

## Research Statement

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My research broadly looks at the effects of social hierarchies on consumers' preference formation and consumption decisions. Specifically, I investigate perceptions of social class and social inequality, and interpretations of the legitimacy of hierarchy and inequality as a result of political ideology as antecedents to consumer behaviors. Relevant consumer outcomes that I study include food choices, new product adoption, sustainable consumption, using predatory lending services, hedonic/utilitarian consumption, and data privacy decisions, among others.

In a recent paper published in the *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, titled "Bringing Our Values to the Table: Political Ideology, Food Waste, and Overconsumption," we established that political ideology influences how consumers manage the tradeoff between food waste and overconsumption when served large portions. Liberals, who typically focus on social equity, become concerned with avoiding negative environmental consequences of food waste and thus overeat to prevent waste. In contrast, conservatives focus on their personal responsibility to avoid the negative consequences of overconsumption and eat less, producing food waste. This research has important implications for environmental sustainability and consumer health and wellbeing.

In a paper under second round review at the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, titled "Janteloven and New Product Adoption: Political Ideology, Social Hierarchy, and Radically New Products," we demonstrate the effect of political ideology on radical innovation adoption. Despite extensive research showing that political liberalism is broadly linked to openness to new experiences and conservatism to aversion to uncertainty, in this multi-method research we find that liberals are less interested in radical innovation than conservatives. We demonstrate that this effect is explained by liberals' desire to avoid signaling status through the use of new products. The effect is attenuated when innovative products are consumed inconspicuously because they cease to serve as a status signal, thus increasing product adoption among liberal consumers who view social hierarchies as illegitimate and generally avoid overt status signaling. These findings are relevant to understanding how hierarchies underlie consumption motives and how marketers can shift product positioning contingent on the political ideology of their target consumers.

Another paper invited for second round review at the *Journal of Consumer Research* is titled "Shortcut to Beautiful: How Beauty Filters Affect Consumer Judgments." In this research, we demonstrate the effect of using beauty filters on social media platforms. We demonstrate that while beauty filters enhance perceived attractiveness of social media influencers, their application can backfire, reducing the effectiveness of those influencers' endorsements. Beauty filtered (vs. unfiltered) appearance leads consumers to cast negative moral judgment on the filtered influencer, driven by the perception that the filter is an unfair shortcut to beauty. This has

a negative downstream consequence on intentions to follow the filtered influencers' product recommendations.

“Hands Off My Data! The Effect of Social Class on Data Sharing” is also in preparation for submission to the *Journal of Consumer Research*. In this research, we demonstrate differences between lower versus higher-class consumers' preferences when making the tradeoff between online data privacy and content personalization. Lay perceptions are that higher-class consumers have more sensitive information and resources to lose in the case of a data breach, and thus should value privacy more than lower-class consumers. Yet, we find the opposite is true across several online contexts (e.g., online cookies, private browsers, GPS location services, dating apps, etc.). In fact, lower class consumers value privacy more than higher class consumers and are willing to sacrifice personalization benefits to protect their online data. We find evidence that a heightened sense of possessiveness over their data among lower-class consumers underlies this effect. We also rule out trust in how online companies use data as well as subjective knowledge about technology and online data as alternative explanations.

In another research project, “Dads, Brads, and Chads: Subjective Cultural Competence and Confirmatory Consumption,” in preparation for submission to the *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, we investigate how consumers' subjective sense of their cultural knowledge (i.e., knowledge, tastes, and behaviors) is central to their identity. Consumers who feel they possess a great deal of cultural knowledge identify as more sophisticated and those feeling they lack cultural knowledge identify as down-to-earth. We also find that hedonic-utilitarian product attributes naturally elicit associations with sophistication versus down-to-earth consumption respectively. Thus, consumers who feel subjectively higher in cultural competence make more hedonic product choices. Alternatively, rather than making choices to compensate for a lack of knowledge, consumers feeling they lack cultural knowledge make identity-congruent utilitarian choices that are perceived as more down-to-earth relative to hedonic products.

Additionally, I have multiple working papers that contribute to the theme of social hierarchies and consumption. For example, “Payday Mayday! Income-Class Misalignment and Payday Loans” is in preparation for submission to the *Journal of Consumer Research*. In this research, we demonstrate that consumers' objective income and subjective perceptions of social class are often misaligned. When a negative mismatch occurs (i.e., when consumers subjectively feel higher in class than they place objectively relative to others in society) it represents objective economic needs paired with an increased sense of confidence in one's ability to pay off debt from predatory lenders, such as payday loans. Thus, negatively misaligned consumers are more likely to seek out and rely on predatory lending services. We demonstrate a practical marketing intervention to reduce objective-subjective misalignment and reliance on predatory lenders.

In sum, the overarching aim of my research is to develop customer-based strategies that address managerially important questions for marketers and policymakers with the goal of improving consumer and societal wellbeing. The research summarized in this statement converge on the theme of individual and social-level constructs that influence how consumers develop preferences and make consequential decisions. My long-term goal is to continue to pursue a deeper understanding each construct individually and ultimately study how they interact with each other.