice and willingness-to-pay implies that consumers are less likely to behave ethically unless they are presented with “nudges” in this direction. Conceptualizing socially conscious consumption as the result of both bottom-up and top-down processes leads to a somewhat different, and I would argue more fruitful and realistic, research agenda than is found to date in existing research.

Optimizing Nudges: The Theoretical and Empirical Underpinnings of *Nudge*

Before turning directly to Thaler and Sunstein’s suggestions for crafting successful “nudges,” it is important to contextualize their argument from the perspective of the supporting academic literature. First of relevance is the literature from social psychology pertaining to dual-process cognitive models, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984) or the Heuristic Systematic Model (Chaiken, 1987). Both the success of nudges and the rationale for their existence is predicated on

¹⁴ This seems true in the case of downshifting, although some downshifterers may benefit from nudges such as those outlined above.

the notion that people have two information processing systems—one which is deliberative and conscious, and one which is intuitive and automatic. Thaler and Sunstein point to studies of decision-making that debunk the “rationality” of normatively important decisions such as voting that have previously been viewed as conscious and deliberat(ive) choices¹⁵.

Having argued that people sometimes employ automatic rather than deliberative information processing to make important decisions, Thaler and Sunstein turn to the research regarding social influences on behavior and cognition from social psychology. In particular, the authors highlight evidence showing that people are social creatures whose behavior is influenced by both the perception and behavior of others¹⁶. For this reason, people are likely to “do what others do” and to believe that their behavior is under greater scrutiny from others than it actually is. The power of social norms as demonstrated social psychological research leads Sunstein and Thaler to argue that: “The general lesson is clear. If choice architects want to shift behavior and to do so with a nudge, they might simply inform people about what other people are doing” (p. 65). And indeed, a number of studies have already done so, although not using the theoretical framework of “nudges” as their rationale.

¹⁵ Examples of such studies are those conducted by Westen (2008), who found that political candidates who use complex arguments lose elections, and Todorov et al (2005), who found candidate appearance to be the key driver of election outcomes.

¹⁶ This account draws largely from the overviews on social norms provided by Ross and Nisbett (1991) and Cialdini (2000).

For example, Coleman (1996) conducted a field experiment in which subjects in the treatment condition were informed that most people complied with tax laws. As a result, more people became less likely to cheat on their taxes. Similarly, Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren (1990) experimented with signs to visitors of the Petrified Forest National Park, showing that positive injunctive norms are more effective than negative, informational ones. This approach has also been used by health communication experts such as Perkins (2003), who used a similar social norms approach to reduce drinking and other undesirable activities by debunking misperceptions of the degree of alcohol abuse on campus resulting from the availability heuristic (i.e. easily recalled drinking experiences). This approach was also employed by Linkenbach and Perkins (2003) who conducted a smoking cessation intervention in Montana resulting in similarly positive effects¹⁷.

Normative nudges. Although Thaler and Sunstein do not go into further detail beyond citing the studies above, I turn now to focus on the specifics of the psychological theories of normative influence used to develop successful “nudges” such as those employed by Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren (1990) and Goldstein, Cialdini, and Griskevicius (2008).

¹⁷ Adding an additional layer to my research, it is important to note that these two empirical studies are themselves built upon two prominent theories in social psychology. First, they are indebted to Ajzen and Fishbein’s Theory of Reasoned Action, which posits that intended behavior is the products of attitudes about behaviors as well as what the authors call “subjective norms,” or beliefs about what other people think of performing that behavior. This idea of subjective norms is elaborated upon by Cacioppo, who posits that “descriptive norms” (information about what people are doing) as well as injunctive (his word for subjective) norms (ideas about what people should do) influence intended behavior.

Two sets of theories are particularly relevant to the development of nudges that encourage prosocial consumer behavior such as socially conscious consumption: (1) social identity and self-categorization theory and (2) the focus theory of normative conduct. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; e.g. Tajfel, 1978) and self-categorization theory (e.g. Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, 1999) argue that highlighting the normative behavior of a psychologically meaningful group increases conformity to that norm. This expectation is based on the premise that social identity represents “an expansion of the self-concept involving a shift in the level of self-conception from the individual self to the collective self” (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007, p. 170). Because this move from an “individual” to a “collective” self-concept is often based on perceived membership in a social category (Brewer, 2003), people will thus conform to the norms of that reference group when membership in that group is made salient for self-representation (e.g. Hogg, 2003). Importantly, individuals who strongly identify with a reference group will be most affected by this change in its salience.

The focus theory of normative conduct expands on the idea that social norms can be used to influence behavior by differentiating between two kinds of normative influence—injunctive norms that relate to beliefs about what people *should* do, and descriptive norms that relate to beliefs about what people are *actually* doing. Different modes of normative influence (e.g. injunctive versus descriptive) require different levels of cognitive effort, with descriptive norms being posited to require less effort to process than injunctive norms (Cialdini, 2003). For this reason, descriptive norms are posited to

be more situation-specific than injunctive norms (Reno, Cialdini, & Kallgren, 1993), which opens up the possibility of using them to shape situation-specific, contextual outcomes (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007, p. 176). However as Schultz et al (2007) note, descriptive norms can influence people who are both above *and* below the norm, thus creating boomerang effects that *decrease* prosocial behavior amongst individuals who are already behaving in a normatively desirable way. This issue is particularly relevant when it comes to tailored communications such as personalized feedback regarding consumer decisions (e.g. energy use). For this reason, Schultz et al (2007) suggest that it is ideal to deploy messages combining descriptive norms (which communicate conformity with or deviance from group behavior) with injunctive norms (which reinforce ideas of what normatively “good behavior” is).

Importantly, social identity theory and focus theory are not mutually exclusive perspectives. For example, Goldstein and Cialdini (2007) use social identity theory to make sense of and/or draw into question findings from experiments manipulating descriptive norms to increase conservation behavior (reusing hotel towels). Indeed, as the studies presented by Goldstein, Cialdini, and Griskevicius (2008) demonstrate, it is possible to blend the two theories by examining how conformity to a descriptive norm varies as a function of the type of reference group tied to that norm.

This approach of blending social identity theory with focus theory is particularly germane to my studies. I have previously asserted that socially conscious consumption is

a behavior prevalent among individuals with high levels of IIPM¹⁸, which leads to the related inference that individuals who think a particular issue is very important are also likely to identify with a reference group of likeminded consumers (e.g. an issue public *à la* Krosnick, 1990). Social identity theory suggests that making such reference groups salient (e.g. “other people who care about the environment”) will enhance appeals to choose socially conscious products—especially among people with high IIPM. Focus theory provides further direction regarding the optimization of these appeals: specifically, it suggests that messages should manipulate descriptive norms relating to important reference groups that are coupled with injunctive norms signaling whether or not consumers’ conformity or deviance from the target behavior is normatively desirable.

The following hypotheses that I propose are largely derived from the prior work conducted by Goldstein et al (2008) and Schultz et al (2007) as well as situated within the theoretical framework provided by *Nudge*. Although both studies pertain to consumer *conservation* behavior (saving energy), I posit that this approach will be equally effective in shaping purchase behavior. Stated formally, I posit that:

H4: People are more likely to choose socially conscious products when nudges include descriptive norms tied to the reference group of individuals *buying the same type of product* in comparison to when no descriptive norms are presented (provincial norm condition).

¹⁸ When I use the term “high IIPM” I am refer to the importance that a person ascribed to an issue, both in comparison to their attitudes towards other issues (within-subjects) and in comparison to other people (between-subjects). The latter suggests that IIPM is a characteristic of people, whereas the former is more open to being shaped by circumstances or conditions (e.g. salience). I further discuss the implications of operationalizing IIPM as a within-subjects or between-subjects construct in my pilot data.

H5: People are more likely to choose socially conscious products when nudges include descriptive norms tied to the reference group of *supporting of specific issue* (issue public norm condition).

Building upon these hypotheses, I further argue that properly targeting engaged audiences with these messages (i.e. audiences with high IIPM) can offset the negative effects of pricing a socially conscious product at a higher cost. Towards this end, I hypothesize that:

H6: Descriptive norms priming the *issue public* identity will help to close the gap in socially conscious consumption created when a socially conscious product is more expensive.

I turn now to my efforts to identify issues for inclusion in the experiments testing the hypotheses above, as well as efforts to construct valid and reliable measures of issue importance and high-quality graphics for inclusion in my experiments.

CHAPTER 4

Identifying Issue Supporters, Measuring Issue Importance, and Developing Product Pairs

My dissertation theorizes that individuals who possess one or more politically relevant attitude(s) are willing to purchase products that are sympathetic to that attitude(s), even when those products are more expensive. According to this logic, socially conscious consumption is a behavior motivated by strongly held but heterogeneous political attitudes. In order to best test this hypothesis, it was thus necessary to first identify *distinct* groups of consumers who care about different issues (and thus are attracted to different kinds of socially-conscious product appeals). This is not to say that consumers cannot support several issues at once. Rather, it presents a strong test of my hypothesis that *despite* differences in issue support and product preference across the American public, socially conscious consumption has broad appeal.

Method

Participants and procedures. Before elaborating on the methods and findings of my pre-tests, it is first necessary to discuss my choice use Mechanical Turk to generate a panel of subjects for all of my dissertation studies. The primary reason for using Mechanical Turk over other offline methods (i.e. surveys administered over the phone) or more demographically representative web panels relates to scale: quite simply, due to its low cost Mechanical Turk offers me the opportunity to a series of experiments (rather than a single experiment) with more subjects at a lower cost than any other alternative. Given that the availability of data relating to the potential effect size of my manipulations

is minimal, a larger sample with greater statistical power is by no means an insignificant benefit. Moreover, Mechanical Turk's subjects have also been shown to be more demographically diverse than in-person experimental subjects (college student) used by many researchers in the past (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012). Although there may be further concerns regarding the quality of data from "spammers" (individuals who provide answers at random) or sensitization among "super Turkers" (individuals who spend more than 20 hours a week using Mechanical Turk), this subject pool is growing in acceptability among social science researchers (Bohannon, 2011). In fact, recent findings using subjects from Mechanical Turk have been published in a flagship journal of political science (Arceneaux, 2012 in the *American Journal of Political Science*) as well as highly selective general interest journals (Golder & Macy, 2011 in *Science*).

Measuring Issue Importance (Pretest 1)

In order to identify distinct groups of socially conscious consumers and develop a scale measuring the degree to which issue attitudes are predictive of product preference (IIPM), I conducted a web survey ($N=138$). Respondents were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk service, and compensated \$0.30 for their participation in short surveys about "public opinion about current affairs." Upon entering the online survey, respondents were first asked to complete four blocks of questions with 20 items pertaining to contemporary political issues (e.g. "pollution of drinking water or rivers, lakes, and reservoirs" or "unfair compensation of workers in the third world," see Appendix 1 for complete list). These 20 items were repeated across blocks but presented in randomized order to safeguard against order effects. The four blocks asked

respondents to indicate the degree to which they “worried¹⁹,” “took action²⁰,” “changed their behavior²¹,” or “paid attention to news stories²²” about various issues relating to socially conscious products and practices. All questions used 4-point Likert scales and were laid out using a grid format (see Figure 4.1). After completing the 80 attitudinal questions, respondents were asked to rank 8 different issues in importance, with ties between issues being prohibited²³. The issue-ranking question was always asked last in order to prevent respondents from deducing that the 20 items repeated over the four blocks could be classified within 8 overarching issues. The order of items used the ranking task was randomized.

¹⁹ Question wording: “We are going to show you a list of social or cultural problems faced by U.S. citizens. For each one, please tell us if you personally worry about this problem a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or not at all.”

²⁰ Question wording: “Sometimes people take action regarding issues that are personally important to them. How important would you say that taking action on the following issues is to you personally? For each one, please tell us if taking action is very important, moderately important, slightly important, or not at all important to you personally.”

²¹ Question wording: “Sometimes people change their behavior to support issues that are personally important to them. Please tell us if supporting each of the following issues is very important, moderately important, slightly important, or not at all important to you personally.”

²² Question wording: “How closely do you pay attention to news stories about the following social or cultural problems? For each one, please tell us if you follow this issue very closely, somewhat closely, slightly closely, or not at all.”

²³ Question wording: “Finally, we’d like to ask you to rank how personally important the following issues are to you. Although we understand that you may have similar feelings towards multiple issues in real life, there cannot be any ties.” Choices were worded as follows: (1) “The use of food additives and/or genetic modification of food”; (2) “Air, water, and/or land pollution”; (3) “Fair trade practices”; (4) “Animal rights”; (5) “Labor practices/conditions”; (6) “Supporting small businesses, regardless of their country or location”; (7) “Supporting local businesses, regardless of their size”; (8) “Outsourcing business or services from the United States” (emphasis included).

FIGURE 4.1. Display of Survey Items for Potential Measure of IIPM

Worry about problems

We are going to show you a list of social or cultural problems faced by U.S. citizens.

For each one, please tell us if you personally worry about this problem a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or not at all.

	Not at all	Only a little	A fair amount	A great deal
Pollution of drinking water or rivers, lakes, and reservoirs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contamination of soil and water by toxic waste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Air pollution and smog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Change behavior

Sometimes people change their behavior to support issues that are personally important to them.

Please tell us if supporting each of the following issues is very important, moderately important, slightly important, or not at all important to you personally.

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important
Avoiding free trade agreements (like the North American Free Trade Agreement or the World Trade Organization) on jobs in <u>the United States</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encouraging that a fair price is paid to workers in the third world for products they export to the United States	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encouraging good conditions for <i>local</i> businesses in your community, <u>no matter their size</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Pay attention to news stories

How closely do you pay attention to news stories about the following social or cultural problems?

For each one, please tell us if you follow this issue very closely, somewhat closely, slightly closely, or not at all.

	Not at all	Slightly closely	Somewhat closely	Very closely
Additives like colors, preservatives, or flavoring of food or drink	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pollutants (like mercury or dioxins) or residues (like antibiotics or hormones) in meat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Air pollution and smog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Take action

Sometimes people take action regarding issues that are personally important to them. How important would you say that taking action on the following issues is to you personally?

For each one, please tell us if taking action is very important, moderately important, slightly important, or not at all important to you personally.

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important
Preventing the importation of foreign products to protect jobs in <u>the United States</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preventing the contamination of soil and water by toxic waste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preventing additives like colors, preservatives, or flavoring from appearing in food or drink	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Note. Full size images available from the author upon request.

Prior to developing measurement models to determine the best indicators of IIPM, it was first necessary to identify four distinct segments of consumers based on participants' rankings of the eight underlying issues identified by my review of the extant literature: organic or "all natural" ingredients or practices; the environment; Fair Trade; animal rights; labor conditions; small business; local business, and outsourcing. Table 4.1 displays the correlations between these issue rankings below.

TABLE 4.1. Correlations between Issue Rankings (N=138)

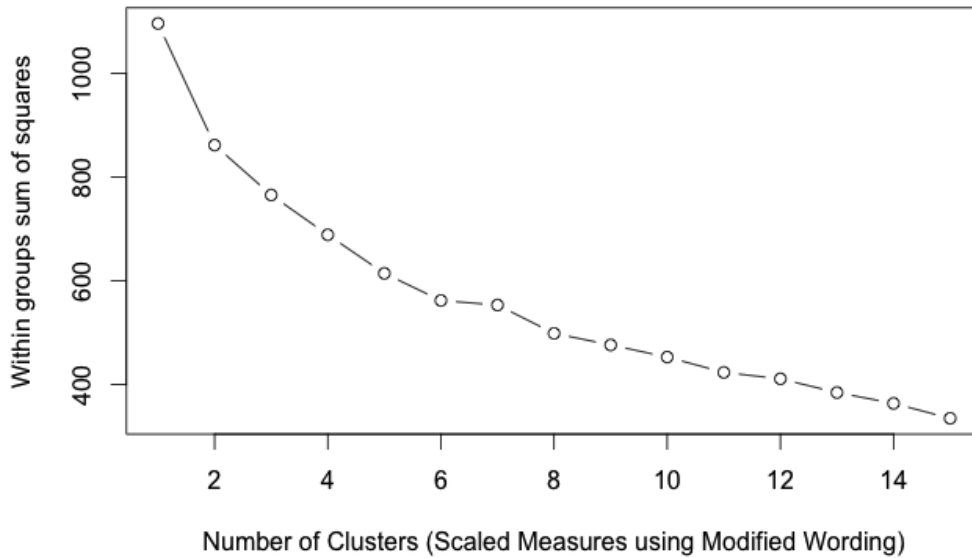
	Organic	Environment	Fair Trade	Animal rights	Labor conditions	Small business	Local business
Environment	0.28**						
Fair Trade	-0.24**	-0.20*					
Animal rights	0.04	0.08	-0.28***				
Labor conditions	-0.24**	0.02	0.18*	-0.13			
Small business	-0.40***	-0.37***	-0.11	-0.24**	-0.1		
Local business	-0.27**	-0.31***	-0.17*	-0.37***	-0.37***	0.41***	
Outsourcing	-0.23**	-0.36***	-0.07	-0.26**	-0.23**	-0.11	0.11

Note. In order to full differentiate between local, small, and U.S.-based businesses, choices were worded as follows: “Supporting small businesses, regardless of their country or location”, “Supporting local businesses, regardless of their size,” and “Outsourcing business or services from the United States” (emphasis included).

Many of these bivariate relationships conform to intuition: for example, participants ranked local business similarly to small business ($r=.41^*$), and their attitudes about organic products/practices and the environment ($r=.28^*$) or labor conditions and Fair Trade ($r=.18^*$) were also highly correlated. Support for some issues was also negatively correlated with support for other issues. Specifically, supporting small businesses was negatively correlated with prioritizing organic products and practices ($r=-.40^{***}$) as well as environmental concerns ($r=-.37^{***}$). Similarly, supporting local business was associated with lower concern about animal rights ($r=-.37^{***}$) and labor conditions ($r=-.37^{***}$). Taken together, the correlations above suggest that although attitudes about local and small businesses are *linked*, they have potentially different motivations and/or underlying dimensions.

Next, a cluster analysis was conducted using the popular approach of K-means clustering. First a plot of the within-groups sum of squares by the number of clusters was generated using the standardized values of the rankings. Then, after identifying the “bend” and/or “elbow” in the plot (Figure 4.2), the data was partitioned into six clusters using K-means.

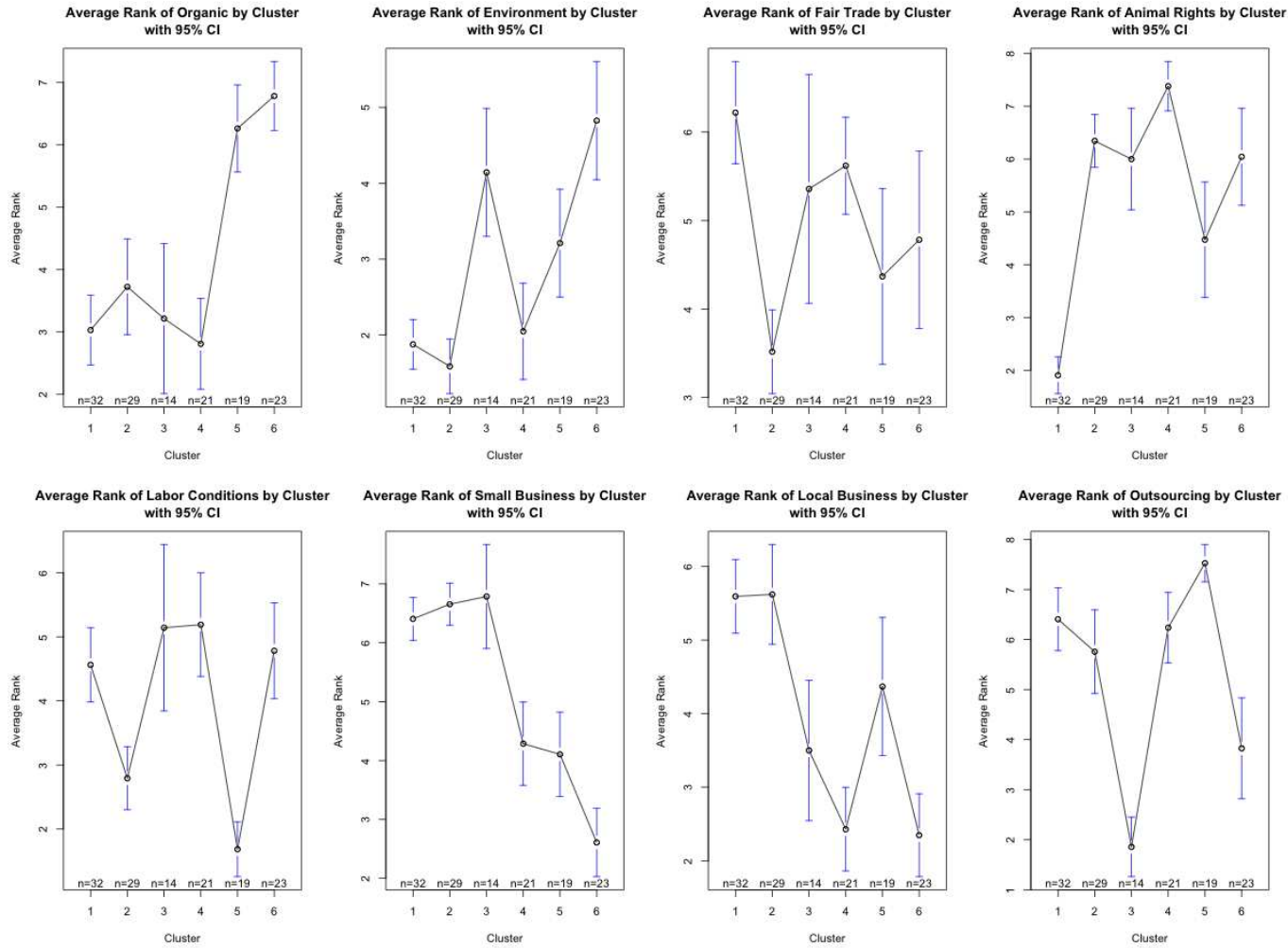
FIGURE 3.2. Within-groups Sum of Squares by Number of Clusters (N=138)



Note. Rankings were scaled and K-means were generated using the base functionality of the statistical software R.

After partitioning the data into clusters, I compared the mean rankings and surrounding confidence intervals for the eight issues *across* clusters (Figure 4.3). As Figure 4.3 indicates, there were four clusters of individuals who ranked *certain* issues more highly than all other respondents (with high=1 and low=8). The confidence intervals surrounding average within-cluster rankings suggest that indicate that some clusters rank animal rights (cluster 1, $n=32$), labor conditions (cluster 5, $n=19$), small business (cluster 6, $n=23$), and outsourcing (cluster 3, $n=23$) more highly than all other groups of respondents.

FIGURE 4.3. Mean Ranking of Issues by Cluster (N=138)



Note. Rankings were scaled and K-means were generated using the base functionality of the statistical software R.

Having identified four distinct issues to be employed in my dissertation studies, I further examined the sociodemographic characteristics of individuals falling into the relevant clusters. Table 4.2 displays the aggregate characteristics of these clusters in comparison to the overall sample. *Importantly, due to the small sample size of this pre-test study, none of these results are statistically significant (using a X^2 test).* The differences in distributions revealed are nonetheless suggestive: Individuals who ranked animal rights highly were less educated, less Republican, more liberal, and more likely to be Hispanic than the overall sample. Individuals who prioritized labor conditions above the rest were more likely to be Asian, more educated, more liberal, and more Democratic than the overall sample. Individuals who cared about outsourcing were more educated, conservative, and Republican than the overall population and did not include any Hispanics. Finally, individuals who prioritized small business were almost universally white (5% responded as “other”), less affluent, and much more conservative and Republican than the rest of the sample. I will return to these observations in my discussion of my second dissertation study, which will use a much larger sample.

TABLE 4.2. Demographic Characteristics of Issue Clusters (N=138)

	Overall	Animal rights (Cluster 1)	Labor (Cluster 5)	Outsourcing (Cluster 3)	Small business (Cluster 6)
Age (<i>M, SD</i>)	33.652 (12.173)	32.000 (9.530)	29.894 (8.569)	34.714 (12.449)	35.826 (13.422)
Hispanic (=1)	10.8%	15%	10.5%	0%	8.7%
White	81.9%	84.3	73.7	85.7	95.7
Black	5.1%	3.1	5.3	7.1	0
Asian	6.5%	0	15.8	0	0
Income (est. 000's)	49.945 (29.011)	49.063 (24.681)	53.816 (34.504)	50.000 (27.473)	46.304 (27.653)
Education					
Less than HS	1.4	3.1	0	0	0
HS	10.1	9.4	5.3	14.3	13.0
Some college	37.7	53.1	42.1	35.7	34.8
College	41.3	34.4	42.1	50	43.5
Graduate degree	9.4	0	10.5	0	8.7
Ideology (1-7)					
Very liberal	12.3	21.9	26.3	7.1	4.3
Liberal	23.2	25.0	15.8	7.1	13.0
Slightly liberal	16.7	21.9	21.1	21.4	21.7
Middle of the road	19.6	15.6	15.8	14.3	21.7
Slightly conservative	10.1				
conservative		6.3	15.8	14.3	4.3
Conservative	12.3	6.3	5.3	21.4	21.7
Very conservative	5.8	3.1	0.0	14.3	13.0
Partisanship					
Strong Dem	18.8	18.8	21.1	14.3	13.0
Dem	22.5	31.3	31.6	14.3	17.4
Leans Dem	11.6	12.5	15.8	14.3	4.3
Independent	20.3	18.8	15.8	14.3	21.7
Leans GOP	5.8	9.4	0	7.1	8.7
GOP	10.1	6.3	10.58	21.4	8.7
Strong GOP	10.9	3.1	5.3	14.3	26.1

Note. Due to the small sample size of the data, differences between clusters do not achieve statistical significance.

Next, indicators of IIPM for the four identified issues (animal rights, labor conditions, outsourcing, and small business) were selected using an “EFA within CFA” framework (see Brown, 2006, p. 93). The key objective of using this approach was to identify a small number of strong indicators of IIPM for each issue (which could then be combined into a scale). Prior to implementing this “EFA within CFA” approach, I fielded a second survey to gather additional data relating to indicators relating to small business ($N=99$). This was because the first survey did not include enough indicators of attitudes about small business to be included in the measurement models specified later in this section. The methods and questionnaire employed by my second survey were identical to those of the first survey, except that the four blocks of questions only included items pertaining to small business and outsourcing. These items are also included in Appendix 1.

Having collected sufficient data to generate measurement models for all four issues, the E/CFA approach was implemented using five steps (per issue). First, a multi-level measurement model was fit to the data to test which items and question wordings loaded onto the latent variable of IIPM. Specifically, the observed items—the relevant survey questions repeated over the four blocks—were treated as indicators of latent variables tapping different cognitions or behaviors indicating concern about an issue (i.e. the question wording of blocks pertaining to “worry,” “attention,” “behavioral change,” and “taking action”). In turn, these four latent variables were treated as indicators of a higher-order latent variable that represented overall IIPM. All measurement models

contained no double-loading indicators and all measurement error was presumed to be uncorrelated.

Second, the sample variance-covariance matrix was analyzed using the “sem” and “MASS” packages in the statistical software R. The standardized coefficients of this multilevel model were examined to determine which question wordings and items were the strongest indicators of IIPM for that issue. Indicators with a standardized coefficient of $<.80$ were deemed fit to be removed from the model. Complete illustrations of these multilevel measurement models are included in Appendix 4.

Third, a new measurement model with a reduced number of indicators was specified after removing the indicators with weak loadings. Goodness of fit was evaluated using the model X^2 , the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the standardized root square mean square residual (SRMR), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and its 90% confidence interval, the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). Guided by suggestions provided by Kline (2011), an acceptable fit met the following criteria: NFI ($\geq .90$ to $.95$), SRMR ($\leq .05$ to $.08$), RMSEA ($\leq .06$ to $.08$), CFI ($\geq .90$ to $.95$), and TLI ($\geq .95$). The use of multiple indicators of model fit allows for a more reliable estimate of the solution (Brown, 2006) because various indices provide different information about the model (i.e. comparison to the null model) and have different weaknesses (i.e. sensitivity to sample size). The modification indices of the multilevel measurement model were also consulted to identify additional indicators that could be deleted to improve model fit.

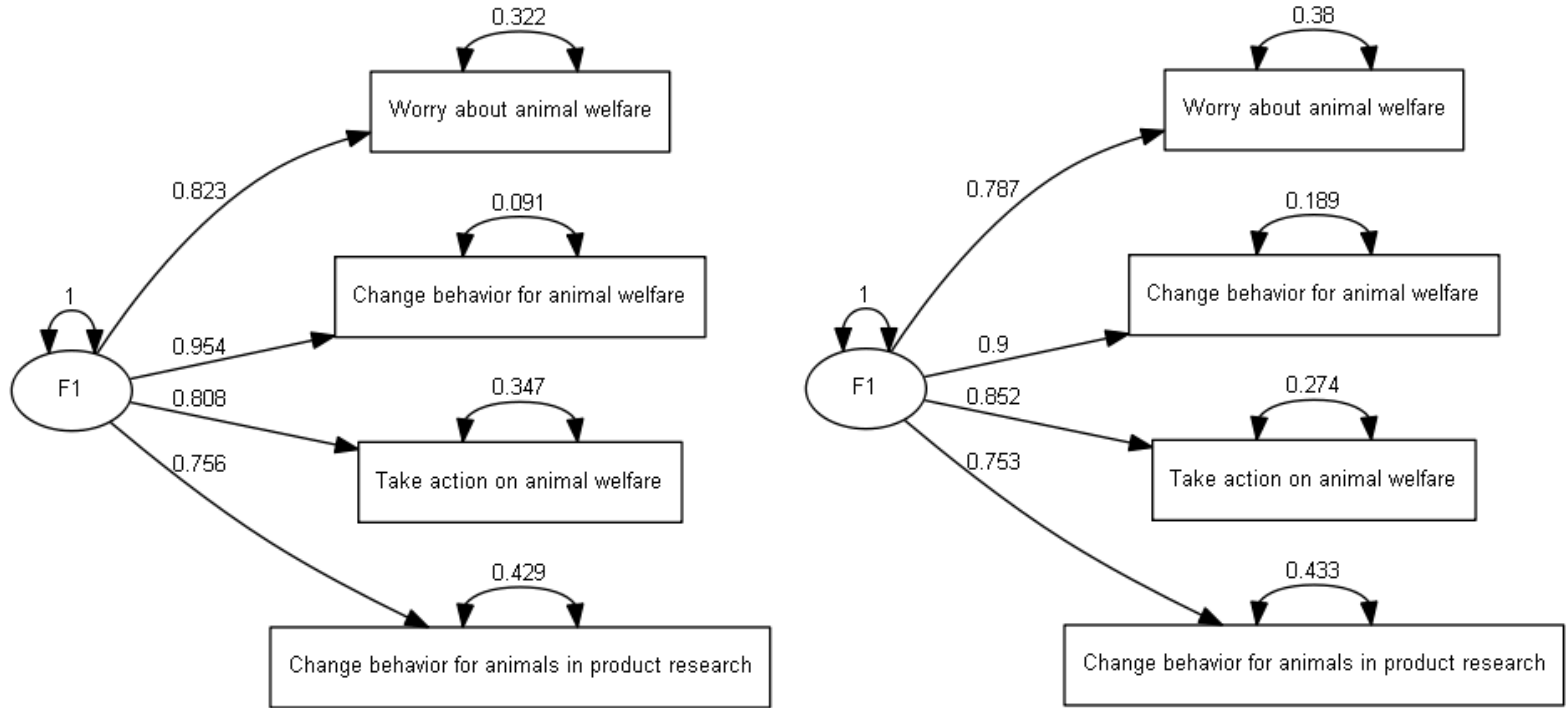
Fourth, after removing items with large values in the modification indices (i.e. correlated error terms), a final model was specified and the model fit indices were examined to make sure the fit was acceptable. Fifth, the measurement model was re-estimated using a statistically independent sample of observations to confirm the structure ($N=315$; methods and sample characteristics described in Study 1). This is considered to be a best practice in the development of psychometric measurement models when using an E/CFA approach.

Figure 4.4 depicts the finalized measurement model for IIPM surrounding animal rights, as well as its replication using a statistically independent sample. All of the overall goodness-of-fit indices suggested that the model fits the data well. For the first model, $\chi^2(2)=.981$, $p=.612$; NFI=.997, SRMR = .007; RMSEA = 0 (90% CI = 0.00 - .116); TLI = 1.006; CFI= 1.00. When the model was replicated using a new sample, the model fit remained good: $\chi^2(2)=.355$, $p=.836$; NFI=.999; SRMR = .003; RMSEA = 0 (90% CI = 0.00 -.06); TLI = 1.002; CFI= 1.00. Inspection of the modification indices for both models indicated no localized points of ill fit (e.g. largest modification index = 1.975).

FIGURE 4.4. Indicators of IIPM Regarding Animal Rights

Finalized measurement model (N=138)

Confirmed measurement model (N=315)



Goodness of fit:

$X^2(2) = .981, p = .612$

NFI = .997

SRMR = .007

RMSEA = 0 (90% CI = 0.00 - .116)

TLI = 1.006

CFI = 1.00

Goodness of fit:

$X^2(2) = .355, p = .836$

NFI = .999

SRMR = .003

RMSEA = 0 (90% CI = 0.00 - .06)

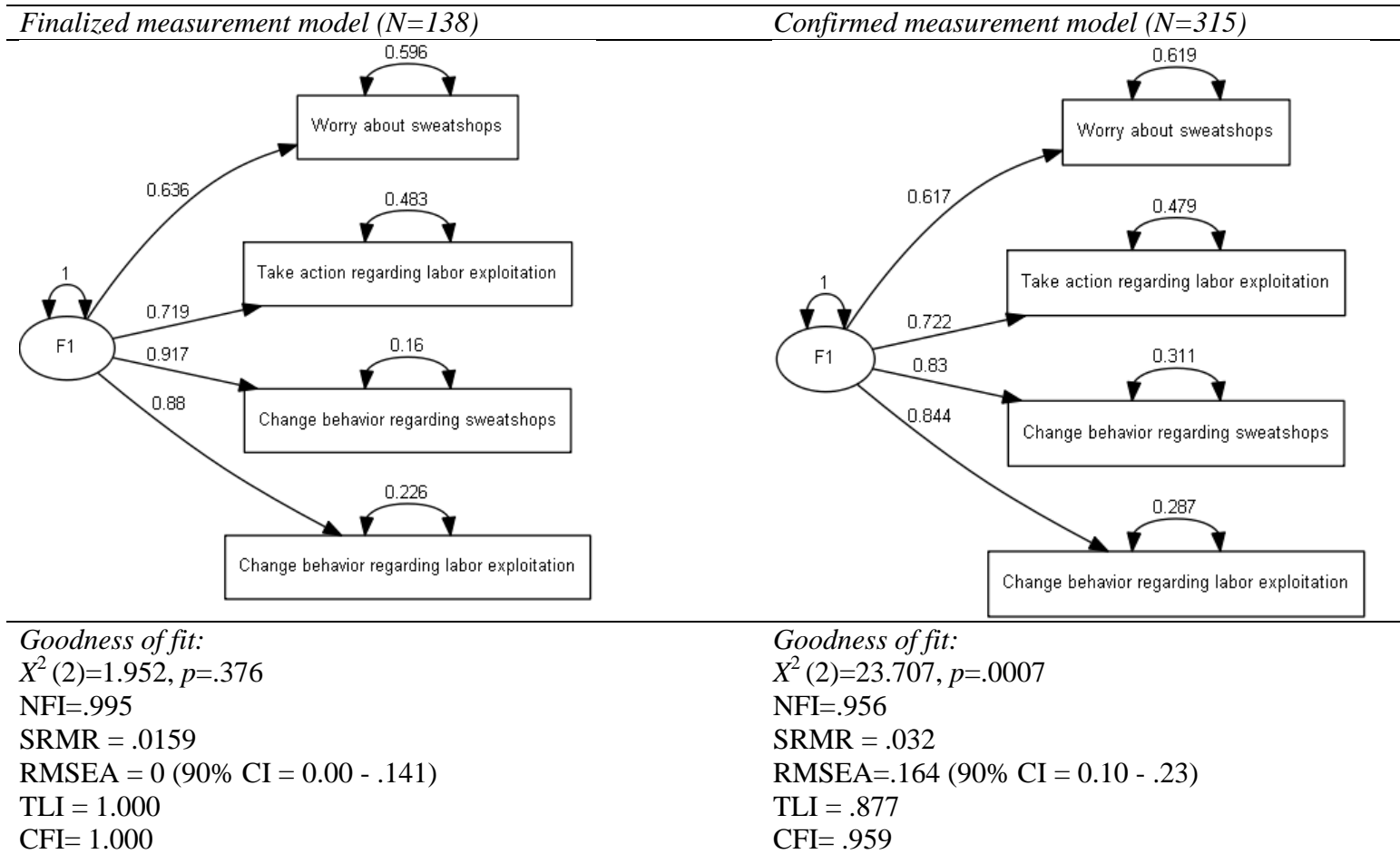
TLI = 1.002

CFI = 1.00

Note. Standardized coefficients. Models generated using the “sem” and “MASS” packages in the statistical software R.

Figure 4.5 depicts the finalized measurement model for IIPM surrounding labor conditions. Each of the overall goodness-of-fit indices suggested that the model fits the data well: $\chi^2(2)=1.952, p=.376$; NFI=.995; SRMR = .0159; RMSEA = 0 (90% CI = 0.00 - .141); TLI = 1.000; CFI= 1.00. Inspection of the modification indices indicated no localized points of ill fit (e.g. largest modification index = .729). The replicated model fit the data moderately well, with three of the five indices indicating acceptable goodness-of-fit: $\chi^2(2)=23.707, p=.0007$; SRMR = .032; NFI=.956; RMSEA=.164 (90% CI = 0.10 - .23); TLI = .877; CFI= .959.

FIGURE 4.5. Indicators of IIPM Regarding Labor Conditions

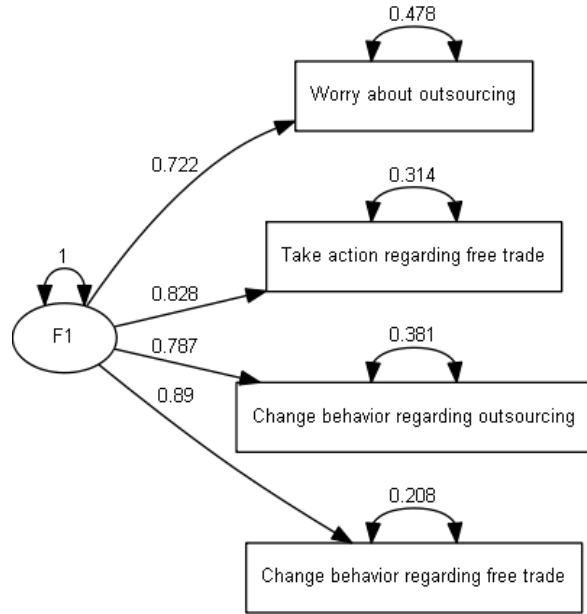


Note. Standardized coefficients. Models generated using the “sem” and “MASS” packages in the statistical software R. The X^2 model fit statistic is very sensitive to sample size, thus its statistical significance in the confirmed measurement model may be due to the larger sample size rather than poor fit.

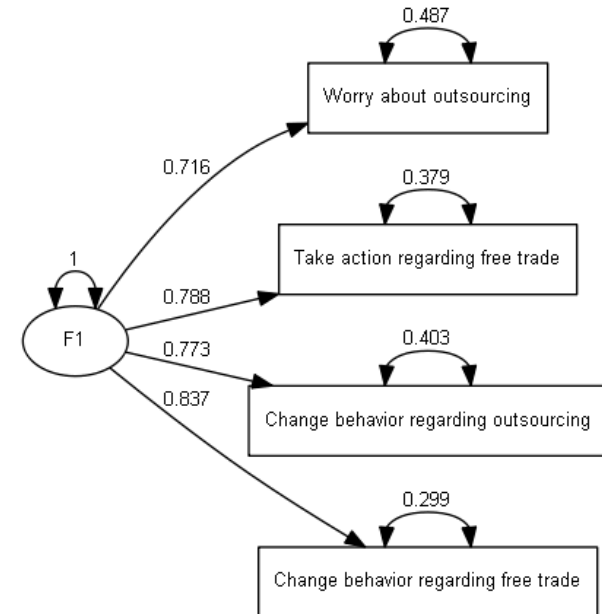
Figure 4.6 depicts the finalized measurement model for IIPM surrounding outsourcing. Each of the overall goodness-of-fit indices suggested that the model fits the data well: $\chi^2(2) = .747, p = .688$; NFI = .998; SRMR = .007; RMSEA = 0 (90% CI = 0.00 - .107); TLI = 1.009; CFI = 1.00. Inspection of the modification indices indicated no localized points of ill fit (e.g. largest modification index = .920). The replicated model fit the data moderately well, with four of the five indices indicating marginally acceptable goodness-of-fit: $\chi^2(2) = 18.872, p = .0008$; NFI = .967; SRMR = .035; RMSEA = .186 (90% CI = 0.12 - .25); TLI = .911; CFI = .970.

FIGURE 4.6. Indicators of IIPM Regarding Outsourcing

Finalized measurement model (N=138)



Confirmed measurement model (N=315)



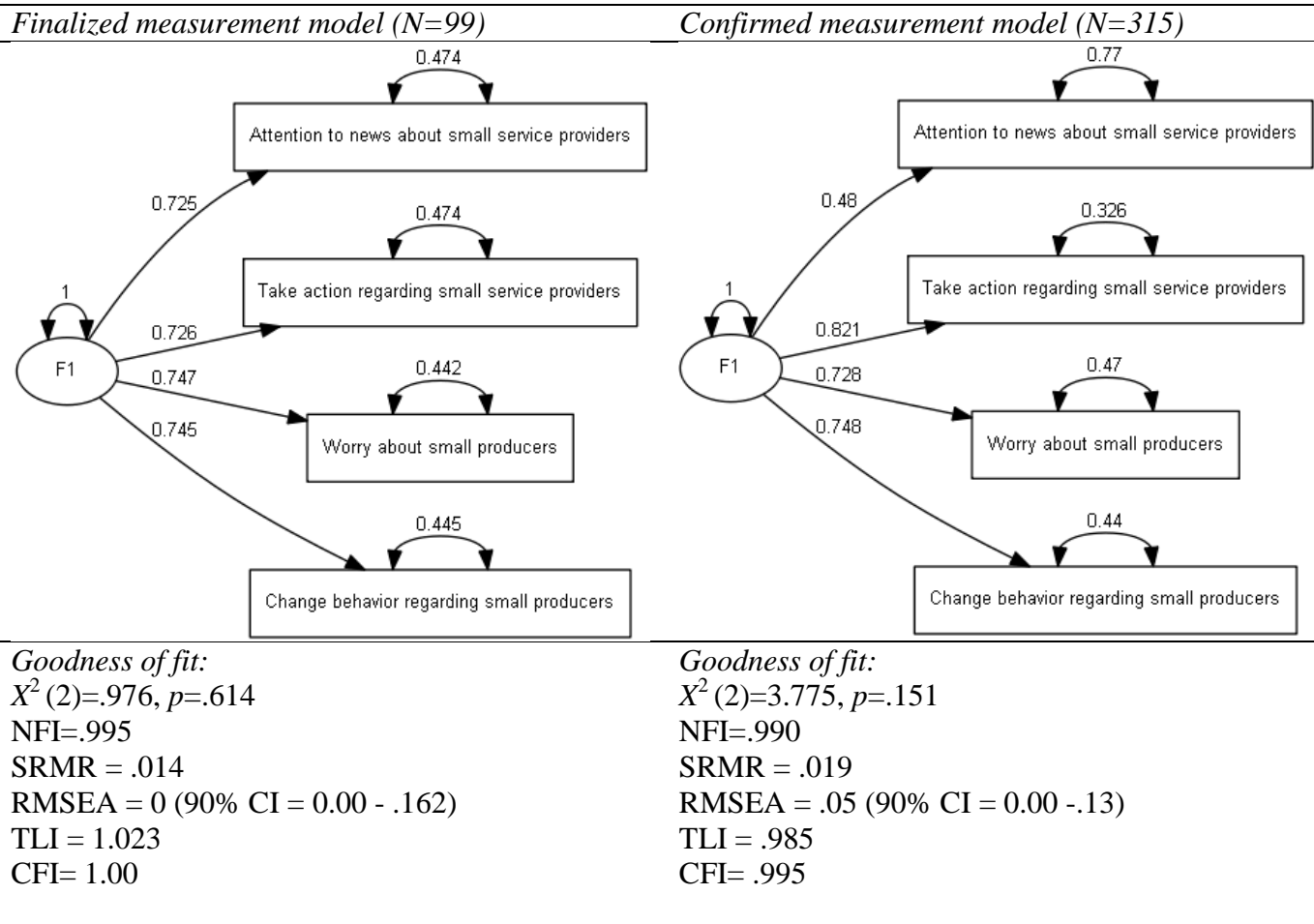
Goodness of fit:
 $X^2(2)=.747, p=.688$
 NFI=.998
 SRMR = .007
 RMSEA = 0 (90% CI = 0.00 - .107)
 TLI = 1.009
 CFI= 1.00

Goodness of fit:
 $X^2(2)=18.872, p=.0008$
 NFI=.967
 SRMR = .035
 RMSEA=.186 (90% CI = 0.12 - .25)
 TLI = .911
 CFI= .970

Note. Standardized coefficients. Models generated using the “sem” and “MASS” packages in the statistical software R. The X^2 model fit statistic is very sensitive to sample size, thus its statistical significance in the confirmed measurement model may be due to the larger sample size rather than poor fit.

Figure 4.7 depicts the finalized measurement model for IIPM surrounding small business. Each of the overall goodness-of-fit indices suggested that the model fits the data well: $\chi^2(2) = .976, p = .614$; NFI = .995; SRMR = .014; RMSEA = 0 (90% CI = 0.00 - .162); TLI = 1.023; CFI = 1.00. Inspection of the modification indices indicated no localized points of ill fit (e.g. largest modification index = .890). When the model was replicated using a new sample, all of the goodness-of-fit indices confirmed the model structure: $\chi^2(2) = 3.775, p = .151$; NFI = .990; SRMR = .019; RMSEA = .05 (90% CI = 0.00 - .13); TLI = .985; CFI = .995.

FIGURE 4.7. Indicators of IIPM Regarding Small Business



Note. Standardized coefficients. Models generated using the “sem” and “MASS” packages in the statistical software R.

Discussion. In summary, the pre-test(s) outlined in this section accomplished several tasks. First, I identified four causes with distinct groups of supporters. This allows me to directly test the hypothesis that IIPM drives socially conscious consumption, rather than an overall interest in socially conscious products. This approach is extensible across issues and different segments of the population. Second, I developed models identifying indicators of the four “issues” or “causes” that could be combined into a scale measuring IIPM. These measurement models were all confirmed using a statistically independent sample of data. Having identified the optimal issues to be manipulated in my experimental studies, it was next necessary to develop and pre-tests socially conscious products supporting them. I turn now to my efforts towards this end.

Developing Product Images (Pretest 2)

Having established four “issues” to be manipulated in my dissertation studies, it was next necessary to develop pairs of products comparing a generic item to a socially conscious counterpart. Two products were chosen per issue: shampoo and household cleaner (animal rights); cotton t-shirts and dark chocolate (labor conditions); a cup of coffee and AA batteries (outsourcing); and strawberry jam and glycerin soap (small business). These products were chosen based on their believability as a socially conscious product and their similarity in estimated cost (\$4-10). All products were marketed as hypothetical brands to avoid confounding attitudes towards real-life brands, but the images and marketing of products were modeled as closely as possible after real products.

Given that my dissertation studies hinge on choices between socially conscious products and generic alternatives, it was necessary to pre-test the images used in my studies to ensure that respondents noticed their socially conscious characteristics while maintaining believability. Specifically, I refined product images with an eye towards maintaining noticeable aesthetic differences between the product pairs (e.g. shape, labeling) that would *not* affect consumers' product choice, coupled with "socially conscious" labeling schemes (e.g. "no-sweat") that *would* affect (some) consumers' product choice. These *unimportant* but *noticeable* aesthetic differences were incorporated into the product pairs to avoid sensitization and/or reactance to the artificiality of the experiment.

The product images were pre-tested using an iterative process of soliciting and coding open-ended feedback. During each iteration, Mechanical Turk HIT workers were recruited to enter a short survey about "product marketing," and shown the images of the eight product pairs. The placement of products (right/left) was randomized. When viewing the images, respondents were asked to provide a close-ended response as to whether or not the differences between the two products "would motivate you or other consumers to pay a different price"²⁴. After answering this close-ended question, respondents were directed to a new page asking them to describe the differences between

²⁴ The question wording: "Assuming that the quantity and quality of the products above are roughly the same, do you think that the differences between Product 1 and Product 2 would motivate you or other consumers to pay a different price?" Answers included: (1) "Yes, consumers would pay a different price for these two products"; and (2) "No, consumers would NOT pay a different price for these two products."

the two products that they had just viewed *without clicking back to the previous page*²⁵. These open-ended responses were then coded to identify the proportion of respondents who identified the socially conscious characteristic of a product as the main differentiator between the pair, rather than the aesthetic difference between them. Respondents had to specifically mention the cause on the label in order to be coded as remembering it. Comments indicating that the label content of products were different without *specifically* mentioning the cause were coded as remembering differences in “packaging.”

Table 4.3 below indicates the percentage of respondents who identified socially conscious characteristics as the main difference between pairs of products, in comparison to the number of individuals who thought that aesthetic differences were the most important. It is important to keep in mind that my coding rule is very strict – although people are asked to recall package characteristics without being able to look at the image, individuals who simply said that a product’s “name,” “branding” or “slogan” changed without specifying those cause-related textual changes were simply coded as noticing a difference in “packaging” rather than the associated “cause.” Consequently, the percentages in Table 3 do not add up to 100%, as some responses could not be properly classified because they were too vague (e.g. “different labels”), and some responses indicated reactance (e.g. “coffee can’t be grown in Seattle”).

²⁵ In the final iteration of soliciting feedback, the question wording was altered by asking respondents to “try to be specific” when it came to remembering “the main difference” between product pairs (emphasis included).

TABLE 4.3. Observed Differences between Product Pairs

Cause	Product	<i>Mentioned socially conscious characteristic</i>			<i>Mentioned product appearance</i>		
		1 (N=58)	2 (N=53)	3 (N=59)	1 (N=58)	2 (N=53)	3 (N=59)
Animal rights	Shampoo	59.3%	77.2%	83.3%	35.6%	20.5%	14.8%
	Household cleaner	93.2%	-	98.1%	6.8%	-	1.9%
Labor conditions	T-shirts	88.1%	-	87.0%	10.2%	-	9.3%
	Chocolate	79.7%	89.0%	88.9%	18.6%	12%	7.4%
Outsourcing	Coffee	79.6%	84.1%	88.9%	11.9%	15.9%	1.9%
	Batteries	90.0%	-	92.6%	10%	-	3.7%
Small business	Strawberry jam	87.0%	72.7%	75.9%	14%	27.3%	7.4%
	Soap	74.5%	76%	90.7%	22.0%	24%	7.4%

Note. Products that achieved more than 87% recognition of the socially conscious characteristic were not included in the second iteration of soliciting open-ended feedback in order to save time and money. X^2 tests for all products indicated that there were no differences in recall based on whether a cause-related product was positioned on the left or right of an image.

By the third iteration of image pre-testing, more than 75% of respondents freely offered the socially conscious characteristic as the key differentiator between products, and the number of individuals who mentioned aesthetic appearance was consistently below 15%.

Figure 4.8 and Figure 4.9 display the finalized images relating to animal rights. The shampoo was branded as “Natural Impulse,” with color (yellow versus green undertones) being the primary difference in appearance. The “animal-friendly” shampoo also featured a seal with the outline of a rabbit including the text, “No animals user for research” and “For the love of nature,” whereas the text on the generic product simply said, “Reinforced fruit concentrate” and “For the love of nature.” The household cleaner was called “Clean.” (modeled after the “Nice!” generic brand by Walgreens). Both bottles were advertised as “lemon-scented,” but one bottle had squared corners whereas the other had round corners. The animal-friendly household cleaner also included a rabbit logo and text saying, “Supports ethical treatment of animals.”

FIGURE 4.8. Shampoo Relating to Animal Rights



Note. Full-size versions of these images are available on the web, and can be accessed by clicking on each product: (1) [Natural Impulse generic shampoo](#); (2) [Natural Impulse animal-friendly shampoo](#).

FIGURE 4.9. Household Cleaner Relating to Animal Rights



Note. Full-size versions of these images are available on the web, and can be accessed by clicking on each product: (1) [Clean. generic household cleaner](#); (2) [Clean. animal-friendly household cleaner](#).

Figure 4.10 and Figure 4.11 display the finalized images relating to labor conditions. The first product was a package of plain cotton tee-shirts branded as “Lee’s Tees” and modeled after the popular shirts by Hanes. The packaging for the “no-sweat” tees was red, and included a “stamp” logo guaranteeing that “No sweatshop labor was used in the production of these shirts.” The packaging for the generic tees was orange, and simply indicated that the shirts were “machine washable,” with a “no shrink guarantee.” The second product was a bar of 78% cacao “Henrietta Dark Chocolates.” The chocolate supporting good labor conditions, the “Humanitarian Blend,” had a gold wrapper and included the text “Harvested in Cote D’Ivoire under human working conditions.” The generic alternative, “Midnight Blend,” had a bronze wrapper and boasted “luxurious depth, timeless sophistication.”

FIGURE 4.10. T-Shirts Relating to Labor Conditions



Note. Full-size versions of these images are available on the web, and can be accessed by clicking on each product: (1) [Lee's Tees generic t-shirts](#); (2) [Lee's Tees "sweatshop free" t-shirts](#).

FIGURE 4.11. Chocolate Relating to Labor Conditions



Note. Full-size versions of these images are available on the web, and can be accessed by clicking on each product: (1) [Henrietta generic chocolate](#); (2) [Henrietta “Humanitarian Blend” chocolate](#).

Figure 4.12 and Figure 4.13 display the finalized images relating to outsourcing. The first product was a “to-go” cup of coffee with brand information printed on the sleeve. The socially conscious cup of coffee was called “All American Joe” and featured a light brown sleeve as well as the slogan, “Feels like home. Roasted in Seattle, WA.” The generic cup of coffee was called “100% Colombian Joe” and featured a medium brown sleeve with the slogan, “A world of taste. 100% Colombian beans.” The second product was a package of four batteries branded as “Power Plus” and modeled after Duracell’s popular product. The socially conscious batteries had silver tops and featured a red sticker that said “Made in the USA,” as well as an American flag next to text indicating that it was “Produced by American workers.” The second product claimed to be “Longer lasting” and “The world’s #1 Battery from the brand you trust,” and featured batteries with copper (rather than silver) tops.

FIGURE 4.12. Coffee Relating to Outsourcing



Note. Full-size versions of these images are available on the web, and can be accessed by clicking on each product: (1) [“All American Joe” coffee \(Made in the USA\)](#); (2) [“100% Colombian Joe” coffee](#).

FIGURE 4.13. Batteries Relating to Outsourcing



Note. Full-size versions of these images are available on the web, and can be accessed by clicking on each product: (1) [Power Plus batteries "Made in the USA"](#); (2) [Power Plus generic batteries](#).

Figure 4.14 and Figure 4.15 display the finalized images relating to small business. The first product was strawberry jam made by two different producers: “Williamson Farms” (socially conscious) and “Bowery, Inc” (generic). In addition to these differences in name, the socially conscious jam included text indicating that it was produced by “a family-owned small business,” a farmhouse logo, and a silver top. The generic brand of jam simply claimed to be “Made from the finest ingredients” and had a gold top. The second product was three bars of glycerin soap, also produced by two different brands: “Smith’s Soaps” (socially conscious) and “Clean.” (generic). In addition to having a different name, the socially conscious “Smith’s Soap” included a tree logo and text indicating that it was made by a “family-owned small business.” Like the jam, the generic alternative simply claimed to be made from the finest ingredients.

FIGURE 4.14. Strawberry Jam Relating to Small Business



Note. Full-size versions of these images are available on the web, and can be accessed by clicking on each product: (1) [Williamson Farms Strawberry Jam \(made by a small business\)](#); (2) [Bowery, Inc. generic Strawberry jam](#).

FIGURE 4.15. Glycerin Soap Relating to Small Business



Note. Full-size versions of these images are available on the web, and can be accessed by clicking on each product: (1) [Smith's Soaps \(made by a small business\)](#); (2) [Clean generic soap](#).

Finally, it was necessary to assign costs to each of the products, as well as a “discount” for the generic product for the experimental conditions in which the socially conscious product was more expensive (see Table 4.4). All full-priced items ended in “9” or “99” based on prior research showing that these cost structures are not only popular but the most effective (Schindler & Kibarian, 1996; Blattberg & Wisniewski, 1989). Discounts ranged between 14-20%, and relied upon the researcher’s best judgment regarding the believability of the discounted price.

TABLE 4.4. Pricing of Socially Conscious Products

Cause	Product	Full price	Discounted	% Discount
Animal rights	Shampoo	\$5.19	\$4.21	18.9%
	Household cleaner	\$4.29	\$3.49	18.6%
Labor conditions	T-shirts	\$9.99	\$8.49	15%
	Chocolate	\$4.19	\$3.59	14.3%
Outsourcing	Coffee	\$2.49	\$2.11	15.2%
	Batteries	\$5.49	\$4.65	15.3%
Small business	Strawberry jam	\$3.49	\$2.99	17.1%
	Soap	\$4.99	\$3.99	20%

Note. Discounts ranged between 15% and 20% to avoid sensitization, as the realism of the experiment would have been compromised if respondents noticed that the price difference was held at a constant percentage.

Having fully developed both the measures and products to be used in my dissertation studies, I turn now to my efforts to test the hypothesis that IIPM motivates socially conscious consumption.

CHAPTER 5

Investigating the Relationship Between IIPM and Socially Conscious Consumption

My first dissertation study empirically evaluates the first half of my theory of socially conscious consumption – namely, that the “Issue Importance-Product Match” (IIPM) is the key to socially conscious consumption. To reiterate, IIPM is defined as the convergence of (1) personal concern over or interest in a specific public issue; (2) the relevance of the product in question to this issue or concern; and (3) the availability of a product that makes the claim that using it addresses the issue/concern in a way consonant with the consumer/citizen’s preferred solution. In particular, my theory regarding IIPM leads me to posit that IIPM motivates socially conscious consumption (H1a) even under conditions of greater cost (H2b). In fact, I even go so far as to argue that the magnitude of the relationship between IIPM and socially conscious consumption *increases* when there is a cost differential (H1c). Because I argue that attitudes towards specific issues are the critical pathway to socially conscious I also posit that IIPM mediates the effect of overtly political attitudes such as partisanship and ideology (H2) as well as socio-demographic traits (H3).

Method

Study 1 was a between-subjects design with two conditions ($N=315$). Respondents were recruited through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk service, and compensated \$.50 for their participation in an online survey about “new products entering the market.” Individuals who had participated in my previous studies (detailed in Chapter 4) were informed that they were not eligible to take the survey, and towards this

end were screened upfront with a question asking them for their Amazon Mechanical Turk worker ID.

Upon entering the survey, respondents were asked to answer a battery of 16 questions relating to their attitudes on a variety of social or political issues. These questions were the indicators of IIPM for animal rights, labor conditions, outsourcing, and small business identified in the psychometric study detailed above. The presentation of these questions was identical to the presentation in the psychometric study (Pretest 1), with items being aggregated into question blocks pertaining to “worrying about,” “paying attention to news,” “changing behavior,” or “taking action” on an issue. Once again the question order within the blocks of questions was randomized to conceal the fact that some questions were indicators of the same construct.

Upon completing this battery of questions, respondents completed two distracter tasks. The first distracter task presented respondents with an image of four stacked boxes of soap manufactured by a hypothetical brand (“Clean Conscience”). The boxes of soap were differentiated by color (brown, green, magenta, and purple) and fragrance (“cinnamon orange clove,” “lemongrass,” “geranium rose,” and “lavender”). Respondents were asked to click once on the fragrances that appealed to them, and twice on fragrances that did not appeal to them. They were then asked to check boxes indicating which, if any, of the soaps they would be likely to buy.

The second distracter task displayed a prototype of a hypothetical backpack “being prepared to enter the market.” Once again, respondents were asked to click once

on features that appealed to them, and twice on features that did not appeal to them. Respondents were able to “like” or “dislike” up to fourteen product features (zippers, logos, labels, etc.), and were asked to elaborate on why certain features would convince them to purchase the backpack in an open-ended text box. The open-ended feedback collected during both the distracter task and at the end of the study indicated that respondents found this product convincing, with many asking if and when the backpack would be available for purchase. This feedback indicated that the distracter task successfully established the pretense that the study was a traditional marketing survey.

Next, subjects were asked to make product choices relating to the four different issues (animal rights, labor conditions, small business, and outsourcing). For each issue, respondents choose between two different kinds of socially conscious products and their generic counterpart. In total, respondents were asked to choose between eight different pairs of products relating to four issues, with socially conscious products corresponding to the products that were developed in Pretest 2. The cost differential for each pair of products was randomly assigned to one of two conditions, with prices either being (a) equal or (b) the socially conscious product being more expensive (see Table 4 for this predetermined pricing structure). The order in which product choices were presented was randomized. Finally, respondents were asked to complete a brief section of questions regarding demographic characteristics such as age, race, education, and partisanship.

While Study 1 was a “true” experiment insofar as product cost was randomly assigned, it is important to note that IIPM was not—and could not—be randomly assigned, as a person’s attitudes towards an issue can only be manipulated in salience but

not in strength or direction (at least in the short term context of an experiment such as mine). Consequently, it is not possible to make *causal* inferences about the relationship between IIPM and product choice in Study 1 because IIPM cannot be randomly assigned. In other words, like much of the research reviewed in Chapter 2, the findings produced in Study 1 are built upon correlation rather than causation and should be carefully interpreted as such.

Results

Participants in Study 1 were demographically similar to individuals who participated in the first pre-test. The average respondent was 34 years old, with age being quite varied (SD=11.915) and ranging from age 18 to 75. While the sample was once again dominated by white respondents (80.3%), 8.3% of respondents were black and 7.6% were Asian. Only 6% of participants were Hispanic. The estimated mean income of the sample was \$43,793 per year (SD=27.511), and the median income fell into the range of \$25,000-\$35,000 per year²⁶. While 37% of respondents in the study reported that they earned less than 25,000 a year, 1% of respondents reported that they earned more than \$200,000²⁷. The sample skewed towards highly educated respondents, with almost half of the sample having a college (41.3%) or graduate (7.6%) degree. Finally, respondents were more liberal and more Democratic than the U.S. public. More than a

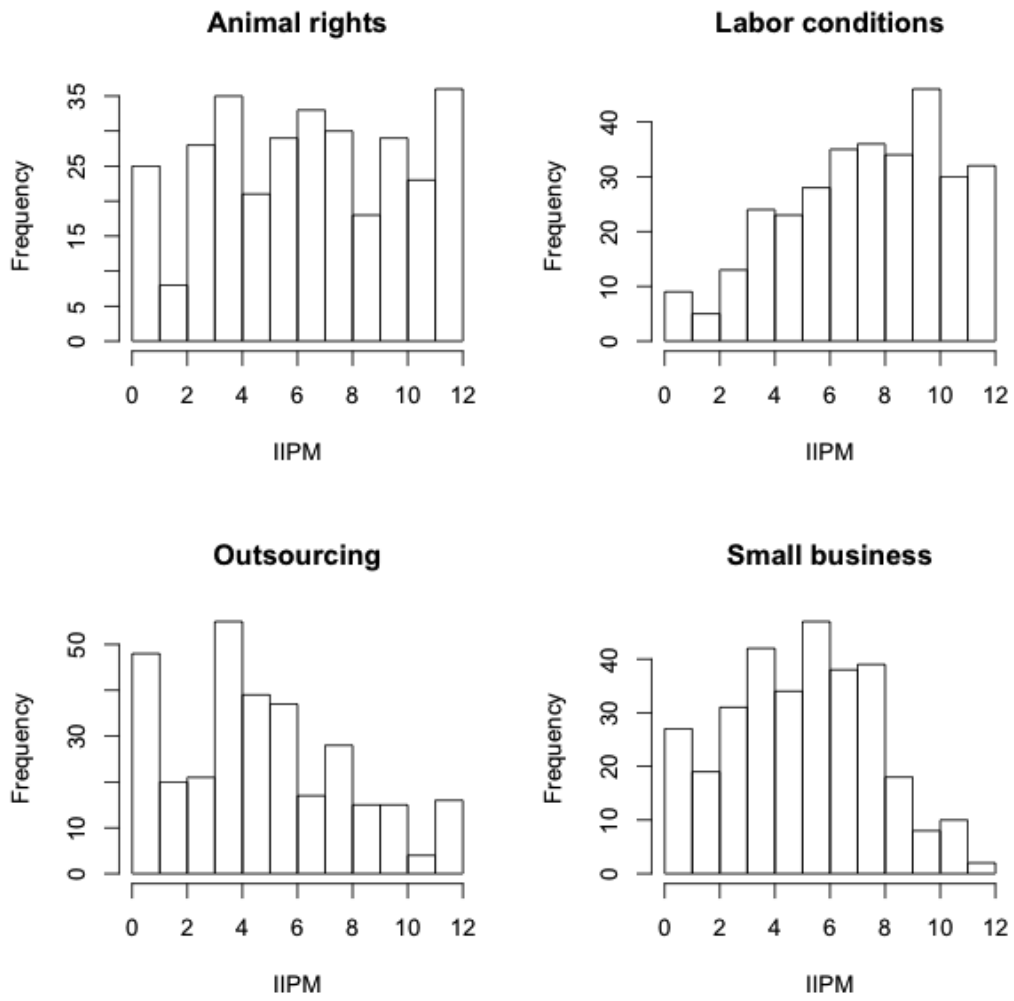
²⁶ While it is often posited that Mechanical Turk workers are less affluent than the general population, this statistic is in line with the U.S. Census data finding the median per capita income in the United States to be roughly \$27,500 in 2011. The mean estimated income was calculated after recoding a categorical variable for income into a continuous variable. See Pre-test 1 for details regarding this coding structure.

²⁷ Categories for self-reported individual income were as follows: (1) Less than \$25,000; (2) \$25,000-\$35,000; (3) \$35,000-\$50,000; (4) \$50,000-\$75,000; (5) \$75,000-\$100,000; (6) \$100,000-\$150,000; (7) \$150,000-\$200,000; (8) More than \$200,000. These values were subsequently transformed into an integer variable taking the mean of each category.

quarter of respondents described themselves as “liberal,” with an additional tenth describing themselves as “very liberal.” Only 28% of the sample described themselves as “slightly” to “very” conservative. The partisanship of respondents also reflected these left-leaning political views, with six out of ten respondents describing themselves as “leaning” to “strong” supporters of the Democratic Party. Only 13.6% of respondents described themselves as Republicans. For a side-by-side comparison of the demographic characteristics of all samples used in my dissertation research, see Appendix 3.

More important than the demographic characteristics of the sample were respondents’ expressed attitudes in relation to the issues manipulated by the experimental study. The IIPM indicators were summed into scales ranging from 0-12, with “0” indicating low IIPM and “12” indicating high IIPM. The mean and median IIPM for labor conditions was the highest among the four issues ($M=7.759$, $SD= 2.962$; median=8). Supporting animal rights had the second highest mean and median IIPM scores ($M=6.790$, $SD= 3.461$; median=7), although this issue also had the greatest variance amongst respondents. Supporting small business and discouraging outsourcing had similar mean and median IIPM scores, with small business receiving slightly more support ($M=5.447$, $SD= 2.733$; median=6) than (opposing) outsourcing ($M=5.146$, $SD= 3.222$; median=5). As Figure 5.1 displays below, IIPM for labor conditions was skewed towards higher values, whereas IIPM for outsourcing and small business was skewed towards lower values:

FIGURE 5.1. Distribution of IIPM Measures (N=315)



Note. For details regarding the specific measures comprising each scale, see Chapter 4.

Finally, there were moderate to strong correlations between respondents' IIPM scores across issues, suggesting than respondents' concern and (self-reported) behavior surrounding socially conscious products extends across issues. The strongest correlation was between IIPM regarding labor conditions and small business (.61***), two issues that might be seen as having similar means as well as ends.

TABLE 5.1 Pearson's Correlations Between IIPM Measures

	Animal rights	Labor conditions	Outsourcing
Animal rights			
Labor conditions	.59***		
Outsourcing	.41***	.39***	
Small business	.48***	.61***	.46***

Note. ***p<.001.

However, although this dissertation is not disinterested in between-subjects differences regarding overall preference for socially conscious products, its primary focus is on *within-subject* differences regarding issue prioritization. For this reason, each IIPM measure was transformed into deviations from the within-subject mean IIPM across issues. For example, someone might have averaged "somewhat important" (2) across ALL questions, but if their average score for questions about animals was "very important" (4), their deviation would be 2 (and animal rights would be shown to be a higher priority). I then correlated this deviation score with the ranking variable used in Pre-test 1 to identify distinct clusters of supporters. These correlations were moderate to large, as defined by Cohen (1988): .65*** (for animal rights), .43*** (for labor conditions), .53*** (for outsourcing), and .41*** (for small business). That the ranking measure (which prohibits ties between issues) is not more highly correlated with

deviation scores (which allow ties between issues) suggests that people place similar value on multiple issues.

Data Analysis

First, descriptive statistics comparing across group means (along the lines of cost and IIPM) were generated on an issue-by-issue basis to confirm that the posited relationships followed simple and intuitive patterns (see Appendix E). Having established that the simple relationships between IIPM, cost, and product choice conformed to the hypotheses outlined above, more sophisticated models were developed to account for *within-subject* variation in IIPM (i.e. comparing differences in IIPM *within* people, rather than between them). Specifically, my data restructured into “long form” (also known as “person-period” format) where each individual had 8 observed outcomes that mapped onto their dichotomous choices between eight product pairs. These outcome variables were matched with the tailored IIPM measures for the issue relevant to that product. For example, if a person was choosing between a “no-sweat” tee and the generic alternative, IIPM would be set as equal to that person’s value on the scale for IIPM regarding labor conditions. This person-period format facilitated *within-subject* comparisons of the effect of IIPM to provide insight into the effect of prioritizing issues relative to other issues rather than simply comparing the effect of IIPM *between-* persons.

The long data were then fit to a generalized linear mixed model including random effects for time (to account for order effects) and participants (to account for dependence between observations). Estimates were fit using maximum likelihood, and the dependent variable was modeled using a binomial distribution. Model 1 presents the baseline model,

which tests the hypothesis that all else being equal, the greater the IIPM, the greater the likelihood of socially conscious consumption (H1a). To evaluate the related hypothesis positing that the magnitude of the relationship between IIPM and socially conscious consumption is greater when a socially conscious product is more expensive (H1c), Model 2 includes an interaction term between the randomly assigned product cost and IIPM²⁸. Dummy variables comparing products to the reference group of “batteries” were also included in all models to control for overall differences in product preference. Table 5.2 presents the coefficient estimates generated by these models below²⁹.

²⁸ Models testing the interaction between (1) IIPM, cost, and time as well as (2) IIPM, cost, and product were also fit to the data. These interactions were not statistically significant. The insignificance of the former interaction indicates that the effects of IIPM and cost were not contingent upon how many choices the respondents had previously made (i.e. becoming conditioned to the repeated measures component of the experiment). The insignificance of the latter interaction indicates that the effects of IIPM and cost were not confined to the particularities of a single product, or that certain socially conscious products used in the experiment were more (or less) convincing than others.

²⁹ Critics might posit that these models do not truly evaluate within-subjects differences, as it could be argued that people who care about one issue care about many other issues. For this reason, a robustness check was conducted in which a person’s IIPM scores were mismatched with products (i.e., someone’s IIPM for labor conditions was used as a predictor of choosing a product supporting animal rights). The mismatched values of IIPM were not significantly predictive of product choice. This supports the inference that within-subject differences of IIPM are what have an effect on socially conscious consumption, rather than a person’s overall political profile and tendency to simultaneously support many (or few) issues. At least in my studies, IIPM does not appear to be transitive across issues. See Appendix F for complete details regarding the robustness check.

TABLE 5.2. Predicting the Effect of Cost and IIPM on Socially Conscious Consumption

	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Random effects</i>		
	Variance (SD)	Variance (SD)
Respondent ID (Intercept, $n=315$)	1.273 (1.128)	1.306 (1.143)
Time (Intercept, $n=8$)	.043 (.208)	.042 (.204)
Groups	315	315
Observations	2520	2520
<i>Fixed effects</i>		
	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)
IIPM	.195*** (.021)	.127*** (.027)
Greater cost (=1)	-1.957*** (.109)	-2.746*** (.235)
IIPM * Greater cost		.126***(.033)
<i>Product</i>		
Chocolate (=1)	.281 (.200)	.281 (.2)
Cleaner (=1)	.903*** (.202)	.936 (.205)
Coffee (=1)	-.080 (.190)	-.082 (.192)
Jelly (=1)	.792*** (.195)	.815 (.197)
Shampoo (=1)	.648** (.198)	.649 (.2)
Soap (=1)	.687*** (.200)	.681 (.201)
T-shirts (=1)	.388 (.203)	.403 (.203)
(Intercept)	-.085 (.200)	.302 (.224)

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Note. Reference group for products is “batteries.” Coefficient estimates were generated using the “lme4” package in R.

Both Model 1 and Model 2 indicate that some socially conscious products were more attractive than others, regardless of cost and a person’s attitudes towards the issue at hand. Specifically, subjects were more than twice as likely to choose an animal-friendly household cleaner (OR=2.549) or jam made by a small business (OR=2.260) than they were to choose batteries “Made in the U.S.A.” They were also more like to choose “animal-friendly” shampoo (OR=1.914), soap manufactured by a small business (OR=1.976), or “no-sweat” tee-shirts (OR=1.497) from the outset of the experiment.

Beyond these differences in overall product preference, the baseline model (Model 1) indicated that both IIPM and product cost factored into product preference. As IIPM increased, so did the likelihood of respondents choosing the socially conscious product ($b=.195$; $SE=.021$; $OR=1.215$). According to this estimate, the odds of choosing a socially conscious product increase by roughly 21% for each one-point increase on the IIPM scale, which supports my hypothesis that IIPM motivates socially conscious consumption. The odds of choosing a socially conscious product are thus 10.4 times greater for an individual who cares greatly about an issue (IIPM=12) in comparison to someone who doesn't care about that issue at all. Cost appears to have even greater impact than IIPM: the odds of choosing a socially conscious product when it is ~20% more expensive are .14 times the odds of choosing the same product when the cost is equal.

Model 2 indicates that there is an interaction between product cost and IIPM ($b=.126$; $SE=.033$). This statistically significant coefficient estimate for the interaction between IIPM and product cost indicates that IIPM exerts a different effect on product choice depending on the cost differential. In particular, high levels of commitment to a product-related issue appear to mitigate the effects of that product being noticeably more expensive. As the predicted probabilities presented in Figure 6 below indicate, IIPM comes quite close to closing the gap between the likelihood of buying a socially conscious product at greater versus equal cost. When someone doesn't care at all about an issue, the odds of buying a socially conscious product are 69% to 97% *lower* when it

is more expensive. However, when a person is highly engaged with an issue, the odds of buying the more expensive socially conscious product are only 29% to 46% lower.

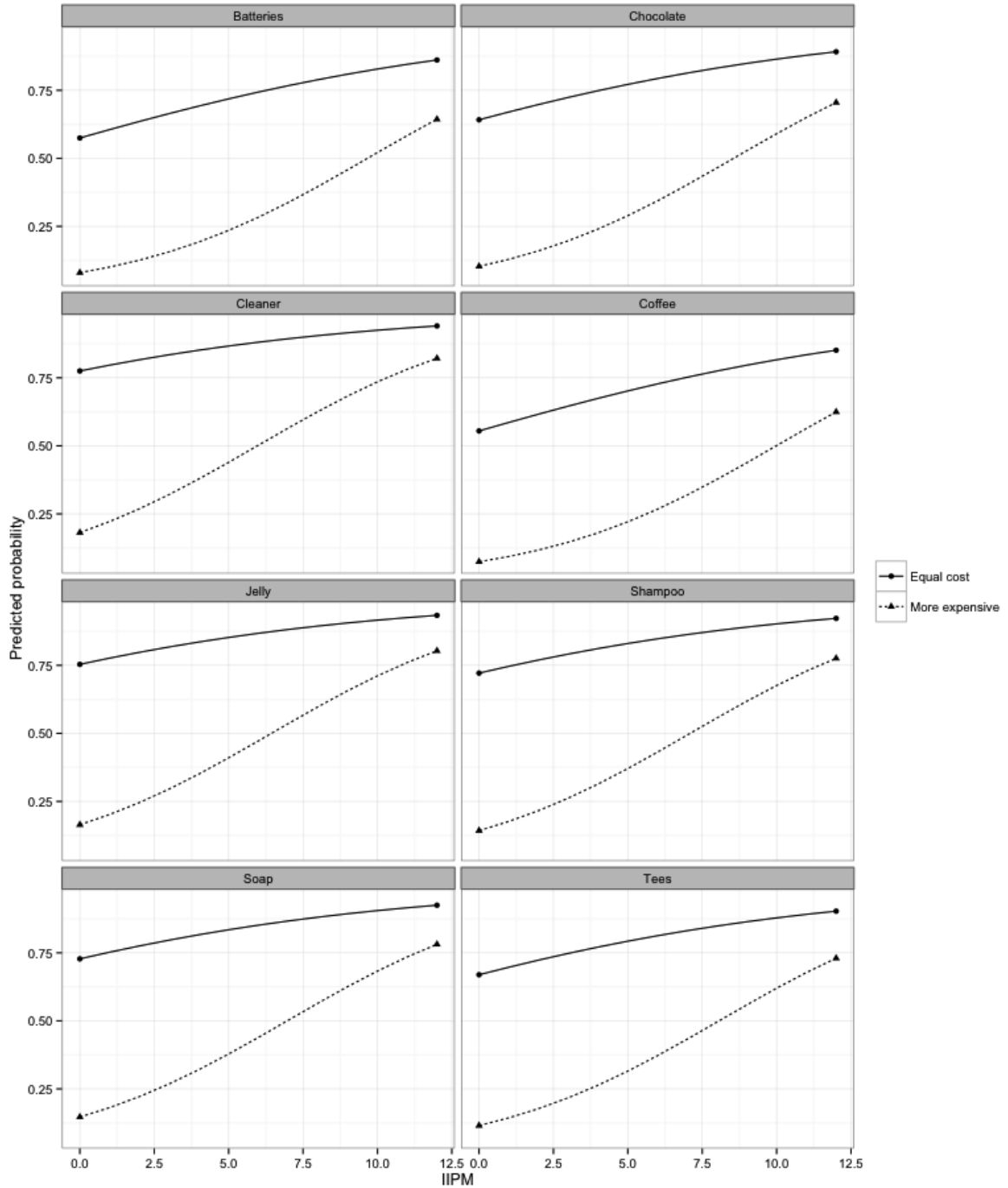
Alternatively, one could argue that IIPM has little effect when the stakes are low. When two products cost the same amount, the odds of buying a socially conscious product are between 39% and 59% greater for a consumer with high IIPM (=12) in comparison to a consumer who doesn't care about that issue at all (IIPM=0). In contrast, when a cause related product is *more expensive*, caring about that issue can increase the odds of buying a socially conscious product between 79% and 108%.

Although my analyses generated supportive evidence for H1c showing that IIPM may mitigate the effect of higher cost, it is important to raise the point that the significant interaction term between IIPM and product cost may be the result of a ceiling effect. The careful reader will note what Figure 5.2 displays quite clearly: when a socially conscious product is equally priced as a generic alternative, the baseline probability of choosing that product is above 50% *even for individuals who don't care about that issue at all* (IIPM=0). In fact, for some especially popular products such as the animal-friendly household cleaner, the baseline probability of choosing the animal-friendly cleaner at equal cost was above 75% even for individuals who rated every item in the relevant IIPM scale as being "not at all" important. In other words, IIPM may *falsely* appear to "close" the gap created by cost because the baseline probability of choosing a socially conscious product at equal cost is relatively high *regardless of* the importance a person ascribes to the issue at hand.

In addition to raising the empirical issue of how to properly interpret the statistically significant interaction between IIPM and product cost, the high baseline probability of choosing socially conscious products at equal cost pertains substantively to my theory of IIPM. Although Models 1 and 2—as well as the supporting data and robustness checks included in Appendix E and Appendix F—generated consistent evidence of the statistically significant correlation between IIPM and product choice, there nonetheless appear to be other processes at play which also motivate socially conscious consumption. As Figure 5.2 shows, the baseline probability of choosing *all* socially conscious products at equal cost was above 50%, or greater than chance. Possible explanations for why this is the case include the following. First, it is possible that the “warm glow” or social status conferred by choosing socially conscious product (Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010) may have a broad appeal to consumers (regardless of their issue-relevant attitudes) *when there is no material cost*. Alternatively, because socially conscious products are often perceived as being more expensive, consumers might have interpreted the equal pricing structure as a “discount,” and have been motivated by the idea of receiving greater value for their money rather than supporting the issue at hand. This dissertation does not go as far as to test these alternative explanations, but it is important to keep in mind that a majority of *disengaged* consumers choose socially conscious products.

FIGURE 5.2. Marginal probabilities of choosing a socially conscious product

**Predicted probability of choosing a socially conscious product
by issue importance and cost**



Note. Predicted probabilities were generated using Model 2 presented in Table 5.2

This dissertation also posits that the demographic attributes and political disposition of respondents are not important predictors of product choice after controlling for IIPM. However, it is reasonable to argue that IIPM may stem (at least in part) from a person's sociodemographic background and political preference. IIPM can thus be seen as mediating the relationship between sociodemographic traits and political preference on product choice.

To test the related hypotheses that IIPM mediates the effect of both demographic characteristics (H2) and political attitudes such as partisanship and ideology (H3) on socially conscious consumption, structural equation modeling was used to fit the two models presented in Table 5.3 below. Model 1 displays a baseline model in which demographic and political variables directly predict product choice. Due to the limitations in the structural modeling capabilities of the statistical software R, this model uses diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS) to estimate the model parameters for the dichotomous dependent variable (product choice). These coefficient estimates can be interpreted similarly to coefficients generated using probit regression. The number of choices that a respondent had made was also included in the model to control for possible effects of fatigue and/or conditioning to the experiment. Dummy variables for product were also included in the model to account for baseline differences in product appeal.

According to Model 1, Asians were less likely to choose socially conscious products ($b=-.278$; $SE=.106$), whereas older ($b=.007$; $SE=.002$) individuals were more likely to choose them. Strangely, the relationship between income and product choice appears to be negative ($b=-.003$; $SE=.001$), suggesting that when age is held constant,

people with higher income are slightly less likely to choose socially conscious products. While this is a counter-intuitive finding, one will recall from my literature review in Chapter 2 that there have been conflicting findings regarding the direction and significance of income's effect of socially conscious behavior. A person's political ideology also appears to directly affect product choice, with conservatives being less likely to choose cause-related products ($b=-.074$; $SE=.027$) than liberals. Partisan leanings did not appear to directly affect product choice.

Model 2 presents the coefficient estimates generated when IIPM mediates the effects of demographic and political characteristics. It is important to note that in this model, partisanship, ideology, and income were allowed to have both direct and indirect effects on product choice. These results provide support for the argument that IIPM mediates the effects of demographic characteristics on product preference. Equation 2 indicates that age, race, and higher education affect IIPM. Older people were likely to have higher IIPM scores ($b=.02$, $SE=.006$). On average, Blacks had higher levels of IIPM than whites ($b=.594$, $SE=.237$), whereas Asians had lower levels of IIPM than whites ($b=-.816$; $SE=.267$). Individuals with a college or advanced degree had lower levels of IIPM than people with lower levels of educational attainment.

TABLE 5.3. IIPM as a Mediator of Demographic and Political Attributes

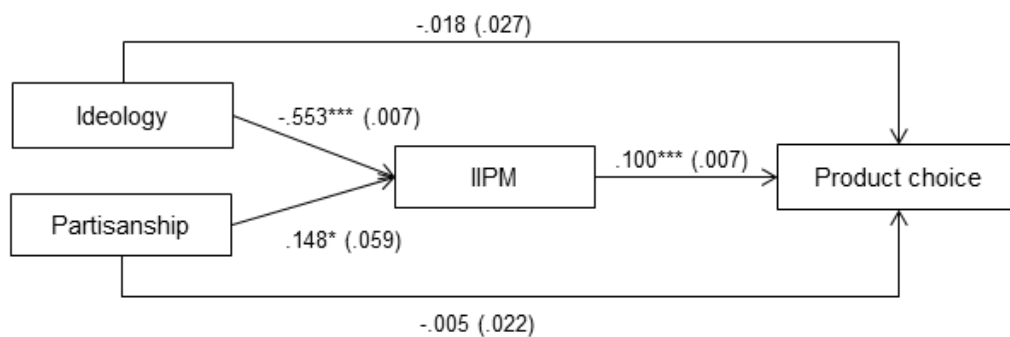
	Model 1	Model 2
Equation 1: Predicting Product Choice	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)
IIPM		.100*** (.007)
More expensive (=1)	-.914*** (.054)	-.914*** (.054)
Chocolate	.173 (.091)	.173 (.091)
Cleaner	.361*** (.097)	.361*** (.097)
Coffee	-.236** (.088)	-.236** (.088)
Jelly	.213* (.093)	.213* (.093)
Shampoo	.241** (.092)	.241** (.092)
Soap	.258** (.096)	.258** (.096)
Choice number (1-8)	.04*** (.012)	.04*** (.012)
Age	.007** (.002)	
Black	-.191 (.1)	
Asian	-.278** (.106)	
Hispanic	.04 (.108)	
Less than high school (=1)	-.32 (.312)	
High school (=1)	.037 (.083)	
College (=1)	.032 (.063)	
Graduate school (=1)	-.138 (.113)	
Income	-.003* (.001)	-.003** (.001)
Ideology (1=very lib, 7=very cons)	-.074** (.027)	-.018 (.027)
Partisanship (1=strong Dem, 7=strong GOP)	.02 (.022)	.005 (.022)
Equation 2: Predicting IIPM		
Age		.02*** (.006)
Income		.001 (.002)
Black		.594* (.237)
Asian		-.816** (.267)
Hispanic		-.078 (.287)
Less than high school		-.111 (.72)
High school		-.074 (.191)
College		-.402* (.157)
Graduate school		-1.168*** (.252)
Ideology (1=very lib, 7=very cons)		-.553*** (.07)
Partisanship (1=strong Dem, 7=strong GOP)		.148* (.059)
Intercept		7.688*** (.244)
Goodness-of-fit		
X^2 (df)		11.651 *** (16)
NFI		.851
SRMR		.372
Scaled RMSEA = 0 (90% CI)		.047 (.040-.057)
TLI		.673
CFI		.866

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Note. Coefficients are probit regression coefficients. Both models were estimated using the “lavaan” package in R. Diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS) were used to estimate the model parameters for the dichotomous dependent variable in Equation 1. This approach uses the full weight matrix to compute robust standard errors and a mean- and variance-adjusted test statistic. Maximum-likelihood estimates with categorical outcomes are not yet available for structural equation modeling in R.

One will recall that ideology but not partisanship had a direct effect on product choice in the baseline model (Model 1) that accounted for direct effects of demographic traits and political attitudes. However, when IIPM is included as a mediator in the model, neither the direct effect of ideology nor partisanship are statistically significant. Rather, IIPM fully mediates the effect of ideology (b=-.553, SE=.070) and partisanship (b=.148; SE=.059). One will note that although both ideology and partisanship are coded as 7-point scales ranging from left-leaning (=1) to right-leaning (=7) political sentiments that are highly correlated ($r=.75$, $p<.001$), their coefficients run in opposite directions (see Figure 5.3). Counter to the popular imagination, although liberals are more likely to express higher levels of IIPM (which in turn affect their product choice), so are individuals supportive of the Republican party. This finding not only supports the specific hypothesis that IIPM mediates political preference, but the larger thrust of my argument that Americans of all stripes are willing to buy socially conscious products.

FIGURE 5.3. Indirect and Direct Effects of Ideology and Partisanship on IIPM and Product Choice



Note. Figure is only a partial illustration of the full model available in Table 5.3. Only the coefficient estimates for ideology and partisanship are presented.

Discussion

Study 1 provided empirical support for the first expectation of my theory: that IIPM is key to engaging in socially conscious consumption. This study not only found supportive evidence for the proposition that IIPM is the key link between demographic traits and/or political attitudes and socially conscious consumption, but that people will engage in socially conscious consumption even when it is to their material disadvantage (i.e. greater cost). Most importantly, the fact that *within*-subject differences in IIPM impact consumer behavior provides support for the argument that people prioritize issues differently, thus socially conscious consumers cannot be thought about in an omnibus sense such as “voters” or “volunteers.”

CHAPTER 6

Exploring the Effect of Normative Appeals on Socially Conscious Consumption

The previous chapter of my dissertation established that the degree to which Americans care about certain political issues directly relates to their likelihood of choosing socially conscious products supporting that issue or cause. When tested in an experimental setting, this behavior was consistent across four different issues (animal rights, labor conditions, small business, and “Made in the USA”) and eight different products (batteries, chocolate, cleaner, coffee, jelly, shampoo, soap, and t-shirts). Moreover, the significant interaction between product cost and IIPM indicated that higher cost becomes less important to consumers when they care a great deal about the issue at hand. Although the likelihood of choosing a socially conscious product at higher cost was very low for people who do not care about that issue, people who *greatly* cared about an issue were almost as likely to choose a socially conscious product as they were to choose a cheaper generic alternative. In other words, caring a great deal about an issue connected to a socially conscious product nearly closes the gap created by roughly a 20% difference in cost.

Although the appeal of socially conscious products may be widely spread and shared across disparate issue publics, my data (as well as decades of public opinion research) also indicate that the issues citizens care about are quite scattered. Even if products supporting each and every one of the issues that Americans care about are made available to the public, it is not reasonable to assume that people with limited time and resources are able or willing to find products sympathetic to their political profile on a

consistent basis. And even amongst those with sufficient motivation and resources to seek out socially conscious products on a consistent basis, it is highly unlikely that they will be able to do this 100% of the time. On both a practical and theoretical level then, targeting consumers with products matching the issues they care about is a promising avenue to boost this alternative form of politically relevant behavior. This last point underscores the importance of the “matching” component of my IIPM measure, and stands at the foundation of my second dissertation study, which explores the effect of issue targeting and normative appeals on consumer behavior. I elaborate now on the methods and findings of this study.

Method

Study 2 was a between-subjects design with six conditions ($N=1330$). This experiment crossed product cost (equal or higher cost of socially conscious product in comparison to generic content) with normative appeals (issue public norm, provincial norm, and control). Additionally, respondents were blocked by their most (least) important issue to ensure that equivalent sample sizes were available to evaluate the importance of issue-product match in conjunction with product cost and normative appeals. Similar to Study 1, Study 2 could not experimentally manipulate the effects of IIPM because it was an exogenous characteristic of respondents that could not be randomly assigned.

Once again, respondents were recruited through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk service, and compensated \$1.00 for their participation in an online survey about “new products entering the market.” Individuals who had participated in previous studies were

informed that they were not eligible to take the survey, and towards this end were screened upfront with a question asking them for their Amazon Mechanical Turk worker ID.

Upon entering the survey, respondents were asked to choose their “most” and “least” important of four issues. Like Study 1, these issues were presented in a fashion concealing their potential relevance to product characteristics or consumer behavior. Respondents were then randomly assigned to either their most or least important issue while blocking by issue. Because some issues were more (or less) popular than others, once a quota was filled, respondents were automatically assigned to either their least or most important issue (depending on which quota was filled). If both quotas were filled for a person’s most and least important issues, they were informed that they were not eligible for the study and screened from the survey³⁰.

After being randomly assigned to high or low IIPM, respondents were asked to answer a battery of 16 questions relating to their attitudes on a variety of political issues. These questions were the same indicators of IIPM for animal rights, labor conditions, outsourcing, and small business developed and implemented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this dissertation. After completing this battery of questions, respondents completed the same distracter tasks used in Study 1. Once again, open-ended comments collected at the

³⁰ While this approach mimics the process of random assignment, it does not truly satisfy the criteria of being a “true experiment” because individuals who entered the survey after a quota was filled did not have the same probability of being assigned to their high/low issue as someone who entered the survey when both quotas were open. For this reason, to the best of my knowledge I cannot say that IIPM was a third factor in my experiment because it was not truly randomly assigned.

end of the study indicated that these distractor tasks successfully concealed the true goals of the experiment.

Next, respondents were next asked to make choices between pairs of generic and socially conscious products. In contrast to Study 1, however, Study 2 only asked respondents to make choices relating to a *single* issue – the issue that they most or least supported³¹. When making each of these two choices, respondents were randomly assigned to cost differential (higher or equal cost) and the type of “nudge” they received. The cost differentials were identical to those used in Study 1. The types of “nudges” presented to consumers were as follows: one third of respondents chose between products without receiving a nudge (control condition); one third of respondents received a nudge emphasizing group membership as a supporter of their most (least) important issue; and one third of respondents received a nudge emphasizing the respondent’s membership in unrelated social category (e.g. “people who buy this product”). All conditions using nudges included equivalent numeric data supporting the inference that a majority of the reference group engages in the desired behavior. Finally, respondents were asked to complete a brief section of questions regarding demographic characteristics such as age, race, education, and partisanship³².

Results

Participants in Study 2 were demographically similar to individuals who participated in the pre-test and Study 1, although there were some noticeable differences

³¹ As in Study 1, the order in which products tied to the four issues was also randomized.

³² Once again, gender was accidentally omitted from the questions relating to demographic characteristics.

(see Appendix 4). The average respondent was 30.6 years old, or about three years younger than the average respondent in my previous two studies.

While the racial makeup of the sample was once again primarily white (80.3%), nearly one in ten (9.4%) respondents were Asian. Also in line with the racial and ethnic composition of my sample in Study 1, 7% of participants were Hispanic and 7% were Black. The estimated mean individual income of the sample was \$45,971 per year (SD=3.774), and the median income fell into the range of \$25,000-\$35,000 per year. Once again the sample was skewed towards highly educated respondents, with only 11.3% lacking college education. Given that Study 1 found higher education to positively (and significantly) influence IIPM, this suggests that my respondents may be more predisposed to socially conscious consumption than the population at large. Finally, as in both Study 1 and my pre-test, respondents were more liberal and more Democratic than the U.S. public. This latter point adds an interesting wrinkle to my research, given that respondents in Study 2 were screened based on their expressed political attitudes, whereas participants in the pre-test and Study 1 were not. While popular logic would suggest that individuals with a more conservative political disposition would be disproportionately drawn to two of the issues (small business and “Made in the U.S.A.”) thus changing the sample’s composition, this was not borne out.

Data Analysis

To confirm that there were differences between the populations of “high” and “low” IIPM for an issue, independent sample t-tests allowing for different sample sizes and pooled variance were first used to compare the distributions of subjects randomly

assigned to high and low IIPM for each issue. The t-tests comparing IIPM between groups indicated that there were highly significant differences in the population means for subjects assigned to high/low IIPM for animal rights, outsourcing, and small business. Strangely, although there were statistically significant differences in IIPM based on assignment to condition for people who with high (or low) rankings of labor conditions, individuals who ranked labor conditions as least important had the higher IIPM scores.

TABLE 6.1. Mean IIPM score based on random assignment to condition (N=1320)

	High IIPM	Low IIPM	<i>t</i> , <i>df</i> , <i>p</i>
Animal rights	10.092	6.220	16.037, <i>df</i> =361, <i>p</i> <.001
Labor conditions	7.080	7.631	-2.121, <i>df</i> =346, <i>p</i> =.030
Small business	7.487	6.980	2.090, <i>df</i> =302, <i>p</i> =.037
Outsourcing	7.777	6.191	5.207, <i>df</i> =317, <i>p</i> <.001

Note. Two-tailed T-tests were used.

This difference in IIPM likely stemmed from the fact that very few individuals ranked labor conditions as their “least” important issue, thus this quota was the most difficult to fill. Table 2.2 below provides full summary statistics regarding the rankings provided by all participants who took the screener for the study:

TABLE 6.2. Issue rankings for all screened participants (N=2091)

	Highest rank	Lowest rank
Animal rights	27.3%	35.6%
Labor conditions	39.1%	7.5%
Small business	18.3%	35.8%
Outsourcing	15.2%	21.0%

Note. Summary statistics of all individuals who took the screener question only include individuals who did not submit multiple answers. Limitations in the researcher’s ability to use auto-screen features based on Mechanical Turk ID while administering the survey resulted in some redundancies where individuals tried on multiple occasions to take the survey. Individuals who did this were removed from all datasets, as well as the summary statistics presented above.

Next, to test the between-subject and within-subject differences between groups³³, the long form data from this experiment were fit to a generalized mixed model including random effects for individuals and issues. The model also controlled for product to account for variation due to product characteristics unrelated to the experimental manipulations. Estimates were fit using maximum likelihood, and the dependent variable was modeled using a binomial distribution.

³³ As in Study 1, descriptive statistics comparing across group means (along the lines of cost and IIPM) were generated on an issue-by-issue basis to confirm that the posited relationships followed simple and intuitive patterns. See Appendix G for details.

TABLE 6.3. Predicting the Effect of Cost, IIPM, and Normative Appeals on Socially Conscious Consumption

	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Random effects</i>		
	Variance (SD)	Variance (SD)
Respondent ID (Intercept, n=1330)	1.906 (1.380)	1.913 (1.382)
Issue (Intercept, n=4)	.058 (.242)	.058 (.240)
Groups	1327	1327
Observations	2577	2577
<i>Fixed effects</i>		
	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)
High IIPM (=1)	1.077*** (.126)	.961 (.618)
Greater (cost (=1)	-1.632*** (.111)	-1.295* (.568)
Provincial norm (=1)	-.019 (.130)	1.380# (1.294)
Issue public norm (=1)	.522*** (.135)	2.460# (1.414)
High IIPM * Greater cost		-.048 (.373)
High IIPM * Provincial norm		-.452 (.865)
Provincial norm * Greater cost		-.948 (.799)
High IIPM * Greater cost * Provincial norm		.316 (.527)
High IIPM * Issue public norm		-1.029 (.951)
Issue public norm * Greater cost		-1.724* (.849)
High IIPM * Greater cost * Issue public norm		.987# (.565)
(Intercept)	1.793*** (.288)	1.551 # (.938)

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; # $p < .08$

Note. Coefficient estimates were generated using the “lme4” package in R. Random effects for time were not included in the model due to a malfunction in the survey software Qualtrics which failed to correctly record the randomized product order for roughly 80% of cases.

Model 1 presents the baseline model, which tests the hypothesis that normative appeals positively impact socially conscious consumption – especially normative appeals tapping identification with supporters of an issue holding personal importance (H4). Previous literature (Goldstein et al, 2008) also suggests that provincial norms – norms relating to the immediate consumer environment in which a person makes a choice—also positively impact prosocial consumer behavior (H5).

Model 1 reinforces the finding in Study 1 that, overall, people are less likely to choose socially conscious products when they are more expensive. In fact, when all other factors are held constant, the odds of buying a socially conscious product are 81% lower when a socially conscious product is 15-20% more expensive than a generic alternative. Also supporting Study 1 is the finding that high IIPM increases the likelihood of choosing a socially conscious product. An individual who ranked an issue highest was almost three times more likely to choose a matching prosocial product than someone who ranked that issue lowest.

Targeting participants with normative appeals about the behavior of issue supporters also increased the odds of choosing a socially conscious product. All other things being equal, participants who received a normative appeal tapping their social identity as an issue supporter were 1.7 times more likely to buy a socially conscious product than individuals who received no normative appeal. This finding strongly supports my hypothesis that norms targeting germane aspects of a person's political identity increase the likelihood of prosocial consumer behavior (H4). The effectiveness

of these appeals suggests that consumers perceive themselves as being part of a social movement, in which individual actions done in concert enact social change.

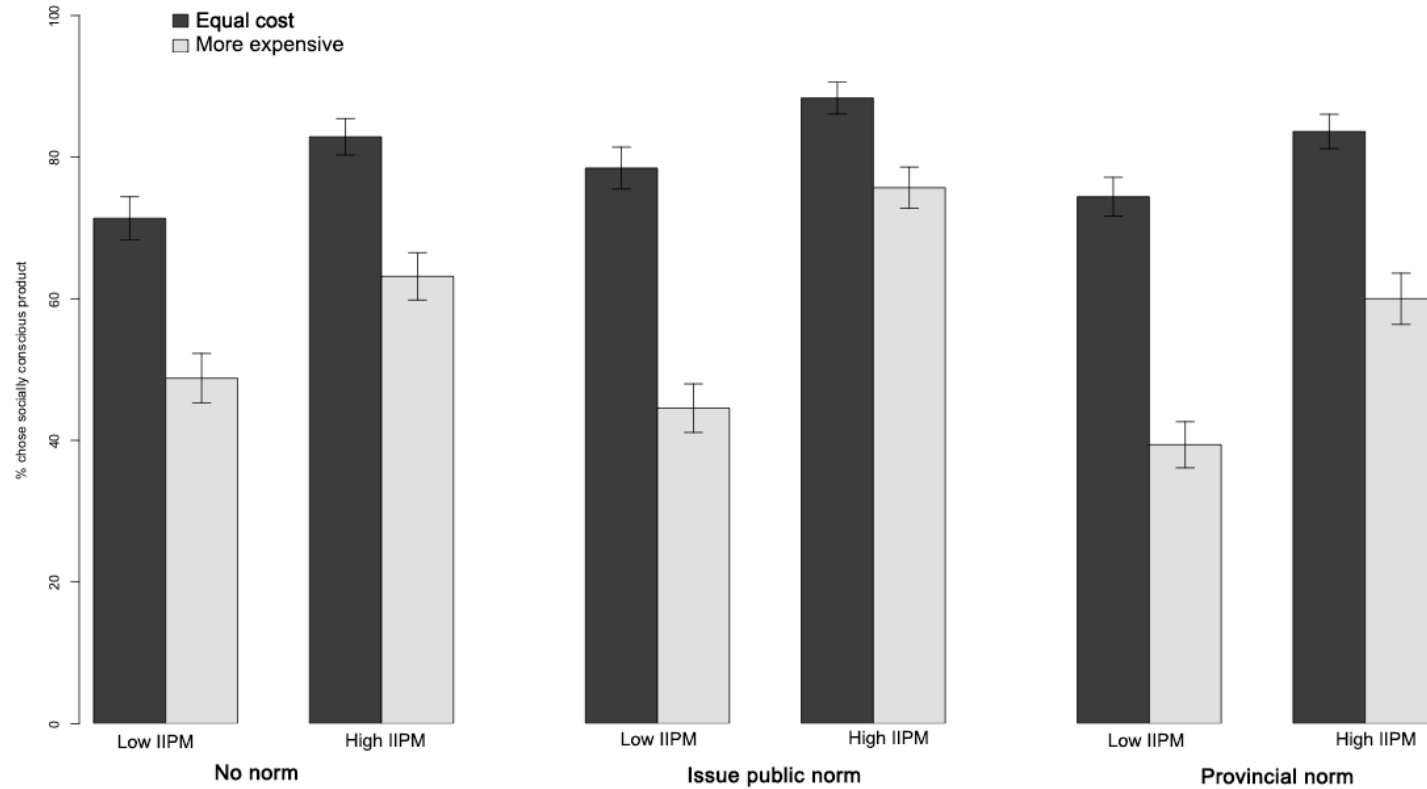
In contrast to the prior literature, however, normative appeals tapping shared situational consumer identity—“shoppers buying this product” – had no effect on respondents’ behavior. This null finding fails to support the expectation that provincial norms tapping the shared experience of buying a product also increase the likelihood of pro-social consumer behavior (H5). There are several possibilities why provincial norms are not as effective in my studies as in Goldstein et al (2008). First, it is possible that null effect is due to the differences between conservation and consumer behavior (i.e. not using a product versus buying something). Although the products used in my experiments were all of low cost, there is still a higher net cost of choosing a socially conscious product rather than choosing to re-use a bath towel during a hotel stay. Indeed, the fact that socially conscious consumption was tied to a material cost was a point of emphasis in my experimental designs. Second, it is also possible that this null effect is due to differences between online and offline consumer contexts: after all, the experience of clicking through hypothetical products on an e-commerce site is quite different from the tangible experience of staying in a hotel room (e.g. Goldstein et al, 2008). In other words, provincial norms may be more effective in an offline context because the circumstances of that setting are more immediately tangible to consumers. Finally, these appeals may have been less effective than the issue public appeals because they do not directly pertain to the potentially *cumulative* effects of social action.

I turned next to explore the effect of normative appeals when they are made in conjunction with consumer targeting (i.e. high IIPM) and higher prices. Specifically, the hypotheses posed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation posed that normative messages would help to close the gap created by higher cost (H6). In practice, this hypothesis is best tested as a three-way interaction between the randomly assigned factors (product cost, high/low IIPM, and the type of normative appeal)³⁴.

Prior to conducting a multivariate analysis and following, I first examined the overall differences between groups along the lines of the focal independent variable (see Jaccard, 2003, p. 50). As Figure 6.1 indicates, there appear to be large differences in socially conscious consumption attributable to cost. The size of this difference not only varies along the extent to which a person holds the issue at hand to be important (the low-order interaction) but also the normative message received (the focal independent variable). However, these data do not properly account for clustering of standard errors within individuals and issues.

³⁴ The use and interpretation of three-way interaction terms is an area of dispute both within and between social scientific disciplines. For example, one author even goes so far as to label them “largely useless for the purposes of hypothesis testing” (Braumoeller, 2004), and others have chronicled widespread errors in the implementation and interpretation of interactive effects (Brambor, Clark, & Golder, 2006). Even among those scholars who endorse the use of such interaction terms, there is a lack of consensus regarding the correct approach to doing so. Consider the contrast between two recent books explicitly devoted to the proper use of interaction terms: in one, Kam and Franzese (2009) recommend against mean centering variables (p. 93); in the other, Jaccard and Turrissi (2003) explicitly state that researchers should do so (p. 46). The specific approach employed by this dissertation follows the methodology outlined by Jaccard (2003) for understanding three-way interactions that are a mix of experimental factors and self-reported variables (p. 50-57).

FIGURE 6.1. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Products by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal



Note. Means, standard deviations, and cell counts used in this Figure are available in Table G1.

The coefficient estimates presented in Table 6.3 provide conditional support for the hypothesis that targeted normative appeals can counteract the effect of cost on prosocial consumer behavior. Specifically, the three way interaction term between high IIPM, higher cost, and normative appeals tapping the identity of issue supporters was marginally significant ($p=.08$). However, contrary to what we might expect given the extant literature, provincial norms had neither a main nor a contingent effect on consumer behavior. The latter finding is unsurprising, given the lack of a main effect for provincial norms.

Figure 6.2 below illustrates the predicted probabilities generated by Model 2. My results indicate that, at baseline, there is a high likelihood of choosing a socially conscious product when two choices are equally priced. When priced at equal cost, the probability of choosing a socially conscious product was 94% for people who received a normative appeal emphasizing their membership in an issue public. Even individuals who ranked an issue as least important and received *no normative message* were more than 75% likely to choose that product when the alternative was equally priced.

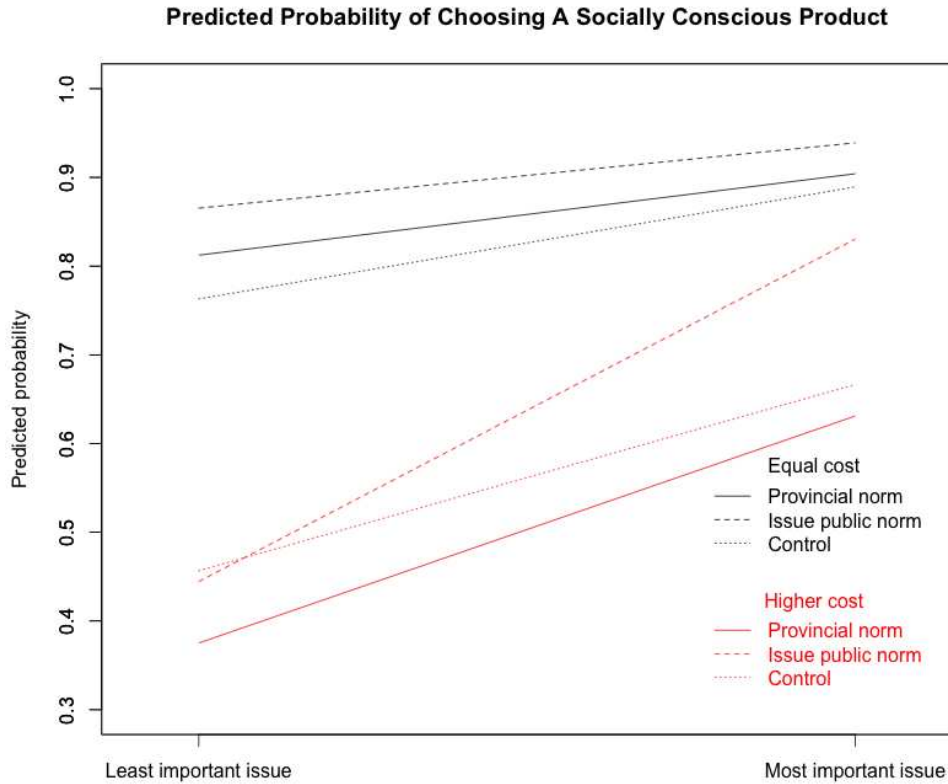
Unexpectedly, Figure 6.1 also illustrates that when products are equally priced, normative appeals have the greatest effect of buying a socially conscious product at higher cost when a person *doesn't care about the issue at hand*. In fact, normative messages increase the odds of choosing a prosocial product by 23% when people say that they don't care about an issue, but only by 12% when they say that they do! In other words, even if people do not give high priority to an issue, they will nonetheless respond to appeals to the identity of issue supporters. This suggests that *when the stakes are low*,

issue-importance (in a discrete sense) may be less important to consumers than identifying with a group of people supporting a political, cultural, or social cause.

By far the most interesting result illustrated in Figure 6.2 is the additive effect of targeting the *right* population with a normative appeal when there is a cost differential between products. From the outset, subjects who cared about an issue were almost twice as likely (OR=1.560) to choose a socially conscious product over a generic product when receiving no normative appeal. However, these odds are 73% lower than the odds that (statistically) identical subjects would choose the prosocial product after receiving a normative appeal emphasizing their membership of an issue public. The odds of choosing a prosocial product at higher cost when receiving a normative message are only 13% lower than the odds of choosing the same product at equal cost (when receiving no message whatsoever). In fact, the odds of issue publics targeted with a normative appeal are 10% *higher* than the odds of a person who doesn't care about an issue choosing that product over an equally priced alternative³⁵.

³⁵ An additional robustness check testing the significance of the differences between these groups was conducted by transforming the various combinations of conditions represented by the three-way interaction into dummy variables. These dummy variables were then included in the equation, with high-IIPM individuals who received an issue public norm at equal cost being treated as the reference group. The coefficient estimate for with high-IIPM individuals who received an issue public norm at *higher* cost was significantly different ($p < .01$). See Table G1 in Appendix G for full details.

FIGURE 6.2. The Effect of Normative Appeals on Socially Conscious Consumption



Note. Predicted probabilities were generated using the coefficient estimates presented in Model 2 of Table 6.3.

Discussion

Study 2 adds nuance to the argument that targeting people normative appeals that match up with their expressed sociopolitical identity will product the greatest increase in prosocial consumer behavior. Although Study 1 indicates that people should be targeted with products that match up with their expressed sociopolitical identity, Study 2 suggests that, when the stakes are low, normative appeals can increase the odds of buying a socially conscious product the most for someone who may not explicitly say that they

identify with supporters of that issue. In general, it is fair to say that normative appeals emphasizing membership in a group of issue supporters greatly impact the odds of purchasing a socially conscious product, but that rising tide does not lift all boats equally.

Additionally, Study 2 indicates that there may be a ceiling effect for normative appeals emphasizing membership in an issue public when products are equally priced. On a practical level, this finding suggests that using normative messages can be used to *compensate* for the higher production costs for socially conscious products – or to increase the profit margin for a socially conscious product that actually costs the same amount to produce as a generic alternative.

I turn now to the conclusion section of my dissertation, which draws together the empirical findings presented in Chapters 5-7 and integrates the thrust of my research agenda into the larger literature about normative appeals and socially conscious products.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

There are many ways in which citizens can engage in politics. In this dissertation I have explored one non-traditional form of such behavior – the purchasing of socially conscious consumer products. From the controversy over the U.S. Olympic team’s uniforms to the tragic collapse of an overcrowded factory in Bangladesh, the relationship between individual economic and political behaviors is becoming more salient and visible. This point is not lost on the producers of goods and services, many of whom increasingly market their products (and companies) in terms of the social value they add. But to what extent are Americans willing to purchase products supporting their political, social, or cultural views? Which Americans? Under what circumstances? And can such behavior be increased?

These are the broad questions motivating my research agenda. And while I remain agnostic regarding *which* issues citizens should support, also motivating my research is the belief that the increased availability of products supporting diverse viewpoints enriches political and civic life rather than crowding out “traditional” forms of political participation. My research is intended to drive home the point that it is just as important to study the small but frequent decisions that citizens make while shopping as the more overtly (though often less frequent) political acts such as voting, working for a campaign, contacting an officeholder, etc., that are the subject of most political communication research.

Developing a Theory of Socially Conscious Consumerism

As my literature review (Chapter 2) made clear, the extant empirical research on “cause-related marketing,” “political consumerism,” and/or “socially conscious products” —spread across more than a decade of scholarship, a variety of methodologies, and a large number of social or political issues — suggests that many people are open to purchasing socially conscious products, often doing so even if greater cost is involved. Moreover, some of these studies suggest that people’s opinions about political issues motivate their consumer behavior, and that appealing to social norms or social identity may increase its prevalence. However my review of the literature also illustrated two shortcomings in this body of research. First, it showed that much of the existing research lacked a theoretical perspective that could apply across different issues and contexts. Second, it showed that for those studies which *did* attempt to generalize across issues and behaviors (e.g., observational studies of “political consumerism”) the measures of socially conscious consumerism that were used were insufficiently specific to allow for more nuanced understandings of the “pushes” and “pulls” motivating this behavior.

In Chapter 3 I built upon my review and critique of the extant literature to develop a more “holistic” theory of politically conscious consumer behavior. Central to my argument is the concept of the “Issue Importance-Product Match” (IIPM). I defined IIPM as the convergence of (1) personal concern over or interest in a specific public issue; (2) the relevance of the product in question to this issue or concern; and (3) the availability of a product that makes the claim that using it addresses the issue/concern in a way consonant with the consumer/citizen’s preferred solution. For example, there

would be high IIPM when a person who cares about economic justice encounters a Fair Trade product in a grocery store. However, there would be no guarantee that this same person would prefer the eco-friendly product down the aisle because IIPM is both issue and context specific *on an individual level*.

Seven hypotheses were derived from the argument above. Specifically, I posited that:

- All else being equal, the greater the IIPM, the greater the likelihood of socially conscious consumption (**H1a**) -- even when the socially conscious option is more expensive (**H1b**);
- The magnitude of the relationship between IIPM and socially conscious consumption is greater when a socially conscious product is more expensive than when two products are the same cost (**H1c**);
- All else being equal, IIPM mediates the effect of overtly political attitudes (such as political ideology or partisanship) on socially conscious consumption (**H2**);
- All else being equal, IIPM mediates the effect of demographic traits (such as age, income, or education) on socially conscious consumption (**H3**).

Testing the above hypotheses was intended to help better understand how the combination of individual motivations and characteristics and product qualities interact to produce socially conscious consumer behavior. But my research interests extended to the question of whether or not such behavior could be increased or encouraged through message design. To this end I further developed my theory about amenable conditions for socially conscious consumption by turning to the theory of “nudging” forwarded by

Thaler and Sunstein (2008). Building on Thaler and Sunstein's argument that choice architecture can be used to "nudge" people towards more personally or socially beneficial behaviors, I argued that nudges can be optimized to encourage consumers to engage in prosocial behavior. Specifically, I developed research-driven hypotheses around the possibility of targeting engaged publics with normative appeals to increase their likelihood of socially consumption. Drawing from the extant literature, I posited that:

- People are more likely to choose socially conscious products when they are targeted with nudges including descriptive norms regarding consumer behavior in the immediate consumer environment (provincial norm) (**H4**);
- People are more likely to choose socially conscious products when they are targeted with normative appeals tapping identification with supporters of an issue that holds personal importance (issue public norm) (**H5**).

Building upon these hypotheses, I argued that properly targeting engaged audiences with these messages (i.e. audiences with high IIPM) can even offset the negative effects of pricing a socially conscious product at a higher cost. Towards this end, I hypothesized that:

- Descriptive norms priming the *issue public* identity will help to close the gap in socially conscious consumption created when a socially conscious product is more expensive (**H6**).

Summary of Findings

In Chapters 4 through 6 I then turn to my empirical analyses. Given the relative scarcity of experimental studies and the related deficit of causal evidence about the precursors of socially conscious consumption, I chose to administer a series of web surveys to Mechanical Turk HIT workers to test the hypotheses outlined above.

Although there were downsides to using this population—namely, that my respondents were less racially diverse and more highly educated than the American public at large—Mechanical Turk provided me with a scalable and readily accessible sample, while also providing an affordable option for extensively pre-testing the images and measures used in my studies.

In addition to choosing a sample population and an overarching methodological framework, I also made decisions regarding the analytical procedures used to generate my findings. To generate reliable and valid measures of issue-importance for the purpose of manipulating IIPM, I employed a traditional approach to cluster analysis (using K-means) and a slightly less traditional approach to psychometric scaling (an “EFA-within-CFA” framework). To appropriately model the data yielded by Study 1 (which asked respondents to make 8 choices between product pairs relating to four different issues), I fit a generalized linear mixed model to my data while including random effects for time (to account for order effects) and participants (to account for dependence between observations). Structural equation modeling was applied to this same dataset to test the proposition that IIPM mediates the effect of demographic traits and political attitudes on socially conscious consumption. Finally, a similar generalized mixed model that used in

Study 1 including random effects for individuals nested within issues was used to analyze the experimental data generated by Study 2.

Given the importance of IIPM to my theoretical concerns, it was first necessary to identify diverse groups of issue supporters, as well as to generate reliable and valid measures tapping issue importance for all four issues. Because my theory posits that IIPM translates across issues—in other words, that it is applicable across all socially conscious products and issues—it was first necessary to identify groups of issue supporters that were as *different* as possible. To do so, I asked a group of respondents to rank the importance of eight different issues, and then used cluster analysis to identify four unique groups of individuals who prioritized one issue above all the rest. Out of the eight issues chosen, there were distinct clusters of individuals who were more supportive of animal rights, good labor conditions, small business, and products “Made in the USA” than the rest of the sample. I then developed psychometric models around each of these four issues to generate four-question scales tapping the Issue-Importance Product Match. All of these scales satisfied traditional measures of goodness-of-fit, and were validated using a statistically independent sample.

Having identified the issues to be included in my experiments as well as how to measure them, I next conducted a series of pre-tests to fine-tune the product pairs to be included in my dissertation. To maintain realism in the experimental environment and to avoid sensitization, it was necessary to include subtle differences in the packaging of product pairs. However, it was more important for respondents to note that the *key* difference between products was their (lack of) support for an issue. By the third

iteration of product designs, 75% or more of respondents said that support of an issue or cause was the key differentiator for all eight product pairs.

Having identified a reliable and valid way to measure IIPM as well as high-quality images presenting the hypothetical product pairs, Chapter 5 used a survey experiment to test the contingent effects of IIPM and product cost on the likelihood of choosing a socially conscious product. This study supported the hallmark claim of my theory: that all else being equal, the greater the IIPM, the greater the likelihood of socially conscious consumption (H1a). This study further supported the claim that this relationship between IIPM and product choice persists when a socially conscious product is more expensive (H1b), and that high IIPM can even *mitigate* the effects of higher cost (H1c). However, my findings regarding IIPM's mitigating effect on cost should be interpreted with some caution, as they may have been the product of a ceiling effect created by the high overall probability of choosing socially conscious products at equal cost regardless of IIPM. Further, they also cannot be seen as providing causal evidence for my claims, as IIPM could not be experimentally manipulated. Finally, Study 1 also generated supportive evidence for my hypotheses arguing that IIPM mediates the effects of political preference (H2) and demographic traits (H3) on product choice. In other words, Study 1 showed that demographic traits and political preference influence the degree to which people care about certain issues, which in turn affects whether or not they will choose a socially conscious product when presented with the opportunity.

Finally, Chapter 6 built upon the finding that IIPM motivates socially conscious consumption and mitigates the effect of higher cost by testing the effect of targeting

consumers with normative appeals. Contradicting prior research by Goldstein et al (2008), Study 2 found that “provincial” norms tapping a shared consumer experience had no effect on the likelihood of choosing a prosocial product (H4). At baseline, normative appeals tapping a person’s identity as a supporter of an issue were found to increase their likelihood of choosing a related socially conscious product by nearly threefold (H5). Moreover, the effect of these “issue public” normative appeals interacted with product cost and IIPM (H6). Whereas such normative appeals had little to no effect on choosing a socially conscious product at higher cost among individuals who ranked an issue as “least important,” they greatly enhanced the likelihood of choosing such a product among people who ranked that issue as “most important.” In fact, targeting individuals who cared about an issue with normative messages tapping their support of that issue nearly closed the gap created by a 20% difference in cost. Once again, findings relating to the main and contingent effects of IIPM could not be interpreted as evidence of causation, as the procedure of blocking respondents to issue (to conditions of “high” and “low” IIPM) ensured equivalent sample sizes but was not truly “random.”

Conclusions

The findings of this dissertation have a number of implications for researchers, marketers, and even citizens themselves. While nothing could seem more mundane than standing in line at the checkout counter, my dissertation has shown that at least some of these decisions are deeply political. Particularly as rates of participation in traditional forms of politics (such as voting or contacting a government official) decline, it is important to note that new behaviors have sprung up. In contrast to common stereotypes,

my research shows that political participation via socially conscious consumerism is not constrained to wealthy, liberal, educated, and/or young individuals. Although demographic factors such as those I have listed may influence the issues that a person cares about (as well as the degree to which they care), they by no means *preclude* engaging in this alternative venue for political participation. Rather, my research demonstrates that socially conscious consumers are heterogeneous rather than uniform in both their attitudes and behavior, reflecting the diverse (and sometimes oppositional) nature of political life in the United States.

Just as the ways in which Americans engage in political life are changing, so has the context in which consumer decisions are made. In the past decades, researchers and marketers have become much more savvy about how to use technology to target consumers and/or citizens. Some, such as Turow (2012), have raised concerns about the normative implications and potential inequalities of targeting content based on consumers' background characteristics. According to Turow (2012), the "rhetoric of consumer power" has been replaced by the "rhetoric of esoteric technological and statistical knowledge that supports the practice of social discrimination through profiling" (p. 3). One could argue that my dissertation research makes a clear case for the latter rather than the former: that researchers and marketers will maximize their efforts by targeting consumers with prosocial products based on their *existing* attitudes. This approach is quiet likely to maximize the short-term probability that consumers will

purchase products that are consistent with their values and support causes they believe in³⁶.

However, it bears consideration that the experiments employed in my studies (as well as the statistical models evaluating their results) evaluate consumer behavior at a single moment in time. My research is not longitudinal, and cannot evaluate the long-term effects of this sort of targeting. There is no reason to believe that socially conscious consumption and the attitudes motivating it are stable, and/or stagnant – for example, that caring about one issue does not, over time, open to the door to caring about other issues. This is supported by the qualitative data collected at the end of my studies. For example, one respondent noted: “I hope that I do not unknowingly purchase products that have been animal tested or produced in sweat shops. I feel that there should be more labels showing that fact on products like the ones you showed here so that the public can make an informed choice.”

In other words, my findings should not be interpreted too literally, because that neglects the possible *long-term* benefits of exposing people to different kinds of products. While it is fascinating to note that normative appeals emphasizing a person’s sociopolitical identity can close the gap created by higher cost, it is equally important to remember that even individuals who say that they *don’t care about an issue* have more

³⁶ Targeting that is too obvious also raises the possibility of reactance: “It’s not necessarily about the products, but in the side-by-side comparison portion of the survey, in the middle it would tell me that, say, 67% of people who, like me, were consciously against sweatshops, would chose a certain product. To me, this defeated the purpose of a traditional side-by-side comparison and (somewhat) took away my free will to choose. Before I even looked at the products, I was basically being told which product I should pick.”

than a 70% probability of choosing a socially conscious product if it is of equal cost as a generic alternative. Over time, such small choices (such as seeing a new kind of socially conscious product, or buying it when it is on sale) may serve as a gateway to attitude change that in turn expands the universe of issues a person supports. This inference is supported by two recent studies. One indicates that the first experience of buying an organic product serves as an “icebreaker” for buying other socially conscious products, such as locally grown products or other organic products (Gottschalk & Leistner, 2013). The other indicates that the behaviors captured in experiment settings fail to capture the dynamics pattern of market data *over time* --- namely, that adaptation and “learning experiences” shape a person’s long-term proclivity to buy socially conscious products (Araña & León, 2013).

Just as it important to remember that my findings depict choices made at a single point in time, it is also important to be mindful that my research agenda does not go so far as to evaluate the veracity of such claims. For instance, examples of “green-washing”—the use of deceptive marketing to promote the perception that a product or company is environmentally friendly—date back to the mid 1980’s. In fact, throughout the course of my research, a number of respondents raised similar concerns in the open-ended comments collected after each study. Echoing this sentiment, one respondent wrote: “The best products are those which clearly state their company philosophies and practices. Too many large corporations are trying to jump on the ‘Green Bandwagon’ and advertise their products as being ‘natural’ or ‘green’ and yet their corporate practices are horrible and still focused on only the bottom line.” Indeed, although using hypothetical

products in my research eliminated the potential confound of branding, a byproduct of this approach is that participants were presented with non-verifiable claims. As Hassan, Shaw, and Shiu (2013) demonstrate through a series of interviews and focus groups, consumers are not unaware of this potential wrinkle in socially conscious consumer behavior. In fact, subjects indicated that the complexity, ambiguity, and lack of credibility of some marketing claims causes them to delay their purchase decisions. By this account, current estimates of people's proclivity to engage in socially conscious consumption may be *too low*.

Although few companies actually go so far as to make deceptive marketing claims, many brands have raised the point that it is difficult of keeping track of supply chains in a globalized economy. After a factory fire killed 1,127 workers in a Bangladesh factory in April 2013, public outcry led to a number of consumer petitions demanding companies to take a more proactive role in ensuring safe working conditions for factory workers in third world countries (Greenhouse, 2013). However, large retailers such as Gap, Target, J.C. Penney, and Wal-Mart declined to participate due to the threat of litigation by labor groups, stating that "supply chain matters" are "appropriately left to retailers, suppliers and government" (Wal-Mart, 2013). This point is not dissimilar to the statements made by Apple following a scandal regarding the working conditions at a major iPhone supplier in China, Foxconn—and perhaps the reason one respondent noted, "I cannot bring myself to believe the 'non-sweatshop conditions' statement" in Study 1.

In the wake of such controversies, brands and consumer groups have adopted a number of approaches to attempt to provide greater transparency regarding global

business practices. The Sustainable Apparel Coalition (which includes brands such as Nike, Walmart, Gap, J. C. Penney and Target) is reportedly incorporating social and labor measurements into an existing measure of environmental sustainability, the Higg Index. However, this metric would initially be used for internal business purposes, and it is unclear when or if would be made available (and interpretable) to the public (Clifford, 2013). In a similar effort, clothiers such as Everlane have increased transparency surrounding their labor practices. Perhaps the most novel attempt to track the supply chain is by a smartphone app called “Buycott” that allows consumers to scan product bar codes to determine if a product comes from objectionable origins. However, due to complexity of supply chains in a global economy, such automated approaches to “tracing a product’s ownership back to its top parent company” cannot *guarantee* that ethical standards of production have been met. At best, automated approaches to evaluating the socially conscious characteristics of products can be seen as making probabilistic forecasts that are dependent on the availability of information as well as the quality of that information. In other words, although software can enhance human judgment when it comes to differentiating between products, the possibility of false positives (products that falsely appear to meet ethical standards) and false negatives (products that actually meet ethical standards but are not classified as such) remains.

In their current state, efforts such as the “Buycott” app add an additional burden to consumers with already limited time and monetary resources. Software which attempts to simplify the “matching” process between issue importance and product availability by requiring users to scan each item that they consider purchasing (after specifying each

cause they support or oppose) takes additional time and effort that shoppers may not possess. For example, one of the participants in Study 1 noted: “I would like to buy all American, but usually I am in such a hurry to get through the store that I do not have time to read the labels that well. Companies should advertise on their commercials that they are made in the USA.” Unsurprisingly, multiple respondents to the survey also pointed to income as a prohibitive factor, noting that they “sadly lack ‘the coinage of convictions’” or are “financially strapped.” Another respondent identifying herself as a single mother poignantly wrote: “I do 50-cent surveys on Amazon just so I can afford toilet paper. Choosing to buy more expensive products is a luxury for the rich. I cannot imagine anyone taking your surveys has a lot of extra discretionary income.” This latter comment—as well as the corroborating statistic showing that roughly 37% of each sample earned less than \$25,000 per annum in each of my studies—suggests that my studies offer a *strong* test of IIPM’s influence on consumer behavior. It also bears consideration that my studies investigate the politics of relatively inexpensive products – in other words, my research may elucidate the politics of the checkout counter, but it does not necessarily translate into the politics of the parking lot, high-end handbags, or household appliances.

Comments such as those above highlight the difficulties still facing socially conscious consumption, but the results from my dissertation studies offer evidence of its potential. My results indicate not only that the topic is ripe for further inquiry by researchers, but a promising course of action for practitioners—for better or for worse. I will leave it to the political philosophers to debate whether or not “politics at the

checkout counter” enriches or detracts from civic life, and whether such behavior is sufficient replacement (or complement) to more traditional forms of political participation. Rather, I argue that the increasing prevalence of socially conscious consumption, coupled with citizens’ tendency to *see* such behavior as a political act, merits serious attention from scholars of political communication, political behavior, and public opinion. Notably, only a handful of national public opinion surveys in the United States and Europe have bothered to ask respondents about their views on the political significance of their purchasing behavior – and, as my review of the literature has shown, findings from analyses using these overly generic measures are not always consistent with the larger body of research. If scholars are to take socially conscious consumption as seriously as the general public does, it is thus imperative for us ask more questions—and better questions—about this emergent form of non-traditional political behavior in national public opinion surveys.

Finally, my dissertation suggests that it is time for scholars, practitioners, and the public to take a long look at our affection for the American tradition of boycotting, and question whether or not there may be a more fruitful avenue for social change. While in some cases, boycotting successfully polices corporate behavior, it does little to improve the processes of global consumerism entwined with modern daily life. Yet as my data show, consumers are more than willing to offset the potentially higher costs of production for products that satisfy their moral druthers—and in fact, that they are even more likely to do so if you first remind them that such druthers exist. Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to study the response of institutions to consumer behavior such as that

demonstrated in this dissertation, my studies have clearly established that consumers are both “active” (independently motivated to buy socially conscious products) as well as “reactive” (responsive to normative appeals deployed by institutions). In other words, my data support the argument that socially conscious consumption is simultaneously “bottom-up” and “top-down.” Favoring the consumer carrot over the stick may not only feel better for consumers– it may also do more for our global society.

APPENDIX A

Classification of Journals and Studies

Economics:

- Agricultural and Resource Economics Review
- Agricultural Economics
- Choices
- Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization
- Journal of Public Economics
- Labor Studies
- Revista de Administração da Universidade de São Paulo
- The World Economy

Agriculture/Food Science:

- Appetite
- Applied Geography
- British Food Journal
- Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics
- Food Quality and Preference
- Food Policy
- European Review of Agricultural Economics
- Journal of Agricultural & Food Industrial Organization
- Journal of Food Products Marketing
- HortScience
- International Food and Agribusiness Management Review

Environment (includes Science, Management, and Economics):

- Business Strategy & the Environment
- Ecological Economics
- Environmental and Resource Economics
- Journal of Environmental Planning & Management

Communication

- Corporate Reputation Review
- Journal of Advertising
- Corporate Communications: An International Journal
- International Journal of Strategic Communication

Marketing:

- International Journal of Consumer Studies
- International Journal of Research in Marketing

- International Journal of Hospitality Marketing
- International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing
- International Marketing Review
- Journal of Consumer Affairs
- Journal of Consumer Marketing
- Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management
- Journal of Islamic Marketing
- Journal of Marketing
- Journal of Marketing Research
- Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing
- Journal of Product & Brand Management
- Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services
- International Journal of Bank Marketing
- Journal of Marketing Management
- Journal of Targeting
- Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science
- The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research
- International Journal of Consumer Studies
- Journal of Product & Brand Management

Business (Interdisciplinary):

- Journal of Business Ethics
- Journal of Business Research
- Journal of Leadership, Accountability, and Ethics

Psychology

- Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
- Journal of Economic Psychology
- The Psychological Record

Management:

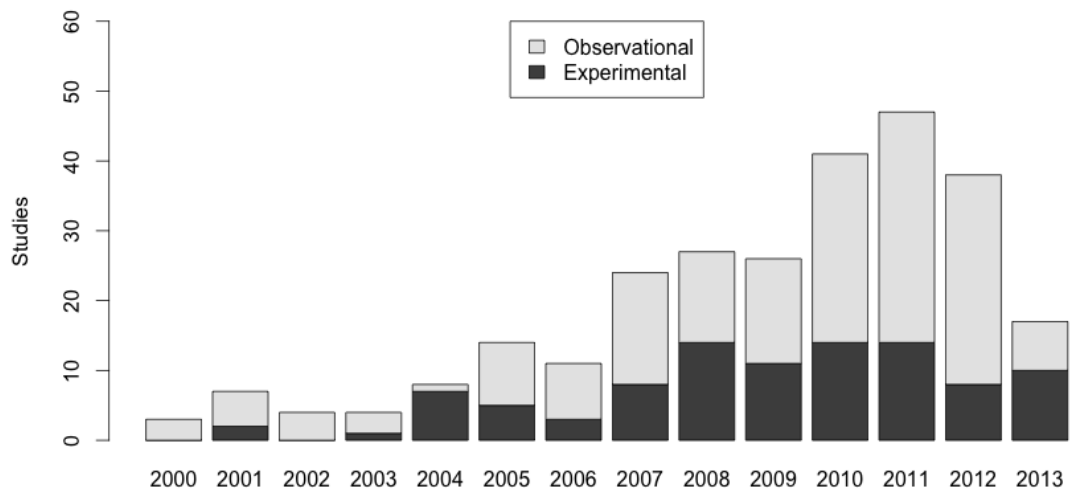
- Management Decision
- Management Science
- International Journal of Bank Science
- International Management Review
- International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management
- Journal of Service Management
- African Journal of Business Management
- International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management

- Journal of Product & Brand Management

Sociology

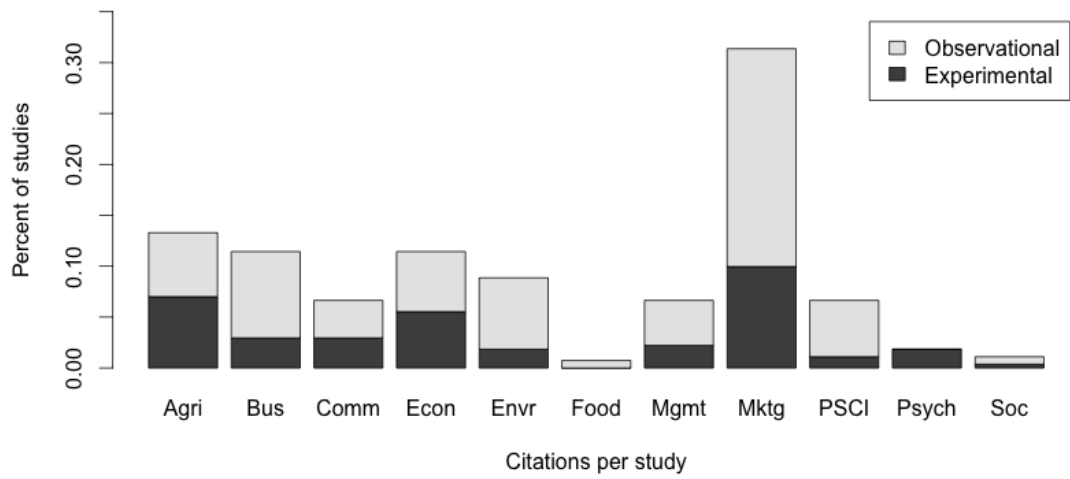
- Rural Sociology

FIGURE A1. Number of Studies by Year and Methodology (N=271)



Note. Data for 2013 were collected through June 2013. Observational studies include scanner data, cross-sectional surveys, and panel surveys. Experimental studies include between-subjects, within-subjects, and quasi-experiments as well as conjoint experiments.

FIGURE A2. Methodology by Field (N=271)



Note. Observational studies include scanner data, cross-sectional surveys, panel surveys, and conjoint analyses embedded in surveys. Experimental studies include between-subjects, within-subjects, and quasi-experiments.

TABLE A1. Studies Included in Review of Empirical Literature (Chapter 2)

Study	Citations/ Year	Method (O/E)	Field
Akehurst, Afonso, & Gonçalves (2012)	3	O	Management
Aktar (2013)	0	E	Agriculture
Al-Hyari, Alnsour, Al-Weshah, & Haffar (2012)	2	O	Marketing
Ali (2011)	0	O	Management
Ali & Wisniesk (2010)	0	O	Management
Angulo & Gil (2007)	0.4	O	Agriculture
Annunziata et al (2011)	0	O	Agriculture
Araña & León (2013)	1	E	Economics
Arnot et al (2006)	8.8	E	Business
Atkinson (2009)	0	E	Communication
Auger & Devinney (2007a)	14.2	E	Economics
Auger & Devinney (2007b)	10	E	Economics
Auger et al (2003)	21.6	E	Economics
Auger et al (2008)	5.5	E	Economics
Auger et al (2010)	2.5	E	Economics
Bae (2012)	0	O	Marketing
Baek (2010)	2.5	O	Political science
Basu & Hicks (2008)	5.8	E	Economics
Becchetti & Rosati (2007)	5	O	Economics
Behrens et al (2005)	25	E	Business
Bernard, Hustvedt, & Carroll (2013)	0	E	Economics
Binnekamp & Ingenbleek (2008)	1	E	Agriculture
Blumrodt, Bryson, & Flanagan (2012)	0	O	Marketing
Bondy & Talwar (2011)	0	O	Business
Borin, Lindsey-Mullikin, & Krishnan (2013)	0	E	Management

Bravo, Cordts, Schulze, & Spiller (2012)	2	O	Agriculture
Briggeman & Lusk (2011)	1	E	Agriculture
Bullock (2012)	0	O	Environmental
Carlsson et al (2010)	0	E	Environmental
Chakrabarti & Baisya (2001)	1.8	O	Marketing
Chan (2001)	12.4	O	Marketing
Chan & Lau (2000)	6.8	O	Marketing
Chang & Lusk (2009)	1.7	E	Agriculture
Chu & Lin (2013)	0	O	Communication
Chengyan Yue et al (2007)	0	E	Agriculture
Choi & Ng (2011)	0	E	Business
Choy (2012)	0	O	Management
Christensen (2011)	0	O	Political science
Cranfield et al (2010)	55.5	O	Economics
D'Astous & Mathieu (2008)	1.3	O	Marketing
Datta (2011)	0	O	Economics
De Barcellos et al (2011)	3	E	Marketing
De Magistris & Gracia (2008)	7	O	Agriculture
DeMarree, Briñol, & Petty (2012)	1	E	Social psych
De Moura, Nogueira, & Gouvêa (2012)	0	O	Agriculture
De Pelsmaker et al (2006)	5.7	O	Economics
De Pelsmaker et al (2005a)	7	O, E	Economics
De Pelsmaker et al (2005b)	30.6	O, E	Economics
De Pelsmaker & Janssens (2007)	8.2	O	Economics
Dentoni et al (2009)	2.7	E	Economics
Derks (2011)	0	E	Marketing
Diamantopolous et al (2003)	20.7	O	Business
Dickson (2001)	5.1	E	Communication
Didier & Lucie (2008)	4	E	Marketing
Dimitri & Dettmann (2012)	2	O	Agriculture

do Paço et al (2009)	1.3	O	Environmental
do Paço & Raposo (2010)	0.5	E	Marketing
Dodd (2012)	0	O	Communication
Dolnicar & Pomeroy (2007)	0	O	Marketing
Dong et al (2011)	0	O	Environmental
Doran (2009)	9.7	O	Business
Doran (2010)	0.3	O	Business
Doran & Natale (2010)	2	O	Business
D'Souza et al (2006)	4.8	O	Communication
Echegaray (2012)	0	O	Political science
Ek & Soderholm (2008)	7.5	E	Environmental
El-Bassiouny, Taher, & Abou-Aish	2	O	Marketing
Elfenbein, Fisman & McManus (2009)	3	E	Economics
Fandos Roig, Guillén, Coll, & Saumell (2013)	0	O	Marketing
Feldman & Vasquez-Parraga (2013)	0	E	Marketing
Ferreira et al (2010)	0	E	Economics
Fisher, Bashyal, & Bachman (2012)	0	O	Marketing
Follows & Jobber (2000)	10.4	O	Marketing
Fraj & Martinez (2007)	8.2	O	Marketing
Gerpott & Mahmudova (2010)	1.5	O	Marketing
Gneezy et al (2010)	10	E	Economics
Gotlieb & Wells (2012)	4	O	Communication
Gotlieb (2012)	0	E	Communication
Gottschalk & Leistner (2013)	3	O	Marketing
Göttsche (2011)	0	O	Business
Grankvist et al (2007)	3.6	E	Agriculture
Grankvist et al (2007)	2	E	Agriculture
Griskevicius et al (2010)	26.5	O	Social psych
Groza et al (2011)	2	E	Business
Gupta & Ogden (2009)	6.3	O	Marketing

Ha-Brookshire & Norum (2011)	2	O	Marketing
Hainsmueller et al (2011)	1	E	Political science
Halapete et al (2009)	2.7	O	Agriculture
Halkier & Holm (2008)	1.8	O	Marketing
Han & Kim (2010)	2.7	O	Business
Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez (n.d.)	0	O	Business
Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2008)	2	E	Environmental
Hertel et al (2009)	2	O	Political science
Hiscox & Smyth (2006)	7.7	E	Political science
Hoek & Gendall (2008)	1.8	E	Marketing
Hoffmann (2013)	0	O	Marketing
Honkanen et al (2006)	9.2	O	Marketing
Hooghe & Marien (2011)	0	O	Political science
Hoogland et al (2005)	3.6	E	Agriculture
Hou et al (2008)	1.3	O	Marketing
Howard & Allen (2010)	5	E	Sociology
Hustinx et al (2011)	0	O	Political science
Hustvedt (2006)	1.3	O	Agriculture
Hustvedt, Peterson & Chen (2008)	2.8	O	Agriculture
Hustveldt & Bernard (2010)	0.5	E	Economics
Hyvönen, Saastamoinen, Hongisto, Kallio, & Södergaard	0	O	Marketing
Imkamp (2000)	2.4	O	Economics
Jacobsen (2010)	0	O	Economics
Jacobsen (2010)	0	O	Economics
Jacobsen (2010)	0	O	Economics
Jansen et al (2011)	1	O	Business
Jansson (2011)	3	O	Environmental
Jansson et al (2010)	1.3	O	Marketing
Jansson et al	3.5	O	Marketing
Jia (2010)	0	O	Communication

Junaedi (2007)	0.6	O	Business
Juwaheer (2005)	0	O	Management
Kahn (2007)	15.6	O	Environmental
Kang et al (n.d.)	0	O	Business
Keum et al. (2004)	5.8	O	Political science
Kidwell, Farmer, & Hardesty (2013)	0	E	Marketing
E. E. K. Kim, Kang, & Mattila (2012)	5	E	Marketing
Kim & Choi (2005)	5.3	O	Marketing
Kim & Chung (2011)	0	O	Marketing
Kim, Lee & Park	1	O	Business
Kim & Park (2013)	0	O	Agriculture
Koller, Floh, Zauner (2011)	0	O	Marketing
Koos	3	O	Marketing
Kriwy & Mecking (2012)	6	O	Marketing
Kronrod, Grinstein, & Wathieu (2012)	13	E	Marketing
Krystallis et al (2008)	2.8	O	Marketing
La Ferle et al (2011)	0	E	Business
Krystallis, Vassallo, & Chryssohoidis (2012)	1	O	Management
Langen (2011)	0	E	Agriculture
Laroche et al (2001)	29.3	O	Marketing
Larue et al (2004)	6.5	E	Agriculture
Larue et al (2004)	6.5	E	Agriculture
Lee (2009)	3.7	O	Marketing
R. Lee (2009)	0	E	Communication
R. Lee & Lee (2013)	0	O	Marketing
Lee & Shin (2010)	4	O	Communication
Leszczyc & Rothkopf (2010)	8	E	Management
Lichtenstein, Drumwright & Braig (2004)	33.8	E	Marketing
Lii & Lee (2012)	17	E	Business
Lindenmeier, Tscheulin, & Drevs (2012)	0	O	Agriculture

Littrell et al	3.6	O	Marketing
Lockie et al (2002)	13.7	O	Sociology
Long & Murray (2013)	0	O	Agriculture
Loureiro & Lotade (2005)	20.6	O	Economics
Manaktola & Jauhari (2007)	10.8	O	Business
Marien et al (2010)	9.5	O	Political science
Marin, Ruizm & Rubio (2009)	15.3	O	Business
Marquina (2010)	0	E	Business
Marquina & Morales (2012)	0	E	Marketing
Mattila & Hanks (2012)	0	E	Management
Mather et al (2005)	1.3	E	Marketing
McDonald & Oates (2006)	4.8	O	Environmental
McEachern et al (2007)	2.4	O	Marketing
McManus & Bennet (2010)	1.5	E	Economics
Meuller & Remaud (n.d.)	0	E	Marketing
Michaelidou & Hassan (2008)	9.3	O	Marketing
Michaud & Llrena (2011)	0	E	Environmental
Mills & Schleich (2010)	4	O	Environmental
Mohr & Webb (2005)	26.1	E	Marketing
Molina-Murillo (2007)	0	E	Management
Moon et al (2002)	7.9	O	Agriculture
Mostafa (2007)	5	O	Marketing
Mostafa (2007)	8	O	Marketing
Mwiti & Nyogesa (n.d.)	0	O	Environmental
Nan & Heo (2007)	13.8	E	Communication
Neilson (2010)	2.5	O	Marketing
Neilson & Paxton (2010)	2	O	Business
Newman & Bartels (2010)	0	O	Political science
Nijssen & Douglas (2008)	0.3	O	Marketing
Nilsson (2008)	6	O	Business

Nilsson (2009)	5.7	O	Marketing
Nilsson et al (2010)	0.5	O	Marketing
Noiseux & Hostetler (2010)	1.5	O	Environmental
Oliver & Lee (2010)	1.5	O	Marketing
Olson (2013)	4	E	Marketing
Oppewal et al (2006)	3.7	E	Marketing
Ozaki (2011)	10	O	Environmental
Ozcaglar-Toulouse, Shiu & Shaw (2006)	8.3	O	Marketing
Park & Ha (2012)	1	O	Management
Paul & Rana (2012)	2	O	Marketing
Pandya & Urbatsch (2010)	0	O	Political science
Pedregal & Ozcaglar-Toulouse (2011)	0	O	Marketing
Pfau et al (2008)	2.5	E	Communication
Pickett-Baker & Ozaki (2008)	11.8	O	Marketing
Poelman et al (2008)	5.5	E	Agriculture
Pomering & Dolnicar (2009)	10	O	Business
Prasad et al (2004)	4.4	E	Economics
Rahbar & Wahid (2010)	0.5	O	Management
Rahim et al (2011)	0	O	Management
Ramasamy et al (2010)	1	O	Business
Ramirez (2010)	0	E	Marketing
Rezai, Teng, Mohamed, & Shamsudin (2012)	1	O	Management
Rode et al (2008)	5.8	E	Economics
Roe et al (2001)	15.5	O	Environmental
Rotaris & Danielis (2011)	0	E	Agriculture
Rousu & Corrigan (2008)	0.3	E	Agriculture
Rowlands et al (2002)	4	O	Marketing
Rui et al (2011)	0	O	Environmental
Ruiz De Maya, Lopez-Lopez & Munuera (2011)	0	O	Environmental
Safi & Ramay (Safi & Ramay, 2013)3	0	O	Management

Sage & Goldberger (2012)	0	O	Agriculture
Salami & Lätteenmäki (2009)	0	O	Marketing
Sammer & Wüstenhagen (2006)	12.5	E	Environmental
Sandberg & Nilsson (2011)	1	O	Economics
Sandovici & Davis (2010)	0	O	Sociology
Sangkumchaliang & Huang (2012)	4	O	Agriculture
Sanjuán et al (2003)	2.9	O	Marketing
Scruggs et al (2011)	1	O	Business
Sen & Bhattacharya (2001)	77	E	Marketing
Seyfang (2008)	3.5	O	Environmental
Shah et al (2007)	9	O	Political science
Shaw & Shiu (2002)	4.7	O	Marketing
Shi (2012)	0	O	Economics
Shifren (2013)	0	E	Marketing
Smed (2012)	0	O	Economics
Smed, Andersen, Kærgaard, & Daugbjerg (2013)	0	O	Marketing
Smith (2011)	0	O	Business
Sonnenberg et al (2011)	0	O	Marketing
Stobbelaar et al (2007)	2.4	O	Marketing
Stoleru, Munteanu, & Jitareanu (2012)	0	O	Agriculture
Stolle et al. (2005)	28.1	O	Political science
Stratton & Werner (2013)	0	E	Psychology
Stromsnes (2005)	1.1	O	Political science
Tanner & Kast (2003)	10.3	O	Marketing
Tian, Wang & Yang (2011)	1	O	Business
Tobler et al (2011)	0	O	Food science
Ureña et al (2008)	4.5	O	Marketing
van Birgelen, Semejin & Keicher (2009)	3	O	Environmental
Van Doorn & Verhoef (2011)	0	E	Marketing
Van Kempen et al (2009)	3	E	Environmental

Van Loo et al (2011)	0	E	Agriculture
Vassilikopoulou, Siomkos & Mylonakis (2005)	1	O	Business
Veluri (2012)	0	O	Management
Wagner et al (2009)	15.7	E	Marketing
Wang, Gabay, & Shah (2012)	1	O	Communication
Ward & De Vreese (2011)	2	O	Communication
Webb, Mohr & Harris (2008)	13	O	Business
Welsch & Kuhling (2009)	3.3	E	Environmental
Wheale & Hinton (2007)	2.4	O	Environmental
Xu (2010)	0	O	Environmental
Yang & Hu (2011)	0	O	Agriculture
Yates (2011)	0	O	Political science
Zander & Hamm (2010)	9	O	Food science
Zander et al. (2013)	0	O	Agriculture

APPENDIX B

Survey Items Included in Pre-test 1

Potential Measures Tapping Animal Rights, Labor Conditions, and Outsourcing

- Pollution of drinking water or rivers, lakes, and reservoirs
- Contamination of soil and water by toxic waste
- Air pollution and smog
- Genetically modified organisms found in food or drinks
- Pesticide residues in fruits, vegetables or cereals
- Pollutants (like mercury or dioxins) or residues (like antibiotics or hormones) in meat
- Unfair compensation of workers in the third world
- Failing to pay a fair price to workers in the third world for products they export to the United States
- The welfare of farmed animals
- The welfare of animals used for product research
- Poor working conditions (such as “sweatshops”)
- Exploitative labor practices
- Conditions for small businesses in the United States
- Conditions for small businesses outside of the United States
- The state of local businesses in your community, no matter their size
- The effect of importing of foreign products on jobs in your community
- The state of businesses in the United States, no matter their size
- The effect of importing of foreign products on jobs in the United States
- The effect of free trade agreements (like the North American Free Trade Agreement or the World Trade Organization) on jobs in the United States

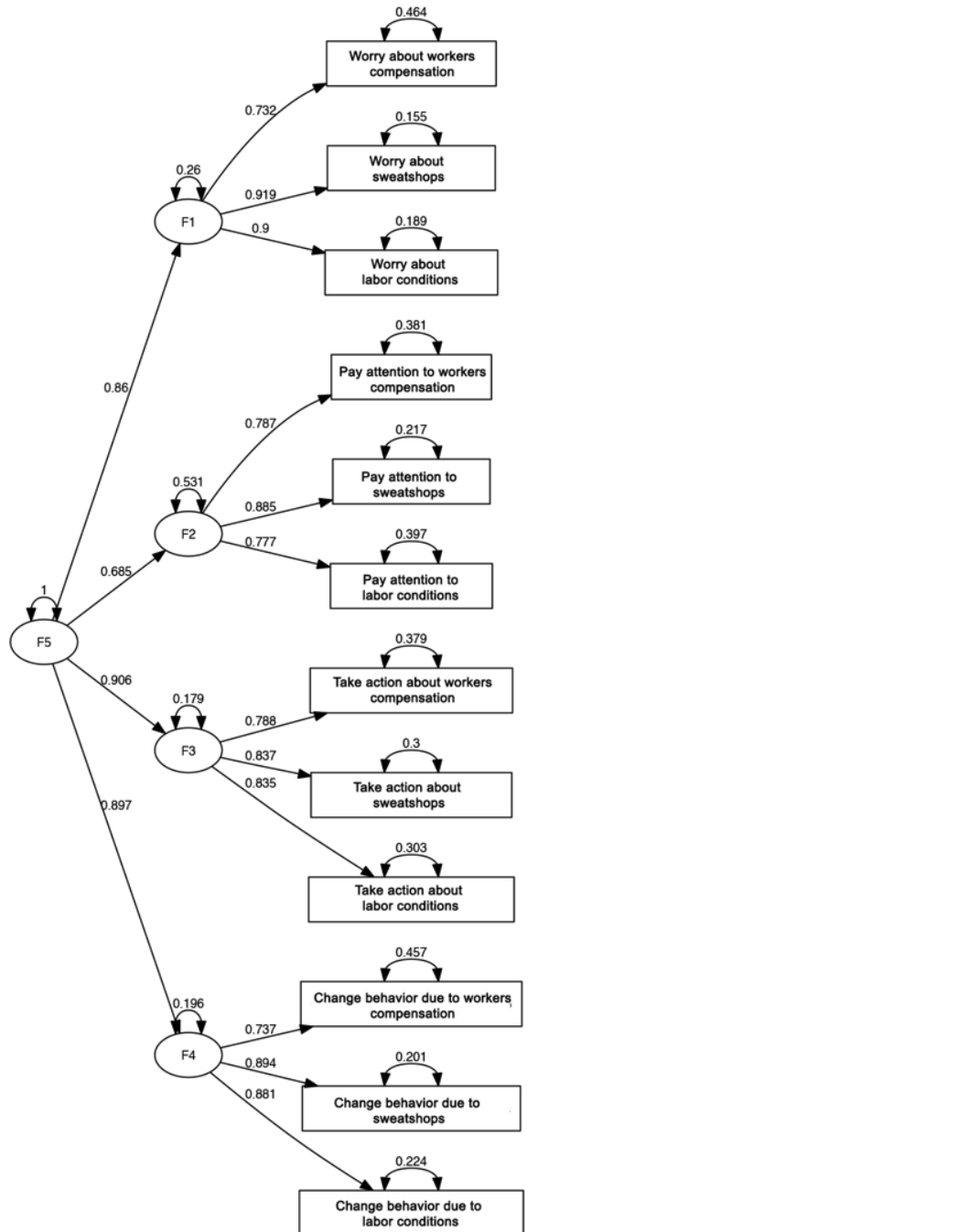
Potential Measures Tapping Animal Rights, Labor Conditions, and Outsourcing

- Conditions for *small* businesses in the United States
- Conditions for *small* businesses outside of the United States
- The effect of government policies or regulation on small business in the United States
- The effect of importing of foreign products on jobs in the United States
- The effect of importing of foreign products on jobs in the United States
- The effect of government policies or regulation on small businesses outside of the United States
- The effect of large corporations on small businesses, both in the U.S. and abroad
- The effect of free trade agreements (like the North American Free Trade Agreement or the World Trade Organization) on jobs in the United States

APPENDIX C

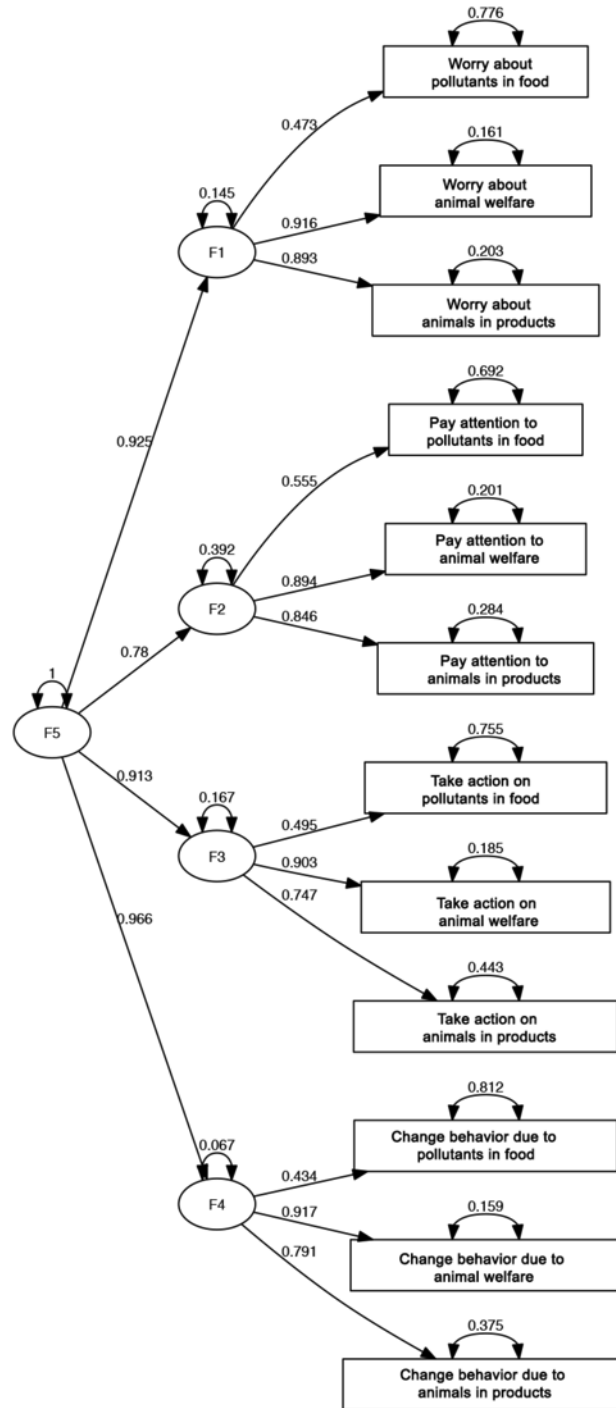
Full Measurement Models of IIPM Indicators

FIGURE C1. Indicators of Labor Conditions IIPM



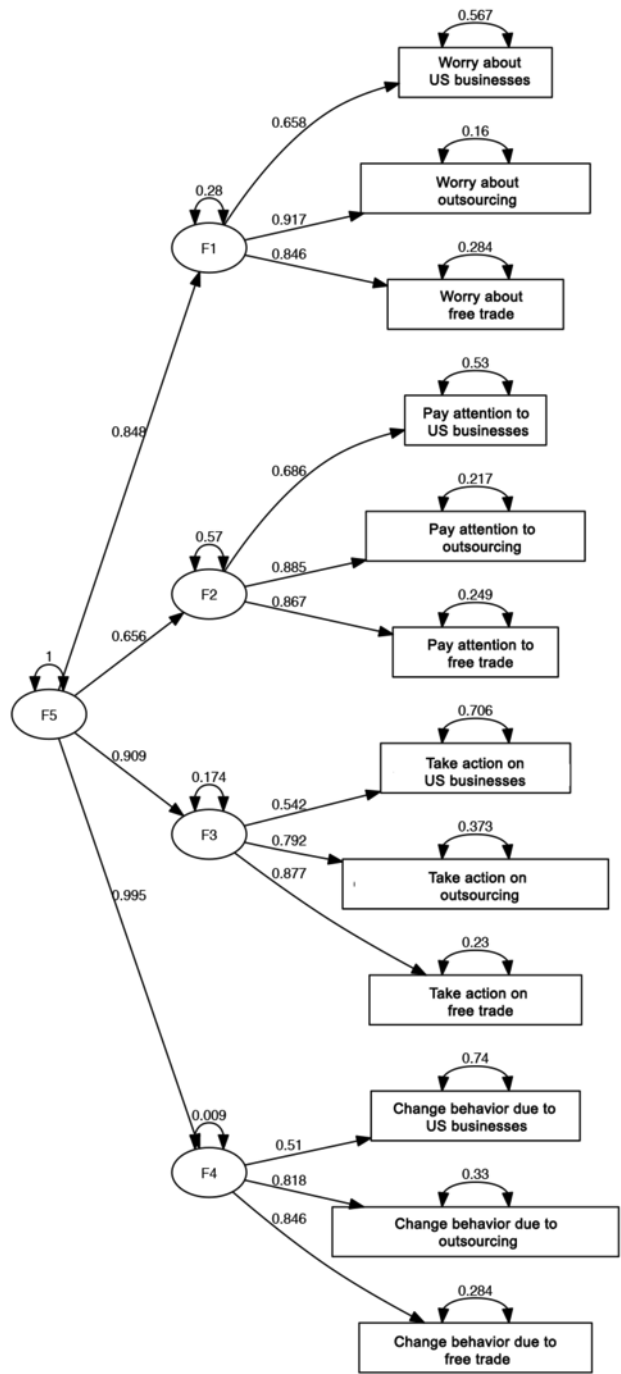
Note. Overall goodness-of-fit indices are not presented, as the goal of this specific exercise was not to develop a good-fitting measurement model but to identify which measures and factors were most strongly related.

FIGURE C2. Indicators of Animal Rights IIPM



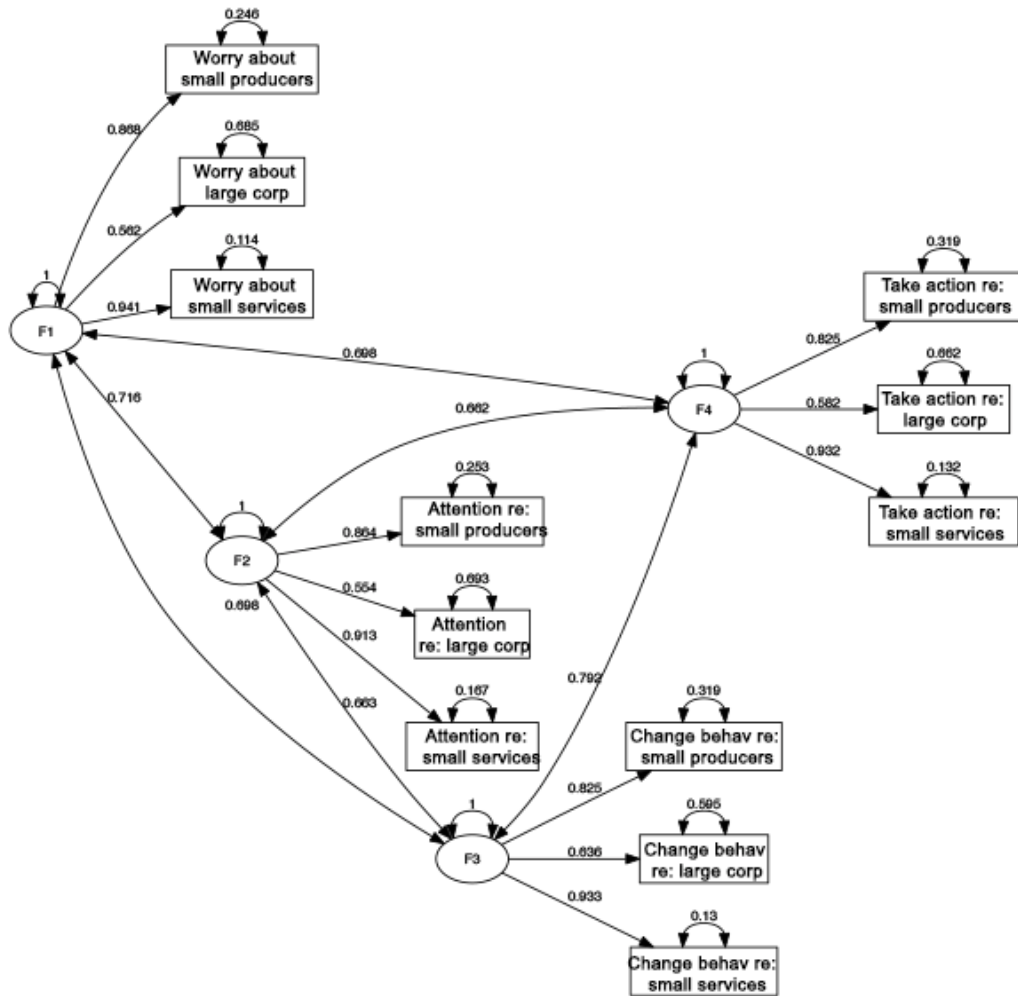
Note. Overall goodness-of-fit indices are not presented, as the goal of this exercise was not to develop a good-fitting measurement model but to identify which measures and factors were most strongly related.

FIGURE C3. Indicators of Outsourcing IIPM



Note. Overall goodness-of-fit indices are not presented, as the goal of this specific exercise was not to develop a good-fitting measurement model but to identify which measures and factors were most strongly related.

FIGURE C4. Indicators of Small Business IIPM



Note. Overall goodness-of-fit indices are not presented, as the goal of this specific exercise was not to develop a good-fitting measurement model but to identify which measures and factors were most strongly related.

APPENDIX D.

The Demographic Makeup of Study Participants

TABLE D1. Sample Demographics

	Pre-test 1	Study 1	Study 2
Age (<i>M</i> , <i>SD</i>)	33.652 (12.173)	34.016 (11.915)	3.673 (12.277)
Hispanic (=1)	1.8%	6.0%	7.0%
White	81.9%	8.3%	78.9%
Black	5.1%	8.3%	7.0%
Asian	6.5%	7.6%	9.4%
Income (est. 000's)	49.945	43.793	45.971
Education			
Less than HS	1.4%	1%	.5%
HS	1.1%	14.6%	1.8%
Some college	37.7%	35.6%	38.9%
College	41.3%	41.3%	4.9%
Graduate degree	9.4%	7.6%	8.8%
Ideology (1-7)			
Very liberal	12.3%	1.2%	1.8%
Liberal	23.2%	27.9%	29.7%
Slightly liberal	16.7%	21.9%	18.9%
Middle of the road	19.6%	21.6%	19.5%
Slightly conservative	1.1%	8.3%	11.1%
Conservative	12.3%	7.9%	7.5%
Very conservative	5.8%	2.2%	2.4%
Partisanship			
Strong Dem	18.8%	23.5%	2.3%
Dem	22.5%	24.1%	27.1%
Leans Dem	11.6%	12.7%	13.7%
Independent	2.3%	21.0%	17.7%
Leans GOP	5.8%	5.1%	6.9%
GOP	1.1%	7.3%	8.8%
Strong GOP	1.9%	6.3%	5.5%

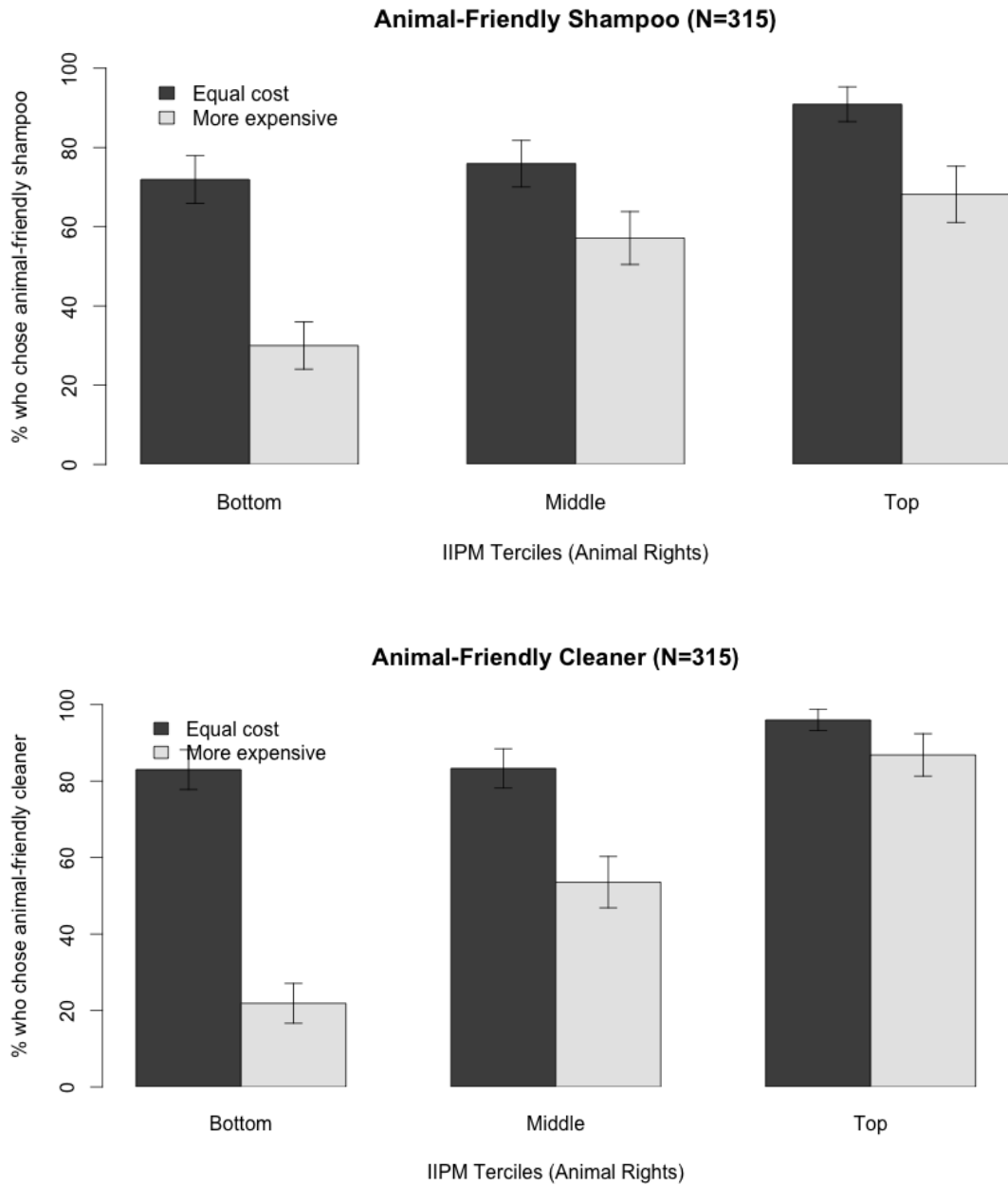
APPENDIX E.

Descriptive Statistics from Study 1

TABLE E1. Socially Conscious Consumption by Product, IIPM Tercile, and Cost

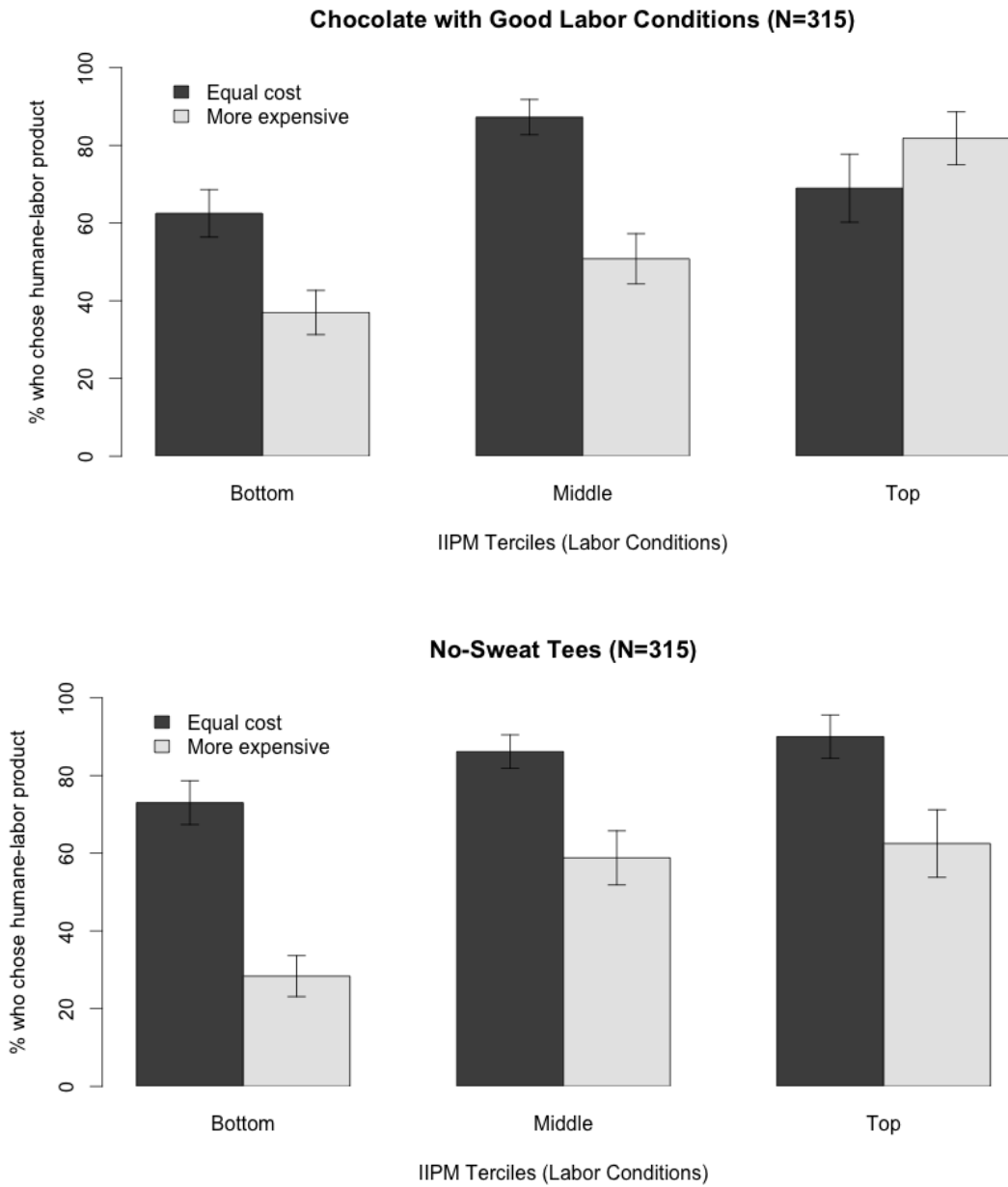
<i>Animal rights</i>							
Shampoo				Household cleaner			
Tercile	Cost	M (SD)	n	Tercile	Cost	M (SD)	n
Bottom	Equal	.719 (.453)	57	Bottom	Equal	.830 (.379)	53
Middle	Equal	.759 (.432)	54	Middle	Equal	.833 (.376)	54
Top	Equal	.909 (.291)	44	Top	Equal	.960 (.198)	50
Bottom	Greater	.300 (.462)	60	Bottom	Greater	.219 (.417)	64
Middle	Greater	.571 (.499)	56	Middle	Greater	.536 (.503)	56
Top	Greater	.682 (.471)	44	Top	Greater	.868 (.343)	38
<i>Labor conditions</i>							
Chocolate				T-shirts			
Tercile	Cost	M (SD)	n	Tercile	Cost	M (SD)	n
Bottom	Equal	.625 (.488)	64	Bottom	Equal	.730 (.447)	63
Middle	Equal	.873 (.336)	55	Middle	Equal	.862 (.348)	65
Top	Equal	.690 (.471)	29	Top	Equal	.900 (.305)	30
Bottom	Greater	.370 (.486)	73	Bottom	Greater	.284 (.454)	74
Middle	Greater	.508 (.504)	61	Middle	Greater	.588 (.497)	51
Top	Greater	.818 (.392)	33	Top	Greater	.625 (.492)	32
<i>Outsourcing</i>							
Batteries				Coffee			
Tercile	Cost	M (SD)	n	Tercile	Cost	M (SD)	n
Bottom	Equal	.522 (.503)	67	Bottom	Equal	.622 (.488)	74
Middle	Equal	.810 (.397)	42	Middle	Equal	.600 (.497)	35
Top	Equal	.767 (.427)	43	Top	Equal	.571 (.499)	56
Bottom	Greater	.208 (.408)	77	Bottom	Greater	.186 (.392)	70
Middle	Greater	.353 (.485)	34	Middle	Greater	.512 (.506)	41
Top	Greater	.442 (.502)	52	Top	Greater	.513 (.506)	39
<i>Small business</i>							
Jelly				Soap			
Tercile	Cost	M (SD)	n	Tercile	Cost	M (SD)	n
Bottom	Equal	.810 (.395)	58	Bottom	Equal	.800 (.403)	70
Middle	Equal	.810 (.396)	63	Middle	Equal	.857 (.353)	63
Top	Equal	.800 (.406)	35	Top	Equal	.944 (.232)	36
Bottom	Greater	.344 (.479)	61	Bottom	Greater	.388 (.492)	49
Middle	Greater	.500 (.505)	56	Middle	Greater	.500 (.505)	56

Top Greater .571 (.501) 42 Top Greater .415 (.499) 41
FIGURE E1. Animal-Friendly Product Choices by Cost and IIPM Tercile



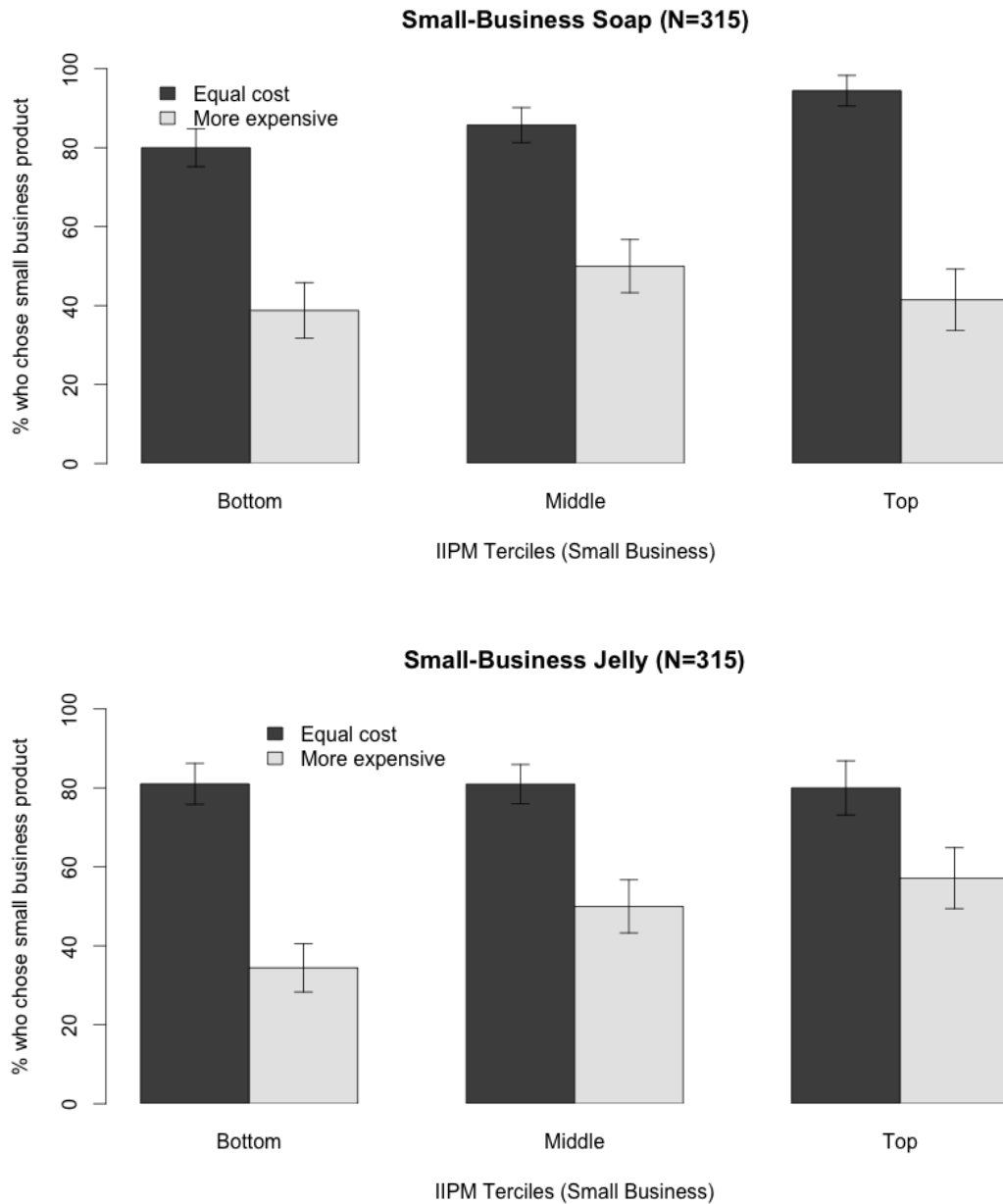
Note. The ranges for the IIPM scores for animal rights by tercile were as follows: low (0-5); medium (6-9); high (10-12).

FIGURE E2. “No Sweat” Product Choices by Cost and IIPM Tercile



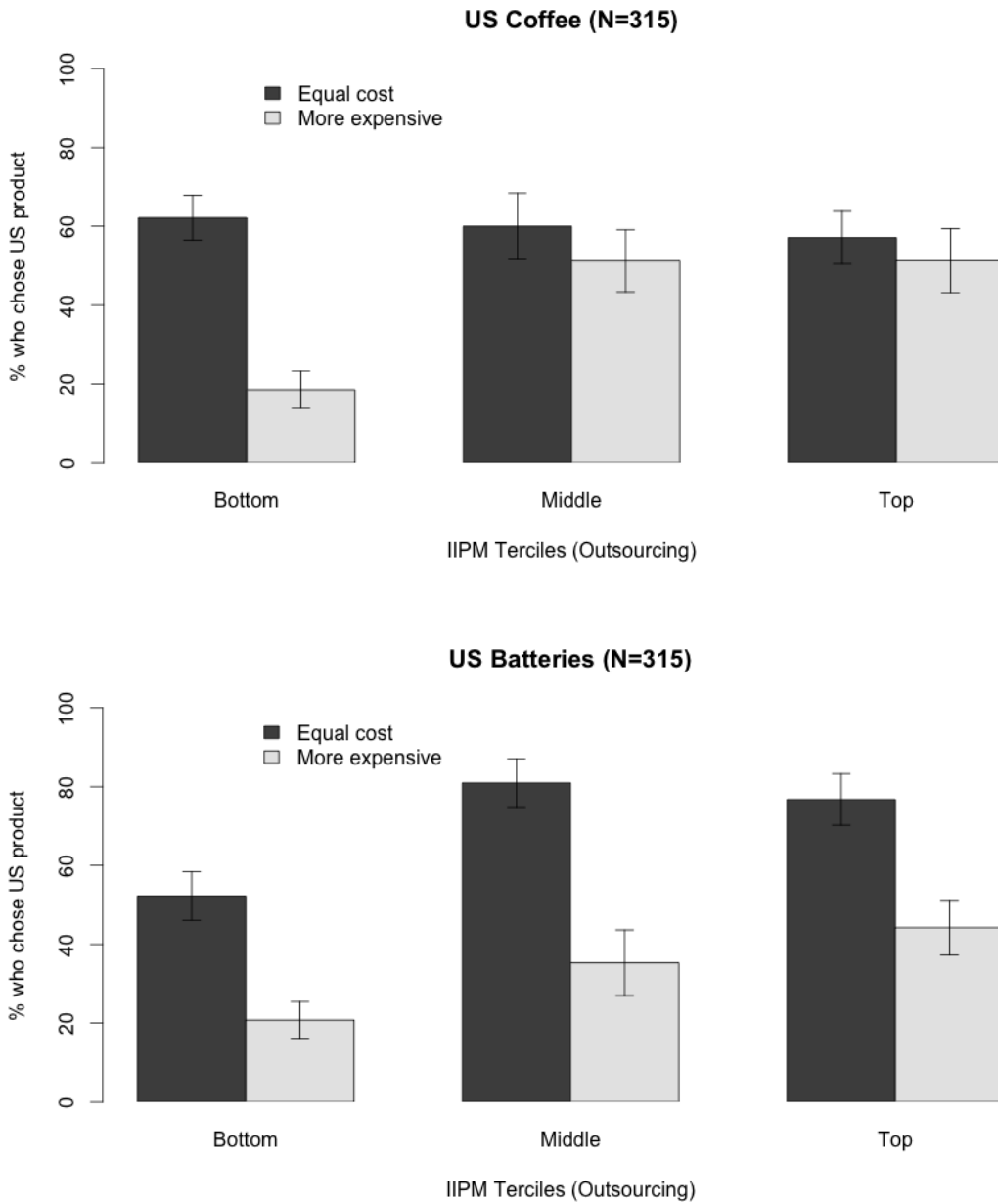
Note. The ranges for the IIPM scores for labor conditions by tercile were as follows: low (0-7); medium (8-10); high (11-12).

FIGURE E3. Small Business Product Choices by Cost and IIPM Tercile



Note. The ranges for the IIPM scores for small business by tercile were as follows: low (0-4); medium (5-7); high (8-12).

FIGURE E4. “Made in the USA” Product Choices by Cost and IIPM Tercile



Note. The ranges for the IIPM scores for small business by tercile were as follows: low (0-4); medium (5-6); high (7-12).

APPENDIX F.

Robustness Check of IIPM's Predictive Power Within Individuals

TABLE F1. Mismatching IIPM Values and Product Choice

Product	Correct IIPM	Mismatched IIPM
Batteries	Outsourcing	Labor conditions
Chocolate	Labor conditions	Animal rights
Cleaner	Animal rights	Outsourcing
Coffee	Outsourcing	Small business
Jelly	Small business	Labor conditions
Shampoo	Animal rights	Small business
Soap	Small business	Animal rights
T-shirts	Labor conditions	Outsourcing

Note. The Pearson's correlation between IIPM and Mismatch IIPM was .430***.

TABLE F2. Predicting the Effects of Mismatched IIPM Values on Socially Conscious Consumption

Model 1	
<i>Random effects</i>	
	Variance (SD)
Respondent ID (Intercept, n=315)	1.592 (1.262)
Time (Intercept, n=8)	.045 (.212)
<i>Fixed effects</i>	
	<i>b</i> (SE)
Mismatched IIPM	-.001 (.020)
Greater cost (=1)	-1.926*** (.107)
IIPM * Greater cost	
Product	
Chocolate (=1)	.794*** (.194)
Cleaner (=1)	1.189*** (.205)
Coffee (=1)	-.073 (.190)
Jelly (=1)	.864*** (.194)
Shampoo (=1)	.939*** (.200)
Soap (=1)	.987*** (.197)
T-shirts (=1)	.901*** (.204)
(Intercept)	.794*** (.194)

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Note. Reference group for products is “batteries.” Coefficient estimates were generated using the “lme4” package in R.

APPENDIX G.

Descriptive Statistics from Study 2

TABLE G1. Socially Conscious Consumption of Animal-Friendly Products by Product, IIPM, and Cost

IIPM	Cost	Appeal	<i>M</i>	SD	<i>n</i>
High IIPM	Greater	No norm	.714	.453	220
Low IIPM	Greater	No norm	.488	.501	205
High IIPM	Equal	No norm	.829	.378	216
Low IIPM	Equal	No norm	.632	.484	209
High IIPM	Greater	Issue public	.785	.412	195
Low IIPM	Greater	Issue public	.445	.498	211
High IIPM	Equal	Issue public	.883	.322	206
Low IIPM	Equal	Issue public	.757	.430	218
High IIPM	Greater	Provincial	.744	.437	254
Low IIPM	Greater	Provincial	.394	.490	226
High IIPM	Equal	Provincial	.836	.371	232
Low IIPM	Equal	Provincial	.600	.491	185

Note. Based on the experiment's design, group means of IIPM values are only presented for those individuals blocked to condition.

**TABLE G2. Robustness Check of Significant Differences
Between Joint Effect of Experimental and Non-Experimental
Factors**

	Model 1
<i>Random effects</i>	
	Variance (SD)
Respondent ID (Intercept, n=315)	1.946 (1.395)
Time (Intercept, n=8)	.0595 (.243)
Groups	1327
Observations	2577
<i>Fixed effects</i>	
	<i>b</i> (SE)
No norm * Low IIPM * Equal cost	-1.358*** (.321)
Issue public * Low IIPM * Equal cost	-.731* (.341)
Provincial* Low IIPM * Equal cost	-1.08*** (.316)
No norm * Low IIPM * Higher cost	-2.676*** (.315)
Issue public * Low IIPM * Higher cost	-2.779*** (.314)
Provincial * Low IIPM * Higher cost	-3.051*** (.313)
No norm * High IIPM * Equal cost	-.418 (.339)
Provincial * High IIPM * Higher cost	-.274 (.338)
No norm * High IIPM * Higher cost	-1.845*** (.307)
Issue public * High IIPM * Higher cost	-.947** (.32)
Provincial * High IIPM * Higher cost	-1.962*** (.315)
(Intercept)	2.558*** (.286)

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Note. Reference group is “Issue public norm * High IIPM * Equal cost”.
Coefficient estimates were generated using the “lme4” package in R.

TABLE G3. Socially Conscious Consumption of Animal-Friendly Products by Product, IIPM Tercile, and Cost

IIPM	Cost	Appeal	<u>Chose shampoo</u>		<u>Chose cleaner</u>	
			<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>n</i>
Low IIPM	Greater	No norm	.438 (.504)	32	.333 (.479)	30
High IIPM	Greater	No norm	.808 (.402)	26	.735 (.448)	34
Low IIPM	Equal	No norm	.667 (.479)	33	.769 (.43)	26
High IIPM	Equal	No norm	.966 (.186)	29	.944 (.236)	18
Low IIPM	Greater	Issue public	.241 (.435)	29	.343 (.482)	35
High IIPM	Greater	Issue public	.909 (.292)	33	.833 (.381)	24
Low IIPM	Equal	Issue public	.824 (.387)	34	.844 (.369)	32
High IIPM	Equal	Issue public	.879 (.331)	33	1.000 (.000)	21
Low IIPM	Greater	Provincial	.400 (.498)	30	.333 (.478)	39
High IIPM	Greater	Provincial	.842 (.375)	19	.739 (.449)	23
Low IIPM	Equal	Provincial	.762 (.431)	42	.842 (.37)	38
High IIPM	Equal	Provincial	.999 (.149)	22	.977 (.152)	43

Note. Based on the experiment's design, group means of IIPM values are only presented for those individuals blocked to condition.

TABLE G4. Socially Conscious Consumption of Products with Humane Labor by Product, IIPM Tercile, and Cost

IIPM	Cost	Appeal	<u>Chose chocolate</u>		<u>Chose T-shirts</u>	
			<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>n</i>
Low IIPM	Greater	No norm	.500 (.509)	30	.333 (.483)	21
High IIPM	Greater	No norm	.63 (.492)	27	.655 (.484)	29
Low IIPM	Equal	No norm	.885 (.326)	26	.733 (.45)	30
High IIPM	Equal	No norm	.75 (.44)	32	.821 (.389)	39
Low IIPM	Greater	Issue public	.500 (.511)	24	.517 (.509)	29
High IIPM	Greater	Issue public	.774 (.425)	31	.743 (.443)	35
Low IIPM	Equal	Issue public	.917 (.289)	12	.76 (.436)	25
High IIPM	Equal	Issue public	.828 (.384)	29	.900 (.305)	30
Low IIPM	Greater	Provincial	.516 (.508)	31	.478 (.511)	23
High IIPM	Greater	Provincial	.577 (.504)	26	.679 (.476)	28
Low IIPM	Equal	Provincial	.730 (.45)	37	.688 (.471)	32
High IIPM	Equal	Provincial	.762 (.431)	42	.808 (.402)	26

Note. Based on the experiment's design, group means of IIPM values are only presented for those individuals blocked to condition.

TABLE G5. Socially Conscious Consumption of “Made in the USA” Products by Product, IIPM Tercile, and Cost

IIPM	Cost	Appeal	<u>Chose coffee</u>		<u>Chose batteries</u>	
			<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>n</i>
Low IIPM	Greater	No norm	.321 (.476)	28	.821 (.39)	28
High IIPM	Greater	No norm	.515 (.508)	33	.938 (.25)	16
Low IIPM	Equal	No norm	.464 (.508)	28	.607 (.497)	28
High IIPM	Equal	No norm	.556 (.506)	27	.778 (.428)	18
Low IIPM	Greater	Issue public	.531 (.507)	32	.32 (.476)	25
High IIPM	Greater	Issue public	.739 (.449)	23	.625 (.492)	32
Low IIPM	Equal	Issue public	.735 (.448)	34	.625 (.495)	24
High IIPM	Equal	Issue public	.783 (.422)	23	.833 (.381)	24
Low IIPM	Greater	Provincial	.308 (.471)	26	.387 (.495)	31
High IIPM	Greater	Provincial	.55 (.51)	20	.348 (.487)	23
Low IIPM	Equal	Provincial	.625 (.495)	24	.611 (.494)	36
High IIPM	Equal	Provincial	.667 (.483)	21	.656 (.483)	32

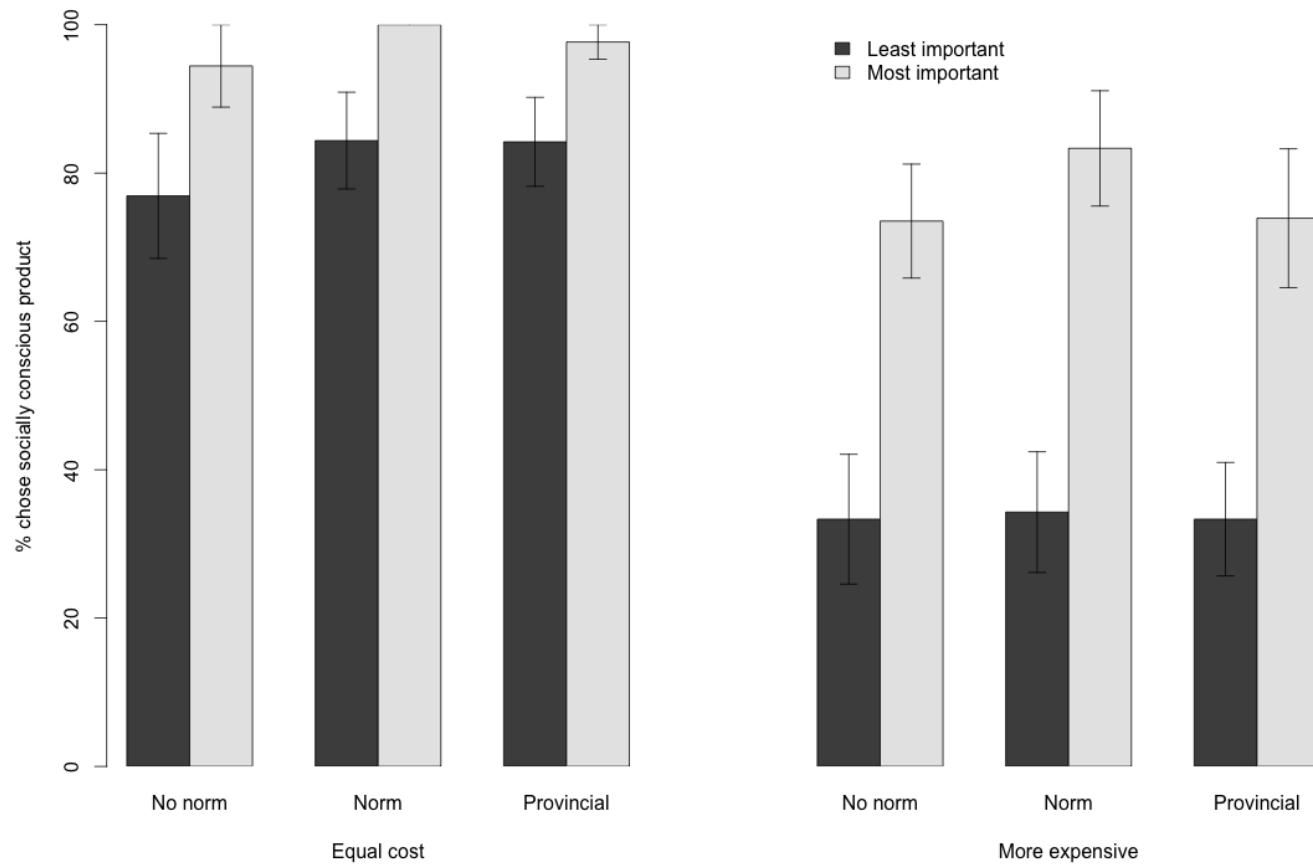
Note. Based on the experiment’s design, group means of IIPM values are only presented for those individuals blocked to condition.

TABLE G6. Socially Conscious Consumption of Small Business Products by Product, IIPM Tercile, and Cost

IIPM	Cost	Appeal	<u>Chose jelly</u>		<u>Chose soap</u>	
			<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i> (SD)	<i>n</i>
Low IIPM	Greater	No norm	.538 (.508)	26	.625 (.500)	16
High IIPM	Greater	No norm	.520 (.510)	25	.370 (.492)	27
Low IIPM	Equal	No norm	.742 (.445)	31	.815 (.396)	27
High IIPM	Equal	No norm	.938 (.246)	32	.846 (.368)	26
Low IIPM	Greater	Issue public	.682 (.477)	22	.545 (.51)	22
High IIPM	Greater	Issue public	.72 (.458)	25	.652 (.487)	23
Low IIPM	Equal	Issue public	.842 (.375)	19	.852 (.362)	27
High IIPM	Equal	Issue public	.929 (.262)	28	.92 (.277)	25
Low IIPM	Greater	Provincial	.500 (.511)	24	.310 (.471)	29
High IIPM	Greater	Provincial	.600 (.500)	25	.429 (.504)	28
Low IIPM	Equal	Provincial	.917 (.282)	24	.840 (.374)	25
High IIPM	Equal	Provincial	.870 (.344)	23	.931 (.258)	29

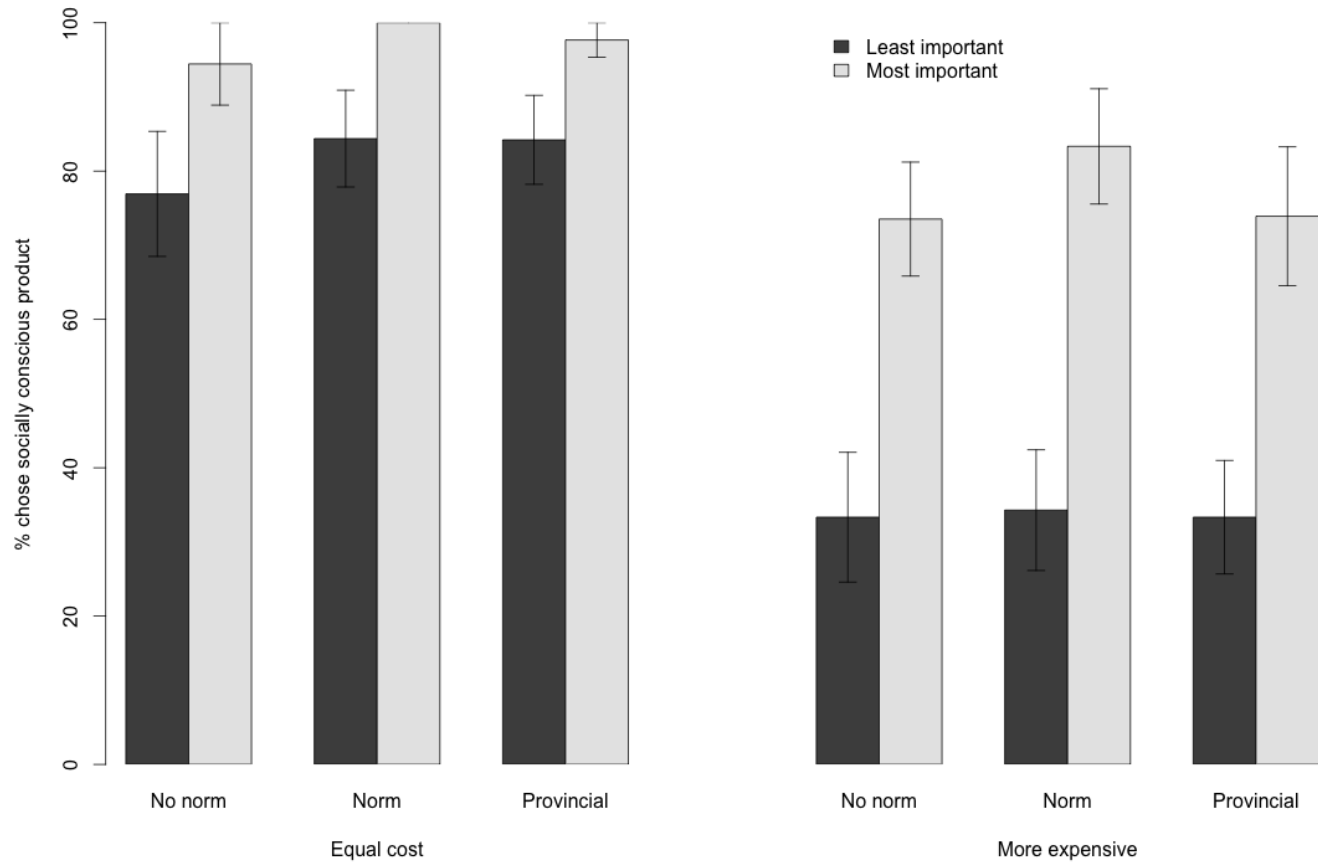
Note. Based on the experiment's design, group means of IIPM values are only presented for those individuals blocked to condition.

FIGURE G2. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Cleaner by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal



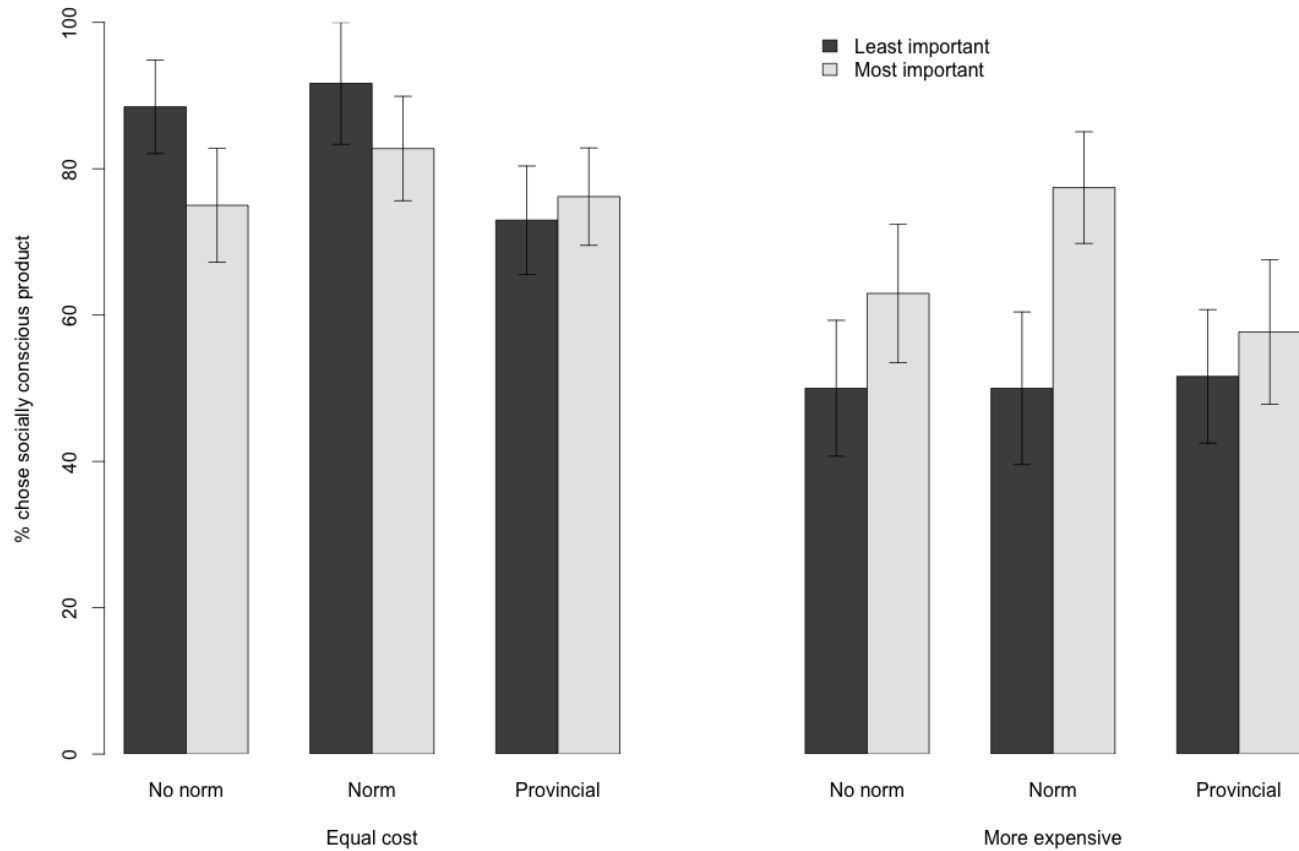
Note. Means, standard deviations, and cell counts used in this Figure are available in Table G2.

FIGURE G3. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Shampoo by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal



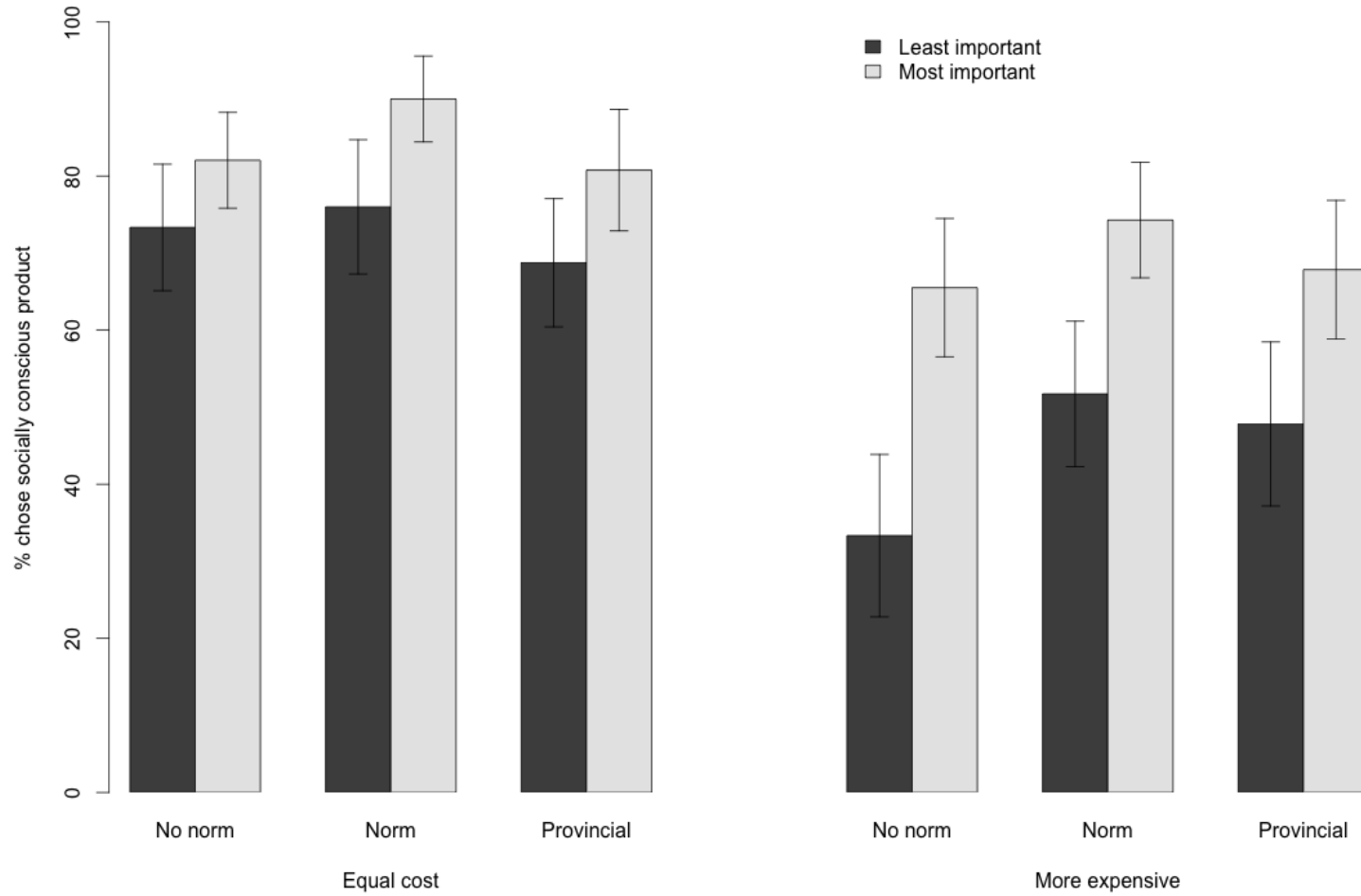
Note. Means, standard deviations, and cell counts used in this Figure are available in Table G3.

FIGURE G4. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Chocolate by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal



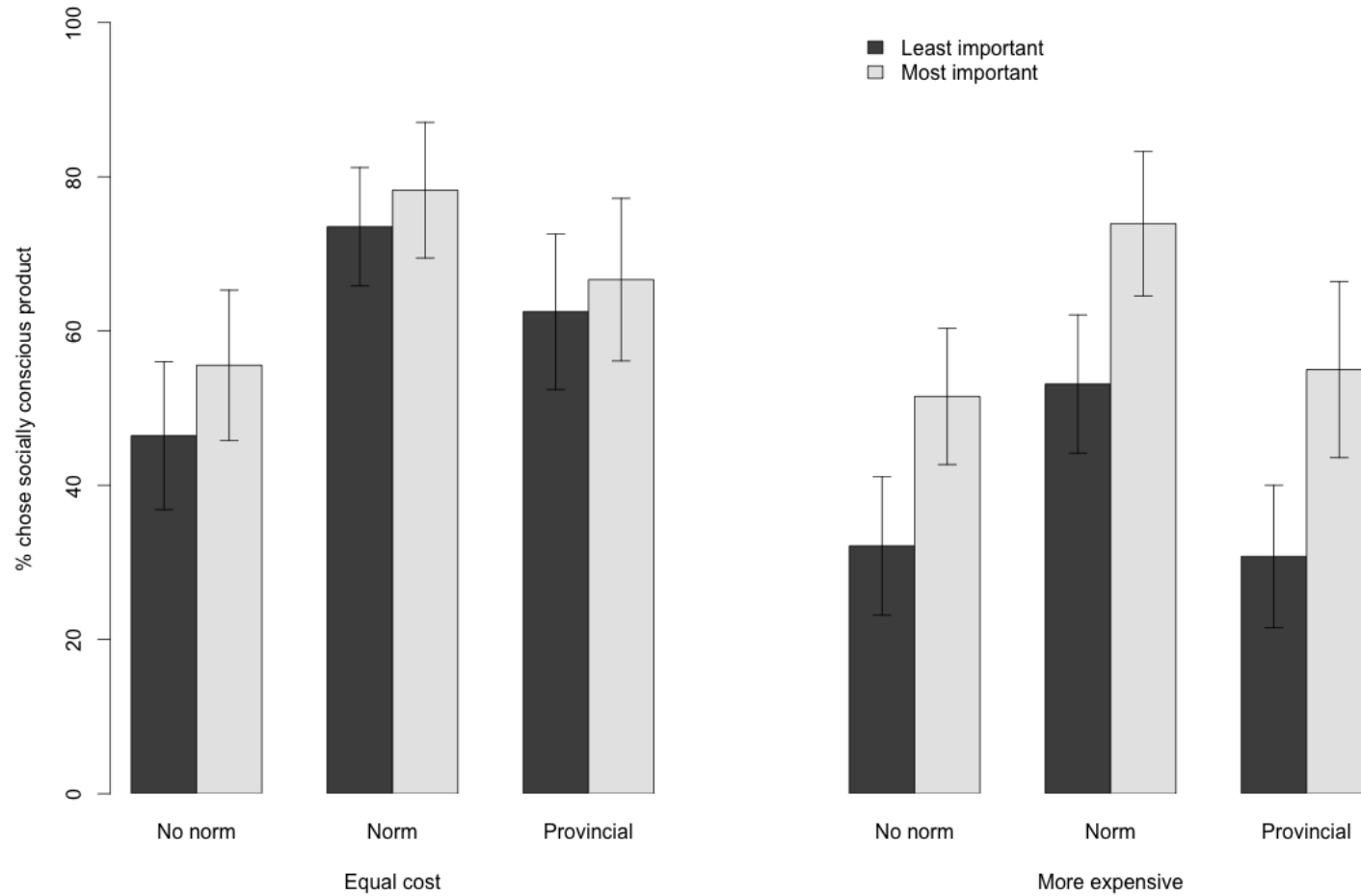
Note. Means, standard deviations, and cell counts used in this Figure are available in Table G4.

FIGURE G5. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious T-Shirts by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal



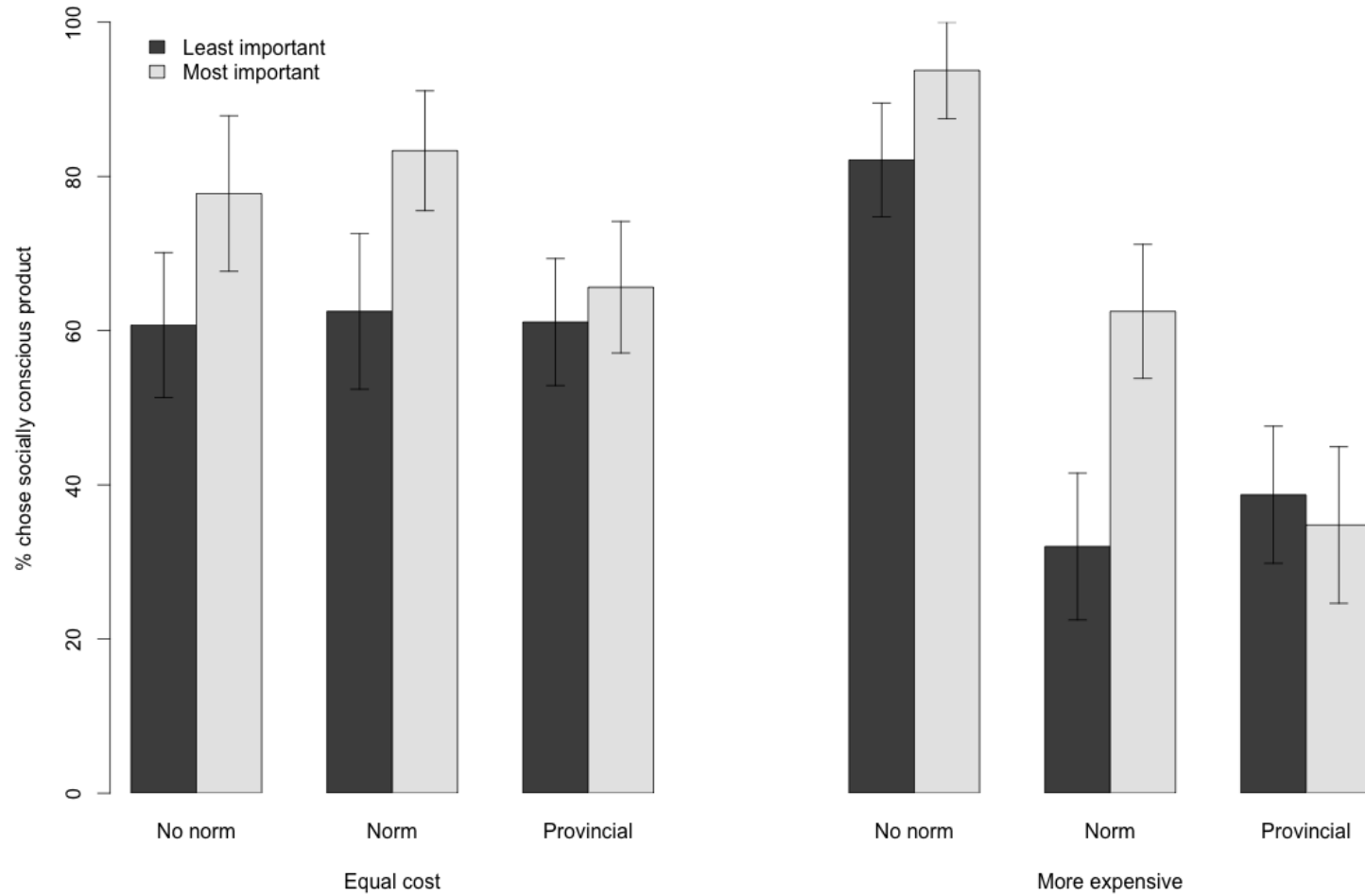
Note. Means, standard deviations, and cell counts used in this Figure are available in Table G5.

FIGURE G6. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Coffee by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal



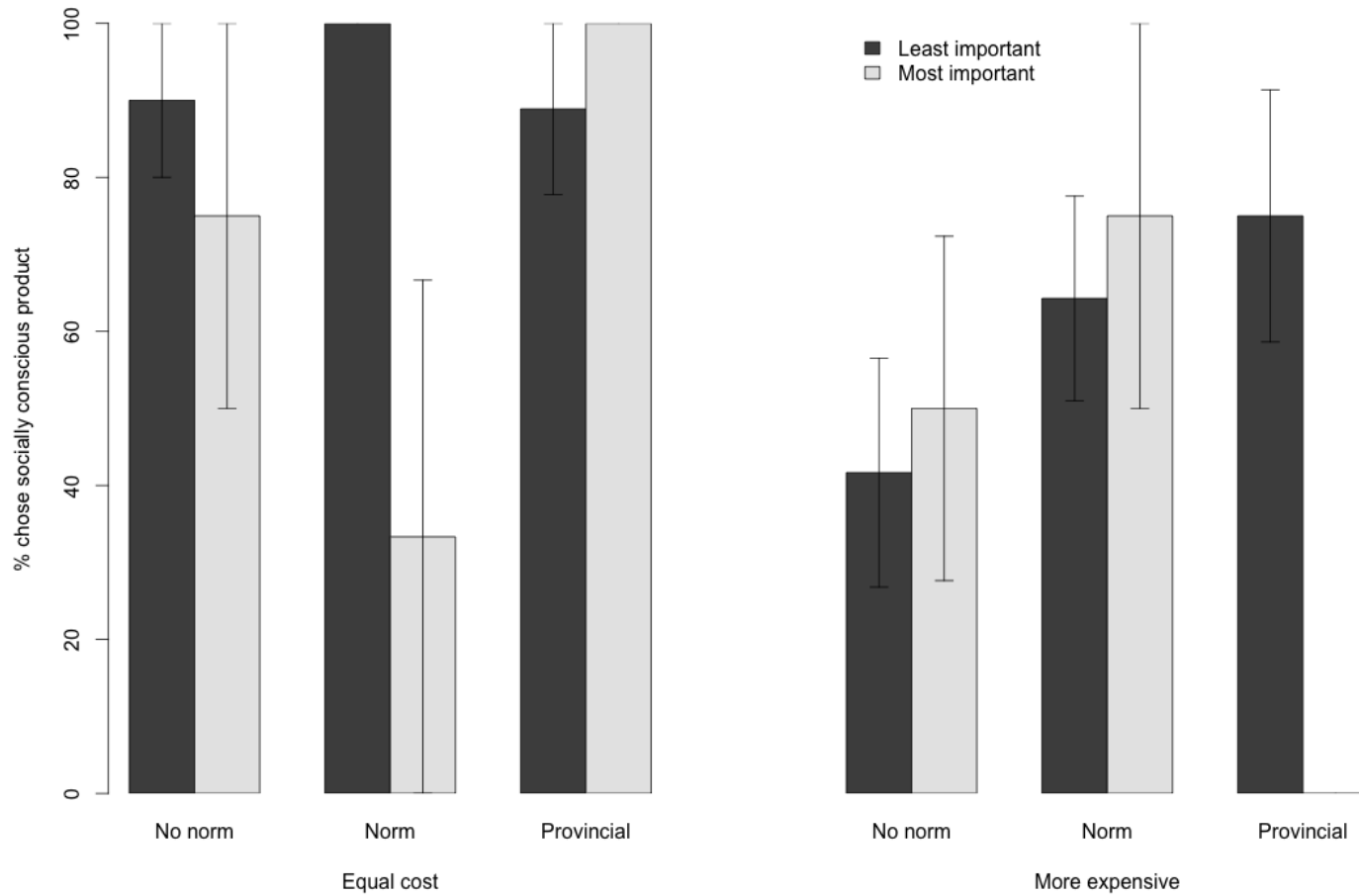
Note. Means, standard deviations, and cell counts used in this Figure are available in Table G6.

FIGURE G7. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Batteries by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal



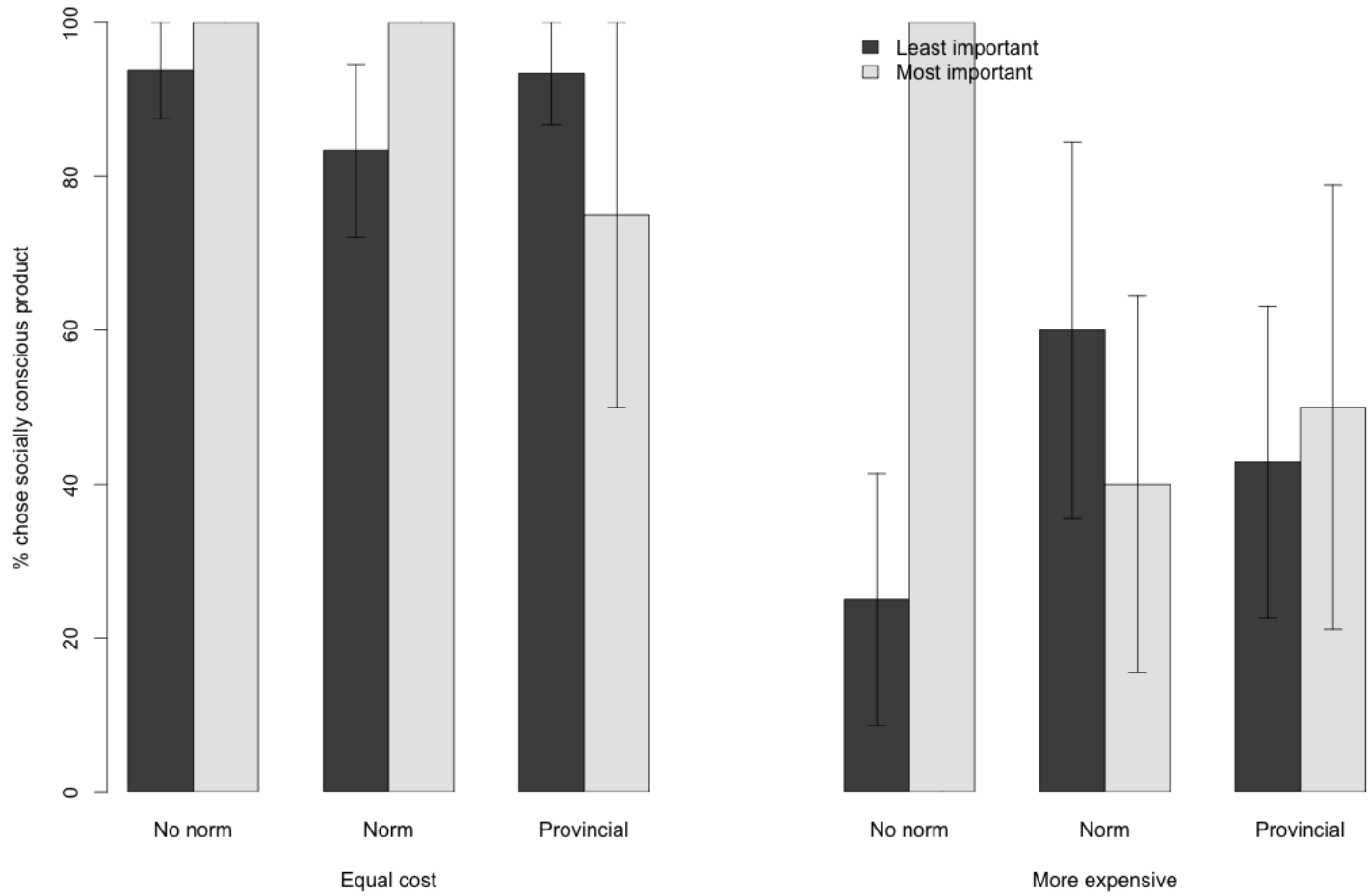
Note. Means, standard deviations, and cell counts used in this Figure are available in Table G7.

FIGURE G8. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Jelly by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal



Note. Means, standard deviations, and cell counts used in this Figure are available in Table G8.

FIGURE G9. Percent Respondents Choosing Socially Conscious Soap by IIPM, Cost, and Normative Appeal



Note. Means, standard deviations, and cell counts used in this Figure are available in Table G9.

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