

Discounting humanity: When consumers are price conscious, employees appear less human

Citation for published version (APA):

Henkel, A. P., Boegershausen, J., Hoegg, J., Aquino, K., & Lemmink, J. (2018). Discounting humanity: When consumers are price conscious, employees appear less human. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 28*(2), 272-292. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1023>

DOI:

[10.1002/jcpy.1023](https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1023)

Document status and date:

Published: 01/04/2018

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Document license:

Taverne

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
- The final author version and the galley proof are versions of the publication after peer review.
- The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

If the publication is distributed under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license above, please follow below link for the End User Agreement:

<https://www.ou.nl/taverne-agreement>

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at:

pure-support@ou.nl

providing details and we will investigate your claim.

Downloaded from <https://research.ou.nl/> on date: 10 Oct. 2024

Open Universiteit
www.ou.nl



This article is part of the issue "Marketplace Morality"

Discounting Humanity: When Consumers are Price Conscious, Employees Appear Less Human

Alexander P. Henkel

Open University and Business Intelligence and Smart Services (BISS) Institute

Johannes Boegershausen, JoAndrea Hoegg ,
and Karl Aquino

University of British Columbia

Jos Lemmink

Business Intelligence and Smart Services (BISS) Institute and Maastricht University

Accepted by Margaret C. Campbell and Karen Page Winterich; Associate Editor, Mark Forehand

Consumers are frequently bombarded with a myriad of marketing tactics. One tactic regularly employed by thrift-oriented brands is to highlight low prices, discounts, and sales promotions. When consumers encounter these low-price signals, they may adopt a price conscious mentality, that is, a singular focus on getting the cheapest deal. A price conscious mentality is likely beneficial for consumers, as it helps them save money. However, it is also possible that it has negative implications, particularly for how consumers perceive and interact with other human beings in the marketplace, such as customer service employees. The current research addresses this issue by investigating how consumers' price conscious mentality impacts their perceptions of employees' humanity. Results from four studies demonstrate that a price conscious mentality can lead consumers away from fully recognizing the human qualities of employees. The findings also suggest that this subtle form of dehumanization can result in harsher treatment of employees when they provide less than satisfactory service.

Keywords Dehumanization; Price conscious mentality; Customer-employee interaction; Social cognition; Branding

Recognizing others' humanity is widely touted by politicians, ethicists, media celebrities, and business leaders as being essential for creating a just and civilized society. It follows from this principle that any activities or practices that lead people away from

this ideal—that is, to see others as less human—can be critiqued as impeding moral progress, not to mention having immediate consequences for those who are perceived as being less than fully human (Gray, Gray, & Wegner, 2007; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). There is no shortage of atrocities that can be traced to extreme forms of dehumanization (Haslam & Loughnan, 2016). However, recent work in social psychology has shown that subtle forms of dehumanization are more prevalent in people's everyday experiences than one might suspect (Haslam, 2015). For instance, doctors fail to fully consider the humanness of their patients (Haque & Waytz, 2012). Likewise, those receiving condescending treatment from others can feel dehumanized (Bastian & Haslam, 2011). We submit that these forms of "everyday dehumanization," where others are not attributed the full capacity for emotional experience

Received 30 November 2016; accepted 28 November 2017
Available online 13 December 2017

The authors are extremely grateful to the editor, Meg Campbell, and the AE for their excellent and constructive guidance along the review process, and the reviewers for their many insightful suggestions. We are also thankful to Abhishek Borah, Yann Cornil, and Julian Vahl for their numerous helpful comments on earlier versions of this manuscript. Geoffrey Goodwin, Nick Haslam, Kasey Morris, and Joonho Park kindly shared their trait words lists that facilitated the development of the dictionary used for study 1. The authors would also like to thank Marco Wendt for his excellent research assistance, Rishad Habib for her help with coding for study 1, and Linda Lichel and Ekin Ok for posing as employees for the pictures used in our studies.

The first two authors contributed equally.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Alexander P. Henkel, Faculty of Management, Science and Technology, Open University, Valkenburgerweg 177, 6419 AT Heerlen, The Netherlands. Electronic mail may be sent to alexander.henkel@ou.nl.

© 2017 Society for Consumer Psychology
All rights reserved. 1057-7408/2018/1532-7663/28(2)/272-292
DOI: 10.1002/jcpy.1023

and rational intentionality that defines human beings, can also taint the nature of marketplace interactions. It can do so by reducing the extent to which consumers take into account the basic human needs of employees and consequently treat them in less considerate ways.

Being the target of negative treatment by customers can have adverse effects on employees' well-being. For example, studies in organizational behavior have shown that employees who experience rude and inconsiderate customer behaviors report higher levels of emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and burnout (Kern & Grandey, 2009; Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012; Wang et al., 2013). It is conceivable that some of these negative customer behaviors might have been facilitated by everyday dehumanization. Our purpose is to show that under certain circumstances consumers do not fully recognize the humanness of employees.

We hypothesize that a price conscious mentality (PCM), defined as a singular focus on saving money and getting the cheapest deal, can lead consumers to discount the human qualities of employees and treat them more inconsiderately as a result. There are many conditions under which people might approach a consumption experience with a PCM. Some could be internal to the consumer such as their shopping goals (e.g., finding a deal); others could be external market forces such as a brand's positioning (e.g., thrift oriented; Chartrand, Huber, Shiv, & Tanner, 2008). Building on the notion that price consciousness as a consumer trait captures the "degree to which the consumer focuses exclusively on paying low prices" (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer, 1993, p. 235), we propose that a PCM is a more momentary state characterized by an exclusive focus on paying low prices and getting the best deal. A PCM generates a market-pricing and transactional focus (e.g., Fiske, 1992; Gasirowska, Chaplin, Zaleskiewicz, Wygrab, & Vohs, 2016), which "does not make allowances for intimacy and social connectedness" (Mead & Stuppy, 2014, p. 16).

The diminished space for connectedness and intimacy that follows from adopting a PCM can change how consumers think about the people associated with the product or service they want to consume. We propose that the focus on economic utility and monetary outcomes, as well as the input-output logic that characterizes a PCM will make consumers less likely to fully recognize the humanness of employees. The process of perceiving some people as being somewhat less than human is called dehumanization (e.g., Haslam, 2006). Dehumanization involves the failure to fully recognize

aspects of humans that distinguish them from animals (i.e., more complex cognition) and machines (i.e., the capacity to experience emotions).

Across four studies, we provide correlational and experimental evidence that a PCM can lead to subtle forms of dehumanization toward employees with undesirable downstream consequences for consumer-employee interactions. By so doing, we contribute to the extant literature in three ways. First, we extend the body of work on price consciousness, which hitherto has exclusively investigated the construct as a stable trait representing the extent to which consumers generally focus on price (e.g., Lichtenstein et al., 1993; Steenkamp & Maydeu-Olivares, 2015). In contrast, we demonstrate that price consciousness might also manifest itself as a salient but transitory mental state that has significant implications for consumer-employee interactions at the point of the consumption experience. We document the insidious, incidental effects of a PCM on dehumanization in everyday consumption contexts. Rather than suggesting dehumanization is a motivated or malevolent act of commission (i.e., actively denying people's humanity to justify the infliction of harm), we contend that a PCM can lead to dehumanization by omission (i.e., indifference and lack of interpersonal sensitivity). While more subtle, this latter form of dehumanization can nevertheless impose significant costs on others (Waytz & Schroeder, 2014) and is likely more common in consumers' daily experiences and interactions with employees.

Second, we extend the literature on the effects of brands by demonstrating that how a brand is positioned has direct implications for the employees who literally "breathe life" into these brands. Most prior research has focused on what consumers learn about brands from employees (e.g., Folkes & Patrick, 2003; Matta & Folkes, 2005). We document that characteristics of a brand shape how consumers perceive employees. We hypothesize that a brand that relies on a *thrift positioning*, that is, a focus on low prices and discounts (Chartrand et al., 2008), can lead consumers to view employees who represent the brand as less than fully human. These findings are particularly timely, as thrift-oriented brands continue to gain market share and shape the trajectories of diverse industries, from retailing to aviation services (Steenkamp & Kumar, 2009; Williamson & Zeng, 2009).

Third, we propose and test a new mechanism to explain some of the frictions that occur between customers and employees that have been documented in the literature. Rather than solely being the outcome of a critical incident or failure experience, our theory suggests that unpleasant interactions

might unknowingly be elicited and amplified by the PCM triggered by a brand's positioning or a consumer's shopping focus.

Theoretic Development

Triggers of a Price Conscious Mentality in the Marketplace

Hunting for the best deal, biggest discounts, and lowest prices is an integral element of consumer behavior. Consumers relish the feeling of obtaining a bargain (e.g., Darke & Dahl, 2003). The advent of online price comparison portals (e.g., PriceGrabber) and smart phone applications (e.g., NowDiscount) has reduced search costs and made it easier for consumers to search for bargains. The search for the lowest cost alternative, perhaps to the exclusion of all other considerations, can lead to a price conscious mentality—a singular shopping mentality under which consumers exclusively focus on paying low prices and scoring the best deal (Lichtenstein et al., 1993).

Price consciousness can also be evoked by consumers' exposure to companies' marketing efforts, such as their brand positioning and related communications. While brands differ on many aspects, price is one of the most salient cues in the marketplace (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). At the extreme end, brands may be singularly positioned around price, as is the case with thrift-oriented brands; or they may focus more on other dimensions and be positioned as full-service brands. Brands that are thrift-oriented inherently draw attention to the economic benefits and cost savings of brand consumption. Thus, these brands likely instill a transaction-focused, calculative lens toward marketplace interactions (Laran, Dalton, & Andrade, 2011). Most notably, the selling proposition of thrift-oriented brands (e.g., Spirit Airlines, Ryanair, Motel 6, ibis budget hotels) and hard discounters (e.g., Family Dollar, ALDI) is that they strip down their offerings to the bare minimum and charge for every extra unit of service. These brands almost exclusively emphasize associations related to prices, deals, and savings (e.g., Tybout & Sternthal, 2005). In contrast, non-thrift-oriented brands tend to emphasize facets of brand experience other than price to differentiate themselves from competitors (e.g., service, customization, relationships; Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009).

One potential outcome of these differences in positioning is the activation of different brain regions for highly differentiated, non-thrift-oriented versus thrift-oriented brands (Schaefer & Rotte,

2007; Schmitt, 2012). A thrift-oriented brand positioning can also shape consumers' spending mindsets. For example, exposure to a thrift-oriented (vs. non-thrift-oriented, premium) brand symbol can trigger consumers to spend less (more) in a subsequent task (Laran et al., 2011). These effects might be further reinforced by corporate branding practices: an informal scan of the marketplace suggests that only thrift-oriented brands such as dollar stores (e.g., *Dollarama*, *Dollar Tree*) and hard discounters (e.g., the German *Netto-Marken-Discout* supermarkets, the Canadian *no-frills* supermarkets) explicitly allude to saving money in their brand name.

A PCM can be evoked through a self-imposed shopping focus or through external cues such as the name or positioning of a brand. In either case, it can lead consumers to relate to employees of the brand through a singular market-pricing lens characterized by rational cost-benefit assessments and maximization of personal welfare over other concerns like building relationships or maintaining social harmony (Fiske, 1991, 1992). It is important to note, however, that we do not imply that a PCM is binary. A non-price-conscious shopping mentality can also raise concerns about market-pricing, but we maintain that these are less central than under a PCM. Similarly, although a focal part of a non-thrift-oriented brand positioning emphasizes experience-related factors that contain traces of other relationship forms (e.g., communal sharing), such a positioning is not devoid of market-pricing concerns (Aggarwal & Larrick, 2012). Nonetheless, many points of contact for non-thrift-oriented brands (e.g., stores, websites) are purposefully designed to reduce cues about prices, deals, and cost savings (e.g., Ailawadi & Keller, 2004).

Implications of a Price Conscious Mentality for Marketplace Interactions

Individuals guided by a PCM seek to maximize their own monetary outcomes. Research has shown that focusing on maximizing one's monetary outcomes often occurs at the expense of interpersonal sensitivity (e.g., Ma-Kellams & Blascovich, 2013). Furthermore, adopting an analytical and calculative mindset can dampen sympathy and donations to identified victims of misfortune (Small, Loewenstein, & Slovic, 2007), counteract moral intuitions, and increase selfish, unethical behavior (Wang, Zhong, & Murnighan, 2014). Even more subtle reminders of the market in the form of money have been shown to increase feelings of social distance from others (e.g., Gasiorowska

et al., 2016). Although a PCM makes money more salient, it is distinct from a mere money priming effect because of its inherent focus on minimizing expenditures.

We contend that a PCM might adversely affect social relations. Given the singular focus on a market-pricing approach, social interactions are guided by proportionality, wherein consideration of others is a function of the cost of being considerate and the merits of those who are potential recipients of that courtesy (Rai & Fiske, 2011). Within the realm of market-pricing, we argue that brands solely emphasizing low prices also signal the diminished personal merit of individuals associated with such offerings. Narrowing the exchange to market-related factors is also likely to evoke a stronger business-centered frame to these social interactions (Kouchaki, Smith-Crowe, Brief, & Sousa, 2013). Through such a lens, the people involved in the transaction are viewed in more instrumental terms; that is, as means to achieve a desired end rather than as ends in themselves. When others are viewed as means, they are less likely to elicit compassion and other kinds of tender or sociable feelings (e.g., Molinsky, Grant, & Margolis, 2012). Accordingly, we suggest that a PCM with its attendant focus on saving money and the marketization of all elements in these interactions relates inversely to perceiving and engaging with other individuals as fully human.

Dehumanization and its Effects on Customer–Employee Interactions

Dehumanization involves attributing less mind (Gray et al., 2007; Kozak, Marsh, & Wegner, 2006) or ascribing fewer traits that reflect human uniqueness and human nature to another person (Haslam, 2006). Different conceptualizations of humanness converge on the notion that there are two distinct dimensions that underlie the assignment of species to the category of human (Haslam, 2014). The first dimension refers to capabilities for agency, which include higher cognition, culture, complex sentiments, language, intentional action, and free will (e.g., Gray et al., 2007; Haslam & Bain, 2007). Also referred to as human uniqueness, these traits distinguish humans from animals (Haslam, 2006). They are the result of gradual social learning and thus represent encultured humanity (Haslam, Bastian, Laham, & Loughnan, 2012).

The second dimension relates to a person's capability to experience feelings, pleasure, and pain (e.g., Gray, Knobe, Sheskin, Bloom, & Barrett, 2011; Gray et al., 2007; Kozak et al., 2006), as well as

attributes that may connect rather than contrast humans with other creatures (e.g., interpersonal warmth; Haslam & Bain, 2007). These sort of traits serve as markers of differentiation vis-à-vis inanimate objects such as machines, robots, and other automatons (Haslam, 2006). These traits allow humans to be emotionally receptive and open with others (e.g., Haslam, 2014; Haslam, Loughnan, & Holland, 2013). They are typically perceived to be an integral, innate part of being human and constitute the universally shared aspects of humanity (Haslam et al., 2012). While the two dimensions of humanness (i.e., human uniqueness and human nature) may behave independently in peoples' perceptions of others, they tend to co-occur and work jointly in facilitating how people treat dehumanized others (Bastian, Jetten, & Haslam, 2014).

Failing to fully consider another person's humanness has significant implications for social interactions (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). While most studies of negative customer–employee interactions focus on relatively extreme, harmful customer behaviors (e.g., harassment or aggression) that are potentially facilitated by dehumanization by commission (for a review see Koopmann, Wang, Liu, & Song, 2015), recent evidence also underscores the prevalence and importance of more subtle forms of dehumanization in interpersonal, everyday contexts (e.g., Bastian & Haslam, 2010; Haque & Waytz, 2012; Haslam, 2014). For example, perceiving employees as less capable of emotional experience and rational intentionality can lead to adverse outcomes for employees resulting from the omission of positive and prosocial behavior in interactions (Waytz & Schroeder, 2014).

Dehumanization can also result in more punitive behaviors toward targets (Haslam & Stratemeyer, 2016; Zhang, Chan, Teng, & Zhang, 2015). Diminished perceptions of employees' humanness may culminate in rude or insensitive customer behaviors toward employees that undermine the former's job performance and well-being (Kern & Grandey, 2009; Rafaeli et al., 2012; Volmer, Binnewies, Sonnentag, & Niessen, 2012; Zhan, Wang, & Shi, 2016). Even in the absence of such behaviors, feeling dehumanized is in itself a highly aversive and stressful experience (Moradi, 2013; Zhang, Chan, Xia, Tian, & Zhu, 2017).

To summarize, we propose that a PCM negatively affects the extent to which consumers perceive employees of a brand as fully human. It is important to note that we do not claim that consumers in a PCM will dehumanize employees in an *absolute* sense by viewing them as non-human, or

inhuman (Haslam et al., 2013). Rather, we propose a more subtle and *relative* process by which a person is less likely to perceive the qualities in the target that tend to make us recognize other people as being fully human (Haslam, 2014). This failure to recognize employees' humanness, in turn, increases consumers' punitive behaviors toward employees during unsatisfying service interactions. More formally:

H₁: Consumers in a price conscious mentality are less likely to fully recognize the humanness of employees.

H_{2A}: Consumers in a price conscious mentality are more likely to punish employees after a service failure.

H_{2B}: Dehumanization mediates the effect of price conscious mentality on punishment.

Overview of Studies

Four studies examine the effect of a PCM on consumers' perceptions of employees' humanness and the resulting downstream consequences. Study 1 employs a text-mining approach to test our first hypothesis based on consumers' actual brand experiences. Using more than 2,000 reviews, we provide preliminary evidence that the positioning of a brand influences ascription of human traits to employees even after accounting for quality differences between brands. Two experiments provide evidence for this PCM effect in an actual (study 2) as well as a fictitious (study 3) brand context. Our final experiment (study 4) demonstrates that dehumanization mediates the effect of a PCM on consumers' punitive behavior toward employees. Study 4 also holds the brand constant across conditions and manipulates consumers' shopping focus to induce a PCM.

In determining sample size, we initially followed the rule of thumb of having approximately 50 participants per cell unless we were constrained by supply of participants in the lab. Subsequently, based on power analyses, we aimed for around 150 participants per cell for data collected on Amazon Mechanical Turk. Data for each study were collected in a single wave and were analyzed only after all the data were collected.

Study 1

The purpose of study 1 was to examine how a brand positioning that evokes a PCM affects consumers' propensity to acknowledge the human qualities of employees via the usage of explicitly humanizing trait words when writing about their experiences with the brand. Using fewer human attributes in descriptions of others constitutes a subtle and covert form of dehumanization (Haslam et al., 2013).

Our initial empirical context was the European airline industry, which is characterized by high levels of customer contact and fierce competition. These competitive dynamics require brands to position themselves distinctively by either adopting a thrift-oriented or a non-thrift-oriented, full-service positioning.

To identify suitable brands, we conducted a pretest with 244 international European students at a Dutch university described below. In the pretest, participants evaluated the perceived positioning of four well-known airline brands on a 10-point scale, from low-cost (1) to premium (10). Two of the brands were thrift-oriented (easyJet, Ryanair) and two were non-thrift-oriented (British Airways, Lufthansa). Participants perceived the greatest difference in positioning between Ryanair ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.93$; *Scale Midpoint* = 5.50, $t(243) = 23.05$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.96$) and Lufthansa ($M = 7.77$, $SD = 1.92$; *Scale Midpoint* = 5.50, $t(243) = 18.44$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.37$). Ryanair and Lufthansa are also among the largest brands in the thrift-oriented and non-thrift-oriented categories in Europe, respectively (Worldatlas, 2017). Thus, we used Ryanair and Lufthansa as the brands for our study.

Data

For study 1, we collected review data from a large online review portal that specializes in tracking reviews in the aviation industry. We scraped all reviews that were available for these two brands. The dataset covers 59 months (August 2012–June 2017) and contains 2,061 (2,047 after removing duplicates) reviews. Our dataset not only includes text-based review comments, but also quantitative evaluations of reviewers' brand experiences. These quantitative evaluations were critical, as they allowed for an examination of the effect of a thrift-oriented positioning on usage of humanizing trait words *after accounting* for perceived quality differences between the brands. These variables were used to demonstrate that brand positioning has an

effect above and beyond quality differences on consumers' propensity to humanize employees.

The reviews in our dataset were almost evenly distributed across the two brands (Ryanair: 51.4% vs. Lufthansa: 48.6%) and were written by 1,801 unique reviewers, who mostly reviewed one of the two airlines (98.9%). The large majority of these consumers (80.8%) wrote a single review about their experience with one of the two brands. Some reviewed different legs of their trip with the same airline (9.7%), or different trips altogether (9.5%). A small number of consumers (1.1%) reviewed both airlines.

Independent Variable: Thrift-Oriented Positioning. This study featured a single independent variable, thrift-oriented positioning (1 = Ryanair; 0 = Lufthansa).

Dependent Variable: Usage of Humanizing Language. Given our interest in the use of humanizing language, standard dictionaries such as the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC; Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010) are not well suited for our purposes because they do not feature categories which are restricted to trait words that are used specifically to describe humans. Consequently, we constructed a customized dictionary with the goal of capturing consumers' explicit mentions of the human qualities of employees. A list of 30 trait words from a seminal paradigm in the dehumanization literature (Haslam & Bain, 2007; Haslam, Bain, Douge, Lee, & Bastian, 2005) served as the foundation of our dictionary (e.g., conscientious, sympathetic, rude). This measure has been used extensively in the dehumanization literature (e.g., Bastian & Haslam, 2010; Gwinn, Judd, & Park, 2013; Zhang, Chan, & Cao, 2014). We supplemented this list with additional traits identified in the literature on (de)humanization and social perception (Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014; Morris, Goldenberg, & Boyd, 2017; Morris, Goldenberg, & Heflick, 2014; Park, Haslam, & Kashima, 2012).

As the language used by consumers on online review platforms typically is characterized by industry-specific jargon and terms (Netzer, Feldman, Goldenberg, & Fresko, 2012), we further complemented our dictionary with context-specific words acknowledging human qualities (e.g., courteous, humorous) that we identified in a bottom-up approach by tagging the nouns used to describe employees (e.g., crew, staff, attendant, steward, captain; for a similar approach see Villarroel Ordenes, Ludwig, de Ruyter, Grewal, & Wetzels, 2017). The Methodological Detail Appendix (MDA) contains a detailed, step-by-step description of our approach

(Appendix S1: Table S1) as well as the final dictionary with 114 humanizing trait words and their sources (Appendix S1: Table S2). These words included positive (e.g., friendly, helpful, polite) as well as negative traits (e.g., rude, shy, ignorant) that are indicative of human uniqueness, human nature, or both.

As our central dependent measure, we computed the binary variable *presence of humanizing traits* (1 = yes; 0 = no). In addition, we also computed a continuous dependent measure that captures the degree of humanization in reviews: the *number of human traits used* defined as the sum of all human traits used in a review by a consumer. We report the detailed results for the binary and count measure in our MDA.

Quality Control Variables. We used three ways to account for differences between the brands using different quality-related measures based on the quantitative evaluations provided by consumers. First, we used consumers' ratings of their overall brand experience (1–10 scale, final $N = 1918$, 93.7% of full sample). Second, we considered consumers' inclinations to recommend the brand as a measure of experienced quality (0 = no; 1 = yes; $N = 2,046$, 99.9% of the full sample). Third, cabin staff rating (1–5 stars; final $N = 2,012$, 98.3% of full sample) served as our final measure of quality. This measure constitutes the most conservative control variable, as it is an attribute-level quality evaluation of the humans involved with the brand. As a final robustness check, we also ran a model controlling for all quality indicators simultaneously.

Additional Control Variables. Following prior research on online customer reviews (Chen & Lurie, 2013), we included several review-related control variables. First, we controlled for review length (*word count*) because it might be positively related to the number of humanizing words used. Second, we controlled for the *number of reviews* written by the user to account for potential differences between the review styles of users writing a single versus multiple reviews. Third, we controlled for class of travel with three dummy variables (i.e., economy, premium economy, and business/first class using the "no information provided about class of travel" as the base line).

Specification. The MDA contains the descriptive statistics (Appendix S1: Table S3) as well as the correlation matrix (Appendix S1: Table S4) for all variables used in study 1. The reviews in our sample included a relatively low number of humanizing traits, which supported the use of the *presence of*

humanizing traits as our central dependent measure. As this variable is binary (1 = Yes, 0 = No), we used logistic regressions with robust standard errors to estimate the different models (Appendix S1: Table S5). Our complementary dependent measure, *number of humanizing traits*, is a count variable. This count variable showed little evidence for overdispersion, as the mean ($M = 0.60$) and variance ($\sigma^2 = .65$) were relatively similar. As the more formal tests also indicated absence of overdispersion (Cameron & Trivedi, 1998), we used Poisson regressions with robust standard errors. The MDA provides details on the specification and results of these models (Appendix S1: Table S6).

Results

In the descriptive analysis, we found that reviewers of Ryanair (35.42%) were significantly less likely to use any humanizing words in the reviews than reviewers of Lufthansa (50.70%; $\chi^2(1) = 48.76$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.31$). A similar pattern emerged in our basic model controlling for review-specific variables and class of travel (Appendix S1: Table S5, model 1a). Consistent with our predictions, the thrift-oriented positioning dummy (0 = Lufthansa; 1 = Ryanair) had a negative and significant effect on consumers' propensity to use any humanizing traits ($\beta_{\text{exp}} = -.63$, $SE = 0.14$, $\text{Wald } \chi^2(1) = 19.93$, $p < .001$) as well as on the number of humanizing traits used in consumer reviews ($b = -.44$, $SE = 0.08$, $\text{Wald } \chi^2(1) = 26.93$, $p < .001$; $M_{\text{Ryanair}} = 0.48$ vs. $M_{\text{Lufthansa}} = 0.73$; Appendix S1: Table S6, Model 1b).

Importantly, the effect of the thrift-oriented positioning dummy remained negative and significant even after accounting for quality differences between the airlines (see Appendix S1: Tables S5 and S6). We estimated the effect of brand positioning after accounting for quality via overall ratings (model 2), recommendation (model 3), cabin staff rating (model 4), and all quality measures combined (model 5). To illustrate, when using the control measure that is most directly related to employees, cabin staff rating, the effect of the thrift-oriented positioning dummy remained significant and negative (*presence of any humanizing traits*: $\beta_{\text{exp}} = -.35$, $SE = 0.15$, $\text{Wald } \chi^2(1) = 5.67$, $p = .017$; *number of humanizing traits*: $b = -.20$, $SE = 0.09$, $\text{Wald } \chi^2(1) = 5.56$, $p = .018$).

Robustness Checks. To further probe the robustness of our effect we re-ran our models including only consumers who traveled in economy class ($N_s = 1,300\text{--}1,171$). The results from this

subsample replicate the patterns described above and are presented in detail in the MDA (binary: Appendix S1: Table S7; Poisson: Appendix S1: Table S8). We also re-ran our models controlling for review age using the timestamp of each review. This control variable was not significant in any of the models and did not change the results reported above. Our results are also robust to modeling the quality-related measures with dummy variables to account for potential non-linear effects (e.g., Mittal, Ross, & Baldasare, 1998).

Discussion

Our first study provides market-level evidence that a thrift-oriented brand positioning has a negative effect on consumers' propensity to recognize the humanness of the employees associated with this brand. Using a text-mining approach, we demonstrate that consumers are less likely to explicitly recognize the humanness of employees in reviews of their brand experiences. One advantage of our dependent measures of humanization of service employees in consumers' language used in reviews is that they are conservative and valence-independent. For instance, a review that only contains general positive or negative statements (e.g., "the flight attendant's service was great" or "the service by the attendants was bad") is coded as zero in our approach despite the consumer's reference to employees. Thus, the effects we document are indicative of subtle dehumanization. An additional advantage of the airline context is that consumer-employee interactions have to occur during check-in, boarding, and in the cabin regardless of brand positioning. This industry characteristic increases our confidence that the diminished humanization of employees in the reviews of the thrift-oriented brand did not emerge from a lack of interactions with employees. Another important insight from our first study is that we demonstrate the robustness of this effect of brand positioning after accounting for quality differences between thrift-oriented and non-thrift-oriented brands. Based on this preliminary evidence, our subsequent studies further examine and illuminate the effect of a PCM.

There are, however, a number of limitations primarily resulting from the nature of our data. First, the relatively low prevalence of humanizing words precludes us from conducting more nuanced analyses regarding the two dimensions of dehumanization. Thus, in all our subsequent studies, we use established two-dimensional measures

of dehumanization that capture the extent to which a target is ascribed human uniqueness (i.e., capability for agency) and human nature (i.e., capability for experience).

Second, the vastly different value propositions of the two brands might raise concerns about self-selection effects of consumers choosing each brand and opting to write online reviews (e.g., Li & Hitt, 2008). To address this issue, we randomly assigned participants to the different mentality conditions (i.e., PCM vs. non-PCM) in all our subsequent studies. Relatedly, an inspection of the content of the consumer reviews in our dataset suggests considerable within- and across-brand variability in actual brand experiences. While we used several measures to account for this heterogeneity, all the designs of our subsequent studies seek to maximize experimental control by keeping the experiences of consumers as constant as possible across the different conditions.

Study 2

The aim of study 2 was to replicate the findings of study 1 in the same consumption context while addressing some of the limitations resulting from the characteristics of the data used in our first study. In study 2, we held the evaluation target (i.e., employee) and interaction constant. Moreover, we employed a validated scale that captures the two different senses of humanness, experience/human nature, and agency/human uniqueness. Past research has shown that the social category of businesspeople (e.g., executives, directors) is more likely to be dehumanized in a mechanistic (i.e., denied human nature) rather than an animalistic (i.e., denied human uniqueness) fashion (Loughnan & Haslam, 2007). However, as we had no a priori reason to predict an interaction between a PCM and the two dehumanization dimensions, we addressed this issue empirically in studies 2–4. We adopted a two-stage approach to examine perceptions of humanness following prior work. First, we analyzed dehumanization via an overall dehumanization index (Waytz & Epley, 2012). Second, we conducted a more nuanced analysis of the two dimensions of humanness perceptions, experience, and agency (e.g., Bastian et al., 2013; Gray et al., 2007). We also included a neutral (no brand) control condition and added a number of additional control variables that could not be obtained for the review data.

Design and Procedure

In this study, 208 students at a Dutch university (52.8% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 19.1$ years) participated in a single-factor, between-subjects experimental design in exchange for partial course credit. They were assigned to one of three conditions (thrift-oriented brand vs. non-thrift-oriented brand vs. no brand control).

To exclude the possibility that participants in the control condition received brand-related information prior to the experimental session, we first scheduled all non-commercial neutral control sessions. Since roughly 300 participants were expected to participate in this experimental session, we took a conservative approach and scheduled one-third of expected participants first ($N = 102$); these participants were told simply that they were participating in a study of their perceptions about a person. The remaining participants ($N = 106$, since the actual show-up did not correspond with the number of participants registered for the study) were told that they would participate in a study of their perceptions of a major airline brand. They were randomly assigned to one of the two brand conditions and were presented with a logo of one of the two brands.

After exposure to the logo, participants responded to an open-ended question regarding their associations with the brand (i.e., “In one to two words, how would you describe Lufthansa/Ryanair?”). To disguise the true purpose of the study and help immerse participants in the respective brand context, they subsequently completed a series of questions related to the perceived brand positioning. In this study, we assessed the positioning of the two brands using a broader battery of 19 items (see Appendix S1 for all items used). For the sake of parsimony, we only report the results for the four core items and only employ this four-item measure as a manipulation check in this and all subsequent brand-related studies (e.g., “Lufthansa/Ryanair prices are generally very low,” “Lufthansa/Ryanair is more expensive than other airlines,” [reverse-coded], $r = .81$, $p < .001$); “I would say that Lufthansa/Ryanair provides superior service,” and “I believe that Lufthansa/Ryanair provides excellent service”; $r = .86$, $p < .001$).

After completing the brand perception questions, participants in the brand conditions received a laminated picture of a person that varied by condition. In the thrift-oriented (non-thrift-oriented) condition, the picture was manipulated to represent a Ryanair (Lufthansa) flight attendant in an advertisement.

Participants in the control condition saw an image of the same woman without any brand information in front of a neutral background (see Appendix S1).

Participants were asked to imagine an interaction with the woman in the picture (see Appendix S1 for details). We then introduced our central dependent measure of dehumanization, adopted from Kozak et al. (2006). This 10-item scale assesses how much mind is attributed to a person, such that ascribing less mind equals more dehumanization. The mind attribution scale includes two dimensions (all measured from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree) related to experience (e.g., the extent to which a person “has complex feelings”) and agency (e.g., the extent to which a person “can engage in a great deal of thought”). All items are included in Appendix S1. Using these items, we computed an overall dehumanization index ($\alpha = .83$; following Waytz & Epley, 2012), as well as two separate indices for human nature (i.e., capability for experience; 4 items; $\alpha = .67$) and human uniqueness (i.e., capability for agency; 6 items; $\alpha = .86$) for a more nuanced analysis (see Gray et al., 2007, 2011).

We controlled for participants’ perceptions of the realism of the ad (2 items, $r = .63$, $p < .001$; “The advertisement (picture) handed out to me was realistic,” “The image of the person was realistic,” 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Neither in this nor in any of the subsequent studies did controlling for realism alter results; thus, we do not discuss it further. As dehumanization has been linked to objectification (e.g., Gray et al., 2011), we also measured the physical attractiveness of the person (“Please rate the woman (flight attendant) based on her outward appearance,” 1 = unattractive to 10 = very attractive). Finally, participants were asked to share their demographic information.

Results

Manipulation Checks. Participants in the thrift-oriented brand condition rated the brand as having a significantly stronger price focus than those in the non-thrift-oriented brand condition ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 5.87$, $SD_{\text{thrift}} = 1.21$; $M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 3.09$, $SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 1.26$, $t(104) = 11.54$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.27$) while the latter was perceived as having a significantly stronger service focus ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 2.98$, $SD_{\text{thrift}} = 1.16$; $M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 5.03$, $SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 0.94$, $t(104) = 11.81$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.32$). Given that participants in the control condition were not exposed to a brand, we did not measure these items in this condition.

Dehumanization. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the dehumanization index as the dependent variable showed significant differences between conditions ($F(2, 205) = 16.75$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.81$). Planned contrasts supported our hypotheses: participants in the thrift-oriented brand condition ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 4.41$, $SD_{\text{thrift}} = 1.07$) attributed significantly less humanness to the woman displayed in the picture than did those in the non-thrift-oriented brand condition ($M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 4.86$, $SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 0.76$, $F(1, 205) = 7.72$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.39$). Participants in both brand conditions attributed less humanness to the woman than those in the control condition ($M_{\text{control}} = 5.23$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 0.74$; vs. thrift-oriented $F(1, 205) = 33.09$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.80$; vs. non-thrift-oriented, $F(1, 205) = 6.58$, $p = .011$, $d = 0.36$). We return to this interesting finding in our discussion of this study.

Next, we analyzed the two different dehumanization dimensions using a mixed-model ANOVA with condition (thrift-oriented vs. non-thrift-oriented vs. control) as the between-subjects factor and the dehumanization dimensions (i.e., experience vs. agency) as the within-subject factor. This analysis produced a significant effect of the within-subject factor ($F(1, 205) = 24.90$, $p < .001$)—suggesting that dehumanization overall was greater on the experience than the agency dimension—as well as a marginally significant interaction between condition and dehumanization dimension ($F(2,205) = 2.90$, $p = .057$).

To better understand this interaction, we conducted separate analyses of the two dehumanization factors. These analyses produced significant overall effects of condition for both the experience ($F(2, 205) = 7.84$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.55$) and the agency ($F(2, 205) = 16.56$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.80$) dimension. Planned contrasts showed that participants in the thrift-oriented condition ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 4.15$, $SD_{\text{thrift}} = 1.18$) attributed significantly less capability for experience to the woman than those in the non-thrift-oriented ($M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 4.76$, $SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 1.03$, $F(1, 205) = 8.60$, $p = .004$, $d = 0.41$) or control ($M_{\text{control}} = 4.85$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 1.05$, $F(1, 205) = 14.93$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.54$) condition. The difference between the non-thrift-oriented and control condition was not significant ($F < 1$, $p > .61$). Participants rated the woman’s capability for agency marginally significantly lower in the thrift-oriented condition ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 4.58$, $SD_{\text{thrift}} = 1.20$) than in the non-thrift-oriented condition ($M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 4.93$, $SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 0.82$, $F(1, 205) = 3.51$, $p = .06$, $d = 0.26$). The mean for the control condition ($M_{\text{control}} = 5.48$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 0.88$) was significantly different from both

the thrift-oriented ($F(1, 205) = 30.59, p < .001, d = 0.77$) and the non-thrift-oriented ($F(1, 205) = 11.44, p = .001, d = 0.47$) condition.

Other Measures. Participants' ratings of the woman's attractiveness differed by condition ($F(2, 207) = 5.02, p < .01, d = 0.44$). According to post-hoc tests, in the non-thrift-oriented condition ($M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 7.98, SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 1.76$), the woman was perceived as significantly less attractive than in the thrift-oriented condition ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 8.60, SD_{\text{thrift}} = 1.17, F(1, 205) = 5.76, p = .017, d = 0.33$) or the neutral control ($M_{\text{control}} = 8.68, SD_{\text{control}} = 1.15, F(1, 205) = 9.45, p < .01, d = 0.43$). Differences between the thrift-oriented and the control condition were not significant ($F < 1$). The finding that participants perceived the thrift-oriented brand employee as significantly *more attractive* than the non-thrift-oriented brand employee suggests that the failure to attribute humanness is a specific consequence of a PCM rather than the result of an overall negative halo effect. Interestingly, while some prior work has suggested that objectification (e.g., an increased focus on women's outward appearance) might lead to greater dehumanization (e.g., Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Vaes, Paladino, & Puvia, 2011), we found very small correlations between ratings of physical attractiveness and the humanness perceptions. In fact, the correlations were trending in the opposite direction (experience: $r = .08, p > .22$, agency: $r = .13, p = .059$).

Discussion

Study 2 provides additional evidence that a PCM influences consumers' perceptions of a brand's employees. In support of our first hypothesis, participants attributed significantly less humanness to an employee of the thrift-oriented brand relative to the non-thrift-oriented brand, as well as a neutral non-commercial control condition. A more nuanced analysis of the two dehumanization dimensions revealed that employees associated with a thrift-oriented brand were denied capability for experience to a somewhat greater extent than capability for agency. This is consistent with the finding that the related social category of businesspeople (e.g., executives, directors) is dehumanized by being denied human nature (i.e., experience) rather than uniqueness (i.e., agency; Loughnan & Haslam, 2007). Given the singular business-minded focus of a PCM, it might lead consumers to particularly discount employees' qualities that signal human nature and capability for experience.

Interestingly, employees of both brands were ascribed less agency than the market-unrelated individual. While markets contribute greatly to progress and welfare in society, this finding suggests that a market frame might also negatively affect how we relate to others (Fourcade & Healy, 2007). We return to this point in our general discussion section.

Although study 2 controlled for a number of aspects inherent in the field data used in study 1, it carries some different limitations. First, to validate the findings from study 1 in a controlled setting, our stimuli were actual brands that consumers may have had personal, idiosyncratic experiences with. Second, the evaluation target's outfit was adapted based on the condition in which it was displayed (i.e., brand dress code color). This color difference could have affected the perceived classiness of the wearer (Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010), which might in turn have impacted ascriptions of humanness. It is also possible that participants drew inferences about the employee's status, which, while plausible, does not consistently predict levels of dehumanization (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). Research on the link between status and dehumanization has found that extremely low-status out-groups (e.g., homeless) are particularly likely to be dehumanized (Harris & Fiske, 2006). However, for less extreme target groups such as those we examine, the effects of status on dehumanization have been equivocal (Demoulin et al., 2004; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). To address these issues, our subsequent studies hold the employee constant across conditions.

Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 offered support for our first hypothesis, showing that consumers in a PCM are less likely to fully recognize the humanness of employees. However, the use of actual consumer brands in studies 1 and 2 does not preclude the possibility of the influence of consumers' pre-existing brand associations, which might go beyond differences in the extent to which a PCM is evoked by the brand's positioning. Hence, in study 3, we sought to offer a more controlled test of our central hypothesis that a PCM as evoked by marketers leads consumers to ascribe less humanness to a brand's employees. Therefore, we presented consumers with a fictitious brand, only varying its positioning, while holding all other factors constant.

Design and Procedure

In a single-factor, between-subjects (thrift-oriented vs. non-thrift-oriented) design, 50 undergraduate students of a Dutch university (66.7% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 21.0$ years) participated in exchange for partial course credit. At the beginning of the study, participants were introduced to a fictitious rental car brand: "Mobile," allegedly new to the market. This ad mimicked marketing materials from leading car rental companies that adopt a thrift-oriented (vs. non-thrift-oriented) positioning, with information about the mission, vision, and values of the company (see Appendix S1 for the full stimuli).

Next, all participants were shown an identical picture of a female employee at a service desk, displaying the brand logo on her shirt and wearing a headset. As the dependent measure, participants assessed the humanness of the service agent on the same items used in study 2. Finally, participants assessed the perceived price focus of the brand ($r = .66, p < .001$) as well as the perceived realism of the stimuli.

Results

Manipulation Check. Participants in the thrift-oriented condition perceived the brand as significantly more price focused and thrift-oriented than those in the non-thrift-oriented condition ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 4.44, SD_{\text{thrift}} = 1.41; M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 2.94, SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 0.89, t(48) = 4.50, p < .001, d = 1.30$). Participants in the non-thrift-oriented condition perceived the brand to be somewhat more service-oriented than those in the thrift-oriented condition ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 4.22, SD_{\text{thrift}} = 1.44; M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 4.84, SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 1.15, t(48) = 1.68, p = .10, d = 0.48$). Although this latter measure was only directionally consistent, a post-test of the stimuli materials did indicate that the non-thrift-oriented brand was perceived as significantly more service-oriented ($N = 119; M_{\text{thrift}} = 2.56, SD_{\text{thrift}} = 1.40; M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 4.98, SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 1.13, t(117) = 10.35, p < .001, d = 1.91$).

Dehumanization. An independent samples t-test with the dehumanization index (i.e., general mind attribution scale) as the dependent variable showed significant differences between conditions ($t(48) = 3.53, p = .001, d = 1.02$). Participants in the thrift-oriented brand condition ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 4.64, SD_{\text{thrift}} = 0.79$) attributed significantly less humanness to the person displayed in the picture than did those in the non-thrift-oriented brand condition ($M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 5.37, SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 0.68$). A more nuanced

analysis of the two dehumanization dimensions revealed that this effect was driven by the experience factor. In a mixed-model ANOVA with condition (thrift-oriented vs. non-thrift-oriented) as the between-subjects factor and the dehumanization dimensions as the within-subject factor, we found a significant effect of the within-subject factor ($F(1, 48) = 12.79, p < .001$) suggesting that dehumanization overall was greater on the experience than the agency dimension. This analysis also produced a significant interaction between condition and dehumanization dimension ($F(1, 48) = 9.31, p = .004$). Consistent with study 2, the thrift-oriented brand employee was attributed significantly lower capability for experience than the employee associated with a non-thrift-oriented brand ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 3.98, SD_{\text{thrift}} = 1.13$ vs. $M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 5.32, SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 1.08, t(48) = 4.29, p < .001, d = 1.21$). Though directionally consistent, the difference on the agency factor was not significant ($M_{\text{thrift}} = 5.07, SD_{\text{thrift}} = 0.91$ vs. $M_{\text{non-thrift}} = 5.41, SD_{\text{non-thrift}} = 0.67, t(48) = 1.48, p = .15, d = 0.43$).

Discussion

The findings of study 3 offer additional support for our first hypothesis. Exposure to a novel brand that evoked a PCM via its positioning through its marketing materials reduced the extent to which consumers fully recognized the humanness of an employee associated with that brand. These findings suggest that even a one-time exposure to a brand that induces a strong PCM suffices to lead consumers away from a full recognition of the humanness of the people associated with this brand.

The central goal of our final study was to document some of the adverse downstream consequences of a PCM for employees as mediated by dehumanization. Moreover, this study also addresses potential alternative explanations that might have contributed to the dehumanization of employees in our previous studies. First, consumers might hold lay theories about the hiring practices of thrift-oriented versus non-thrift-oriented service-oriented firms (Schneider & Bowen, 2010). Different hiring practices could imply that thrift-oriented brands *actually hire* employees with fewer human qualities. It should be noted, however, that our measures of humanness are valence-neutral and focus on essential features that should be ascribed to *any* human, regardless of employment (e.g., capability to experience pain). Second, it is possible that consumers ascribe thrift-oriented brands a

different personality (e.g., lower sophistication, Aaker, 1997). Such perceptions of a brand's personality might spill over into perceptions of employees just like brands can rub off onto some consumers (e.g., Park & John, 2010). To address these concerns, we used a different manipulation to induce a PCM while holding the brand and its positioning constant across conditions.

Study 4

To summarize, study 4 had three objectives. First, we induced a price conscious mentality without reverting to a thrift-oriented brand positioning by manipulating consumers' shopping focus. Second, study 4 examines the downstream consequences of adopting a PCM to provide a test of our second hypothesis. Third, we aimed to generalize our findings using another established measure of dehumanization (Bastian et al., 2013).

Design and Procedure

In this study, 304 participants were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (51.3% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 34.5$ years) and participated in a single-factor, between-subjects experimental design in exchange for \$0.70. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two shopping mentality conditions (PCM vs. non-PCM). In both conditions, participants were first exposed to a scenario, in which they were asked to imagine vacationing along the coast for a week. The scenario described how they either were on an extremely tight budget or were splurging during an all-inclusive trip, in the PCM and non-PCM condition, respectively (see Appendix S1 for full stimuli). Participants in both conditions were asked to immerse themselves into the situation as much as possible and describe what they would do and how it would make them feel. Next, subjects learned that they needed to rent a car to get to their final destination. Participants in the PCM condition were told that they had to pinch and scrape to be able to afford any car, so they were trying to find the cheapest option they could to save as much as possible. Non-PCM participants were told that the car rental was covered in their all-inclusive trip, so they could afford any car and were trying to find the option that would offer the most pleasurable experience in order to enjoy themselves as much as possible.

The subsequent screen emulated an Expedia.com rent-a-car search result for a multi-day period. The booking overview showed pictures and information of eight different cars, ranging from economy to luxury and sports cars. All cars displayed were available from the same (fictive) car rental company called Mobile. Hence, regardless of condition, participants had the exact same information about the brand. Furthermore, all cars had four or five seats and came with the same service features (e.g., AC, full-to-full fuel, automatic transmission, unlimited mileage). The booking screenshot featured two economy cars (a Mitsubishi Mirage for \$69/trip, and a Toyota Yaris for \$57/trip) and a wide variety of other cars that were selected for their enjoyable riding experience in a price range that was approximately 200–800% of the economy prices (\$112/trip to \$462/trip). Whether participants chose a car consistent with the induced mentality (i.e., PCM vs. non-PCM) served as a manipulation check.

The scenario concluded with a post-booking element that served as an introduction to our dependent measure of employee punishment:

After completing the booking on the Mobile website, you close your browser. Shortly afterward you find an e-mail from Mobile in your inbox, which you think is your confirmation of your reservation. However, the e-mail says that they experienced a server timeout and your booking has not been recorded. You want to understand what has happened and get some help to resolve things. You go back on the website and click the button that enables you to chat in real time with Mobile's online customer support. On the next page, you will simulate the interaction using the Mobile support chat. Please proceed as if it were a real interaction.

Participants proceeded to a mock chat interaction, which used an animated image displaying a Mobile employee typing on screen in real time: "Hello, this is Trish from Mobile customer service. How can I help you?" Next, participants were prompted to describe their problem. Instead of solving their problem, the service agent informed them that the answer to their question had already been stated in the e-mail from the company and that they should simply re-do the booking. Immediately after the service agent's text reply, participants received a notification that the agent had ended their session. Subsequently, they were informed that after their interaction they had found a customer service

survey in their e-mail inbox, as is customary for many companies using online booking and support systems. Participants were asked to rate the interaction with the Mobile employee on a seven-point scale from 1 (very dissatisfying) to 7 (very satisfying). Punishment was operationalized by indicating that Mobile had a policy of considering disciplinary action for agents who get ratings of 2 or below. Similar practices are increasingly used by companies in related industries such as Uber or Lyft (O'Donovan, 2017). This way, if participants considered the interaction unsatisfying, they had the option to punish the employee (i.e., rating her 1 or 2) or to merely indicate their dissatisfaction without punishing (i.e., rating her 3). Our central dependent measure was a binary punishment variable (which took the value of 1 if the employee was rated 2 or lower and 0 otherwise) to assess whether participants punished the employee.

At this point, it should be noted that while satisfaction ratings served as a control variable in study 1, they were used to compute the dependent measure in study 4. However, the operationalization of these two variables was fundamentally different. In study 1, there were no discernible consequences for the employee, irrespective of whether consumers provided a positive or negative rating. The rating merely served as a quality proxy provided via a third party online review portal. Furthermore, in study 1, we were comparing consumer reviews about employees from two different brands that offer different levels of service. To better isolate effects of perceptions of the employees, it was critical to account for general quality differences between the brands. In contrast, in study 4, the firm and all aspects of the service were constant across conditions. Moreover, the staff rating question was posed directly by the company, and a low rating would have explicit, negative consequences for the employee (i.e., disciplinary actions).

After the dependent variable, we measured dehumanization on an eight-item scale adopted from Bastian et al. (2013). This two-dimensional scale assesses to what extent a target is denied human uniqueness (e.g., "I felt like the Mobile agent was unsophisticated") or denied human nature (e.g., "I felt like the Mobile agent was superficial like she had no depth"). All items were measured on seven-point scales (anchored in 1 = "Strongly Disagree"– 7 = "Strongly Agree"). Finally, participants were asked to share their demographic information. As in previous studies, we computed an overall dehumanization index ($\alpha = .81$), as well as two separate indices for denial

of human uniqueness ($\alpha = .71$) and denial of human nature ($\alpha = .77$) for a more fine-grained analysis. In these scales, higher values indicate a greater degree of dehumanization.

Results

Manipulation Check. In total, 93% of participants reserved a car that was consistent with their shopping goal. We included all participants in our analyses and our results are robust to the exclusion of these participants. In addition, we also assessed participants' open-ended responses with respect to what factors they considered when reserving a car and found that 98.1% of participants in the PCM condition explicitly mentioned the low price or cost savings as drivers for their reservation choices (vs. 20.0% in the non-PCM condition, $\chi^2(1) = 194.25$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.66$).

Punishment. Participants in the PCM condition (77.4%) were significantly more likely to punish the employee than those in the non-PCM condition (59.3%, $\chi^2(1) = 11.50$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.40$). As a robustness check, we also examined the effect of condition on the continuous customer satisfaction score and found that participants in the PCM condition were significantly less satisfied than those in the non-PCM condition ($M_{\text{PCM}} = 1.90$, $SD_{\text{PCM}} = 1.20$ vs. $M_{\text{non-PCM}} = 2.40$, $SD_{\text{non-PCM}} = 1.44$, $t(302) = 3.31$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.38$).

Dehumanization. In line with predictions, an independent samples t-test with the general dehumanization scale as the dependent variable ($t(302) = 2.53$, $p = .012$, $d = 0.29$) suggested that participants in the PCM condition ($M_{\text{PCM}} = 5.61$, $SD_{\text{PCM}} = 0.88$) dehumanized the agent significantly more than those in the non-PCM condition ($M_{\text{non-PCM}} = 5.32$, $SD_{\text{non-PCM}} = 1.07$). An analysis of the two dehumanization dimensions demonstrated that participants in the PCM condition were significantly more likely to deny the human nature ($M_{\text{PCM}} = 6.31$, $SD_{\text{PCM}} = 0.86$ vs. $M_{\text{non-PCM}} = 6.05$, $SD_{\text{non-PCM}} = 1.09$, $t(302) = 2.31$, $p = .022$, $d = 0.27$) and the human uniqueness of the customer service agent ($M_{\text{PCM}} = 4.91$, $SD_{\text{PCM}} = 1.15$ vs. $M_{\text{non-PCM}} = 4.60$, $SD_{\text{non-PCM}} = 1.28$, $t(302) = 2.21$, $p = .027$, $d = 0.26$) than participants in the non-PCM condition. A mixed-model ANOVA with shopping mentality (PCM vs. non-PCM) as the between-subjects factor and the dehumanization dimensions (i.e., denial of human nature and denial of human uniqueness) only produced a significant main effect of the dehumanization dimension ($F(1, 302) = 597.22$, $p < .001$) such that dehumanization was stronger on the human nature dimension than on

the human uniqueness dimension. The interaction with the between-subjects factor was not significant ($F < 1, p > .66$).

Mediation. To assess whether dehumanization mediated the effect of shopping mentality (0 = non-PCM; 1 = PCM) on punishment, we used the PROCESS macro (model 4; Hayes, 2013). First, we conducted mediation analysis using the general dehumanization index as the mediator. As outlined above, shopping mentality predicted dehumanization ($b = 0.28, SE = 0.11, t(302) = 2.53, p = .012$), which in turn predicted punishment ($b = 1.53, SE = 0.21, \beta_{exp} = 4.62, Wald \chi^2(1) = 54.34, p < .001$). Bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 samples suggested that the conditional indirect effect of shopping mentality on punishment via dehumanization was positive and significant with a 95% confidence interval that did not include zero ($a \times b = 0.43; SE = 0.18; 95\% CI: 0.10-0.83$). The direct effect of condition on punishment was also significant ($b = 0.73, SE = 0.30, \beta_{exp} = 2.08, Wald \chi^2(1) = 6.07, p = .014$).

Second, we used the separated scales for denial of human uniqueness and denial of human nature as mediators in a parallel mediation analysis. As outlined above, shopping mentality had a significant effect on denial of human nature ($b = 0.26, SE = 0.11, t(302) = 2.31, p = .022$) and human uniqueness ($b = 0.31, SE = 0.14, t(302) = 2.22, p = .027$). Denial of both human nature ($b = 0.71, SE = 0.16, \beta_{exp} = 2.03, Wald \chi^2(1) = 20.10, p < .001$) and human uniqueness ($b = 0.85, SE = 0.20, \beta_{exp} = 2.34, Wald \chi^2(1) = 17.29, p < .001$) in turn predicted punishment. The conditional indirect effect of shopping mentality on punishment via denial of human nature based on 5,000 bootstrap samples was positive and significant with a 95% confidence interval that did not include zero ($a \times b = 0.22; SE = 0.11; 95\% CI: 0.04-0.49$). The indirect effect via denial of human uniqueness was positive and significant as well ($a \times b = 0.22; SE = 0.11; 95\% CI: 0.04-0.55$). The direct effect of condition on punishment was also significant ($b = 0.73, SE = 0.30, \beta_{exp} = 2.08, Wald \chi^2(1) = 6.05, p = .014$).

Discussion

These findings provide additional support for our central claim that a PCM is inversely related to the full recognition of the humanness of employees. Moreover, in support of our second hypothesis, we show the downstream consequences of dehumanization in the form of an increased tendency to

engage in punitive behavior toward employees. Importantly, study 4 demonstrates that even without respective marketing efforts (e.g., a thrift-oriented positioning), adopting a PCM when shopping suffices to discount the humanness of employees. Whereas studies 2 and 3 suggest that a PCM might be somewhat more harmful for appreciating employees' capability for experience (vs. agency); the interaction between shopping mentality and humanness dimensions (i.e., human nature and human uniqueness) was not significant in study 4. While the convergence between the mind perception and the dehumanization approaches is emphasized in reviews from both streams, some fine-grained conceptual differences might have contributed to these divergent patterns (see also Haslam et al., 2013).

General Discussion

Fully recognizing others as human is an important step for following time honored principles for regulating social interactions according to the Golden Rule or Kant's Categorical Imperative, which requires us to treat people as ends and not only as means. In modern democratic states, it is widely regarded as self-evident that people deserve moral consideration simply by virtue of being human. This basic notion is a cornerstone of our current societal order and is reiterated uniformly in diverse writings from philosophers to international declarations (e.g., human rights). Unfortunately, despite this basic consensus at the level of ideals, at the level of individual psychology, people often fail to grant the status of humanness to everyone they meet. While past research has primarily examined how more intentional forms of dehumanization facilitate the infliction of harm upon others (Haslam & Loughnan, 2016), we document how dehumanization emerges incidentally as a function of a consumption-related factor we refer to as a price conscious mentality. Specifically, an extreme shopping focus on cost savings leads consumers away from fully appreciating employees' humanness. By demonstrating how a mentality characterized by price consciousness can be evoked by situational marketplace cues we extend past research that has examined price consciousness as a trait (e.g., Lichtenstein et al., 1993; Steenkamp & Maydeu-Olivares, 2015).

The results of four studies using field and experimental data from multiple service categories demonstrate that a PCM reduces consumers' propensity to fully recognize the humanness of

employees. Study 1 employs a novel text-mining approach to uncover subtle failures by consumers to fully recognize the humanness of employees. The study documents that reviewers of a thrift-oriented (vs. non-thrift-oriented) brand use fewer humanizing trait words in descriptions of their interactions with employees of the brand, even after accounting for brand-level quality differences. Study 2 replicates the effect using the brands from the first study in a more controlled setting. Study 3 offers further support for our central hypothesis using a manipulation of the PCM devoid of consumers' previous brand associations. Finally, study 4 provides evidence of the downstream consequences of dehumanization after service failures. Moreover, by manipulating a PCM unrelated to brand positioning, it directly addresses alternative mechanisms that might contribute to the dehumanization of employees.

Identifying effects of a PCM on perceptions of employee humanness contributes to the existential debate in the social sciences about the relation between the market and morality. Morality, at least as practiced in democratic societies, rests on the full appreciation of others' humanness (Haslam et al., 2012). Notably, thought leaders from diverse disciplines such as sociology and economics have identified the market as being a critical force for shaping the kind of morality that a culture embraces (for an excellent review, see Fourcade & Healy, 2007). Scholars have put forward different viewpoints, which can be subsumed under three rival views of the effect of the market on social relations: civilizing, destructive, or feeble (Hirschman, 1982). Our results suggest that the question of whether the market gives "rise to a distinctive set of beliefs, habits, and social bonds" (Fourcade & Healy, 2007, p. 285) may partly depend on the shopping mentality consumers adopt. A PCM seems capable of subtly undermining the quality of social relations by increasing consumers' tendencies to view employees more as commodities, rather than as ends, that is, humans, in themselves (cf. Polanyi, 2001).

Our findings suggest that the positioning of a brand is a powerful lever under a marketer's control to trigger a PCM. While past research has illuminated the potency of brands, this line of work almost exclusively focuses on how brands affect consumers (e.g., Brasel & Gips, 2011; Laran et al., 2011). Relatedly, work on the interplay of brand positioning, employees, and customer perceptions has focused on examining the potential benefits of strategic alignment between brands and their employees (e.g., Sirianni, Bitner, Brown, & Mandel,

2013). The central theme in this research stream is that consumers regard employees and interactions with them as rich sources of information about brands (e.g., Folkes & Patrick, 2003; Matta & Folkes, 2005). We extend these lines of inquiry by documenting that brands and their positioning have effects on humans other than consumers—namely, the employees. Interestingly, across studies, we find that a PCM is somewhat more likely to negatively affect perceptions of employees' capabilities for experience rather than agency. This form of dehumanization has been referred to as "mechanistic" (Haslam, 2006), implying that humans appear more robot-like. As consumers fail to fully recognize employees' humanness, the potential suffering of these individuals becomes less visible. While subtle, such dehumanization can lead to inconsiderate customer behaviors, particularly in stressful situations such as service failure, creating adverse outcomes for employees and firms alike.

The subtle nature of employee dehumanization can make it particularly difficult to identify. The text-mining approach we developed for the dataset in study 1 uncovers subtle failures to fully recognize others' humanity using naturalistic descriptions of individuals' own experiences (i.e., customer reviews). While the importance of language in dehumanization has been emphasized (e.g., Haslam, 2015), prior work has primarily focused on more blatant metaphors linked to animalistic dehumanization (e.g., beast, gorilla; Haslam, Loughnan, & Sun, 2011). As our approach operationalizes (de)humanization as the ascription of humanizing trait words to others, it holds potential for application across a wide array of contexts in which dehumanization might emerge such as in the workplace and in intergroup conflicts.

Managerial Implications

This research has several implications for brand managers. Our results underscore how factors beyond the control of the employee affect consumers' inclinations toward them. Managers of thrift-oriented brands need to be aware of the potential impact their positioning strategy has on their employees and identify means to offset the potential negative effects. For instance, these managers might consider supplementing their positioning with cues emphasizing the social dimension of consumption (Henkel, Boegershausen, Rafaei, & Lemmink, 2017). In addition, personnel managers of thrift-oriented brands can excel by proactively equipping their employees with the tools and

internal culture to cope with potentially less considerate customers. Failing to be mindful about such effects might be detrimental to organizational performance via diminished work morale, increased absenteeism, and high turnover (Sliter et al., 2012). Interestingly, some thrift-oriented brands such as ALDI actually pay *higher* salaries to their employees (The Hartman Group, 2015) using the power of money to offset potentially painful interactions with customers.

With the advent of new technologies in the form of automated social presence in many service encounters (e.g., van Doorn et al., 2017), a potential solution for brands to mitigate the dehumanization effect resulting from a PCM might be the replacement of humans with robots. Ironically, under certain conditions people might anthropomorphize such inanimate objects (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007), which in turn could trigger a more social interaction focus (Aggarwal & McGill, 2012). The exploration of such an automated social presence is an exciting topic for managers and scholars alike, as determining the optimal amount of humanization of such robots will contribute to competitiveness in the service game in the future.

A more conventional way to counteract the anti-social effects of a PCM might be to employ cues that signal an employee's humanness. As an initial attempt of such an intervention, we ran a modified replication of study 4 ($N = 412$) in which we also varied the style of the name card used by the employee. The name card of the employee was more or less personalized (i.e., regular printed vs. handwritten; see Appendix S1 for full details of the follow-up study). Our main effect of the PCM was replicated; however, we found no reduction in dehumanization of the thrift-oriented brand employee as a function of name card personalization. While this suggests that it might be relatively difficult to counteract the effect of a PCM, there might be stronger, more effective interventions, such as allowing employees to explicitly reference their personal life (e.g., having family photos on their desk; Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015).

Future Research and Concluding Remarks

As with any research, our work has limitations that can seed future inquiry. Our research focuses on examining the effect of a PCM on consumers' perceptions of employees and how these perceptions influence behavior. Yet, it would be interesting to more closely examine what function dehumanization might serve in the marketplace.

One might speculate that a PCM leads to the dehumanization of others because of its pronounced attention on one's own goals at the expense of attention to others' needs (Mead & Stuppy, 2014). Thus, a PCM may bind resources in the quest for realizing cost savings that otherwise would be used for social engagement. In essence, consumers enter the marketplace to exchange money for products and services. The more they solely focus on scoring the best deal, the less desirable it may be to consider the human needs of others. Instead, it may be efficient to dehumanize others to maximize one's own benefits.

Another interesting extension would be to investigate effects of a PCM beyond consumer perceptions of employees. For instance, adopting a PCM might lead individuals to perceive the self as temporarily less human. While self-dehumanization is generally aversive (e.g., Bastian et al., 2013), it might facilitate completion of tasks that clash with feeling human (e.g., delivering bad news to other people). Relatedly, recent work on more blatant forms of dehumanization has identified patterns of meta-dehumanization, wherein feelings of being dehumanized by members of other groups triggers reciprocal dehumanization (Kteily & Bruneau, 2017; Kteily, Hodson, & Bruneau, 2016). Consider, for instance, one reviewer in the dataset used in study 1, who remarked that "cattle would get better treatment." An exciting avenue for future research would be to examine such dehumanization cycles and how the experiences of dehumanization lead to diverse cognitive (e.g., emotional numbing, reduced empathy) and emotional (e.g., sadness, anger) consequences for employees and customers (Bastian & Haslam, 2011). It would also be interesting to examine whether customers under a PCM also dehumanize one another. Dehumanization of fellow customers might lead to less prosocial behaviors such as assistance and emotional support, potentially producing a tainted overall consumption experience.

Markets are a contributor to progress and welfare in society, yet the results of study 2 also suggest some evidence for an overall destructive force of the market. Specifically, we found that participants dehumanized all employees relative to market-unrelated individuals by failing to fully recognize the capability for agency. This is an interesting, yet cynical finding that is worthy of more detailed scrutiny. More work is needed to disentangle the interactive effects of occupational stereotypes (e.g., Cuddy, Glick, & Beninger, 2011) and market-related factors such as a PCM on the degree

to which consumers fully appreciate the human qualities of employees.

Future research might also scrutinize the role of personal characteristics of consumers in amplifying or mitigating the harmful effects of a PCM. For instance, some individuals might have a wider circle of moral concern; that is, they experience a greater moral obligation to show concern for a larger set of creatures (Goodwin, 2015, p. 922). Recent research documents individual differences with respect to identification with all humanity (McFarland, Brown, & Webb, 2013) and moral expansiveness (Crimston, Bain, Hornsey, & Bastian, 2016). In their study of moral expansiveness, Crimston et al. (2016) also show its connection to constructs more familiar to marketing scholars such as empathic concern (Davis, 1983) and moral identity (Reed & Aquino, 2003). Interestingly, it might be those individuals who generally show greater internalization of such values that are particularly likely to be negatively affected by external forces such as a PCM (see Boegershausen, Aquino, & Reed, 2015). An individual's moral circle might be fairly malleable and influenced by situational forces (e.g., inclusion vs. exclusion mindsets; Laham, 2009). Unraveling such complex interactions between consumption-related situational factors such as a PCM and personality is another promising avenue for future research.

To conclude, the relationship between the market and morality is an intricate question across the social sciences. Our research highlights the importance of moving beyond the dichotomy of presence or absence of the market. Instead, we suggest that a price conscious mentality evoked by consumers' approach to the market or the presentation of market offerings has pervasive implications for one of society's most touted moral values—recognizing others' humanity.

References

- Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34, 347–356. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3151897>
- Aggarwal, P., & Larrick, R. P. (2012). When consumers care about being treated fairly: The interaction of relationship norms and fairness norms. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22, 114–127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2011.11.009>
- Aggarwal, P., & McGill, A. L. (2012). When brands seem human, do humans act like brands? Automatic behavioral priming effects of brand anthropomorphism. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39, 307–323. <https://doi.org/10.1086/662614>
- Ailawadi, K. L., & Keller, K. L. (2004). Understanding retail branding: Conceptual insights and research priorities. *Journal of Retailing*, 80, 331–342. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2004.10.008>
- Bastian, B., & Haslam, N. (2010). Excluded from humanity: The dehumanizing effects of social ostracism. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46, 107–113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2009.06.022>
- Bastian, B., & Haslam, N. (2011). Experiencing dehumanization: Cognitive and emotional effects of everyday dehumanization. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 33, 295–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973533.2011.614132>
- Bastian, B., Jetten, J., Chen, H., Radke, H. R. M., Harding, J. F., & Fasoli, F. (2013). Losing our humanity: The self-dehumanizing consequences of social ostracism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39, 156–169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167212471205>
- Bastian, B., Jetten, J., & Haslam, N. (2014). An interpersonal perspective on dehumanization. In P. Bain, J. Vaes, & J.-P. Leyens (Eds.), *Humanness and dehumanization* (pp. 205–224). New York, NY: Psychological Press.
- Boegershausen, J., Aquino, K., & Reed, A. I. (2015). Moral identity. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6, 162–166. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.07.017>
- Brakus, J. J., Schmitt, B. H., & Zarantonello, L. (2009). Brand experience: What is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 73, 52–68. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.73.3.52>
- Brasel, S. A., & Gips, J. (2011). Red Bull “Gives You Wings” for better or worse: A double-edged impact of brand exposure on consumer performance. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 21, 57–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2010.09.008>
- Cameron, A. C., & Trivedi, P. K. (1998). *Regression analysis of count data*. New York: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511814365>
- Chartrand, T. L., Huber, J., Shiv, B., & Tanner, R. J. (2008). Nonconscious goals and consumer choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35, 189–201. <https://doi.org/10.1086/588685>
- Chen, Z., & Lurie, N. H. (2013). Temporal contiguity and negativity bias in the impact of online word of mouth. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 50, 463–476. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.12.0063>
- Crimston, D., Bain, P. G., Hornsey, M. J., & Bastian, B. (2016). Moral expansiveness: Examining variability in the extension of the moral world. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 111, 636–653. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000086>
- Cuddy, A. J. C., Glick, P., & Beninger, A. (2011). The dynamics of warmth and competence judgments, and their outcomes in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 31, 73–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2011.10.004>
- Darke, P. R., & Dahl, D. W. (2003). Fairness and discounts: The subjective value of a bargain. *Journal of*

- Consumer Psychology*, 13, 328–338. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1303_13
- Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44, 113–126. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.44.1.113>
- Demoulin, S., Torres, R. R., Perez, A. R., Vaes, J., Paladino, M. P., Gaunt, R., . . . Leyens, J.-P. (2004). Emotional prejudice can lead to infra-humanisation. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 15, 259–296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463280440000044>
- van Doorn, J., Mende, M., Noble, S. M., Hulland, J., Ostrom, A. L., Grewal, D., & Petersen, J. A. (2017). Domo arigato Mr. Roboto: Emergence of automated social presence in organizational frontlines and customers' service experiences. *Journal of Service Research*, 20, 43–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670516679272>
- Dumas, T. L., & Sanchez-Burks, J. (2015). The professional, the personal, and the ideal worker: Pressures and objectives shaping the boundary between life domains. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 9, 803–843. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2015.1028810>
- Epley, N., Waytz, A., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2007). On seeing human: A three-factor theory of anthropomorphism. *Psychological Review*, 114, 864–886. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.114.4.864>
- Fiske, A. P. (1991). The cultural relativity of selfish individualism: Anthropological evidence that humans are inherently sociable. In M. S. Clark (Ed.), *Prosocial behavior* (pp. 176–214). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fiske, A. P. (1992). The four elementary forms of sociality: Framework for a unified theory of social relations. *Psychological Review*, 99, 689–723. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.99.4.689>
- Folkes, V. S., & Patrick, V. M. (2003). The positivity effect in perceptions of services: Seen one, seen them all? *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30, 125–137. <https://doi.org/10.1086/374693>
- Fourcade, M., & Healy, K. (2007). Moral views of market society. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 33, 285–311. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131642>
- Gasiorowska, A., Chaplin, L. N., Zaleskiewicz, T., Wygrab, S., & Vohs, K. D. (2016). Money cues increase agency and decrease prosociality among children: Early signs of market-mode behaviors. *Psychological Science*, 27, 331–344. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797615620378>
- Goodwin, G. P. (2015). Experimental approaches to moral standing. *Philosophy Compass*, 10, 914–926. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12266>
- Goodwin, G. P., Piazza, J., & Rozin, P. (2014). Moral character predominates in person perception and evaluation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106, 148–168. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034726>
- Gray, H. M., Gray, K., & Wegner, D. M. (2007). Dimensions of mind perception. *Science*, 315, 619. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1134475>
- Gray, K., Knobe, J., Sheskin, M., Bloom, P., & Barrett, L. F. (2011). More than a body: Mind perception and the nature of objectification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101, 1207–1220. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025883>
- Gwinn, J. D., Judd, C. M., & Park, B. (2013). Less power = less human? Effects of power differentials on dehumanization. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 49, 464–470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2013.01.005>
- Han, Y. J., Nunes, J. C., & Drèze, X. (2010). Signaling status with luxury goods: The role of brand prominence. *Journal of Marketing*, 74, 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.74.4.15>
- Haque, O. S., & Waytz, A. (2012). Dehumanization in medicine: Causes, solutions, and functions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7, 176–186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691611429706>
- Harris, L. T., & Fiske, S. T. (2006). Dehumanizing the lowest of the low: Neuroimaging responses to extreme out-groups. *Psychological Science*, 17, 847–853. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01793.x>
- Haslam, N. (2006). Dehumanization: An integrative review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10, 252–264. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr1003_4
- Haslam, N. (2014). What is dehumanization? In P. Bain, J. Vaes, & J.-P. Leyens (Eds.), *Advances in understanding humanness and dehumanization* (pp. 34–48). New York: Psychology Press.
- Haslam, N. (2015). Dehumanization and intergroup relations. In M. Mikulincer, P. R. Shaver, J. F. Dovidio & J. A. Simpson (Eds.), *APA handbook of personality and social psychology* (Vol. 2: Group processes, pp. 295–314). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Haslam, N., & Bain, P. (2007). Humanizing the self: Moderators of the attribution of lesser humanness to others. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33, 57–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167206293191>
- Haslam, N., Bain, P., Douge, L., Lee, M., & Bastian, B. (2005). More human than you: Attributing humanness to self and others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89, 937–950. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.89.6.937>
- Haslam, N., Bastian, B., Laham, S., & Loughnan, S. (2012). Humanness, dehumanization, and moral psychology. In M. Mikulincer, P. R. Shaver, M. Mikulincer, & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *The social psychology of morality: Exploring the causes of good and evil* (pp. 203–218). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13091-000>
- Haslam, N., & Loughnan, S. (2014). Dehumanization and infrahumanization. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 399–423. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115045>
- Haslam, N., & Loughnan, S. (2016). How dehumanization promotes harm. In A. G. Miller (Ed.), *The social psychology of good and evil* (2nd ed., pp. 140–158). New York: Guilford Press.
- Haslam, N., Loughnan, S., & Holland, E. (2013). The psychology of humanness. In S. J. Gervais (Ed.),

- Objectification and (de)humanization: 60th Nebraska symposium on motivation* (pp. 25–51). New York, NY: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-6959-9>
- Haslam, N., Loughnan, S., & Sun, P. (2011). Beastly: What makes animal metaphors offensive? *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 30*, 311–325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927x11407168>
- Haslam, N., & Stratemeyer, M. (2016). Recent research on dehumanization. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 11*, 25–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.03.009>
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Heflick, N. A., & Goldenberg, J. L. (2009). Objectifying Sarah Palin: Evidence that objectification causes women to be perceived as less competent and less fully human. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45*, 598–601. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2009.02.008>
- Henkel, A. P., Boegershausen, J., Rafaeli, A., & Lemmink, J. (2017). The Social Dimension of Service Interactions. *Journal of Service Research, 20*, 120–134. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670516685179>
- Hirschman, A. O. (1982). Rival interpretations of market society: Civilizing, destructive, or feeble? *Journal of Economic Literature, 20*, 1463–1484.
- Kern, J. H., & Grandey, A. A. (2009). Customer incivility as a social stressor: The role of race and racial identity for service employees. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 14*, 46–57. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012684>
- Koopmann, J., Wang, M., Liu, Y., & Song, Y. (2015). Customer mistreatment: A review of conceptualizations and a multilevel theoretical model. *Research in occupational stress and well-being, 13*, 33–79. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-355520150000013002>
- Kouchaki, M., Smith-Crowe, K., Brief, A. P., & Sousa, C. (2013). Seeing green: Mere exposure to money triggers a business decision frame and unethical outcomes. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 121*, 53–61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2012.12.002>
- Kozak, M. N., Marsh, A. A., & Wegner, D. M. (2006). What do I think you're doing? Action identification and mind attribution. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 90*, 543–555. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.4.543>
- Kteily, N., & Bruneau, E. (2017). Backlash: The politics and real-world consequences of minority group dehumanization. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 43*, 87–104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167216675334>
- Kteily, N., Hodson, G., & Bruneau, E. (2016). They see us as less than human: Metadehumanization predicts intergroup conflict via reciprocal dehumanization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 110*, 343–370. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000044>
- Laham, S. M. (2009). Expanding the moral circle: Inclusion and exclusion mindsets and the circle of moral regard. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45*, 250–253. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.08.012>
- Laran, J., Dalton, A. N., & Andrade, E. B. (2011). The curious case of behavioral backlash: Why brands produce priming effects and slogans produce reverse priming effects. *Journal of Consumer Research, 37*, 999–1014. <https://doi.org/10.1086/656577>
- Li, X., & Hitt, L. M. (2008). Self-selection and information role of online product reviews. *Information Systems Research, 19*, 456–474. <https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.1070.0154>
- Lichtenstein, D. R., Ridgway, N. M., & Netemeyer, R. G. (1993). Price perceptions and consumer shopping behavior: A field study. *Journal of Marketing Research, 30*, 234–245. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3172830>
- Loughnan, S., & Haslam, N. (2007). Animals and androids: Implicit associations between social categories and nonhumans. *Psychological Science, 18*, 116–121. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2007.01858.x>
- Ma-Kellams, C., & Blascovich, J. (2013). The ironic effect of financial incentive on empathic accuracy. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 49*, 65–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.08.014>
- Matta, S., & Folkes, V. S. (2005). Inferences about the brand from counterstereotypical service providers. *Journal of Consumer Research, 32*, 196–206. <https://doi.org/10.1086/432229>
- McFarland, S., Brown, D., & Webb, M. (2013). Identification with all humanity as a moral concept and psychological construct. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 22*, 194–198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721412471346>
- Mead, N. L., & Stuppy, A. (2014). Two sides of the same coin: Money can promote and hinder interpersonal processes. In E. Bijleveld, & H. Aarts (Eds.), *The psychological science of money* (pp. 243–262). New York, NY: Springer.
- Mittal, V., Ross, W. T., & Baldasare, P. M. (1998). The asymmetric impact of negative and positive attribute-level performance on overall satisfaction and repurchase intentions. *Journal of Marketing, 62*, 33–47. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251801>
- Molinsky, A. L., Grant, A. M., & Margolis, J. D. (2012). The bedside manner of homo economicus: How and why priming an economic schema reduces compassion. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 119*, 27–37. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2012.05.001>
- Moradi, B. (2013). Discrimination, objectification, and dehumanization: Toward a pantheoretical framework. In S. J. Gervais (Ed.), *Objectification and (de)humanization: 60th Nebraska symposium on motivation* (pp. 153–181). New York, NY: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-6959-9>
- Morris, K. L., Goldenberg, J. L., & Boyd, P. (2017). *Women as animals, women as objects: The cleavage between sexual and appearance-focused objectification*. Working paper, University of South Florida.
- Morris, K. L., Goldenberg, J. L., & Heflick, N. A. (2014). Trio of terror (pregnancy, menstruation, and

- breastfeeding): An existential function of literal self-objectification among women. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 107, 181–198. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036493>
- Netzer, O., Feldman, R., Goldenberg, J., & Fresko, M. (2012). Mine your own business: Market-structure surveillance through text mining. *Marketing Science*, 31, 521–543. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.1120.0713>
- O'Donovan, C. (2017). That four-star rating you left could cost your Uber driver her job. Retrieved from https://web.archive.org/web/20170508173541/https://www.buzzfeed.com/carolineodonovan/the-fault-in-five-stars?utm_term=.jq40wvMLGj, May 8, 2017.
- Park, J., Haslam, N., & Kashima, Y. (2012). Relational to the core: Lay theories of humanness in Australia, Japan, and Korea. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 43, 774–783. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022111414417>
- Park, J. K., & John, D. R. (2010). Got to get you into my life: Do brand personalities rub off on consumers? *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37, 655–669. <https://doi.org/10.1086/655807>
- Polanyi, K. (2001). *The great transformation*. Boston: Beacon.
- Rafaeli, A., Erez, A., Ravid, S., Derfler-Rozin, R., Treister, D. E., & Scheyer, R. (2012). When customers exhibit verbal aggression, employees pay cognitive costs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97, 931–950. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028559>
- Rai, T. S., & Fiske, A. P. (2011). Moral psychology is relationship regulation: Moral motives for unity, hierarchy, equality, and proportionality. *Psychological Review*, 118, 57–75. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021867>
- Reed, A. II, & Aquino, K. (2003). Moral identity and the expanding circle of moral regard toward out-groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 1270–1286. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.6.1270>
- Schaefer, M., & Rotte, M. (2007). Thinking on luxury or pragmatic brand products: Brain responses to different categories of culturally based brands. *Brain Research*, 1165, 98–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brainres.2007.06.038>
- Schmitt, B. (2012). The consumer psychology of brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22, 7–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2011.09.005>
- Schneider, B., & Bowen, D. E. (2010). Winning the service game. In P. P. Maglio, C. A. Kieliszewski, & J. C. Spohrer (Eds.), *Handbook of service science* (pp. 31–59). New York, Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1628-0>
- Sirianni, N. J., Bitner, M. J., Brown, S. W., & Mandel, N. (2013). Branded service encounters: Strategically aligning employee behavior with the brand positioning. *Journal of Marketing*, 77, 108–123. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.11.0485>
- Sliter, M., Sliter, K., & Jex, S. (2012). The employee as a punching bag: The effect of multiple sources of incivility on employee withdrawal behavior and sales performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33, 121–139. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.767>
- Small, D. A., Loewenstein, G., & Slovic, P. (2007). Sympathy and callousness: The impact of deliberative thought on donations to identifiable and statistical victims. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 102, 143–153. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2006.01.005>
- Steenkamp, J.-B. E. M., & Kumar, N. (2009). Don't be undersold!. *Harvard Business Review*, 87, 90–95.
- Steenkamp, J.-B. E. M., & Maydeu-Olivares, A. (2015). Stability and change in consumer traits: Evidence from a 12-year longitudinal study, 2002–2013. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 52, 287–308. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.13.0592>
- Tausczik, Y. R., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2010). The psychological meaning of words: LIWC and computerized text analysis methods. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 29, 24–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927x09351676>
- The Hartman Group. (2015). ALDI is a growing menace to America's grocery retailers. *Forbes*, Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/thehartmangroup/2015/04/14/aldi-is-a-growing-menace-to-americas-grocery-retailers>, November 25, 2016.
- Tybout, A. M., & Sternthal, B. (2005). Brand positioning. In A. M. Tybout, & T. Calkins (Eds.), *Kellogg on branding* (pp. 11–26). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Vaes, J., Paladino, P., & Puvia, E. (2011). Are sexualized women complete human beings? Why men and women dehumanize sexually objectified women. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 41, 774–785. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.824>
- Villarroel Ordenes, F., Ludwig, S., de Ruyter, K., Grewal, D., & Wetzels, M. (2017). Unveiling what is written in the stars: Analyzing explicit, implicit, and discourse patterns of sentiment in social media. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43, 875–894. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucw070>
- Volmer, J., Binnewies, C., Sonnentag, S., & Niessen, C. (2012). Do social conflicts with customers at work encroach upon our private lives? A diary study. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 17, 304–315. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028454>
- Wang, M., Liu, S., Liao, H., Gong, Y., Kammeyer-Mueller, J., & Shi, J. (2013). Can't get it out of my mind: Employee rumination after customer mistreatment and negative mood in the next morning. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98, 989–1004. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033656>
- Wang, L., Zhong, C.-B., & Murnighan, J. K. (2014). The social and ethical consequences of a calculative mindset. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 125, 39–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2014.05.004>
- Waytz, A., & Epley, N. (2012). Social connection enables dehumanization. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48, 70–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.07.012>
- Waytz, A., & Schroeder, J. (2014). Overlooking others: Dehumanization by omission and omission. *TPM: Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, 21, 251–266. <https://doi.org/10.4473/TPM21.3.2>

- Williamson, P. J., & Zeng, M. (2009). Value-for-money strategies for recessionary times. *Harvard Business Review*, 87, 66–74.
- Worldatlas. (2017). The largest airlines in Europe. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20170716141834/http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/which-are-the-largest-airlines-in-europe.html>, July 16, 2017.
- Zhan, Y., Wang, M., & Shi, J. (2016). Interpersonal process of emotional labor: The role of negative and positive customer treatment. *Personnel Psychology*, 69, 525–557. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12114>
- Zhang, H., Chan, D. K. S., & Cao, Q. (2014). Deliberating on social targets' goal instrumentality leads to dehumanization: An experimental investigation. *Social Cognition*, 32, 181–189. <https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.2014.32.2.181>
- Zhang, H., Chan, D. K. S., Teng, F., & Zhang, D. (2015). Sense of interpersonal security and preference for harsh actions against others: The role of dehumanization. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 56, 165–171.
- Zhang, H., Chan, D. K. S., Xia, S., Tian, Y., & Zhu, J. (2017). Cognitive, emotional, and motivational consequences of dehumanization. *Social Cognition*, 35, 18–39. <https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.2017.35.1.18>

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's website:

Appendix S1. Methodological Detail Appendix.

Table S1. Generation of the Humanizing Trait Words Dictionary.

Table S2. Final Humanizing Trait Words Dictionary.

Table S3. Review Data Descriptive Statistics.

Table S4. Review Data Correlation Matrix.

Table S5. Presence of Humanizing Traits as a Function of Thrift-oriented Positioning (full sample; Models 1a–5a).

Table S6. Number of Humanizing Traits Used as a Function of Thrift-oriented Positioning (full sample; Models 1b–5b).

Table S7. Presence of Humanizing Traits as a Function of Thrift-oriented Positioning (economy class passengers; Models 1c–5c).

Table S8. Number of Humanizing Traits Used as a Function of Thrift-oriented Positioning (economy class passengers; Models 1d–5d).