

## **Hippies, greenies and tree-huggers: How the ‘warmth’ stereotype hinders the adoption of responsible brands.**

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## **Abstract**

Past research has highlighted the difficulty faced by responsible consumers; individuals who wish to make environmentally and socially responsible consumption choices. Individual buyers, it is argued, act within a network of structural and social relationships which make responsible alternatives intrinsically hard to pursue. This paper maintains that one such barrier is the perception that users of responsible brands are not worthy of social emulation. Consumers are less likely to adopt brands positioned explicitly on their positive environmental or social credentials because of the stereotypes attached to the users of these products. Two empirical studies demonstrate that users of responsible brands are perceived as stereotypically warm. Warmth, however, is not an appealing feature in a consumption context. Warm groups are not envied and envy plays a central role in fueling a desire to emulate a consumption group. The study is the first to examine the possibility that a group level stereotype limits the potential attractiveness of responsible brands. The significant implications of this insight for both scholarly research and marketing practice are examined in detail. The presence of a warmth stereotype, which has a negative influence on the social perception of responsible brands, suggests that the development of niches of responsible or ethical consumers is intrinsically problematic.

**Keywords:** Stereotype, Responsible consumption, Sustainability, Envy, Imitation, Consumer groups

## INTRODUCTION

Increasing attention to environmental and social issues has led to the introduction of responsible brands that promote their positive impact towards issues of environmental sustainability and social development explicitly (e.g. Unilever, 2012). These credentials appeal to responsible consumers who aim to integrate ethical concerns in their consumption choices (e.g. Valor & Carrero, 2014). Marketing research has explored the motivations and barriers that might lead to the adoption of these products (e.g. Harrison, Newholm, & Shaw, 2005). Despite the alternatives available in the marketplace, however, few consumers choose responsible brands. This niche is estimated to be around 4% of the market (United Nations Environment Programme, 2005). Such a limited appeal is puzzling because consumers express positive attitudes towards these products (e.g. Krystallis, Grunert, de Barcellos, Perrea, & Verbeke, 2012). Attention has therefore focused on the analysis of the individual (Bray, Johns, & Kilburn, 2011; Chatzidakis, Hibbert, & Smith, 2007), contextual (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2010), structural (Carrington, Zwick, & Neville, 2015) and social (Valor & Carrero, 2014) barriers that limit the adoption of responsible brands.

Contributing to this stream of research, the study explores whether the association of a social stereotype with responsible consumers could represent an additional psychological barrier to the adoption of responsible alternatives. Allusions to a general, socially shared view of responsible consumers as stereotypical are frequent (Burgess, King, Harris, & Lewis, 2013; Chaplin & Lowrey, 2010). Derogatory nicknames to label users of responsible products and brands (Chaplin & Lowrey, 2010; Shang & Peloza, 2015; Graham-Rowe et al., 2012) suggests that these consumers are perceived as an out-group which individuals see as distant and potentially threatening (Minson & Monin, 2011).

Since brands are used to make inferences about consumers' characteristics, they can also create prejudices (Chaplin & Lowrey, 2010; Yoon, Gurhan-Canli, & Bozok, 2006). Studies of ethical or responsible consumers suggest that researchers consider individuals who adopt responsible consumption practices to be an identifiable social entity (Harrison et al., 2005; Newholm & Shaw, 2007). Brands promoting environmental or social benefits are especially likely to send strong messages to others since identity shapes decisions to engage in responsible consumption practices (Papaoikonomou, Valverde, & Ryan, 2012). Despite this evidence, no study to date has explored the potential stereotyping of consumers who engage in responsible consumption choices as a group and how it might affect the adoption of responsible consumption.

This investigation shows that the message of 'ethicality', which is implicitly associated with responsible alternatives (Brunk, 2012; Luchs, Naylor, Irwin, & Ragunathan, 2010; Shang & Pelozo, 2015), damages the appeal of responsible brands because of the stereotypes it activates. The possibility that users of responsible brands might be the object of negative stereotypes, presents important implications for marketing practice. Companies often invest significant resources in producing responsible alternatives which can appeal to the niche of responsible consumers (e.g. electric cars, environmentally friendly products, and products from recycled sources). The possibility that current users of these alternatives are stereotyped in a way that makes them a dissociative group (White & Dahl, 2006) creates a potential threat for the promotion of these alternatives beyond this established niche.

This study examines the stereotyping of responsible consumers through the application of theories from social psychology that have accounted for social perception effects in several behavioral contexts (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). The paper shows that the image of a brand as responsible has important consequences for the social perception of its users. Users of responsible brands are perceived as 'warm'. Warmth,

when attributed to a social group, reduces feelings of envy and weakens the desire to emulate these consumers. The study demonstrates how the responsible credentials of a brand hinder its appeal because they lead to stereotyping its users.

The paper is structured as follows. The scholarly background to this investigation is reviewed and the research hypotheses presented. Subsequently, the methodology and findings of two investigations are discussed. Finally, the implications of the study are examined stressing how the results pose interesting new challenges for both academic research and managerial practice.

## **RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

### **Responsible consumers: A dissociative group?**

Scholars report how sustainable practices such as vegetarianism (Minson & Monin, 2011) and the adoption of electric vehicles (Burgess et al., 2013; Graham-Rowe et al., 2012) are sometimes the object of criticism and denigration. Burgess and colleagues (2013) argue that resistance to the adoption of more responsible alternatives (i.e. electric cars) is often driven by negative stereotypes which can be altered through interactions with actual users. Similarly, Graham-Rowe and colleagues (2012) find that electric car drivers are often stereotyped negatively. The participants in their qualitative study see these consumers as “dull”, “lacking a sense of fun” and imagine the typical user as “a spinster lady currently working in a library, hugging trees and going to public meetings about saving the planet” (Graham-Rowe et al., 2012, p. 148). This evidence is consistent with work suggesting that consumption of ethical alternatives communicates higher femininity to external observers (Shang & Peloza, 2015) and therefore could be perceived as threatening for male consumers.

This evidence can be interpreted as a sign that responsible consumers are perceived as a dissociative group which others do not want to emulate (Schor, 1999; Veblen, 1899). Emulation however is a key driver for the diffusion of consumption patterns (Chauduri & Majumdar, 2006). Social interaction leads to a desire to copy consumption choices which are recognized as granting higher social status. This account explains conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899). The drivers of social status vary in different cultures and consumption settings but they are rooted in evolutionary psychology (Griskevicius, Cantú, & van Vugt, 2012). Under specific circumstances, the purchase of environmentally friendly brands can also function as a status signal (Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010) by offering consumers the opportunity to communicate a superior social standing (Griskevicius et al., 2010). Evolutionary psychologists suggest that these findings are in line with an innate tendency to seek relative status in social settings (Van Vugt, Roberts, & Hardy 2007). Successful sustainable brands are often expensive exactly because the noticeable price tag can, in certain cases, harness this tendency for status competition (Griskevicius et al., 2012, p. 121).

Taken together, this evidence suggests that the stereotypical view of socially responsible consumers could pose a barrier for the adoption of these brands by making the emulation of responsible choices less likely. Responsible products seem to confer lower status to their users (Burgess et al., 2013; Graham-Rowe et al., 2012). No clear account exists however that explains this stereotyping process at a group level. Why are responsible consumers, who act in support of the common good, a dissociative consumer group? This paper presents an answer to this question drawing on established psychological theories on social perception and stereotyping.

### **The Stereotype Content Model and the social perception of brands**

The Stereotype Content Model (SCM) is an established theory for the analysis of social perception and group stereotypes. It was originally developed to examine stereotypes and discrimination of social groups (Fiske et al., 2002). This investigation is the first to extend the application of this theory to groups of consumers and especially users of responsible brands as a specific social entity.

The SCM maintains that *warmth* and *competence* are universal dimensions that characterize the perception of different social groups and individuals on the basis of the relative benefit or harm they could deliver to the self or the relevant in-group (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Fiske et al., 2002). Groups or individuals that do not compete for the same pool of resources are considered as warm. Warmth judgements encompass positive social traits such as friendliness, trustworthiness, sincerity and tolerance (Fiske et al., 2002). Conversely, competitive social entities are perceived as hostile and threatening. The dimension of warmth is dominant because, in evolutionary terms, it established whether another group or individual has friendly intentions towards us (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007). Competence is related to perceptions of ability: will the individual or group be able to carry out its intentions (Fiske et al., 2002; Cuddy et al., 2007)? It includes traits such as skillfulness, ambition, confidence and intelligence. Although the two dimensions are not all-encompassing, scholars stress their dominance, automaticity and applicability to a variety of social phenomena (Fiske et al., 2007). Warmth and competence judgements influence individual perception at different social levels; from views about individuals, to perceptions of groups or nations (Cuddy et al., 2008). Since research in different contexts (Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012; Kervyn, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2013) and countries (Cuddy et al., 2008) has provided substantial support for this theory, the SCM model offers a useful template for examining the stereotyping of responsible consumers.

Recently, the SCM has been applied to the study of brand perception (Kervyn et al., 2012; Ivens, Leischnig, Muller, & Valta, 2015). Brands are stereotyped in a similar way to individuals and groups. Past research, however, has not examined the stereotypes attached to the users of different brands but only to the brands themselves. Research suggests that the social perception of a brand transfers to its users. Research on brand personality indicates that personality traits attributed to a brand are also applied to its users (Fennis & Pruyn, 2007; Govers & Schoormans, 2005). In other words, if Mercedes is perceived as a brand high in competence but relatively low in warmth (see Kervyn et al., 2012), users of this brand will also be socially stereotyped as competent but not warm (Fennis & Pruyn, 2007). Research on brand symbolism concurs with this view. The products individuals adopt often reflect their social roles (Chaplin & Lowrey, 2010; Englis & Solomon, 1996) and allow them to show that they belong to cherished groups (White & Dahl, 2006). Brand symbolism influences the process of social categorization (Chaplin & Lowrey, 2010; Solomon, 1983, 1988) and identifies different consumer groups (Englis & Solomon, 1996; Lowrey, Englis, Shavitt, & Solomon, 2001). Cognitive inferences also define aspirational groups (Englis & Solomon, 1996) and these prejudices are learned from childhood onwards (Chaplin & Lowrey, 2010). All these processes rest on the idea that the image of a brand affects the social perception of its users. Research on brand identification documents that users consciously see brands as expressing their own values and personal meanings (Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, & Sen, 2012). There is also evidence from other areas of marketing research lending support to this process of image transfer. For example, animosity towards a country influences consumers' perceptions of brands stereotypically associated with the prejudiced nation (Russell & Russell, 2010). Similarly, the perceived image of a product category influences how individual brands within the category are perceived (Posavac, Sanbonmatsu, Seo, & Iacobucci, 2014).



From this point of view, since brands are perceived in terms of their relative warmth and competence, it is reasonable to expect that the users of these same brands will be affected by the same type of social perception. Specifically, it is argued that the warmth stereotype potentially hinders how users of responsible brands are perceived.

### **Responsible consumption and the warmth stereotype**

To the extent that buying a responsible brand is perceived as an ethical and/or altruistic action (Gruber, Schlegelmilch, & Houston, 2014; Shang & Peloza, 2015), individuals buying such alternatives will be stereotyped as warm. Groups that are perceived as cooperative and non-threatening are usually considered warm. For example, Americans perceive the elderly, Christians, and middle-class as groups that are high on warmth (Fiske et al., 2007). Social entities which are stereotypically low on warmth include homeless people, feminists and the rich (Fiske et al., 2007). The positive social and environmental outcomes associated with responsible consumption should lead to perceptions of warmth because this stereotype is based on appraisals of the perceived benefits the group offers to society (Caprariello, Cuddy, & Fiske, 2009).

In line with the SCM, stereotyping is driven by consumers' ability to recognize the perceived ethicality and altruistic nature of brands that signal a concern for society or the environment. Consumer movements have helped delineating clear identity projects based on responsible consumption patterns (e.g. Papaoikonomou, Valverde, & Ryan, 2012; Valor & Carrero, 2014). Responsible brands tend to stress the communication of their "green" or "ethical" credentials which likely influence how their customers are perceived socially (Harrison et al., 2005). This does not mean that buying a responsible alternative will automatically determine a consumer as belonging to a clearly distinct social group. Rather, the purchase of a brand that supports environmental or social causes might be decoded as an altruistic act and

therefore attach a warmth stereotype to the user with potential further consequences for how the brand is socially perceived (Fiske et al., 2007). The SCM does not make deterministic predictions about how members of different groups are categorized. What is relevant are the general, automatic judgments of competence and warmth that color social perception and are the consequence of structural social relationships (Caprariello et al., 2009). Existing evidence leads us to hypothesize the existence of a warmth stereotype for responsible consumption.

Luchs et al. (2010) find that the perceived ethicality of a product is associated positively with ‘gentleness-related attributes’. The authors stress that this effect works against perceptions of effectiveness and competence. This is consistent with work demonstrating that ethical products are more feminine than normal offerings (Shang & Pelozo, 2015). Femininity is stereotypically associated with care and warmth (Cuddy et al., 2004) and care-giving is reported by responsible consumers as a motivation for their personal choices (Shaw, McMaster, & Newholm, 2015). There is also evidence that in interpersonal relations ethical agents are perceived as caring and compassionate (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Hence, consumers purchasing brands perceived as ethical could be stereotyped as warm.

Brand ethicality generates warmth because it implies that consumers are acting out of altruistic intentions (Cuddy et al., 2008). The symbolism of responsible brands (e.g. Delmas, Nairn-Birch, & Balzarova, 2013), the way these products have been portrayed in the media and advertising (e.g. Bickart & Ruth, 2012) as well as the motives and identities endorsed by organized consumer movements (e.g. Papaoikonomou et al., 2012) have led to an association between social/environmental sustainability and altruistic motives. For this reason, in this research both the role of brand ethicality (Study 1) and the perceived altruism of a consumer group (Study 2) are tested as drivers of stereotyping processes.

This perception is independent of whether users of responsible brands are in fact more ethical people. The opposite is even possible: buying responsible products might lead to moral licensing in other domains (Mazar & Zhong, 2010). The SCM postulates warmth stereotypes to be rooted in evolutionary responses towards others who are perceived as supportive and not competing for the same scarce resources (Cuddy et al., 2008). To the extent that responsible brands are perceived as ethical and motivated by an altruistic concern (i.e. as helping others or the environment), a warmth stereotype will be triggered (Reeder et al., 2002). These arguments lead to the following hypothesis:

**H1:** Perceived brand ethicality/altruism of the consumer group has a positive influence on the stereotype of warmth.

### **Emotional consequences of the warmth stereotype**

The SCM predicts that cognitive stereotypes activate specific emotional reactions (Cuddy et al., 2007; Ivens et al., 2015). Emotions ultimately drive prejudiced reaction towards a social target. For example, racist tendencies against African Americans are explained through a causal chain that starts with cognitive stereotypes of low warmth and low competence, leading to feelings of contempt that ultimately explain aggressive discriminatory behaviors (Fiske et al., 2002; Cuddy et al., 2007). The view that stereotypes are explained by emotional reactions is supported by early research on prejudice that saw it mostly as an unencumbered expression of dislike with clear emotional connotations (Allport, 1954; Katz & Braly, 1933 cited in Fiske et al., 2002). The link between cognition, emotions and behaviors proposed by the SCM is also consistent with emotion research (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989). Emotions are expected to drive different types of behaviors that are broadly classified as supportive or harmful towards the social entity evaluated (Cuddy et al., 2007). In a consumption context, admiration and envy are relevant emotions triggered by cognitive

stereotyping (Ivens et al., 2015). These emotions influence decisions to emulate the consumption of responsible brands (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2011a). Consistent with evolutionary psychology, admiration and envy are important because they are triggered by upward social comparisons (Caprariello et al., 2009) and therefore motivate consumption choices on the basis of relative status competition (Griskevicius et al., 2012). Ethical consumption choices are less likely to be copied by others because the warmth stereotype conveys relative lower (rather than higher) social status. This effect is explained by the influence warmth exerts on feelings of admiration and envy.

Admiration is a pleasant experience caused by the appreciation of something praiseworthy that others have done or achieved (Smith, 2000; Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2011a). It focuses on the evaluation of the other rather than on the analysis of the gap between the self and the other's achievements (Smith, 2000). Admiration serves as a source of inspiration that spurs improvements in personal behavior (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). Warmth stereotypes are likely to elicit admiration. Perceived friendliness triggers positive affect towards a person or group (Cuddy et al., 2007; 2008) which translates into admiration. Moral achievements represent one of the main sources of admiration (Schlenker, Weigold, & Schlenker, 2008). Since responsible consumption choices are perceived as ethical (Shang & Pelozo, 2015), they should trigger admiration. Finally, the recognition of something praiseworthy is expected to trigger a sense of admiration (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Haidt & Seder, 1999). Since warmth stereotypes imply the expectation that the consumers benefit the larger social group, this evaluation should lead to feelings of admiration. In line with these expectations it is hypothesized that:

**H2:** Warmth stereotypes influence positively the admiration felt towards a consumer group.

Upward social comparison, however, can also cause unpleasant emotions of hostility and dissatisfaction (Fiske, 2010; Smith, 2000). In addition to the inspiring feelings of admiration for others' achievements, social perception also causes the opportunity for appraising one's own shortcomings. Envy has an hostile nature and leads to resentment towards the envied (Zizzo, 2002).

Despite being a negative emotion, envy can generate both negative and positive social reactions (Van de Ven et al., 2009). The malicious side leads to negative behavioral consequences, such as, a desire to damage or harm the envied (Beckman, Formby, Smith, & Zheng, 2002; Zizzo, 2002). The benign element of envy triggers a motivation to improve one's own circumstances in order to achieve the desired social position (Van de Ven et al., 2009; Van de Ven et al., 2011a). These two sides co-exist in envy experiences, making this emotion intrinsically ambivalent (Ivens et al., 2015).

Examining social perception as a potential engine for the diffusion and imitation of consumption patterns, envy plays a distinctively positive role. Consumers tend to envy aspirational people that they would like to emulate because copying them would offer a chance to improve personal status (Belk, 2008; Van de Ven et al., 2011b). In other words, envy leads to 'keeping up with the Joneses' (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2011b) and is a common emotion in many consumption contexts (Belk, 2008).

Warmth stereotypes have a negative influence on envy (Cuddy et al., 2007; 2008). Warmth indicates that a group of consumers is friendly and has good intentions towards the self and/or the in-group. This variable will have a negative effect on envy because this emotion indicates a sense of hostility and resentment. In other words, ethical features of brands should indirectly reduce the envy felt towards consumers who adopt them because of the mediating role of warmth. From this point of view, a warmth stereotype would damage the diffusion of

responsible brands because it makes such alternatives less likely to signal the possibility of an improvement in relative status (Griskevicius et al., 2010). This analysis leads to the following research hypothesis:

**H3:** Warmth stereotypes influence negatively the envy felt towards a consumer group.

### **The consequences of social emotions on social imitation**

Although envy and admiration have opposite valence, they both lead to a desire to emulate others and achieve what they already have. They represent sources of status competition and create a desire to fill what is a perceived relative gap in status between the observer and the observed (Griskevicius et al., 2012). This effect makes them extremely important emotions because a desire to emulate others is central in the diffusion or rejection of consumption patterns in the competition for relative status (e.g. Schor, 1999). Behavioral imitation is a common occurrence with several consequences on both the mimicker and the mimicked (Tanner, Ferraro, Chartrand, Bettman, & van Baaren, 2008). When imitation occurs in the case of products with symbolic value, it can pose an identity threat to the mimicked (White & Argo, 2011). This reinforces the idea that imitation is a relevant behavior in status competition. Considering the pervasiveness of imitation in social behavior (Chartrand & Dalton, 2009), this reaction is examined as the outcome of group stereotyping; adding to the list of behaviors studied using the SCM in the past (Cuddy et al., 2008). In this study, imitation is not an automatic behavior occurring in dyadic interactions but, consistent with stereotyping research (Cuddy et al., 2007), the outcome of social comparison emotions (i.e. admiration and anger) measured at the group level.

Admiration towards social groups is linked with a desire to emulate them (Caprariello et al., 2009; Cuddy et al., 2007). It implies that the entity possesses some cherished quality or

feature which is intrinsically positive and should be adopted. Higher social status triggers feelings of admiration (Caprariello et al., 2009). Furthermore, admiration is an emotion strongly involved in learning (Haidt & Seder, 1999). Individuals who are admired become models and sources of information on the adaptive form of behavior (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Becker & Luthar, 2007). The psychological process which is triggered by admiration is the same across different levels of analysis: from individuals comparing their achievements and possessions (Van de Ven et al., 2011a) to the study of intergroup relations (Sweetman, Spears, Livingstone, & Manstead, 2013). In a consumer context, the behavior of others can be easily imitated: by purchasing the same brands, a consumer can share the same symbols and meanings that generate admiration in the target of social evaluation (Fennis & Pruyn, 2007; Govers & Schoormans, 2005). Although there is limited research on admiration, existing evidence in international marketing shows that admiration for a country leads to more favorable attitude towards products imported from such regions (Batra et al., 2000; Nelson & Deshpande, 2013). Consequently, it is hypothesized that if consumers of a certain brand are admired, this emotion will create a desire to purchase the same product. On the basis of this evidence it is hypothesized that:

**H4:** Admiration influences positively the desire to imitate a consumer group.

Several authors suggest the link between envy of what others have and the desire to attain the same goods or status (Belk, 2008; Crusius & Mussweiler, 2012). At a psychological level, envy represents a threat to individual social standing and consequently motivates action aimed at re-establishing or improving one's position (Van de Ven et al., 2011b). In a social context, envy triggered by the appraisal of someone else's achievements can trigger different reactions. In an organizational context, for example, envy can be disruptive and lead to the undermining of more successful coworkers (Duffy et al., 2012). If a consumer feels envy towards another consumer, however, the most likely reaction will be a desire to emulate the

consumption choices made by the observed. Recent behavioral research documents this effect showing how individuals are willing to pay more to own a product already owned by an envied target (Van de Ven et al., 2011b). The role of envy in processes of consumption emulation however has been also examined at a cultural level (Veblen, 1899; Wrenn, 2015) and in economic theory (Becker, 1991). All these different accounts share the view that envy triggers a desire to spend more or to buy more products in order to improve one's relative status. From this point of view, envy is consistent with evolutionary psychology's emphasis on relative status competition (Griskevicius et al., 2012): consumers buy the same products owned by the target of social evaluation in an effort to move from feeling envy to being envied (Van de Ven et al., 2011a). Consequently, it is hypothesized that:

**H5:** Envy influences positively the desire to imitate a consumer group.

### **Stereotyping and the imitation of responsible consumers**

The preceding discussion suggests that warmth can have both a positive and a negative influence on decisions to emulate consumption choices of a consumer group. The path through admiration, postulated by H2 and H3, suggests that warmth increases the desire to emulate consumption of brands perceived as ethical, whilst H4 and H5 suggest a negative indirect effect on imitation. Warmth stereotypes, attributed to users of responsible brands, have a positive influence on admiration and a negative influence on envy. Since both these emotions contribute to explaining social imitation, the research (Figure 1) postulates two indirect effects with opposite signs (Zhao, Lynch Jr., & Chen, 2010).

The ethicality of a brand has a positive indirect effect on the desire to imitate its users, mediated by warmth and admiration. At the same time a negative indirect effect through the influence that warmth has on envy is also postulated. Formally, it is expected that:



**H6:** Perceived brand ethicality/altruism of the consumer group has a positive indirect effect on imitation, mediated by warmth and admiration.

**H7:** Perceived brand ethicality/altruism of the consumer group has a negative indirect effect on imitation, mediated by warmth and envy.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

In order to understand the drivers promoting responsible consumption, it is interesting to compare the two indirect effects. There is relatively little research that can help us develop expectations on the relative influence of these two paths. The evidence reviewed above suggests that consumers engaging in ethical consumption choices might be a dissociative group from which consumers wish to distance themselves (Chaplin & Lowrey, 2010; Graham-Rowe et al., 2012; Minson & Monin, 2011). If users of responsible alternatives are often socially marginalized, then it is reasonable to expect that overall, the negative effect should be larger than the positive one. The relative importance of admiration and envy upon driving imitation in consumption determines which path is more influential. Van de Ven et al. (2011b) compare the relative impact of both emotions on different types of behavior. Their evidence suggests that, when individuals are exposed to an upward social comparison, envy has a stronger influence than admiration on decisions to improve performance in order to diminish the perceived gap from the social target. This evidence is consistent with theorizing from the social sciences stressing the central role of envy in acquisitive processes (Becker, 1991; Veblen, 1899; Wrenn, 2015). Finally, there is significant evidence in psychology that negative emotions are more powerful than positive emotions in shaping behaviors

(Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). This generalized observation should also support the idea that envy is more influential than admiration. In other words, the reduction in feelings of envy posited by H3 is likely to generate a larger reduction in imitation than the one activated by potential increases in admiration. On the basis of these insights it is expected that:

**H8:** Perceived brand ethicality/altruism of the consumer group has a negative influence on the imitation of its users overall.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

The hypotheses are examined in two empirical studies in which participants' evaluations of different groups of consumers are collected and stereotype judgements, emotions and behavioral tendencies are measured. To obtain externally valid assessments of different consumer groups, the survey assesses reactions to socially identifiable groups of brand users.

In Study 1, individuals are asked to evaluate the users of different well-known brands while in Study 2 participants are presented with different profiles of groups of consumers and asked to express their perception of them. The level of stereotyping elicited by real brands compared to the reaction to profiles of consumers should be different. In the first case, participants assess users only on the basis of what they know about the brand while in the second they receive more detailed information. If the theorizing is robust, the same pattern of effects should be identified in the two contexts. The methodology builds on work in social psychology on how social groups are perceived (see Cuddy et al., 2008; Fiske et al., 2002) and past marketing research aimed at assessing the perception of groups of consumers (Solomon, 1988).

Respondents evaluate how they perceive, feel and would behave in relation to different groups of consumers. The dependent variable throughout the analysis is the desire to imitate certain consumption choices. This is consistent with research on the SCM which examines, for example, the likelihood to exclude, challenge or support different social groups which are the focus of research (Cuddy et al., 2007).

To test the rationale that brand ethicality transfers to a perception of users' altruism, both constructs are considered as potential independent variables. In Study 1 perceived ethicality of a brand (brand attribute) is measured as independent variable while in Study 2 the perceived altruism of a group (consumer group attribute) is assessed. The theorizing discussed above suggests that the two are related and that the stereotyping of users of responsible brands stands from their perceived altruism.

## **STUDY 1**

### **Method**

An online survey was conducted where participants evaluated a number of brands before answering questions about the users of those same brands as a group. The key variables adopted for analysis were the evaluations of the users of the brands (Cuddy et al., 2007; Cuddy et al., 2008; Fiske et al., 2002). Two luxury brands (*Rolex* and *Mercedes*), two mass market brands (*Coca Cola* and *Tide*) and three responsible brands<sup>1</sup> were selected as stimuli (*Burt's Bees*, *Seventh Generation* and *Tom's of Maine*) to obtain a diverse set of evaluations.

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<sup>1</sup> The brands chosen were indicated in a recent survey as the leading brands in the US among those positioned on 'green' or 'responsible' credentials (Penn Schoen Berland, 2011).

## **Procedure and participants**

Participants were US residents recruited online through Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT - Mason & Suri, 2011). They completed the survey in exchange for monetary payment. 212 interviews were collected with 17 incompletes, leaving a total of 195 cases. AMT is an online marketplace whose suitability for behavioral research has been supported by several examinations (Mason & Suri, 2012; Paolacci, Chandler, & Stern, 2010).

The survey presented a list of brands (brand logos were used to facilitate recollection) and asked the participants to indicate which brands they were aware of. The software randomly selected two brands among those indicated and the rest of the survey focused on these two, leading to a total of 390 brand evaluations used for the analysis of the results.

## **Measures**

The same scales adopted in previous stereotype research were used in this study (Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002). Participants were asked their evaluation of consumers of different brands ‘as viewed by most Americans’. As Cuddy et al. (2007) argue, providing this instruction had two effects. Firstly, it allowed the exploration of the existence of a social stereotype for a certain group. Secondly, it helped to deal with social desirability bias. Since consumers might be unwilling to express criticism of others, this form of indirect questioning helped to increase the validity of the answers obtained (Fisher, 1993).

The same items adopted in previous research measured warmth, envy and admiration (Fiske et al., 2002; Cuddy et al., 2007). Competence, the second main stereotyping dimension, was also measured so that it could be used as a control in the analysis (Fiske et al., 2002). Two new items were developed to assess consumers’ intentions to emulate individuals that belong to a certain group (see Table 2). These items were based on previous research (Belk, 2008;

Englis & Solomon, 1996) that examined people's desire to copy the consumption patterns of others. From this research, it is clear that "copying" and "imitation" are two common ways to refer to emulative consumption patterns consistent with the focus of this research. On the basis of this insight, group level measures consistent with the indicators used in research on stereotypes were developed (Cuddy et al., 2007). For example, scholars measure the desire to attack or support a certain social group (e.g. the poor, the rich, immigrants). In this context the original verbs were replaced with imitation/copying. Two items were used because in SCM research, two indicators are usually adopted to capture behavioral tendencies (Cuddy et al., 2007).

Before the questions on social perceptions, participants assessed the perceived ethicality of the brand (Brunk, 2012). Individuals also evaluated, on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), each brand on perceived prestige, quality and trustworthiness.

At the end of the survey participants answered four questions that measured social desirability (Grappi, Romani, & Bagozzi, 2013) and six that assessed green consumption values (Haws, Winterich, & Naylor, 2014). The interview concluded with a few demographic questions.

A pre-test was conducted to assess the suitability of the scales and of the brands included. Thirty participants produced 60 brand evaluations. Responses, on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), showed that participants agreed that questions were 'very clear' ( $M = 6.50$ ,  $SD = .63$ ) and 'very easy to answer' ( $M = 6.23$ ,  $SD = .94$ ). Participants also had the opportunity to give their general opinions on the survey. No difficulties or concerns about the questions asked were recorded. Finally, correlations of the new items introduced with the remaining items borrowed from past research on stereotypes were assessed finding no potential concerns.

## Results

To test the research hypotheses, a SEM analysis of the pooled brand evaluations is conducted. Individual brand evaluations are reported in Appendix A. A Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013) is adopted and SmartPLS 3.0 was used for the analysis with 5,000 re-samples to test for the significance of the coefficients estimated for both the measurement and structural model through bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap (Hair et al., 2013). Descriptive statistics and correlations are presented in Table 1. Measures of social desirability and individual green values have very low correlations with all the constructs included in the analysis. This suggests that assessments of social stereotyping are not influenced significantly by these two individual level variables. A Harman's single factor test was conducted to assess the potential effect of common method bias. Running an exploratory factor analysis without rotation, only 29% of the variance is explained by just one factor (against the 79% variance accounted for by five factors). This result suggests that common method bias does not represent a confounding factor in the interpretation of the results.

Table 2 presents the details of the measurement model and shows that all items capture their underlying constructs adequately with reliability indices well above thresholds recommended in the literature (Hair et al., 2013). The Fornell-Larcker criterion, which assesses discriminant validity, is respected for all constructs measured (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity is also established through the analysis of the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). The highest HTMT ratio is .55 which is below the conventional threshold of .85 (Kline, 2011). The inference test, calculated through bootstrapping, presents all values below 1 (highest value is .63) further supporting discriminant validity.

The structural model which tests H1 to H5 is presented in Figure 2. Results show that the perceived ethicality of a brand has a positive effect on the perceived warmth of its users. This is consistent with H1. Warmth, in turn influences admiration positively and envy negatively. However, the effect of warmth on admiration ( $\beta = .22, t = 3.95, p < .01$ ) is contingent on the stereotype of competence. When the latter is included in the model, warmth does not significantly influence admiration (Figure 2) and therefore H2 is rejected. The inclusion of competence stereotypes as a control in the model does not influence the other relationships examined.

The  $R^2$  values show a moderate ability to predict the endogenous constructs. To probe the predictive relevance of the model further, the Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  (Geisser, 1974) is presented.  $Q^2$  are higher than zero for all endogenous constructs, supporting the ability of the model to explain a reasonable amount of variance in the dependent variables specified. The predictive relevance of the model is in line with other marketing studies which have applied the SCM to the analysis of brand responses (Ivens et al., 2015).

To examine H6, H7 and H8, as well as test the mediations implied by the research model, recent methodological guidelines on mediation analysis are followed (Zhao et al., 2010; Hayes, 2013). A regression model is estimated using the average of the items for each construct. The analysis is conducted using PROCESS (Model 6) and 10,000 re-samples for the assessment of BCa confidence intervals. Since the analysis reported shows that competence potentially influences the results, the indirect effect is also estimated with and without this covariate.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Results show that the indirect effect of ethicality through warmth and envy on imitation is significant and negative (effect: -.06, CI from -.09 to -.04). On the other hand, the influence of ethicality through warmth and admiration is significant only when competence is not included in the model (effect: .03, CI from .02 to .06). The effect is not significant when competence is included in the analysis (effect: .002, CI from -.001 to .01). These results support H7 while rejecting H6. Finally, PROCESS also computes the difference between the indirect effects of the path linking ethicality, warmth, envy and imitation and other indirect effects potentially implied by the research model. Results are reported in Table 3. All indirect effects are statistically significant, since the confidence intervals do not include zero. Furthermore, all differences are negative and this indicates that the indirect effect through warmth and envy is significantly larger than any other potential indirect effect postulated by the proposed conceptual model (Hayes, 2013). These results support H8.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

## **Discussion**

The study offers several contributions. The SCM model, which had hitherto been applied to the analysis of brand personality (Ivens et al., 2015), can also be applied to assess reactions to groups of consumers. The social stereotyping of users of responsible brands represent an important barrier to the adoption of responsible offerings. Perceived ethicality drives



stereotypes of warmth, and, through the mediating role of envy, warmth makes a consumer group dissociative. The study extends research on the barriers to responsible consumption (e.g. Bray et al., 2011; Carrington et al., 2010) by showing that, at a societal level, there is a relative bias attached to decisions to support environmental/social causes in a consumer domain. The status-driven nature of consumption processes leads to the stereotyping of caring, altruistic acts that reduce envy hence weakening emulative effects. These findings have important managerial implications. Companies promoting responsible brands need to be aware of this implicit symbolic disadvantage their offerings are likely to face and should devise strategies to counter it. Stereotypes are an additional motivational hurdle that hinder the adoption of responsible brands because they are perceived as diminishing (rather than enhancing) relative social status.

The study contributes to the literature in consumer behavior on envy and its motivational role. The evidence that envy is stronger than admiration in driving imitation is consistent with past research (Van de Ven et al., 2011a) and contributes to explaining the key role of this emotion in triggering acquisitive motivations (Belk, 2008).

The results might be somewhat influenced by the specific brands examined in the research. In Study 2 this possibility is ruled out by assessing participants' reactions to profiles of consumer groups directly. The perceived altruism of consumer choices is also measured since this variable is postulated as the ultimate driver of warmth stereotypes.

## **STUDY 2**

### **Method**

In this study, the social perception of different consumer segments was analyzed directly. Participants evaluated four alternative segments and expressed their opinion on how different

groups of consumers are perceived by most Americans. Each participant evaluated only one segment description.

Although a cover story used in the survey stated that the four groups had been identified in previous market research, the four descriptions of consumer groups were developed specifically for this research. The groups were differentiated in terms of their 'main shopping motivation'. All descriptions had self-explanatory labels differentiated on the basis of the motivational characteristics of the group: Nature-Oriented consumer group, Luxury-Oriented consumer group, Price-Oriented consumer group, Quality-Oriented consumer group. The four descriptions were developed around common competing motivations consumers might experience in their shopping decisions as well as positioning strategies that are common in many categories. The description of the Nature-Oriented group was consistent with existing literature on the attitudes and behaviors of responsible consumers (Harrison et al., 2005). The decision to use several groups was motivated by a desire to obtain significant variability in the independent variable (i.e. altruism). Including only the Nature-Oriented group would have resulted, according to the theory presented, in very positively skewed responses and difficulty for testing the model empirically. This expectation was confirmed by the results as demonstrated by Appendix C and the ratings obtained by this group in terms of altruism and warmth respectively. The four descriptions were assessed for clarity through two qualitative interviews. Slight changes to the text were implemented after the interviews. The description of the four groups is available in Appendix B.

### **Procedure and participants**

216 participants were recruited for this study using the same approach as Study 1. However, 16 interviews were not complete and were discarded before the analysis. In total 200

questionnaires were analyzed. Each individual was randomly allocated to one of the four consumer groups and completed the survey online.

## **Measures**

The same measures of Study 1 were used in this investigation with only two exceptions. Rather than the measure of brand ethicality, in this study, the perception of each group's altruism was assessed. If the theorizing presented is supported, there should be evidence of a negative stereotyping effect of the perceived altruism communicated by the purchase of responsible brands. In other words, buyers of responsible brands would be perceived as altruistic and it is this social perception which triggers the warmth stereotype explored in Study 1. A different measure of social desirability was implemented in this study to further explore whether the hypotheses presented can be affected by desirable responding (Reynolds, 1982).

Fifty participants were recruited through AMT for a pre-test. It was assessed whether the groups were correctly perceived by participants and easy to understand. All other scales were also assessed. On a 7-point scale, participants found both the description of the groups ( $M = 6.16$ ,  $SD = .76$ ) and the questions presented ( $M = 5.99$ ,  $SD = .82$ ) clear and easy to understand. Answers to several Likert scale questions showed that individuals perceive the group profiles as originally planned. Participants were also asked to comment on any difficulty experienced in an open-ended question but no concerns were raised.

## **Results**

The data analysis follows the same approach adopted in Study 1. A PLS-SEM model is estimated using the same specifications discussed above. In this case, however, the focus is

on whether the perceived altruism of the group (rather than the ethicality of the brand) contributes to determining warmth stereotypes and decreases the likelihood of imitation.

Correlations and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4. There is a positive moderate correlation between warmth and competence. Social desirability is clearly not a concern in this study since association between this variable and all the other constructs is very weak. The Harman's single factor test shows that 44% of the variance is explained by one factor while a model with five factors explains 85% of the variance. This evidence, coupled with the analysis of social desirability, suggests that common method bias does not affect significantly the results of this study.

The measurement model is presented in Table 5. All items measure satisfactorily the underlying constructs and there are no reliability concerns. Discriminant validity is also confirmed by the analysis of the HTMT ratio. The HTMT, with a highest value of .83, is below the critical .85 threshold (Henseler et al., 2015). The bootstrap confidence interval shows a highest value of .72, confirming the discriminant validity of the measures used (Kline, 2011).

The structural model is presented in Figure 3. As in Study 1, the stereotype of competence is retained as a control in the analysis. All relationships hypothesized are supported by the data. In this study the influence of warmth on admiration remains significant even after the covariate competence is added to the model.  $R^2$  and  $Q^2$  values suggest that perceived altruism has a substantial effect on competence and warmth respectively (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2013). The model shows good predictive relevance for all the other endogenous constructs.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

The same procedures discussed in Study 1 are implemented to test H6, H7 and H8. Results are consistent with Study 1. The indirect effect of altruism of the group, through warmth and envy, on imitation is significant and negative (effect:  $-.18$ , CI from  $-.29$  to  $-.10$ ). Admiration, however, is not mediating the effect of perceived altruism on imitation. The positive indirect effect of the multiple mediators model, which includes this emotion (effect:  $.08$ , CI from  $.02$  to  $.15$ ), is not statistically significant when competence is included in the model as a covariate (effect:  $.04$ , CI from  $-.003$  to  $.09$ ). Consequently, H6 is rejected while H7 is supported by the data.

The differences between indirect effects are summarized in Table 6. H8 is supported. The indirect negative influence of the perceived altruism of a consumer group is largest than any positive effect which might be caused by increases in admiration.

INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

## **Discussion**

Following a different approach, the same pattern of results of Study 1 is replicated. Evidence shows that consumer groups perceived as altruistic are dissociative because of the mediating role of envy. Stereotypes of warmth make responsible consumption less appealing and therefore represent a social barrier to the adoption of responsible alternatives.

Results from Study 2 show specifically that the altruistic nature of consumption choices of responsible users is problematic. This result raises important implications for marketing and communications around sustainability and responsible consumption choices which are discussed in detail below.

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

The research contributes to the literature which examines the barrier to the development of responsible consumption. Previous research has already discussed how the social processes in which consumption is situated can potentially hinder the adoption of these alternatives (Bray et al., 2011; Chatzidakis et al., 2007; Valor & Carrero, 2014). One potential barrier never examined systematically in previous research is the possibility that current users of responsible brands might represent a dissociative social group which is not appealing to mainstream consumers. This paper builds on an established stereotype theory to outline a process explaining why individuals do not wish to associate with buyers of responsible products. Warmth stereotypes inhibit envy which, despite its negative valence and its association with resentment (Van de Ven et al., 2009), represents a powerful engine for the diffusion of consumption trends (Belk, 2008). When it comes to brand decisions, consumers do not wish to associate with groups who are perceived as ‘nice’. This finding, however, does not imply that associative consumer groups cannot be stereotyped as warm. Although warmth has a unique negative effect on the desire to emulate a group, its effect can be compensated by other perceptions; for example, by high levels of competence which has an associative effect.

This study is also the first to apply the SCM to research on the evaluation of consumer groups. Future research can advance the understanding of how the perception of different consumer groups can contribute to determining different consumption patterns in society (e.g.

Schor, 1999). The SCM is able to capture social stereotypes attached to groups of consumers and therefore can be employed in future studies that examine how stereotypes develop (i.e. their antecedents) and their consequences for consumer behavior in different domains.

Important challenges for marketing and communication associated with responsible alternatives emerge from this research. Cultivating niches of responsible consumption, which are then expected to become more mainstream over time (Low & Davenport, 2005), is a popular strategy in the promotion of responsible brands. The evidence presented in this paper questions the feasibility of this strategy because such niches, often associated with labeling initiatives which represent symbols of ‘ethicality’ (Delmas et al., 2013; Hartlieb & Jones, 2009), are likely to reinforce, rather than challenge, the stereotypization of responsible consumption. Marketers should instead contrast warmth stereotypes, especially in the categories where such a social perception is likely to be considered more damaging (see Luchs et al., 2010 and Griskevicius et al., 2010). It is recommended that managers compensate for the effects of warmth stereotypes through a focus on promoting competence and effectiveness (Burgess et al., 2013; Graham-Rowe et al., 2012). Companies should be cautious when deciding to communicate the responsible features of a product or brand explicitly. In some circumstances this strategy might be effective (Griskevicius et al., 2010), but overall it presents clear risks in terms of stereotyping.

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**Table 1: Correlations and descriptive statistics**

	Mean	SD	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8
Ethicality X1	5.01	1.08	-							
Warmth X2	3.56	.82	.35	-	-					
Competence X3	3.82	.70	.37	.24	-	-				
Admiration X4	3.31	1.00	.26	.10	.52	-	-			
Envy X5	2.53	1.36	.03	-.33	.29	.49	-	-		
Imitation X6	2.99	1.03	.04	-.07	.26	.47	.51	-		
Green values X7	4.78	1.29	.03	.04	.05	.08	-.06	-.05	-	
Social desirability X8	4.04	1.08	.21	.15	.14	.14	-.05	.05	.21	-

Coefficients above .1 are significant at  $p < .05$ ; coefficients above .13 are significant at  $p < .01$ .

**Table 2: Measurement model**

<i>ITEMS</i>	<i>Standardized loadings</i>
<i>Ethicality</i> ( $\alpha = .90$ ; AVE = .65; CR = .87)	
[Brand name] respects moral norms	.86
[Brand name] always adheres to the law	.79
[Brand name] is a socially responsible brand	.86
[Brand name] avoids damaging behaviour at all cost	.82
[Brand name] is a good brand	.71
<i>Warmth</i> ( $\alpha = .87$ ; AVE = .72; CR = .91)	
As viewed by most Americans how friendly are users of [brand name]?	.87
As viewed by most Americans how good-natured are users of [brand name]?	.88
As viewed by most Americans how tolerant are users of [brand name]?	.75
As viewed by most Americans how warm are users of [brand name]?	.88
<i>Competence</i> ( $\alpha = .83$ ; AVE = .75; CR = .90)	
As viewed by most Americans how capable are users of [brand name]?	.90
As viewed by most Americans how competent are users of [brand name]?	.89
As viewed by most Americans how skillful are users of [brand name]?	.81
<i>Admiration</i> ( $r = .82$ ; AVE = .85; CR = .92)	
To what extent do people tend to feel admiration towards users of [brand name]?	.93
To what extent do people tend to feel respect towards users of [brand name]?	.91
<i>Envy</i> ( $r = .94$ ; AVE = .94; CR = .97)	
To what extent do people tend to feel envy towards users of [brand name]?	.97
To what extent do people tend to feel jealousy towards users of [brand name]?	.97
<i>Imitation</i> ( $r = .92$ ; AVE = .93; CR = .96)	
Do people tend to copy users of [brand name]?	.96
Do people tend to imitate users of [brand name]?	.97

**Table 3: Comparison of indirect effects**

<i>Test of difference between effects</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Confidence interval</i>
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect B</i>	-.033	from -.061 to -.011
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect C</i>	-.42	from -.059 to -.028
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect D</i>	-.018	from -.033 to -.007
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect E</i>	-.061	from -.094 to -.037
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect F</i>	-.040	from -.056 to -.026
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect G</i>	-.044	from -.066 to -.026
<i>Indirect effect A: Ethicality → Warmth → Envy → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect B: Ethicality → Warmth → Admiration → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect C: Ethicality → Warmth → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect D: Ethicality → Warmth → Envy → Admiration → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect E: Ethicality → Envy → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect F: Ethicality → Envy → Admiration → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect G: Ethicality → Admiration → Imitation</i>		

**Table 4: Correlations and descriptive statistics**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>X1</b>	<b>X2</b>	<b>X3</b>	<b>X4</b>	<b>X5</b>	<b>X6</b>	<b>X7</b>	<b>X8</b>
Altruism X1	3.74	1.50	-							
Warmth X2	4.01	1.27	.75	-						
Competence X3	4.96	1.02	.31	.37	-					
Admiration X4	3.98	1.33	.48	.47	.46	-				
Envy X5	3.92	1.86	-.20	-.38	.19	.16	-			
Imitation X6	4.09	1.35	-.09	-.14	.29	.37	.50	-		
Green values X7	4.76	1.37	.01	.02	.03	-.01	-.05	-.03	-	
Social desirability X8	5.88	3.11	.05	.10	-.02	.06	-.12	-.03	.21	-

Coefficients above .14 are significant at  $p < .05$ ; coefficients above .19 are significant at  $p < .01$ .

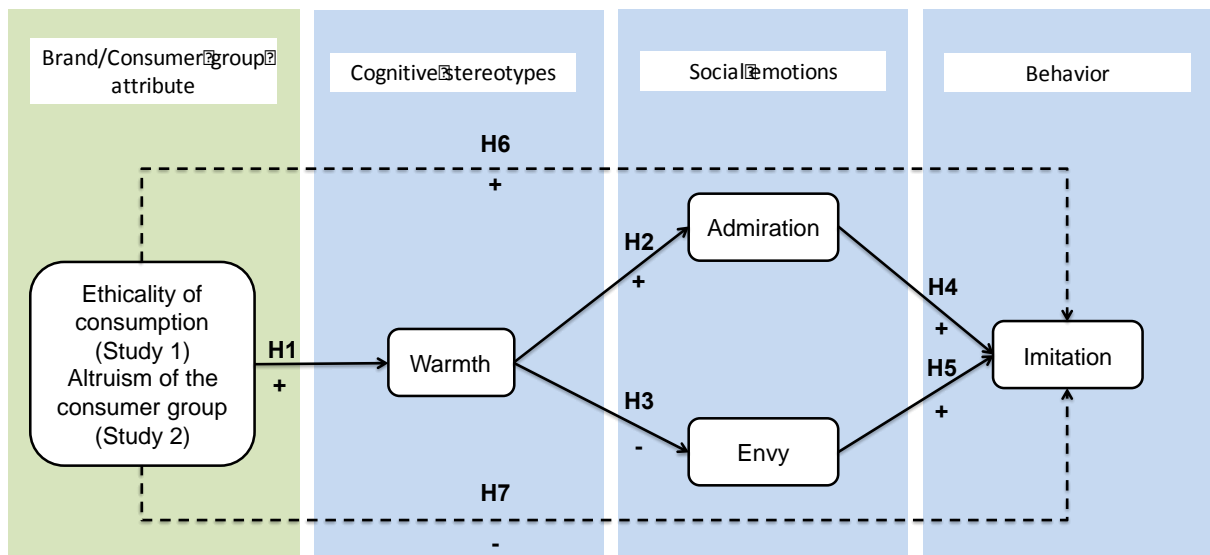
**Table 5: Measurement model**

<i>Items</i>	<i>Standardized loadings</i>
<i>Altruism</i> ( $\alpha = .86$ ; AVE = .79; CR = .92)	
As viewed by most Americans how altruistic are [consumer segment name]?	.81
As viewed by most Americans how charitable are [consumer segment name]?	.92
As viewed by most Americans how generous are [consumer segment name]?	.92
<i>Warmth</i> ( $\alpha = .92$ ; AVE = .71; CR = .94)	
As viewed by most Americans how friendly are [consumer segment name]?	.87
As viewed by most Americans how good-natured are [consumer segment name]?	.90
As viewed by most Americans how sincere are [consumer segment name]?	.85
As viewed by most Americans how tolerant are [consumer segment name]?	.75
As viewed by most Americans how warm are [consumer segment name]?	.86
<i>Competence</i> ( $\alpha = .79$ ; AVE = .51; CR = .86)	
As viewed by most Americans how capable are [consumer segment name]?	.85
As viewed by most Americans how competent are [consumer segment name]?	.81
As viewed by most Americans how competitive are [consumer segment name]?	.46
As viewed by most Americans how confident are [consumer segment name]?	.60
As viewed by most Americans how skilful are [consumer segment name]?	.87
<i>Admiration</i> ( $r = .79$ ; AVE = .83; CR = .91)	
To what extent do people tend to feel admiration towards [consumer segment name]?	.89
To what extent do people tend to feel respect towards [consumer segment name]?	.93
<i>Envy</i> ( $r = .92$ ; AVE = .93; CR = .96)	
To what extent do people tend to feel envy towards [consumer segment name]?	.96
To what extent do people tend to feel jealousy towards [consumer segment name]?	.96
<i>Imitation</i> ( $r = .84$ ; AVE = .86; CR = .93)	
Do people tend to copy [consumer segment name]?	.94
Do people tend to imitate [consumer segment name]?	.92

**Table 6: Comparison of indirect effects**

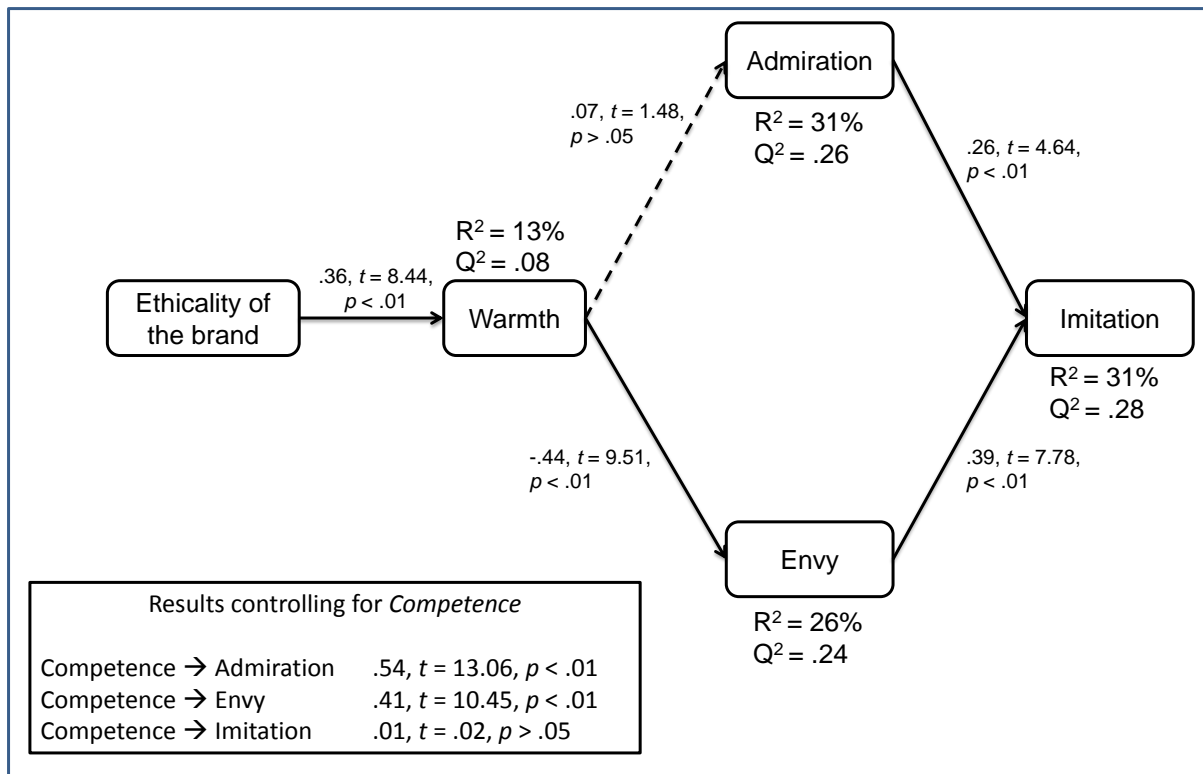
<i>Test of difference between effects</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Confidence interval</i>
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect B</i>	-.23	from -.14 to -.33
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect C</i>	-.12	from -.31 to .05
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect D</i>	-.19	from -.05 to -.31
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect E</i>	-.18	from -.34 to -.07
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect F</i>	-.20	from -.32 to -.12
<i>Indirect effect A minus Indirect effect G</i>	-.27	from -.39 to -.026
<i>Indirect effect A: Altruism → Warmth → Envy → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect B: Altruism → Warmth → Admiration → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect C: Altruism → Warmth → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect D: Altruism → Warmth → Envy → Admiration → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect E: Altruism → Envy → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect F: Altruism → Envy → Admiration → Imitation</i>		
<i>Indirect effect G: Altruism → Admiration → Imitation</i>		



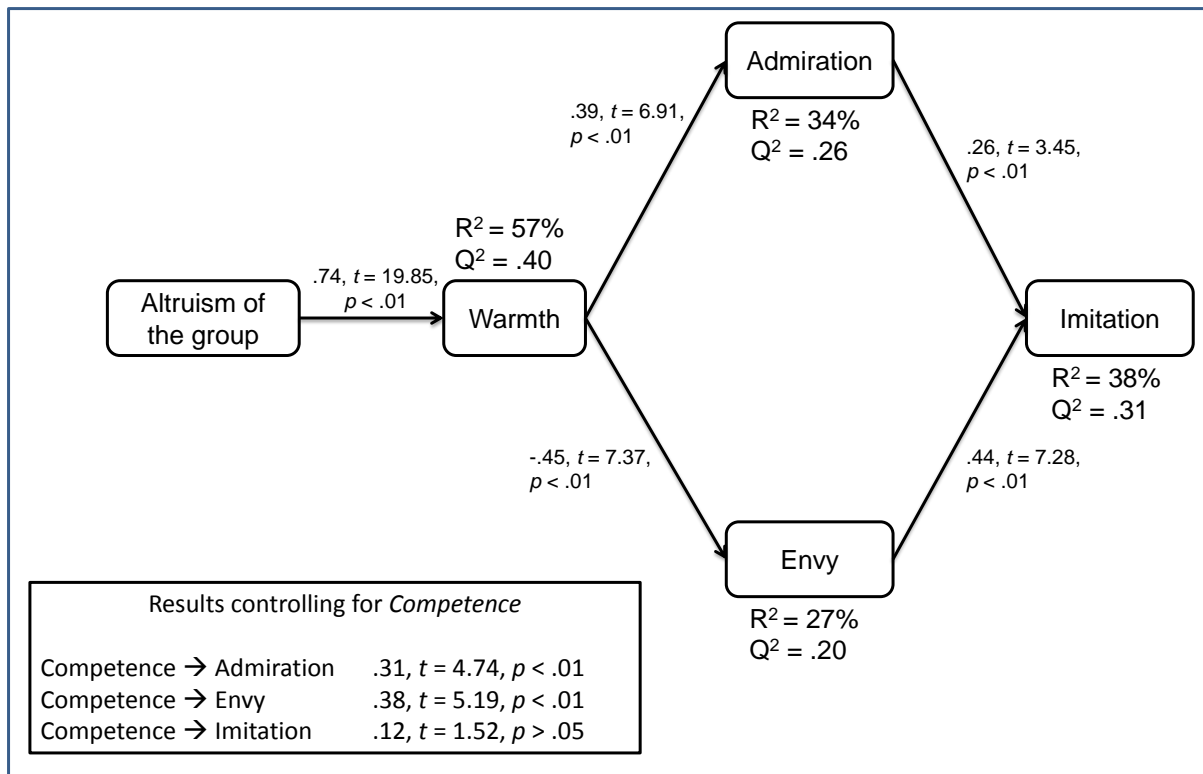


Solid lines represent hypothesized direct effects, dotted lines represent hypothesized indirect effect

**Figure 1: Research model**



**Figure 2: Structural equation model (Study 1)**



**Figure 3: Structural equation model (Study 2)**

## Appendix A: Evaluations of the brands (Study 1)

	Mass Market Brands		Prestige Brands		Sustainable Brands		
	Tide	Coca Cola	Mercedes	Rolex	Burt's Bees	Seventh Generation	Tom's of Maine
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	<i>N</i> = 56	<i>N</i> = 57	<i>N</i> = 55	<i>N</i> = 56	<i>N</i> = 58	<i>N</i> = 53	<i>N</i> = 55
<u>Brand features</u>							
<i>Ethicality</i>	4.69 <i>1.19</i>	4.53 <i>1.23</i>	4.88 <i>1.05</i>	4.96 <i>.95</i>	5.29 <sup>aB</sup> <i>.95</i>	5.41 <sup>AB</sup> <i>.86</i>	5.32 <sup>AB</sup> <i>.99</i>
<i>Prestige</i>	4.45 <i>1.66</i>	4.49 <i>1.81</i>	6.53 <sup>ABEFG</sup> <i>.74</i>	6.59 <sup>ABEFG</sup> <i>.87</i>	4.76 <i>1.54</i>	4.55 <i>1.17</i>	4.87 <i>1.04</i>
<i>Quality</i>	5.45 <i>1.31</i>	5.19 <i>1.42</i>	6.38 <sup>ABFG</sup> <i>.76</i>	6.50 <sup>ABeFG</sup> <i>.87</i>	5.84 <sup>b</sup> <i>1.01</i>	5.58 <i>.84</i>	5.53 <i>1.10</i>
<u>Stereotypes</u>							
<i>Warmth</i>	3.69 <sup>CD</sup> <i>.70</i>	3.67 <sup>CD</sup> <i>.68</i>	2.90 <i>.82</i>	2.94 <i>.85</i>	3.97 <sup>CD</sup> <i>.75</i>	3.84 <sup>CD</sup> <i>.58</i>	3.94 <sup>CD</sup> <i>.56</i>
<i>Competence</i>	3.80 <i>.80</i>	3.45 <i>.75</i>	4.13 <sup>Bfg</sup> <i>.57</i>	4.08 <sup>B</sup> <i>.70</i>	3.80 <i>.67</i>	3.74 <i>.48</i>	3.75 <i>.69</i>
<u>Emotions</u>							
<i>Admiration</i>	2.96 <i>1.10</i>	2.79 <i>1.09</i>	3.66 <sup>ABE</sup> <i>.91</i>	3.88 <sup>ABE</sup> <i>.85</i>	3.06 <i>.85</i>	3.47 <i>.87</i>	3.38 <i>.89</i>
<i>Envy</i>	1.90 <i>1.05</i>	1.75 <i>.86</i>	4.02 <sup>ABEFG</sup> <i>1.02</i>	4.03 <sup>ABEFG</sup> <i>.87</i>	1.84 <i>.95</i>	2.05 <i>1.02</i>	2.18 <i>1.07</i>
<u>Behavioural tendencies</u>							
<i>Imitation</i>	2.68 <i>.98</i>	2.61 <i>1.13</i>	3.30 <sup>ABeFG</sup> <i>.91</i>	3.66 <sup>ABEFG</sup> <i>.94</i>	2.64 <i>.94</i>	2.72 <i>.84</i>	2.55 <i>.93</i>

Values presented are the average of all items for each construct. Numbers in italics are standard deviations. Within each row, values with capitalized superscript labels are significantly different at the  $p < .01$  significance level while lowercase superscript labels indicate a difference which is statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level. Results based on a MANOVA analysis using a Bonferroni post-hoc test to assess pairwise differences.

## Appendix B: Consumer groups in Study 2

### **SEGMENTATION REPORT** / *The Nature-Oriented Consumer*

Main shopping motivation: Main motivation of this segment is to buy environmentally-friendly products. Consumers in this group are likely to buy environmentally friendly products regardless of price. / Favored brands: Fairtrade and/or organic brands; Natural and ethical cosmetics; Local and usually small firms. / Quality orientation: They like quality when it does not come at the expense of the environment. / Price orientation: Their level of concern for price is average. / Luxury orientation: They tend to avoid luxury as it is perceived as wasteful and superficial.

### **SEGMENTATION REPORT** / *The Nature-Oriented Consumer*

Main shopping motivation: Main motivation of this segment is to buy products of the best quality. Consumers in this group are likely to choose high quality products regardless of price. / Favored brands: Premium brands; High-quality brands; Quality certifications that often offer long guarantees. / Nature orientation: They are relatively unconcerned about environmental issues. / Price orientation: Their level of concern for price is low. / Luxury orientation: They tend to buy luxury products more than average when they believe that luxury stands also for quality.

### **SEGMENTATION REPORT / *The Luxury-Oriented Consumer***

Main shopping motivation: Main motivation of this segment is to buy luxury products. Consumers in this group are likely to buy premium labels regardless of price. / Favored brands: Luxury brands; Popular brands; Tend to follow the trends and latest fads. / Nature orientation: They are relatively unconcerned about environmental issues. / Price orientation: Their level of concern for price is low. / Quality orientation: They like quality but they tend to believe that luxury or popular brands are also those of highest quality.

### **SEGMENTATION REPORT / *The Price-Oriented Consumer***

Main shopping motivation: Main motivation of this segment is to spend as little as possible. Consumers in this group are likely to search extensively for special offers, deals and other opportunities to spend less. / Favored brands: Value for money brands; discounts, offers, sales etc.; Tend to do extensive searches for cheap alternatives. / Nature orientation: They are relatively unconcerned about environmental issues. / Quality orientation: They like quality when it comes at a competitive price. / Luxury orientation: They tend to avoid luxury as it is perceived as expensive and unnecessary.

## Appendix C: Evaluations of the consumer groups (Study 2)

	Nature-Oriented group	Luxury-Oriented group	Price-Oriented group	Quality-Oriented group
	A	B	C	D
	(N= 51)	(N= 50)	(N= 48)	(N= 50)
<u>Profile of the groups</u>				
<i>Nature orientation perception</i>	6.14 <sup>BCD</sup> 1.02	2.20 1.35	2.34 1.26	2.58 1.62
<i>Luxury orientation perception</i>	2.49 1.45	6.49 <sup>AC</sup> 1.10	2.13 1.35	6.18 <sup>AC</sup> 1.03
<i>Price orientation perception</i>	3.48 <sup>BD</sup> 1.36	1.97 1.38	6.55 <sup>ABD</sup> 0.86	2.25 1.66
<i>Quality orientation perception</i>	4.92 <sup>C</sup> 1.32	5.30 <sup>C</sup> 1.37	3.46 1.56	6.43 <sup>ABC</sup> 1.07
<u>Stereotypes</u>				
<i>Altruism</i>	5.03 <sup>BCD</sup> 1.26	3.07 1.33	3.24 1.40	3.53 1.18
<i>Warmth</i>	4.96 <sup>BcD</sup> 1.13	3.17 1.12	4.28 <sup>Bd</sup> .94	3.61 1.12
<i>Competence</i>	4.80 1.08	5.00 1.07	4.97 .97	5.06 .96
<u>Emotions</u>				
<i>Admiration</i>	4.25 1.25	3.86 1.54	3.84 1.25	3.94 1.28
<i>Envy</i>	2.52 1.26	5.35 <sup>AC</sup> 1.24	2.93 1.51	4.85 <sup>AC</sup> 1.63
<u>Behavioural tendencies</u>				
<i>Imitation</i>	3.18 1.10	4.67 <sup>Ac</sup> 1.43	3.95 1.20	4.56 <sup>A</sup> 1.11

Values presented are the average of all items for each construct. Numbers in italics are standard deviations. Within each row, values with capitalized superscript labels are significantly different at the  $p < .01$  significance level while lowercase superscript labels indicate a difference which is statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level. Results based on a MANOVA analysis using a Bonferroni post-hoc test to assess pairwise differences.

# Hippies, greenies, and tree huggers: how the “warmth” stereotype hinders the adoption of responsible brands

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2016-09-08

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