

Research Statement

My research interests generally focus on the psychological influence of consumer social class, political ideology, and emotional intelligence, on preference formation and consumption decisions.

The title of my dissertation is “Social Class and Consumer Choice: The Role of Cultural Capital.” In this research, I focus on understanding how social class influences consumer choices. Extending literature on *cultural capital*—a person’s knowledge, tastes, and behaviors that reflect their position within the social class hierarchy—I demonstrate that beyond the purchasing power that financial resources can afford a person, consumer perceptions of their social position based on cultural capital can have an important impact on their pursuit of hedonic versus utilitarian goals. This research reconciles a conflict between the literature on needs satisfaction, which suggests that utilitarian needs are usually addressed first, and evolutionary psychology literature suggesting that lower class consumers sacrifice basic utilitarian needs in favor of hedonic desires. This project is in under review at *JMR*.

My second stream of research focuses on the influence of consumer political ideology on decision-making. In one project, I look at how people who identify with conservative values are more persuaded by messaging from liberal (vs. conservative) news sources to engage in sustainable consumption practices (in preparation for *Nature*). In another project, I demonstrate that priming liberal consumers with messaging regarding food waste (vs. overconsumption) results in unhealthy overeating behaviors, to avoid food waste (in preparation for *JCP*).

My third stream of research focuses on consumer emotional intelligence. In a paper recently published in *JCR*, I examine marketplace interactions between people with similar (vs. dissimilar) levels of emotional intelligence. I evaluate the effects of this similarity on buyer/seller and consumer/consumer interactions and long-term relationships.

In general, my research is aimed at developing customer-based strategy to address managerially important questions for marketers and policy-makers. These three streams of research 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.