Do Less Ethical Consumers Denigrate More Ethical Consumers? The Effect of Willful Ignorance on Judgments of Others

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Abstract

This research shows that consumers who willfully ignore ethical product attributes denigrate other, more ethical consumers who seek out and use this information in making purchase decisions. Across three studies, willfully ignorant consumers negatively judge ethical others they have never met across various disparate personality traits (e.g., fashionable, boring). The denigration arises from the self-threat inherent in negative social comparison with others who acted ethically instead of choosing not to do so. In addition, this denigration has detrimental downstream consequences, undermining the denigrator's commitment to ethical values, as evidenced by reduced anger towards firms who violate the ethical principle in question and reduced intention to behave ethically in the future. There are two moderators of the effect: Denigration becomes less strong if willfully ignorant consumers have a second opportunity to act ethically after initially ignoring the ethical product information and also significantly weakens if initially ignoring the ethical attribute is seen as justifiable. These results have implications for understanding ethical consumption behavior, perceptions of ethical consumerism in general, and marketing of ethical products.

Keywords: Willful ignorance, ethical attributes, ethical consumer behavior, morality, social comparison, sustainability

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The desire to act ethically is inherent in most consumers, but this desire is not always reflected in market behavior. For example, most of us value the idea of fair labor practices, but how many people actually attempt to ascertain the manufacturing origins of their clothing? Besides the time and energy it takes to pursue this information, there are potential psychological costs to obtaining it. Emotional attributes such as whether a product was made with child labor cause distress, and this distress can lead to a number of avoidance responses (e.g., Luce, 1998). When the relevant ethical information is not available to consumers, a prevalent avoidance response is for consumers to remain "willfully ignorant" of the information by requesting ethical attribute information "at a significantly lower rate than they would have used the information had it been available" (Ehrich & Irwin, 2005, p. 266). In this research, we ask the question: What happens after consumers decide to ignore information about ethical product attributes by not requesting it? In particular, what happens when consumers forgo ethical product information while aware that there are other consumers who do collect and consider ethical product information before making their decisions? What is the response to those individuals who actively seek out ethical information, whom we term "ethical others," and how does this response affect consumers' own future ethical behavior?

Prior research on the effect of observing others' acts of virtue suggests that people may experience "a built-in emotional responsiveness to moral beauty" (Haidt, 2003, p. 284) that leads to admiration of the ethical others as well as the desire to behave more ethically themselves in the future. It is possible that consumers could experience this positive shift in judgment, termed

"elevation" (Haidt, 2003), when they know that others spent time collecting and considering ethical product information. Elevation is an optimistic phenomenon, but may not be the only response to ethical others. We propose an opposing response, in which consumers denigrate others, which we define as negatively judging another individual's personality, both by rating them more negatively on negatively valenced personality traits and less positively on positively valenced traits. After deciding to ignore ethical product information, a consumer might feel threatened by the negative contrast with the ethical others' actions. Denigrating these ethical others may help counteract the feeling of threat arising from the negative social comparison (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997; Wills, 1981).

Across three studies, we demonstrate that consumers who ignore ethical attribute information denigrate other consumers who choose to seek out this ethical information. As such, this research makes several theoretical contributions. It is the first, to our knowledge, to examine the denigration phenomenon within the domain of everyday consumption. These findings also extend previous work by providing evidence that denigrating others in the ethical domain leads to detrimental downstream consequences for consumers' own future ethical behavior and by demonstrating ways in which both the propensity to denigrate and the effects of denigration can be moderated. Note that the moral decision tested in these studies, the decision not to know about ethical attributes of products, is an omission rather than a commission (Spranca, Minsk, & Baron, 1991) and is both relatively mild and relatively common in the marketplace. Nevertheless, the results will show that this common omission can have significant effects on later judgments and behaviors. From a practical standpoint, our findings also provide insight into a potential reason why ethical products are rarely market leaders (Luchs, Irwin, Naylor, &

Raghunathan, 2010). Once a consumer chooses to remains willfully ignorant once, a cycle begins that leads that consumer to be even less likely to be ethical in the future.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Ethical Market Behaviors and Willful Ignorance

Past research suggests that consumers may not choose ethical products because the difficult/emotional aspects of ethical attributes can lead consumers to want to avoid thinking about them. Luce (1998) showed that the act of making an emotional tradeoff can cause decision makers to avoid the tradeoff altogether. The most common way to avoid marketplace tradeoffs involving ethics is probably to avoid knowing whether products are ethical or not. In a paper exploring this idea, Ehrich and Irwin (2005) showed that consumers avoid finding out about (i.e., remain willfully ignorant of) ethical attributes such as labor practices and environmental friendliness even though they will use the information to make their decision if it is readily available. However, the question that remains is what happens if a consumer's willful ignorance is highlighted or challenged by others? Extant research has not yet shown whether willful ignorance interacts with a consumer's social environment to produce social consequences.

Prior literature suggests two potential consequences of learning that others have been more ethical than oneself. For certain types of ethical observations, people tend to elevate towards the ethical others in the future (e.g., Haidt, 2003). In other situations, people seem to feel threatened by ethical others and denigrate them as a response to this threat (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997). We argue that the second option (i.e., denigrating ethical others) is much more likely to occur in our context and explain why next.

Why Willful Ignorance Leads to Denigration of Ethical Others

Some previous research suggests that observing someone perform a moral act might lead to a positive emotional response, or a feeling of moral elevation (e.g., Haidt, 2003). Essentially, observing other individuals perform ethical acts might lead to admiration of these ethical others, motivating the consumer to perform similar acts in the future. However, we suspect that this literature is less relevant to the context of the present research, because in past research on elevation, participants view moral acts that are not directly related to an act that they failed to complete and thus simply serve as outside observers. Willfully ignorant consumers, on the other hand, are able to directly compare others' ethical behavior to their own lack of the same behavior. Thus, we predict, based on social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954; Suls & Wheeler, 2000), that the contrast of ethical others' actions to one's own lack of such behavior should instead create a sense of self-threat among willfully ignorant consumers that leads them to denigrate instead of elevate.

Social comparison theory posits that individuals make direct comparisons with others in order to evaluate their personal characteristics, opinions, and abilities (Festinger, 1954). These comparisons can reveal information that is threatening to the self (e.g., Morse & Gergen, 1970; Tesser, Millar, & Moore, 1988), especially when the comparison is made to someone who is superior on relevant qualities (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997) and/or if the task being compared is relevant to the self (Tesser et al., 1988), as viewing ethical product information is to a willfully ignorant consumer. Because consumers are highly motivated to avoid viewing themselves negatively in comparison with others (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001), they then turn to various self-protection strategies in order to prevent such negative feelings from arising and/or persisting. For example, self-enhancement or self-protection motives (Alicke &

Sedikides, 2009) might lead to reactions such as self-deception and moral hypocrisy. Self-deception allows people to behave in a self-interested way while at the same time believing that their moral principles are still upheld (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004), and moral hypocrisy results in "morality [being] extolled—even enacted—not with an eye to producing a good and right outcome but in order to appear moral yet still benefit oneself" (Batson, Kobrynowicz, Dinnerstein, Kampf, & Wilson, 1997, p. 1335).

Based on the above, when a willfully ignorant consumer learns that he or she was ethically "outperformed" by another consumer who chose to view ethical product information, a negative comparison to this ethical other likely leads the consumer to feel threatened. In order to recover from these types of threats, consumers often disparage others (Crocker, Thompson, Mcgraw, & Ingerman, 1987; Fein & Spencer, 1997; Wills, 1981). We expect that this response is especially likely when a direct comparison between two conflicting behaviors is considered, as it is between willfully ignorant consumers and ethical consumers.

There have not been many studies of this nature in the area of moral behavior, especially not in moral consumer behavior. The studies that have been run, although quite different in context than our studies, in a general sense support our expectation of denigration. For example, Monin, Sawyer, and Marquez's (2008) study of participation in immoral speech found that people who went along with negative speech subsequently negatively judged "moral rebels" who refused to participate. Seeking out ethical product information could similarly be interpreted as an act of rebellion by morally superior others against the willful ignorance employed by a consumer who has chosen to ignore ethical information. Similarly, Minson and Monin (2012) found that people tend to think negatively about vegetarians, especially when they are primed to

pay attention to the idea that vegetarians are morally superior. Based on the above reasoning, we predict:

H1: Willfully ignorant consumers will denigrate ethical others due to the negative social comparison to these ethical others.

Alternative Ways to Recover from Self-Threat

We have predicted that the desire to denigrate ethical others stems from the threat of negative social comparison between one's own lack of ethical behavior and other consumers' more ethical behavior. Therefore, if the direct negative comparison is attenuated or removed, consumers should not be motivated to denigrate ethical others as harshly because they will feel less threat. Past research has shown that consumers' need to engage in self-protection/self-enhancing actions declines as the severity of the discrepancy in social comparison decreases (e.g., Argo, White, & Dahl, 2006). Thus, behaving ethically when given a "second chance" to do so before judging ethical others should reduce the discrepancy between the behavior of the willfully ignorant consumer and the ethical other, in turn reducing the severity of denigration. Stated formally:

H2: Willfully ignorant consumers who actively engage in ethical behavior when given a second chance to do so will denigrate ethical others less harshly.

Additionally, consumers should not denigrate ethical others as harshly if they feel as though it is easy to justify why they initially ignored the ethical information. If no one would expect a consumer to seek out the ethical information, such as in a time-sensitive situation, the comparison between the consumers' willfully ignorant actions and the ethical actions of other consumers should not create as much tension. Thus, we propose:

H3: Denigration of ethical others will not be as severe if it is easily justifiable for a consumer to ignore ethical product information.

Effects of Denigrating Ethical Others on Future Ethical Behaviors

Finally, we predict that remaining willfully ignorant when others actively seek out ethical product information can have significant downstream consequences. Although willfully ignorant consumers initially choose to avoid the ethical attribute in order to protect themselves from experiencing negative affect, we predict that denigrating others who did seek out this information leads to less anger about the underlying issue. We base this prediction on self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), which posits that consumers learn about themselves, including their emotions (Laird & Bresler, 1992), by observing and interpreting their own behavior. For example, consumers may conclude that they do not agree with or care about an issue if they are shaking their head side to side (i.e., in a "no" motion) while another individual is presenting the message (Briñol & Petty, 2003). This process should extend to the case in which a consumer is denigrating an individual who cares about a certain issue. That is, by negatively judging someone who cares about an issue, one should conclude that he or she does not care about that issue.

Consistent with this past research, we propose that willfully ignorant consumers who denigrate others infer from their denigration of someone who appears to care deeply about the underlying issue that they themselves must care less deeply. Upon arriving at this conclusion, they then feel less angry about the issue in general and are subsequently less likely to behave ethically with respect to that particular ethical issue in the future (e.g., to be less likely to avoid manufacturers of jeans who use child labor). This prediction is consistent with past research documenting the influence of self-perceptions on future behavior (Kopel & Arkowitz, 1975). We therefore predict:

H4: Denigration of ethical others will lead willfully ignorant consumers to be less likely to commit subsequent ethical acts in the marketplace.

H5: The relationship between denigration of ethical others and willfully ignorant consumers' lower likelihood to commit subsequent ethical acts will be mediated by decreased feelings of anger regarding the underlying ethical issue.

STUDY ONE

In study 1, we test hypothesis 1, that willfully ignorant consumers will denigrate ethical others after learning about these others' ethical actions.

Method

A total of 147 native English-speaking undergraduates (54.10% female; M_{age} = 20.63) participated in the study in exchange for partial course credit. This study used a two-cell between-subjects design (Information Ignored: control attribute vs. ethical attribute) and was completed using a paper packet. Participants read that they would be evaluating four brands of blue jeans and were told that these jeans differed on only four attributes: style (boot cut or regular cut), wash (regular or dark), price ($65 or $75), and a fourth attribute. The fourth attribute either pertained to an ethical issue (i.e., whether the company used child labor) or was a control attribute unrelated to ethicality (i.e., delivery time).

Prior to the study, information about the jeans was placed into six separate envelopes, with each one containing a unique combination of two of the four attributes. Participants were told that, because of time constraints, they would only be able to view information about two attributes and thus could open only one envelope before indicating which of the brands of jeans

they would be most interested in purchasing. Two participants were removed from analyses because they failed to follow instructions by opening multiple envelopes. Nine participants chose an envelope that contained information about labor practices in the willfully ignorant condition or delivery time in the control condition and thus could not be classified as willfully ignorant (or part of the valid control group) and were not relevant to the hypotheses. Participants then provided their opinions about different types of consumers, purportedly for market segmentation purposes (see Appendix A for details). In the control condition, participants rated consumers who would choose to research clothing manufacturers' delivery time before making a purchase. In the willfully ignorant condition, participants rated consumers who would choose to research clothing manufacturers' labor practices before making a purchase. The rating task included ten characteristics, such as fashionable, attractive, odd, and boring (1 = *strongly disagree* and 8 = *strongly agree*; see Appendix B for all items). These characteristics were chosen because they were similar to traits used in prior research (e.g., "vegetarian" as a negative trait; Minson & Monin, 2012) or because they were an expansion into traits relevant to the task that had not been tested before (e.g., "fashionable" as a positive trait). Participants then provided demographic information and their opinion about the study's purpose in this and all other studies.

Manipulation Check with Separate Sample

A manipulation check with a separate sample of 55 participants on MTurk (36.36% female; M_{age} = 34.73) tested whether participants in our main study who ignored information about the manufacturer's labor practices would recognize that they had chosen to forgo ethical information. In one condition participants imagined a consumer who ignored information about the wash of the jeans and the labor practices of the manufacturer. In the other condition participants imagined a consumer who ignored information about the wash of the jeans and the

delivery time of the manufacturer. All participants then indicated their agreement with the following item (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*): "The consumer could have viewed information about the ethicality of the jeans, but did not." As expected, participants who imagined the consumer who ignored labor practice information agreed significantly more with the above statement ($M = 4.27$) than participants who imagined a consumer who ignored delivery time information ($M = 3.04$; $F(1, 53) = 5.21$, $p < .05$).

Main Study Results

A research assistant read all responses to a question asking "What was the purpose of today's task?" and indicated which participants had correctly guessed the true purpose of the study. This classification was checked by one of the authors who also read all responses and any disagreements were resolved by discussion. Thirteen participants were removed for guessing the true purpose of the study. The same procedure for classifying a participant as having correctly guessed the study's hypothesis was repeated across all three studies.

Our dependent variable was an overall positivity score for the focal other [i.e., the mean of the four negative traits (odd, boring, preachy, and vegetarian) subtracted from the mean of the four positive traits (fashionable, attractive, sexy, and serious]. An unconstrained confirmatory factor analysis showed a goodness of fit index (GFI) for two factors (positive and negative) of .88 and a GFI of .76 for one factor with all of the items included.

In order to test hypothesis 1, we ran a one factor (Information Ignored: ethical attribute vs. control attribute) ANOVA with the positivity score as the dependent variable and found that denigration of others who viewed an attribute that the consumer did not depended on the nature of the attribute. If the attribute was labor practices (i.e., an ethical attribute), then the judgments of others were significantly more negative ($M = -2.65$) than when the attribute was delivery time

(M = 1.28, $F(1, 121) = 10.21$, $p < .01$; Figure 1). These results hold if the individuals who guessed the true purpose of the study are included in the sample ($M_{ethical\ attribute}$ = -2.20 vs. $M_{control\ attribute}$ = 0.63; $F(1, 134) = 5.44$, $p < .05$).

--Insert figure 1 about here--

Discussion

These results support the notion that a consumer denigrates others who view ethical product information when he or she remains willfully ignorant of the same information. However, a consumer does not denigrate individuals who view an attribute that he or she did not view if the attribute is not related to ethicality; the "other" in the control condition is viewed as neutral to positive when consumers rate them on an equal number of negative and positive traits. Thus, the results of study 1 suggest that denigration occurs as a result of a negative social comparison in the domain of morality.

We note that we also measured ratings of "anxious" and "compassionate," with the expectation that respondents would assume that ethical others were more anxious and more compassionate. In actuality, the ethical others were rated as significantly less anxious than those in the delivery time condition (M = 6.80 vs. 4.10, $F(1, 121) = 116.82$, $p < .0001$), a finding we are unsure of how to interpret. The participants did rate the ethical others as more compassionate (M = 7.15 vs. 3.97, F = 135.84, $p < .0001$), a rating that serves as a manipulation check. Neither of these two ratings were used in subsequent studies because of their limited usefulness for our hypotheses.

Post-test

Although Ehrich and Irwin (2005) provided evidence that the reason consumers choose to remain willfully ignorant of ethical attributes is their desire to avoid negative emotions, perhaps in study 1 the avoidance of the ethical attribute is because ethical attributes are less important to consumers than other attributes. In a post-test, a separate sample of 55 MTurk participants (41.82% female; M_{age} = 31.96) rated the importance of the four jeans attributes used in study 1 (1 = *not at all important*, 7 = *extremely important)*. Participants rated labor practices (M = 5.33) to be significantly less important than price (M = 5.85; $t(109) = 2.07$, $p < .05$), but more important than wash (M = 4.80, $t(109) = -2.07$, $p < .05$) and equal in importance to style (M = 5.73; $t(109) = 1.57$, $p = .12$). Thus, labor practices are fairly important to the respondents. Nevertheless, it is possible that denigration occurred because participants thought looking at an attribute less important than price was odd or possibly non-normative but not necessarily moral. We return to this issue in study 3, where we empirically rule out this alternative explanation.

STUDY TWO

Study 2 examined whether consumers who remained willfully ignorant of an ethical attribute still denigrate ethical others as severely if they are first given an additional chance to engage in an ethical act. We expect that this second opportunity to behave ethically should reduce consumers' need to negatively judge others who sought out ethical information.

Method

A total of 176 native English-speaking undergraduate participants (43.75% female; M_{age} = 20.40) completed this study in exchange for course credit. This computer-mediated study used a two-cell (Second Opportunity to Act Ethically: yes or no) between-subject design.

As in study 1, participants imagined that they were in the market for a new pair of jeans that only differed on four attributes. They were not allowed to view all of the attributes due to time constraints and thus had to indicate which one of the six combinations of two attributes they wanted to view. Next, participants in the condition in which they had a second opportunity to act ethically before judging others were automatically brought to www.clicktogive.com as part of an ostensibly unrelated task about awareness for the charity website. Participants were not forced to donate upon visiting the site but could choose to donate to up to six charities with a click of a button on the website. Thus the high percentage of participants who chose to donate after visiting the site (93.75%) was expected, with participants donating on average to 3.56 of the six causes.

As in study 1, all participants were then asked to provide feedback about consumers for market segmentation purposes. This study did not include either the "vegetarian" trait or the "preachy" trait from study 1 and instead included "plain" and "harsh," to test the hypotheses with general negative traits instead of traits related to ethicality. Next, all participants answered a question to explore the potential for lasting effects of denigration: "How angry do you get when you hear about companies employing child labor in their manufacturing plants?" (1 = *not angry at all*, 8 = *very angry*; Ehrich & Irwin, 2005).

Results

Five participants were excluded from analyses because they determined the true purpose of the study. For the primary analyses, we also removed data from 26 participants because they chose to view information about the ethical labor attribute and thus could not be classified as willfully ignorant. Although these participants do not allow us to test our primary hypotheses, we can test whether looking at the ethical information resulted in less denigration. As in study 1, an overall positivity score for the ethical others was created (i.e., the sum of ratings on the four

negative traits: ratings for odd, boring, harsh, and plain were subtracted from the sum of ratings on the four positive traits, fashionable, attractive, sexy, and serious). An unconstrained confirmatory factor analysis showed a goodness of fit index for two factors (positive and negative) of .90 and a GFI of .88 for one factor with all of the items included.

The analysis showed that participants who were not willfully ignorant of the ethical attribute information denigrated significantly less than those who were willfully ignorant ($M_{non\text{-}willfully\ ignorant}$ = 3.19 vs. $M_{willfully\ ignorant}$ = 0.60, $F(1, 157) = 4.28$, $p < .05$). This effect serves as additional evidence that denigration of ethical others only results when willfully ignorant consumers compare their lack of ethical action to the ethical actions of other consumers. The rest of our analyses in the current study do not include these non-willfully ignorant participants. Data from 14 additional participants were removed because they indicated that they did not want to partake in the second opportunity to be ethical by not donating to any of the six charities.

*Denigration of ethical others***.** To test our hypotheses, we ran a one factor (Second Opportunity to Act Ethically before Judging Others: yes or no) ANOVA with the positivity score as the dependent variable. The results of this analysis revealed that participants who did not have a second opportunity to act ethically rated the ethical others significantly more negatively than participants who did partake in a second opportunity to act ethically (i.e., those who visited the charity website and donated to at least one cause; $M_{no\ second\ ethical\ opportunity}$ = -0.49 vs. $M_{second\ ethical\ opportunity}$ = 1.76; $F(1, 129) = 5.21$, $p < .05$; Figure 2), in support of both hypotheses 1 and 2. These results hold if the individuals who guessed the true purpose of the study are included in the sample ($M_{no\ second\ ethical\ opportunity}$ = -0.51 vs. $M_{second\ ethical\ opportunity}$ = 1.44; $F(1, 134) = 4.07$, $p < .05$).

--Insert figure 2 about here--

Downstream consequences of denigrating ethical others. The results of the same ANOVA with reported anger at the underlying ethical issue as the dependent variable revealed that participants who did not have another opportunity to act ethically indicated that they would feel less angry upon learning that a company employed child labor ($M_{no\ second\ ethical\ opportunity}$ = 4.51) than participants who had a second opportunity to act ethically by donating on the charity website ($M_{second\ ethical\ opportunity}$ = 5.05; $F(1, 129) = 3.12$, $p = .07$). These results remain marginally significant if the individuals who guessed the true purpose of the study are included in the sample ($M_{no\ second\ ethical\ opportunity}$ = 4.53 vs. $M_{second\ ethical\ opportunity}$ = 5.02; $F(1, 134) = 2.70$, $p = .10$).

Discussion

Overall, the results of study 2 support the notion that willfully ignorant consumers denigrate ethical others as a result of the threat that arises when they compare their own lack of ethical action to these ethical others' actions. When willfully ignorant consumers are given a second chance to act ethically before rating ethical others, they do not feel as threatened by these other consumers since the negative comparison is not as severe and hence do not judge ethical others as harshly. Study 2 therefore provides process evidence via moderation (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005). By manipulating the severity of the discrepancy between the actions of a willfully ignorant consumer and ethical consumers, we illustrate that the threat resulting from a large discrepancy indeed drives the desire to denigrate.

Additionally, the results of study 2 also support our theorizing that denigration affects underlying anger about the ethical issue in a manner consistent with self-perception theory (Bem, 1972). Participants who did not have a second opportunity to act ethically rated ethical others relatively harshly, leading them to conclude that they themselves felt less anger about the

underlying issue, given their willingness to negatively judge someone for acting as if they cared about the issue. Those who had another opportunity to act ethically rated ethical others significantly less harshly, and this less severe denigration resulted in stronger feelings of anger towards the underlying issue of child labor. We explore these downstream consequences in more depth in study 3, by showing that reduced anger after denigrating others also leads to a reduced likelihood of engaging in subsequent ethical behavior.

Post-test

In order to provide additional process evidence, we conducted a post-test to demonstrate that participants acknowledge feeling threatened by negative social comparisons with ethical others. A sample of 29 undergraduate students (51.72% female; M_{age} = 20.86) learned that another consumer bought the same pair of jeans they did and that this individual had considered ethical information (i.e., the manufacturer's labor practices) during the purchase. The participants then imagined that they had either willfully ignored this ethical information or that they had also looked at the ethical information. All participants then rated themselves on three nine-point bipolar items, where lower scores signal lower ratings (*immoral-moral, unethical-ethical*, *inferior-superior;* α = .90). Participants who imagined remaining willfully ignorant rated themselves as significantly less moral, less ethical, and, overall, inferior compared to participants who imagined they had also sought out the ethical information $M_{willfully\ ignorant}$ = 4.91 vs. $M_{not\ willfully\ ignorant}$ = 7.00, $F(1, 27) = 10.53$, $p < .01$).

STUDY THREE

Study 3 used a different product (i.e., backpacks), along with a different ethical attribute (i.e., whether the backpack is constructed with recycled material). It also explored another boundary condition for the denigration of ethical others by varying how many product attributes participants were allowed to see: one, two, or all four of the product attributes. When participants can view only one attribute, we would not expect most consumers to feel badly about avoiding ethical attribute information even after learning that others had viewed the information. It would be easily justifiable for participants who can only view one attribute to ignore the ethical attribute information, resulting in a lack of negative social comparison with those who choose to view ethical information in the same context. In this "easy-to-justify willful ignorance" condition, a consumer will not have a relevant comparison to make, because he or she will not perceive his or her behavior to be in direct conflict (i.e., less moral) than that of the ethical other. Thus, less denigration of ethical others should occur.

On the other hand, participants who are allowed to view two of four attributes (as in previous studies) could conceivably choose to see the ethical attribute information. Thus, if they remain willfully ignorant of such information in this "hard-to-justify willful ignorance" condition, they should feel threatened by the negative comparison that arises between themselves and ethical others who choose to view this information. Participants in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition should therefore denigrate ethical others to a greater extent compared to those in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition. The comparison between these two conditions also allows us to rule out differences in the importance of the ethical attribute information versus other attributes as an alternative explanation for our results. If our results were driven by a desire to denigrate others simply for looking at less important attributes (vs. for learning about attributes with moral implications), participants would denigrate someone who

chose to view ethical attribute information equally in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance and hard-to-justify willful ignorance conditions, which is the opposite of what we predict and find.

Study 3 also included a control, "no willful ignorance" condition in which participants viewed all four attributes with no choice to remain willfully ignorant. In line with hypothesis 3, we expected that participants in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance and in this no willful ignorance condition should not denigrate ethical others as harshly as participants in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition because they are not subject to as negative a comparison with ethical others as those in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition.

We also asked all participants how likely they would be to engage in an ethical behavior in a similar domain (i.e., an ethical action also related to sustainability) after completing the main study in order to examine the effects of denigrating ethical others on subsequent ethical behavior. As predicted in hypotheses 4 and 5, we propose that consumers who denigrate believe that they care less about the underlying ethical issue (both because they have denigrated the ethical other and are less angry), and then behave consistently with this self-perception by acting less ethically in the future. In order to test these hypotheses, we included an additional factor in this study manipulating whether participants had a chance to denigrate ethical others or saw no mention of ethical others and did not rate these individuals at all (i.e., had no chance to denigrate them).

Method

A total of 196 native English-speaking undergraduates (48.47% female; M_{age} = 20.76) participated in this computer-mediated study in exchange for partial course credit. This study used a 3 (Type of Ignorance: no willful ignorance, easy-to-justify willful ignorance, hard-to-justify willful ignorance) × 2 (Chance to Denigrate Ethical Others vs. No Exposure to Ethical Others) between-subjects design. Study 3 initially followed a similar format to that of previous

studies, but with backpacks as the focal product. The four backpacks differed on four attributes: material (strong or lightweight), function (one pocket or three pockets), price ($50 or $70), and recycled content (uses recycled material or no recycled material). The recycled content served as the ethical attribute. Participants were randomly assigned to view one, two, or four attributes.

Participants who were given the chance to denigrate ethical others then rated them on the same eight characteristics as in study 2 using a similar market segmentation cover story to that used in previous studies. Participants who were not exposed to ethical others saw no mention of ethical others at all. Next, all participants completed a measure of anger towards the underlying issue of firms not using recycled materials in their products similar to the anger item used in study 2. Finally, after completing a filler task, participants read that a new organization on campus was interested in gauging student interest in taking a pro-sustainability "Think Green Pledge" online and then indicated their willingness to take the pledge (1 = *absolutely not*, 10 = *absolutely yes*).

Manipulation Checks with Separate Samples

We conducted a manipulation check with a separate sample of 165 MTurk participants MTurk (42.42% female; M_{age} = 34.15) in order to ensure that participants in our main study who ignored information about recycled materials would indeed recognize that they were willfully ignorant. In one condition participants imagined a consumer who chose to view information about the price of backpacks and ignored the other three attributes, including the ethical one. In the other condition participants imagined a consumer who chose to view information about the price and material of backpacks while ignoring the other two attributes, including the ethical one. The rest of the participants imagined a consumer who viewed all four attributes. All participants then indicated their agreement with the following item (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly*

agree): "The consumer could have viewed information about the ethicality of the backpacks, but did not." Participants who imagined the hard-to-justify willful ignorance scenario agreed significantly more with this statement (M = 5.34) than participants who imagined the no willful ignorance scenario (M = 3.07; $F(1, 94) = 36.32$, $p < .0001$). Participants who imagined the easy-to-justify willful ignorance scenario also agreed significantly more with the statement (M = 5.12) than those who imagined the no willful ignorance scenario ($F(1, 96) = 29.24$, $p < .0001$). There was no difference between the participants who imagined the easy-to-justify and hard-to-justify willful ignorance scenarios ($F(1, 134) = 0.67$, *ns*).

We ran an additional manipulation check with a separate sample of 75 MTurk participants (50.67% female; M_{age} = 35.36) to show that participants in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition believed it was more appropriate to ignore the ethical attribute compared to those in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition. All participants were asked to imagine a consumer choosing among a set of brands that differed across four attributes. In one condition participants imagined that the consumer could only view one attribute and chose to ignore whether the brands were made in an ethical manner. The rest of the participants imagined a consumer who could view two attributes and chose to ignore the ethical attribute. All participants then indicated how much they agreed with the following statements (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree)*: "There is no excuse for the consumer ignoring whether the products were made in an ethical manner in this situation" and "Since the consumer could search for information on one [two] attributes, one they should have chosen to find out about is whether the different brands were made ethically or not" (r = .63). Participants who imagined a consumer who could view only one attribute agreed significantly less with these two statements (M = 3.85) than those who imagined an individual who could view two attributes (M = 4.59; $F(1, 73) = 4.44$, $p < .05$).

Results

We removed data of two participants from analyses because they chose to view information about the ethical labor attribute in either the hard-to-justify willful ignorance or easy-to-justify willful ignorance conditions and thus did not ignore the ethical information. Data from 22 participants were excluded from analyses because they determined the study's purpose.

*Denigration of ethical others***.** To analyze differences in the degree of denigration based on type of willful ignorance, we conducted a one-factor, three level (Type of Willful Ignorance: no willful ignorance, easy-to-justify willful ignorance, hard-to-justify willful ignorance) ANOVA with the positivity score for the ethical others as the dependent variable. We note that this analysis only included participants who were exposed to information about ethical others. An unconstrained confirmatory factor analysis was not positive definite because of the lower n in this study, but running the same model constraining variance to be constant across scales resulted in a GFI of .88 for both the positive and negative factor model and the overall model.

As predicted, there were significant differences in the amount of denigration depending on the type of ignorance each participant displayed ($F(2, 72) = 3.27$, $p < .05$). Planned comparisons showed that participants in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition ($M = -1.32$) evaluated ethical others more negatively than those in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition ($M = 2.48$; $F(1, 72) = 4.75$, $p < .05$) and those in the no willful ignorance condition ($M = 3.00$; $F(1, 72) = 5.61$, $p < .05$). The difference between the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition and the no willful ignorance condition was not significant ($F(1, 72) = .10$, *ns*). These results support hypotheses 1 and 3 and are illustrated in Figure 3. Although the pattern of results was directionally consistent when participants who guessed the purpose of the study were

included, differences between conditions were not statistically significant in the full sample ($F(2, 91) = 0.90$; $p = .40$).

--Insert figures 3 and 4 about here--

Downstream consequences of denigration. We next conducted a 3 (Type of Willful Ignorance: no willful ignorance, easy-to-justify willful ignorance, hard-to-justify willful ignorance) × 2 (Chance to Denigrate Ethical Others vs. No Exposure to Ethical Others) ANOVA with reported feelings of anger as the dependent variable. There was a significant main effect of the Chance to Denigrate factor, such that those who judged the ethical others reported feeling less angry than those who did not ($M_{chance\ to\ denigrate} = 2.56$ vs. $M_{no\ exposure} = 2.98$, $F(1, 166) = 4.18$, $p < .05$). The focal analysis was the interaction between these two factors, which was marginally significant ($F(2, 166) = 2.67$, $p = .07$). Follow-up analyses to explore this interaction revealed that, among those who had the chance to denigrate ethical others, Type of Willful Ignorance led to marginally significant differences in anger towards the underlying ethical issue ($F(2, 166) = 2.66$, $p = .07$). Planned pairwise comparisons revealed that participants in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition ($M = 1.89$) felt less angry than those in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition ($F(1, 166) = 3.57$, $p = .06$) and those in the no willful ignorance condition ($M = 2.88$; $F(1, 166) = 4.79$, $p < .05$). Anger among participants in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition did not differ from anger among those in the no willful ignorance condition ($F(1, 166) = 0.18$, *ns*). Thus, when given the chance to negatively judge others, those who cannot easily justify their willful ignorance feel less angry towards companies that do not use recycled content. In contrast, Type of Willful Ignorance did not result in significant differences in anger

among participants who had no exposure to ethical others ($M_{hard\text{-}to\text{-}justify\ willful\ ignorance}$ = 3.14 vs. $M_{easy\text{-}to\text{-}justify\ willful\ ignorance}$ = 2.86 vs. $M_{no\ willful\ ignorance}$ = 2.90; $F(2, 166) = 0.34$, *ns*). This overall pattern of results replicates when participants who guessed the purpose of the study were included in the analysis: Chance to Denigrate and Type of Willful Ignorance interacted to influence level of anger ($F(2, 188) = 3.24$, $p < .05$), and follow-up analyses indicated that Type of Willful Ignorance significantly influenced anger among those who had the chance to denigrate in the same pattern observed for the smaller sample ($F(2, 188) = 3.18$, $p < .05$), but did not affect anger among those who did not have exposure to ethical others ($F(2, 188) = 0.49$, *ns*).

Next, we subjected participants' willingness to take the Think Green Pledge to the same 3 × 2 ANOVA. There was a main effect of Type of Willful Ignorance ($F(2, 166) = 4.17$, $p < .05$), which was qualified by the Type of Willful Ignorance x Chance to Denigrate interaction of interest ($F(2, 166) = 3.33$, $p < .05$). Follow-up analyses among those who had a chance to denigrate ethical others indicated that participants' willingness to take the Think Green Pledge was significantly different by Type of Willful Ignorance ($F(2, 166) = 3.69$, $p < .05$). Planned comparisons revealed that participants in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition (M = 5.05) were significantly less willing to take the Think Green Pledge than those in the no willful ignorance condition (M = 6.96; $F(1, 166) = 7.09$, $p < .05$) and directionally less willing to take the Think Green Pledge than those in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition (M = 5.83; ($F(1, 166) = 1.31$, $p = .25$). Participants in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition differed only marginally from those in the no willful ignorance condition in their willingness to take the Think Green Pledge ($F(1, 166) = 3.14$, $p = ..08$). Among participants who did not have exposure to ethical others, Type of Willful Ignorance also resulted in significant differences in willingness to take the Think Green Pledge ($F(2, 166) = 3.31$, $p < .05$). Figure 4 shows these results.

This overall pattern of results replicates when participants who guessed the purpose of the study were included in the analysis: Type of Willful Ignorance and Chance to Denigrate interacted to influence willingness to sign the Think Green Pledge ($F(2, 188) = 3.53$, $p < .01$), and follow-up analyses indicated that Type of Willful Ignorance significantly influenced willingness to sign the Think Green Pledge among both those who had the chance to denigrate in the same predicted pattern observed for the smaller sample ($F(2, 188) = 5.85$, $p < .01$) and, marginally, for those who did not have exposure to ethical others ($F(2, 188) = 2.88$, $p = .06$).

Next, we checked whether the effect of the Type of Willful Ignorance x Chance to Denigrate interaction on consumers' willingness to take the Think Green Pledge was mediated by reduced anger towards the underlying ethical issue. In other words, we tested whether decreased feelings of anger about the ethical issue in question drove participants in either the hard-to-justify willful ignorance or easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition to be less likely to take the Think Green Pledge compared to participants in the no willful ignorance condition and whether these indirect effects depended on whether participants had a chance to denigrate the ethical others. We also compared the hard-to-justify and easy-to-justify willful ignorance conditions. We expected that, compared to those in the no willful ignorance condition, only those in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition (and not in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition) would be less likely to take the Think Green Pledge due to reduced anger, but that this effect would only hold when participants were given a chance to denigrate ethical others.

In order to test the above hypotheses, we employed conditional process analyses using a series of moderated mediation models (PROCESS Model 7; Hayes, 2013) with bias-corrected bootstrapping (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010). Our first model compared differences between only the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition and the no willful ignorance condition.

Specifically, it tested whether the relationship between Type of Willful Ignorance (i.e., easy-to-justify willful ignorance vs. no willful ignorance) and willingness to take the Think Green Pledge was mediated by feelings of anger and whether this mediation depended on whether participants had a chance to denigrate. For this model, the 95 percent confidence intervals for the conditional indirect effect of Type of Ignorance onto willingness to take the Think Green Pledge through anger included zero both when participants did not have exposure to ethical others (95% CI: -0.40, 0.40 [-0.37, 0.44 if those who guessed the purpose of the study are included]) and when they had the chance to denigrate ethical others (95% CI: -0.57, 0.33 [-0.50, 0.30 if those who guessed the purpose of the study are included]). Therefore, regardless of whether individuals had the chance to denigrate, reduced anger did not mediate the effect of Type of Willful Ignorance on willingness to take the Think Green Pledge among these two conditions, as expected.

Our second model compared differences between the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition and the no willful ignorance condition. The 95 percent confidence interval for the conditional indirect effect of Type of Willful Ignorance onto willingness to take the Think Green Pledge through anger included zero when participants did not have exposure to ethical others (95% CI: -0.24, 0.60 [-0.22, 0.65 if those who guessed the purpose are included]). However, among participants given a chance to denigrate ethical others, the 95 percent confidence interval did not include 0 (95% CI: -1.12, -0.15 [-1.03, -0.16 if those who guessed the purpose are included]). Thus, when given a chance to denigrate ethical others, those in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition felt significantly less angry than those in the no willful ignorance condition, and this reduced anger led to a lower willingness to take the Think Green Pledge.

This same pattern of results held in our final model comparing differences between only the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition and the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition.

The confidence interval included zero when participants did not have exposure to ethical others (95% CI: -0.60, 0.26 [-0.63, 0.26 if those who guessed the purpose are included]). However, when given a chance to denigrate ethical others, those in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition felt significantly less angry than those in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition, and this reduced anger led to a reduced willingness to take the Think Green Pledge (95% CI: 0.09, 0.96 [.10, .87 if those who guessed the purpose are included]).

Discussion

The results of study 3 show that the act of denigration has an undesirable impact on consumers' own future ethical behaviors. Participants in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition were less willing to take the Think Green Pledge than those in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance and no willful ignorance conditions because they felt less angry about the non-ethical practices of companies, but only when they were given the chance to first denigrate ethical others. When it is feasible for consumers to seek out ethical product information but they do not, and they subsequently have the chance to denigrate people who do seek out this information, they feel less anger, and this reduced anger leads to a lower willingness to take the Think Green Pledge, supporting hypotheses 4 and 5. In line with self-perception theory (Bem 1972; Laird & Bresler, 1992), this shift occurs because willfully ignorant consumers infer from their denigration of ethical others that they must not care as deeply about and thus not hold as much anger towards the underlying ethical issue. As self-perceptions can lead to lasting behavioral change (Kopel & Arkowitz, 1975), these consumers are then less likely to perform future ethical acts in a similar domain based on their reduced negative feelings towards unethical practices in that domain.

Post-test

Since study 3 used a new product and new attributes, we ran a post-test very similar to that run after study 1 to examine the perceived importance of each attribute. A separate sample of 50 MTurk participants (46.00% female; M_{age} = 32.66) rated the ethical attribute about recycled content (M = 3.70) to be significantly less important than function (M = 5.96; $t(98)$ = 9.93, $p < .05$), price (M = 5.96, $t(98)$ = 9.93, $p < .05$), and material (M = 5.84; $t(98)$ = 9.40, $p < .05$). However, the design of study 3 rules out this difference in attribute importance as an alternative explanation for our results. Although participants in the main study do not choose to view recycled content information as the single attribute they are allowed to see in the easy-to-justify willful ignorance condition, they do not denigrate others who choose to look at this less important attribute. Therefore, the desire to denigrate must logically be driven by a negative social comparison on morality, and participants only experience a negative social comparison on morality in the hard-to-justify willful ignorance condition where they can view two attributes but still choose to ignore ethical information.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

When consumers fail to act ethically in the marketplace and observe others acting ethically, they might either elevate towards these ethical others and act more ethically themselves (Haidt, 2003) or they might denigrate ethical others to counteract the self-threat that arises from making a negative comparison to these individuals (Fein & Spencer, 1997; Wills, 1981). Across three studies, we find that when consumers willfully ignore information about ethical product attributes and it is reasonable to expect them to view such information, the feeling of self-threat created by ethical others' actions leads these consumers down the path of denigration. This path

ironically leads willfully ignorant consumers to feel less anger towards the underlying ethical issue and ultimately to be less likely to perform ethical acts in the same domain in the future.

Theoretical Contributions and Future Research

Our findings contribute to the literature on ethical consumer behavior (e.g., Haws, Winterich, & Naylor, 2014; Irwin & Naylor, 2009; Luchs et al., 2010; Paharia, Vohs, & Deshpandé, 2013; Peloza, White, & Shang, 2013) by demonstrating that consumers' coping strategies when dealing with tradeoffs among emotion-laden ethical attributes can have sizable social consequences. Specifically, we extend the literature on willful ignorance (Ehrich & Irwin, 2005) by showing that although ignoring ethical attributes might be a short-term solution to avoid negative affect during decision making, it can lead to more detrimental downstream consequences depending on the social information consumers encounter. When willfully ignorant consumers make negative social comparisons with others and denigrate these more ethical consumers, they ultimately become less committed to their own ethical values, which decreases their likelihood of acting ethically in the same domain in the future.

Our research is also the first, to our knowledge, to explore downstream consequences of a specific self-protection mechanism. Past research on self-protection and self-enhancement has explored the immediate effects of such mechanisms, such as how they allow people to recover from self-threat or boost self-worth in anticipation of a threatening situation (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009), but has not looked at more far-reaching consequences of protective acts such as denigration. We show that denigration can undermine consumers' overall ethical values, as reflected by reduced anger towards the ethical issues and reduced future ethical behavior. Future research should continue to unpack the ways denigration can affect consumers over time.

Along these lines, a question for future research in the ethical consumer behavior domain to address is how far the impact of negative social comparisons with ethical others extends. We found that denigration of ethical others reduced consumers' future ethical behavior related to the ethical issue at hand (i.e., sustainability in study 3). However, might consumers also become less likely to perform ethical acts in other domains or to become less altruistic altogether? We also note that we did not vary how consumers discovered that others had chosen to seek out the ethical information they explored. Future research might fruitfully explore whether variations in how consumers find out about the actions of ethical others influence the extent to which the willfully ignorant denigrate them. There are likely many additional moderators of the illustrated effect. For example, the perceived similarity of the ethical other should influence the likelihood of denigration.

Practical Implications

These findings have implications for the ways people react to ethical market behavior. When consumers are faced with ethical decisions, they are unlikely to choose the ethical route every time. If their reaction to this failure is to negatively view others who do react ethically, a troublesome spiral develops. Denigration appears to "stick" in memory, because denigration leads consumers to be less likely to act like one of those ethical consumers in the future. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the most ethical items are often not the best selling items in the marketplace (Luchs et al., 2010), despite (many) consumers' ethical values. Note that if consumers did not have ethical values, they would not feel threatened by comparing themselves to ethical others and would not need to denigrate them. Thus, ironically, our results suggest that consumers do want to behave ethically and feel badly about not doing so when their failure is highlighted by the actions of ethical others. What can marketing managers do about this?

We recommend that firms wanting to use ethical attributes as a selling point should make this information readily available to consumers (vs. forcing consumers to seek this information out themselves). Providing this information is crucial not only to attract the willfully ignorant customer, who would otherwise not seek out this information (Ehrich & Irwin, 2005), but also to avoid losing the future business of consumers who seek out ethical information even when it is not readily available. If these ethical others are subjected to being harshly judged by the willfully ignorant (e.g., on social media, blogs, etc.), they may opt to switch brands in the future. Further, willfully ignorant consumers who engage in denigration upon learning of others' ethical behavior may be less likely to buy brands that they learn are ethical in the future, as our results suggest that denigrating ethical others can undermine commitment to ethical causes. Therefore, it seems that finding ways to allow consumers to behave ethically despite the negative emotions that often surround ethical topics might be of utmost importance to these firms.

The results of these studies might also explain the societal pressure that some groups experience. For example, vegans, environmentalists, and human rights activists are often denigrated by other consumers and the media**.** It is likely that this denigration is at least partially driven by the self-threat that consumers feel when they make a negative social comparison to members of these groups and recognize the discrepancy that exists with their own behavior. In order to gain more traction in their campaigns, these groups might strive to find ways to reduce these negative contrasts and instead promote a scenario in which consumers are likely to demonstrate moral elevation as opposed to self-protective negative judgments of others.

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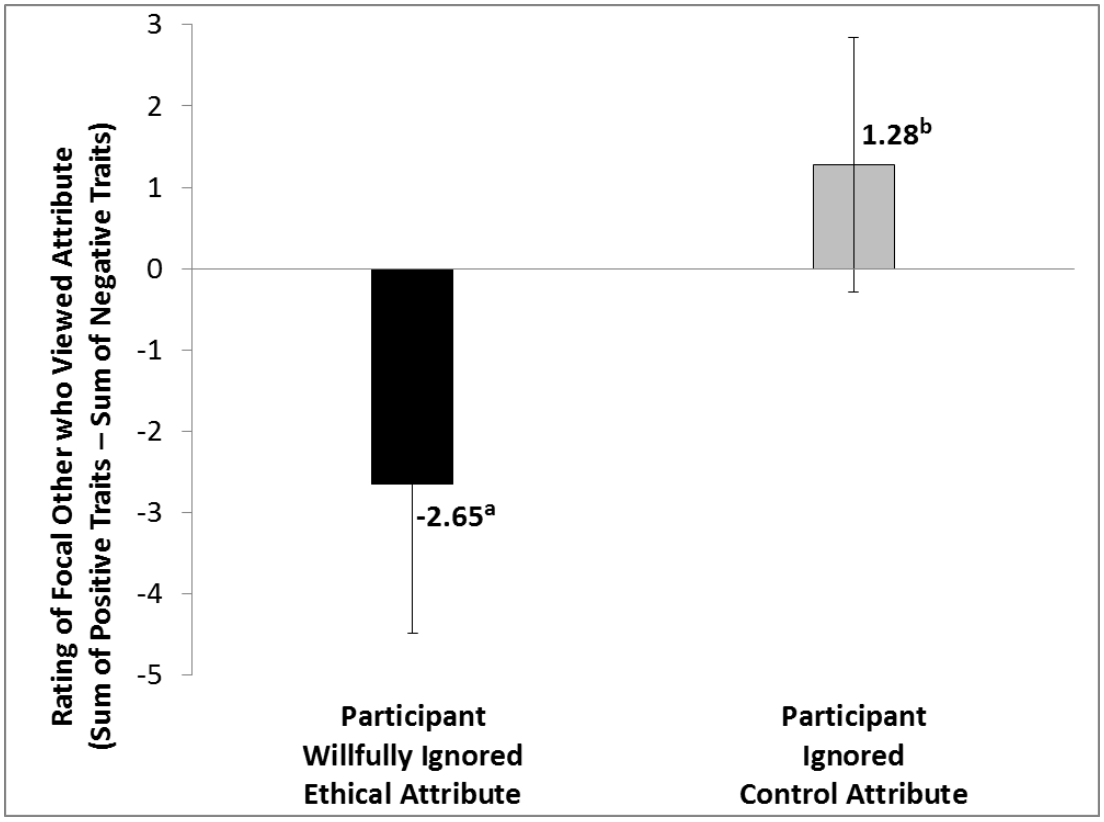
Figure 1. Study 1: Willfully ignorant participants rate ethical others more negatively than non-willfully ignorant participants rate others who ignore a non-ethical attribute



Note – Bars in graphs for each study represent 95% confidence intervals. Means with different letters are significantly different in each figure ($p < .05$).

Figure 2. Study 2: Willfully ignorant participants denigrate ethical others less harshly after having a second chance to act ethically

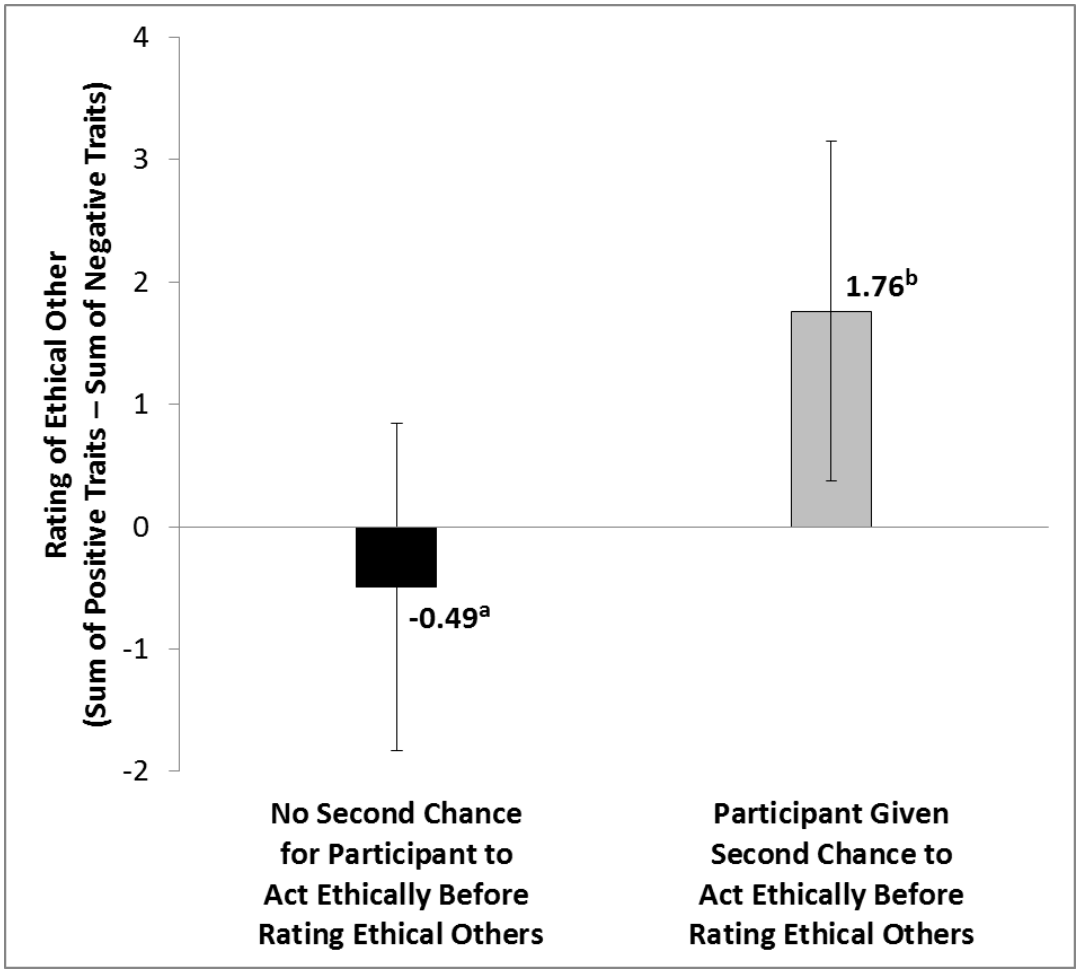


Figure 3. Study 3: Hard-to-justify willful ignorance leads to significantly harsher denigration of ethical others

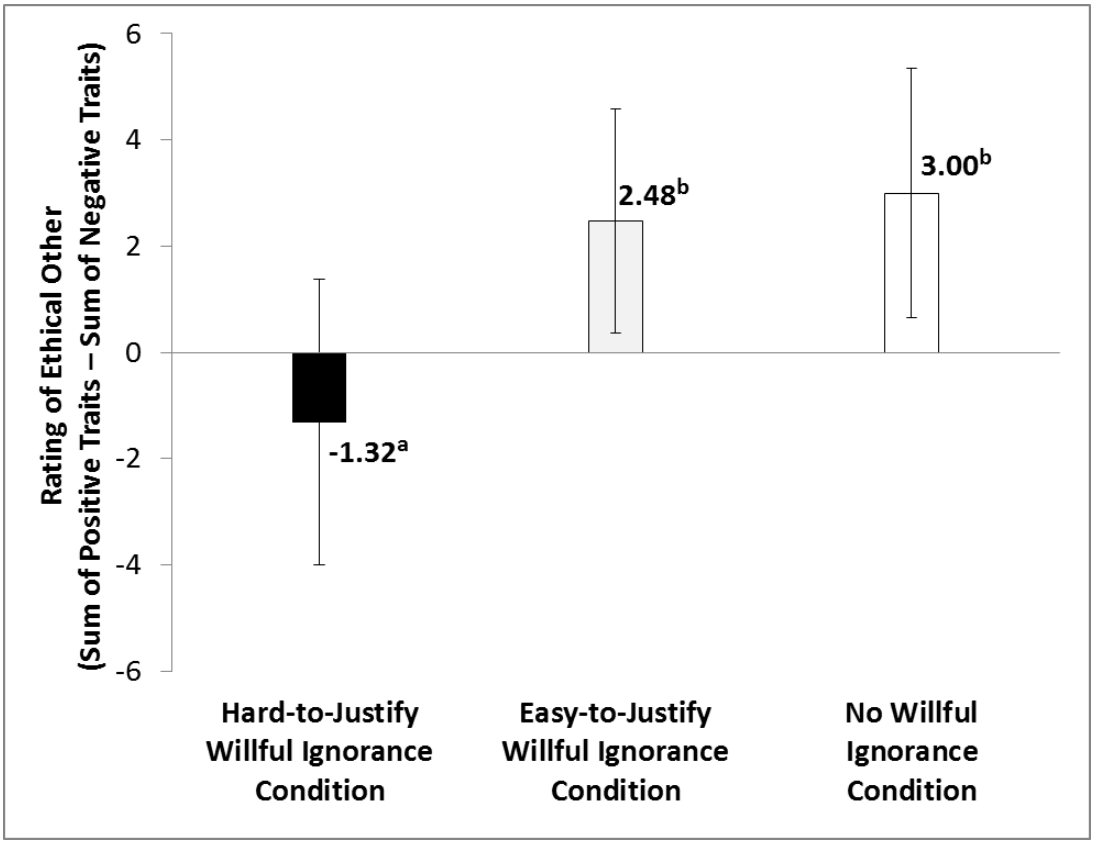
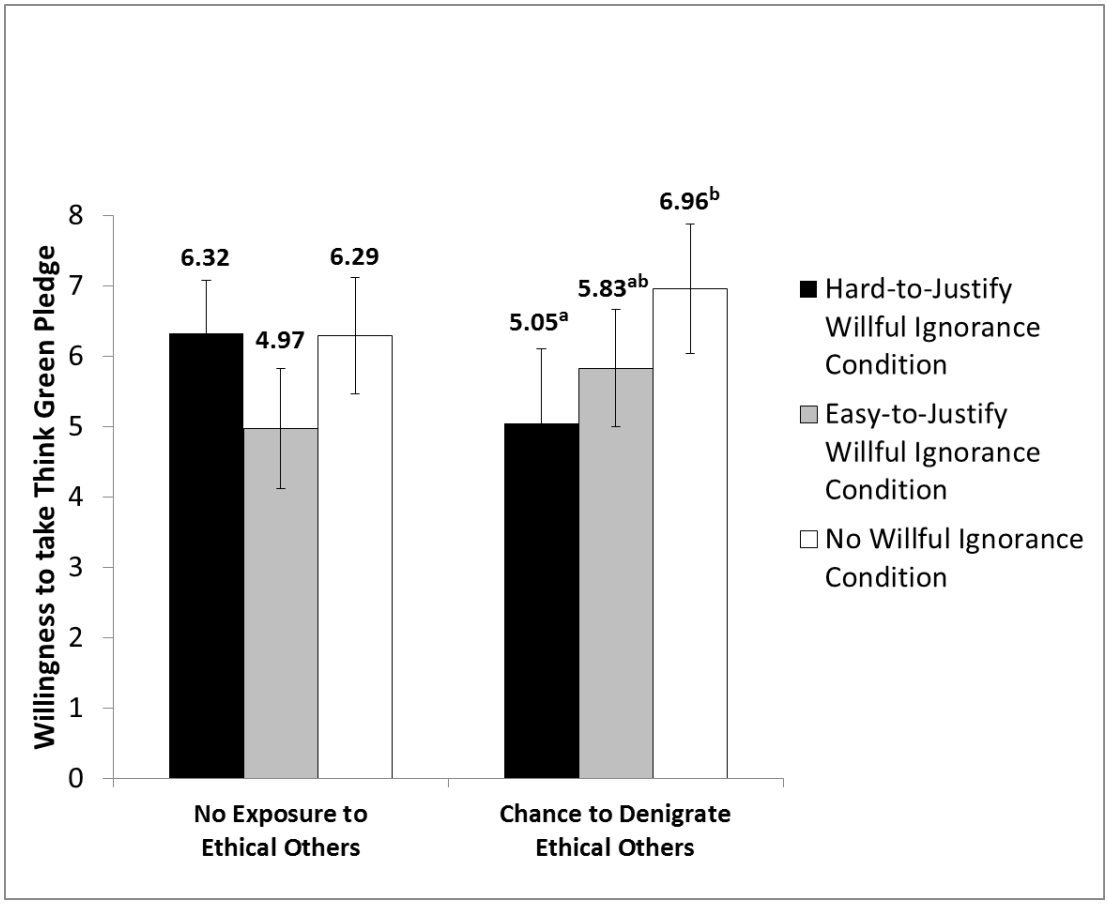


Figure 4. Study 3: When participants are given a chance to denigrate ethical others, hard-to-justify willful ignorance leads to a lower likelihood of acting ethically in the future



Note – Significant pairwise comparisons are only indicated in the "Chance to Denigrate Ethical Others" condition since these comparisons are relevant to our hypotheses.

Appendix A

Market Segmentation Cover Story for Eliciting Ratings of Focal Other
[Question # 3 is focal measure; control condition shown in brackets]

In order to establish effective market segmentation, we'd like to know how you feel about different types of consumers. Please answer as honestly and openly as you can.

1. Please provide three words to describe consumers who choose boot cut versus regular cut jeans. These can be positive words (like happy) or negative words (like snobbish).

2. Please provide three words to describe consumers who choose jeans based on the price of the jeans. You may use positive words or negative words.

3. We are interested to know your impressions of people who might research the labor practices of the firm that makes their clothes, for instance, finding out if a particular brand uses child labor before choosing to buy (or not buy) that brand. [We are interested to know your impressions of people who might research the delivery time of the firm that makes their clothes, for instance, finding out if the product will be delivered within 3 days before choosing to buy that brand.]

Imagine a person such as this, or a group of these people.

To what extent would THESE PEOPLE be described by the following words? (ALL of your answers are anonymous so please be honest) (Participants then rated individuals on positive and negative traits. See Appendix B for a list of traits used in all studies).

Appendix B

Ratings of Focal Others' Personality Traits

	Study 1			Study 2		Study 3		
	Participant Ignored Ethical Attribute	**Participant Ignored Control Attribute**		**Given Second Chance to Act Ethically Before Rating Ethical Others**	**No Second Chance to Act Ethically Before Rating Ethical Others**	**Hard-to-Justify Willful Ignorance Condition**	**Easy-to-Justify Willful Ignorance Condition**	**No Willful Ignorance Condition**
Positive Traits								
Fashionable	4.04	3.67	Fashionable	3.67	3.90	4.00	4.45	5.00
Attractive	4.21	4.10	Attractive	4.27	3.96	4.42	4.48	4.56
Sexy	3.58	3.63	Sexy	3.87	3.22	3.68	3.81	3.64
Serious	6.39	5.85	Serious	6.11	6.18	4.26	4.65	4.08
Compassionate*	3.97	7.15						
Negative Traits								
Odd	4.66	4.77	Odd	4.98	5.40	6.47	5.84	4.88
Boring	3.75	3.48	Boring	3.89	4.24	3.68	3.00	3.32
Preachy	5.27	6.02	Harsh	3.43	4.10	3.47	3.35	2.68
Vegetarian	3.27	5.64	Plain	3.86	4.00	4.05	2.71	3.40
Anxious*	6.80	4.10						

*We did not include "anxious" and compassionate" in the overall positivity score in study 1. See study 1 for an explanation.