SOCIAL CAPITAL AND POLITICAL CONSUMERISM: A MULTILEVEL
ANALYSIS

A THESIS

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by

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* * * *

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ABSTRACT

For some consumers, political consumerism is a form of civic engagement. With both consumption behavior and civic engagement embedded in social relations, I propose that social capital is a predictor of the link between the two—political consumerism. I hypothesize that: 1) individuals with greater social capital are more likely to politically consume than those with less social capital, and 2) individuals in regions whose members are socially integrated and trusting of each other and their institutions are more likely to politically consume than individuals in regions with lower social capital. The underlying rationale is that numerous, positive social interactions provide motivation, information, and skills for influencing social change.

Using data from the 2002/2003 European Social Survey, I test the effects of individual and regional characteristics on political consumerism using multilevel modeling. My final dataset represents 23,746 individuals nested in 209 within-country regions. I find support for my hypothesis that individuals with greater social capital are more likely to be political consumers than those with less social capital. Support for my second hypothesis is less clear, with two of the four region-level social capital variables showing a positive but possibly mediated effect on political consumerism, and the other two showing no effect. While individual-level effects are more important in predicting political consumerism, region-level effects are not inconsequential.

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INTRODUCTION

It can be tempting to dismiss all consumption behavior as materialistic and individualistic—a symptom of civic disengagement—when in fact the opposite may be true. For some consumers, marketplace decisions are an expression of civic engagement. Conscious of the societal effects of their choices, these “political consumers” use boycotting and buycotting behavior to affect marketplace change. Since consumption has become increasingly meaningful in modern-day culture (Zukin and Maguire 2004, Ritzer 2005), it follows that in attempting to affect change, many of these empowered citizens turn to their decisions in the marketplace as a form of political participation. At the same time, reports of declining civic engagement dominate the literature, most notably in Putnam’s book, “Bowling Alone” (2000). It is important to more seriously examine consumption because it may be that civic engagement is not in decline but is instead taking the form of everyday marketplace behavior.

In spite of its potential importance, consumer behavior is vulnerable to being overlooked by sociologists because of the view that consumption is an individualistic and economic activity. In fact, consumer behavior is embedded in social relations (Fukuyama 1995; Granovetter 1985). Political consumerism in particular is sociologically interesting because it is a form of civic engagement and a potential means of stimulating social change. Yet, the research on political consumerism is currently dominated by political

scientists, psychologists, and marketers (Friedman 1991, 1996; John and Klein 2003; Klein, Smith and John 2004; Kozinets and Handelman 1998; McGregor 2001, 2002; Sen, Gurhan-Canli and Morwitz 2001). As a result, existing research provides only a limited understanding of the social predictors and social consequences of political consumerism. Further, the most comprehensive work on this topic (Micheletti 2003, 2004; Micheletti, Follesdal and Stolle 2004; Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti 2005; Stolle and Micheletti 2005) focuses primarily on Scandinavian countries, where political consumerism is especially prevalent. We lack more generalizable insight into political consumerism.

Since political consumerism is a form of civic engagement, which in turn is associated with social capital (Dekker and Uslander 2001; Paxton 2002; Putnam 1993, 2000; Tocqueville 1840; and Verba and Nie 1972), this study uses social capital to predict political consumerism. If social capital is an accepted predictor of civic engagement, and if consumption behavior is embedded in social relationships, then it is reasonable to predict that social capital is also important in explaining a behavior through which consumption and civic engagement are linked—political consumerism. If we continue to ignore the social predictors and outcomes associated with political consumerism, we are in danger of misunderstanding trends in political participation and in marketplace activity.

This study contributes to our understanding of political consumerism in two important ways. First, it focuses on social capital as a predictor of political consumerism to demonstrate that consumption behavior is embedded in both micro and macro social relations, and that it can be an important form of civic engagement. Second, it

acknowledges that individual behaviors are influenced by both individual and aggregate level characteristics by employing multilevel modeling techniques to predict political consumerism. Moreover, the dataset I use is comprised of respondents from 18 countries, providing more generalizable conclusions about political consumerism than in past research.

I analyze data from the 2002/2003 European Social Survey, a cross-sectional, cross-national study of the social attitudes and behaviors of more than 40,000 respondents, to address the following hypotheses: 1) Individuals who have greater personal social capital are more likely to be political consumers than those with less social capital, and 2) Individuals in regions whose members are socially integrated and trusting of each other and their institutions are more likely to be political consumers than individuals in regions with lower social capital. In brief, the underlying rationale is that numerous, positive social interactions provide motivation, information, and skills for influencing social change.

In sum, political consumerism involves the intersection of social, economic, and political forces to bring about social change. This research offers new perspective related to social capital, civic engagement, and consumption behavior by: 1) focusing on the social influences on political consumerism, and 2) examining these relationships both at an individual and societal level.

CONCEPTUAL ARGUMENTS

This thesis addresses the social predictors of political consumerism. My model (Figure 1, see Appendix) suggests that political consumerism is affected by both the characteristics of individuals and the characteristics of the society in which they live. I hypothesize that individuals who have greater personal social capital are more likely to be political consumers than those with less social capital. Similarly, individuals in regions whose members are socially integrated and trusting of each other and their institutions are more likely to be political consumers than individuals in regions with lower social capital. I include individual level demographic controls that have been found to positively affect political consumerism. At the region level, I also include social values as a point of comparison for the social capital effects on political consumerism. I hypothesize that people in regions that value openness to change over conservation, and people in regions that value self-transcendence over self-enhancement are more likely to be political consumers.

Research questions to be examined are:

1. Overall, what is the relationship between social capital and political consumerism?

2. What is the relative importance of social capital (individual and regional) in predicting political consumerism compared to other proposed causes (demographics and values)?
3. What is the importance of regional characteristics in predicting political consumerism relative to individual characteristics? That is, how much of the variance in political consumerism is explained at the region-level? and,
4. How do the relationships between social capital and political consumerism vary depending on whether an individual practices boycotting, buycotting, or both?

Political Consumerism

Several authors support the view that consumption is a valid and meaningful form of civic engagement (Hertz 2001; Kelly 1899; McGregor 2002; Paterson 2005; Scammel 2000). While voting and donating to charity are important, they are occasional rather than everyday occurrences, whereas day-to-day consumption decisions determine the success or failure of individual businesses and of entire industries. In a sense, “consumers use their ‘purchase votes’ in the marketplace to ‘elect’ the sort of society they wish to be part of” (Brinkman 2004:133). Ritzer (2005:67) claims that “the postmodern world is defined by consumption (rather than production),” an observation that directly contrasts with Marx’s focus on the control of owners over their workers.

Some consumers are particularly conscious of their power in the marketplace. Boycotting, for example, is favored by consumer activists who seek to punish businesses for unfavorable behavior, while buycotting instead supports businesses that exhibit

positive behavior (Friedman 1996). Collectively, boycotts and buycotts illustrate the concept of political consumerism, the “consumer choice of producers and products with the goal of changing objectionable institutional or market practices” (Micheletti, Follesdal & Stolle 2004:xiv).

Green consumption, sustainable consumption, and voluntary simplicity may be considered forms of political consumerism, depending on the consumer’s motivation. Voluntary simplicity, for example, refers to the limitation of material consumption by choice (that is, limited consumption as a result of limited access to goods or limited finances does not constitute voluntary simplicity) (Huneke 2005). Voluntary simplicity for the sake of saving money or eliminating household clutter is not considered political consumerism. On the other hand, voluntary simplicity that is practiced to minimize strain on the environment would be classified as political consumerism. Political consumers are motivated by public interests, not only by private considerations (Andersen & Tobiasen 2004; Stolle & Hooghe 2004a).

The idea that consumption decisions can be rooted in social considerations is not new. Granovetter (1985) argues that economic behavior should, like other behaviors, be of interest to sociologists. He writes:

Actors do not behave or decide as atoms outside a social context, nor do they adhere slavishly to a script written for them by the particular intersection of social categories that they happen to occupy. Their attempts at purposive action are instead embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations. (p.487)

Consumers are social actors who consciously participate in the marketplace, their actions influenced by their social relationships and influencing others in return.

The social embeddedness of consumption can be seen in Zelizer's (1994) examination of the social meanings attached to money. She points out that we earmark savings for certain purposes, often according to who earned the money or on whom the earnings will be spent. For instance, spending can be gendered, with the wife's income allocated to a child's education and the husband's to housing expenses. This attachment of social meaning to spending decisions is also evident in the concept of political consumerism (consider the case of social investing as an example of boycotting).

In addition, several studies support the connection between consumption and social relations, especially in the context of identity. The works of Veblen (1912) and Bourdieu (1984) demonstrate that consumption choices help to communicate social position to others. As well, Kozinets and Handleman (1998) conclude that boycotters seek to achieve moral self-expression and differentiation from others through their actions. Similarly, Crockett and Wallendorf find that, for the African-American consumers they studied, shopping serves as an expression of their political ideologies—"their choices...articulate something about who they believe should benefit from their efforts, with whom they are aligned, and who they consider antagonists" (2004:525). Buying behavior is an extension of our selves, operating "not only on an individual level, but also on a collective level involving family, group, sub-cultural, and national identities" (Belk 1988:160).

Consumption is clearly embedded in social relations in a variety of ways. Political consumers are socially motivated to act for the public good and their actions can express individual or collective identity. Note that these ideas are not necessarily mutually

exclusive. For some, political consumption may be an act of civic engagement purely motivated by public interest. For others (perhaps most), political consumption may be an expression of civic engagement that is in turn an expression of underlying individual or collective identity; for instance, being seen as someone who supports environmental and ethical causes may be an important element of one's identity that manifests itself in actions such as political consumerism. This does not mean that such an individual is not truly a political consumer—there is still a motivation to behave in the public interest, even though a private interest is involved as well.

Social Capital

This discussion of the social embeddedness of consumption provides a framework for studying the influence of social capital on political consumerism. Social capital is “the set of norms, networks, and organizations through which (we) gain access to power and resources” (Serageldin and Grootaert 2000:45). While definitions vary, the essence of social capital is that its two components—trust and associations—have value (Putnam 2000).

This value is manifested in some consumers as political empowerment. As discussed below, people with greater social capital have both more access to information that might lead them to practice political consumption, and more motivation and better skills to act on this information than those with less social capital. Trust in others leads to

an expectation that others will act on behalf of the common good, while social associations provide opportunities to form perceptions about the consumption behaviors and political activities of others.

Trust

Individuals who are generally trusting are more likely to be political consumers than others for two key reasons. First, while trust does not directly increase one's access to information, trust in information sources (such as friends or government bodies) does increase the likelihood of acting on information about marketplace practices. Second, people who are more trusting have more motivation to consume politically because they believe that others will reciprocate with similarly socially responsible behavior, giving them faith in the efficacy of their actions. In studying boycott behavior, John and Klein find that participation in boycotts is affected by an individual's expectation of what others will do—"individuals boycott if they think others will do so; individuals do not boycott if they think that others will not" (2003:1207).

Trust in political institutions can also influence political consumerism. On one hand, trust in institutions may result in political consumerism because those who trust believe their actions will be supported by political bodies and are therefore more motivated to act. Andersen and Tobiasen (2004) support this view with their finding that political consumerism is positively correlated with trust in institutions and politicians, as do Stolle and Hooghe (2004b), whose results show a significant positive relationship between political trust and new forms of political participation (including political consumerism). Alternatively, low trust in institutions may also motivate political

consumerism because those who do not trust institutions to act in accordance with their values rely on their own actions to invoke change. In a pilot study of Canadian, Swedish, and Belgian university students, Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti (2005) conclude that political consumers are indeed more distrustful and critical of political and other institutions. Similarly, Swedish political consumers are more distrusting of corporations and corporate leaders; however, they have a more favorable view of institutions that prioritize “transparency, accountability, trade of consumer goods and the corporate world,” such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (Stolle and Micheletti 2005:7).

Associations

Association involvement should also influence political consumerism as it does other types of political participation. Verba and Nie (1972:182) report that organizational members engage in “twice as much political activity as non-members, and those who belong to more than one organization engage in almost three times as much activity as nonmembers.” This relationship between association involvement and political participation extends beyond the realm of traditional political participation (such as voting)—in a cross-national analysis of the relationship between social capital and unconventional political participation (such as boycotting), Paxton (1998) concludes that association membership is also a significant positive predictor of unconventional political participation.

Association involvement provides motivation, information and skills to influence political consumerism. First, members of associations tend to share norms and values that

can motivate political consumerism. In their study of specialty store patronage, Dawson and Wallendorf find association membership to be an even better predictor of specialty store patronage than social class, claiming that “for products which are symbolic and visible, such as clothing and furniture, individuals with greater associational involvement are subject to greater social risk” (1985:589). That is, consumption choices convey norms and values and therefore risk resulting in stigmatization when inconsistent with the choices of fellow association members. Such social risk seems a likely motivator for political consumerism among those with greater association ties.

Second, association involvement increases the number of social ties in one’s network, providing greater access to information that could influence consumption behavior and political activity. Verba et al. (1993) explain that involvement in non-political institutions such as voluntary associations exposes members to situations in which political issues are likely to be discussed.

Finally, in addition to providing motivation and increased information, involvement in associations can help members develop communication and other skills that increase their confidence and efficacy in political activity (Verba et al. 1993).

Not only should number of associations affect political participation, but so should type of association. Associations vary in their potential for members to develop political skills such as communication, negotiation, conflict management, and recognition of coercive behaviors (Warren 2001). The nature of an association also affects political participation in that issues are discussed in a way that is consistent with the shared norms, values and interests of the association members (Perrin 2005). Associations then can be

expected to vary greatly in their likelihood to promote political consumerism among members. Indeed, Stolle and Hooghe (2004b) find that membership in interest groups, social-cultural groups, and check book associations positively predicts new forms of political participation, including political consumerism, while church attendance is a negative predictor.

Demographic Explanations of Political Consumerism

Gender and socioeconomic status have been shown to influence political participation in general, and political consumerism in particular. For example, women are more likely to be political consumers than are men (Micheletti 2004; Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti 2005). Like other non-traditional forms of political participation, political consumerism is appealing to women because it lacks the restraints of membership or face-to-face interactions associated with traditional political participation (Stolle & Hooghe 2004b). As well, traditional sex roles often put women in a position to be political consumers; “as wives and mothers, they are concerned about the effects of consumer goods on their families and humankind. Political consumerism can, therefore, be seen as an engendered form of political participation, triggered by an ethic of care” (Micheletti 2004:256). In comparing political consumerism between males and females, Stolle and Hooghe (2004b) find a greater tendency for females to report boycotting and buycotting behaviors than males (this is especially true of buycotting). Similarly, Klein, Smith and John (2004) find significantly more female boycotters than male in their study of the boycott of a multinational firm.

In addition to sex, wealth and economic factors affect political participation. Those of higher socioeconomic status (SES) are more likely to be politically active (Paxton 1998; Verba and Nie 1972; Verba et al. 1993). Verba and Nie (1972:133) explain that “upper-status citizens have the time, money, and knowledge to be effective in politics” and they are more likely to have an interest in and belief that they can affect political problems.

People with higher SES are more likely to be political consumers because, in order to boycott or buycott products, consumers need access to alternative choices (Stolle & Hooghe 2004a). More ethical alternatives are often more highly priced than their sweatshop or non-fair trade (for example) counterparts, or they may be less accessible. Consumers of higher SES are more likely to be aware of and have access to these products. Not only are people of lower SES less able to participate in political consumerism, but their consumption decisions may be driven more by basic needs than by political, ethical or environmental considerations (Maslow 1968). While political consumerism may be exclusive today, Stolle and Hooghe (2004a) point out that as the effects of political consumerism become evident in the marketplace over time, this behavior can be expected to become more mainstream with greater availability and affordability of ethically and environmentally friendly products. Of note, the social exclusiveness seen with political consumerism is common among social movements and political activism in general (Ray et al. 2003).

Region-Level Explanations

The concept of social capital may be considered at both individual and aggregate (in this case regional) levels (Portes 1998). The argument for how region-level social capital predicts political consumerism is similar to that at the individual level: an individual who lives in a trusting, socially-integrated society is more likely to be a political consumer than an equivalent individual living in a less trusting, less integrated society, primarily because he or she has greater access to information and more motivation to act. That is, regions with more association involvement can be expected to have greater information flow that in turn enables individuals to make political consumption decisions—the social network of any given individual should be better connected and better informed than it would be in a region with lower social capital. Similarly, motivation to politically consume is tied to region-level trust: in more trusting societies, there is a cycle in which trustworthiness is demonstrated when people behave altruistically, in turn inspiring others to reciprocate and reinforcing commitment to common interests (Uphoff 2000). In other words, individuals in more trusting societies may be inspired to consume politically simply because they see evidence of trust and reciprocity in their day to day experiences and they therefore have faith that their actions will be effective. Even though that individual's level of trust may be no greater than if he or she were to reside in a region with lower social capital, the motivation to act would be greater as a result of living in a generally trusting society.

While there has not been much reported on societal predictors of political consumerism, the relationship between social capital and civic engagement has been examined both among individuals and at a societal level. Fukuyama (1995), for instance, discusses “low-trust” and “high-trust” societies and refers to the effect of social capital on creating “moral communities”. In addition, Norris (2001) finds cross-national patterns in levels of social capital that suggest systemic cultural or religious factors as underlying influences.

In addition to social capital, I suggest that region-level values may affect political consumerism. Inglehart and Catterberg’s (2002) cross-national analysis of political participation trends between 1974 and 2000 reveals that unconventional political participation such as petition signing and consumer boycotts has risen, but the pattern varies according to country-level characteristics such as wealth (GNP per capita) and level of democracy (that is, rich democracies versus ex-Communist nations versus developing nations). The authors refer to post-materialist theory as an explanation, claiming that unconventional political participation is more likely among cultures that have shifted toward self-expression values than among those focused on survival. These values, in turn, are related to economic security, with self-expression values more commonly found in richer societies. Consistent with this explanation, Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti (2005) find a strong relationship between political consumerism and post-materialism.

In the context of political consumerism, societal-level effects explain the disastrous business consequences felt by country musicians the Dixie Chicks when their

music was boycotted in response to their public criticism of President George W. Bush. Rossman (2004) explains that the drop in airplay of their music was more a result of regional social values in the United States than of corporate influences in the media industry. This example supports my assertion that social values can stimulate boycotting or buycotting behavior¹.

If social capital and political participation vary according to societal-level characteristics such as culture, wealth, and social values, then political consumerism can be influenced not only by social capital among individuals, but also by the social capital of the regions in which they live. There are likely to be differences in values, trust, and association involvement between regions that help predict political consumerism.

¹ It is also possible that individual-level social values affect political consumerism. Since I am including region-level values for context rather than as a focus of interest in and of itself, and the demographic controls serve that role at the individual-level, I do not include individual-level social values in this analysis.

DATA AND METHODS

I analyzed data from the 2002/2003 wave of the European Social Survey (ESS)². The ESS is a cross-national survey conducted across 22 European countries. The survey measures attitudes, values, and behaviors related to a range of topics of social interest, including politics, culture, and economics. While it is common for social surveys to include a question about boycott participation, the ESS is unique in its inclusion of a question that identifies boycotters.

Respondent samples were randomly selected representatives of private household residents who are age 15 years or older. The survey data were collected via hour-long face-to-face interviews, between September 2002 and December 2003. The resulting sample sizes range from 1207 to 2995³ respondents per country (Jowell et al. 2003).

My final dataset represents 23,746 individuals nested in 209 within-country regions, across 18 European countries⁴. Within-country regions serve as a contextual unit of analysis to provide an understanding of societal-level influences. The ESS based region selection on the European Union's nomenclature of territorial units for statistics

² The Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services (NSD) is the data archive and distributor of ESS data.

³ Response rates vary from 33.5% in Switzerland to 80.0% in Greece.

⁴ I dropped the Czech Republic, Italy, Luxembourg, and Switzerland from the analysis because they were missing data for variables key to my analysis—the values and association participation questions—as a result of deviations in the administration of the survey across countries.

(NUTS) classification.⁵ The NUTS subdivides countries into regions according to population size and economic, geographic, historical and cultural factors (Eurostat 2005). The NUTS regions are a large enough unit of analysis from which to draw societal-level conclusions (the mean population for regions represented in this survey is 1.8 million people), and they encompass both within region homogeneity and between region variety in culture, values, and lifestyles. There is a three level hierarchy of regional subdivisions, with NUTS 1 representing a broader classification of regions and NUTS 3 a more detailed classification (Eurostat 2005). Because the ESS was administered by each country independently, there is variation in the NUTS levels employed; half of the countries chose regions to correspond with NUTS 2, while 4 chose NUTS 1 and 5 chose NUTS 3 classifications. The number of regions per country ranges from 3 (Belgium) to 40 (the Netherlands), with a mean of 11.6 regions per country. The sample size per region ranges from 10 to 1234, with a mean of 171. Table 1 (see Appendix) presents descriptive statistics for the variables included in the analysis.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable, political consumerism, is operationalized using a survey question that asked people to respond “yes” or “no” to a variety of activities listed in association with the question, “During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?” I identified political consumers as people who answered “yes” to either

⁵ Israel excepted.

“boycotted certain products” (boycotters) or “deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical, or environmental reasons” (buycotters). I constructed two political consumerism variables; the first is a dummy variable of “political consumers” and “non-political consumers” with respondents who are boycotters and/or buycotters coded as 1 and others coded as 0, while the second provides a more detailed non-ordered categorization of political consumers, distinguishing respondents who only boycotted in the past 12 months from those who only buycotted and from those who both boycotted and buycotted. Those who were not political consumers served as the reference category.

Individual-Level Independent Variables

I employed three control variables in my individual-level analysis: 1) gender, measured as a dichotomous variable with “female” coded as 1 and “male” coded as 0, 2) respondent’s highest level of education completed, measured using a 7 category ordinal scale, and 3) total net annual household income, measured using a 12 category ordinal scale.

To measure individual-level social capital, I included variables to capture both trust and social associations. Trust is measured using two variables: generalized trust, and trust in institutions. I created a composite measure of generalized trust by taking an average score (on a scale of 0 to 10) for each respondent across three survey items: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?”, “Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair?”, and “Would you

say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?” Cases with data missing on any of the 3 items were classified as missing data.

Similarly, the trust in institutions measure is an average score (on a scale of 0 to 10) across 5 survey items: “Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out: this country’s parliament, the legal system, politicians, the European Parliament, and the United Nations.” “The police” were also included in this list of institutions; however I excluded this from my composite measure of trust in institutions, finding no theoretical rationale for linking trust in police with consumption behavior. Cases with missing data on any of the five items were classified as missing on the constructed measure.

I measured social associations using two variables: frequency of social meetings, and involvement in associations. Frequency of social meetings is a survey item asking respondents to indicate on a 7 point ordinal scale (“never” to “every day”) “How often do you meet socially with friends, relatives or work colleagues?” The creation of the involvement in associations variable was a 3-step process using a survey item which asked respondents to indicate their past 12 month participation in each of 12 types of organizations. I first assigned a score of 1, 2, or 3 to each of the organizations according to Warren’s (2001) assessment of their potential to foster political skills among members. Members of religious or church organizations, for example, have a relatively high tendency to develop political skills from their involvement, whereas participants in sports clubs have a relatively low tendency to develop political skills from their involvement.

Organizations with high potential for political skills development were coded with “3”, those with low potential were coded with “1” and those with mixed potential were coded with “2”. An additive association involvement score was then tabulated for each respondent by totaling the number of organizations in which he or she has participated in the past year, with each organization weighted according to its relative political skills development potential. Scores ranged from 0 to 26. To account for potential over-reporting or misreporting of association involvement, and to recognize that there is likely a threshold at which incremental association involvement ceases to contribute further to political consumerism, I grouped together all respondents with a score between 8 and 26 into a single category⁶. In creating the association involvement variable, cases with missing data on any of the items involved were eliminated.

Region-Level Independent Variables

The social capital variables are the same at the region-level as they are at the individual level: generalized trust, trust in institutions, frequency of social meetings, and association involvement. I included two additional region-level variables for comparison when interpreting the effect of regional-level social capital on political consumerism; these variables represent two dimensions of social values. The ESS includes 21 survey items from which I calculated a mean score for each respondent to create 4 higher-order value variables⁷: 1) openness to change, 2) conservation, 3) self-enhancement, and 4)

⁶ 82% of survey respondents have an association involvement score of less than 8.

⁷ Using ESS website guidelines for working with human values survey items.

self-transcendence. “Openness to change” reflects motivations such as creativity and freedom; “conservation” reflects tradition and social order; “self-enhancement” reflects achievement and power, and “self-transcendence” reflects benevolence and equality. Missing data is handled in the same way as described for the two trust scales.

From these four higher-order value variables I created new variables by calculating the difference between each respondent’s openness to change and conservation scores, and between their self-transcendence and self-enhancement scores to represent two higher-order values dimensions. Individual level scores for each of these two variables were then averaged across each region for regional values scores. Regions with higher scores on the openness to change versus conservation dimension have respondents who, on average across the region, value openness to change more than conservation. Likewise, a higher positive score on the self-transcendence versus self-enhancement dimension reflects a tendency for the inhabitants of a region to value self-transcendence over self-enhancement.

To create the four social capital and two social values region-level independent variables, I aggregated the individual level data by calculating Empirical Bayes (EB) means. This was done to handle the variation in reliabilities across regions due to differences in size and definition of regions. In creating EB estimates, less reliable estimates are adjusted using information from more reliable estimates, shrinking the coefficients toward the grand mean. The result is improved reliability of the region level coefficients.

Analytic Strategy

To study the effects of both individual and regional characteristics on political consumerism, I used multilevel modeling methods. Doing so addresses the question “What is the importance of regional characteristics in predicting political consumerism relative to individual characteristics?” by simultaneously assessing individual and regional variables. Multilevel modeling helps avoid problems posed by the clustering of nested observations; that is, individual observations are nested within regions, meaning that variability among individuals may reflect commonalities of the region in which they live. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression assumes that errors are uncorrelated and that error variance is homoskedastic. With multilevel modeling, variance that occurs between individuals can be separated from variance that occurs between regions, avoiding problems associated with the violation of OLS assumptions.

My primary analysis addresses the question, “What is the relationship between social capital and political consumerism?” In particular, I am interested in understanding the relative importance of social capital in predicting political consumerism compared to control and social values variables, as well as the relative importance of regional characteristics versus individual characteristics. The dependent variable for this analysis

is the political consumers dummy variable. Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, I use hierarchical Bernoulli logit modeling. This analysis consists of six models. The first is the unconditional model:

Level1

$$\eta_{ij} = \log\left(\frac{\varphi_{ij}}{1 - \varphi_{ij}}\right) = \beta_{0j}$$

Level2

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}, u_{0j} \sim N(0, \tau_{00})$$

where γ_{00} is the average log odds of being a political consumer across regions and τ_{00} is the variance between regions in the average log odds of being a political consumer.

Model 2 simply adds to the unconditional model the effects of individual-level controls:

Level1

$$\eta_{ij} = \log\left(\frac{\varphi_{ij}}{1 - \varphi_{ij}}\right) = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{female})_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(\text{education})_{ij} + \beta_{3j}(\text{income})_{ij}$$

Level2

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}, u_{0j} \sim N(0, \tau_{00})$$

where β_{1j} , β_{2j} , and β_{3j} are the coefficients for the control variables. Their effects are fixed.

Model 3 adds to model 2 the effects of individual-level social capital variables, β_{4j} (generalized trust), β_{5j} (trust in institutions), β_{6j} (association involvement), and β_{7j} (frequency of social meetings), with all effects fixed at level 2.

Models 4, 5 and 6 add region-level social associations, trust, and values step-wise to model 3. In each of models 4, 5 and 6, the effects of social associations and trust vary randomly at level 2. The full model with all predictors (model 6) is depicted in the equations below.

Level1

$$n_{ij} = \log\left(\frac{\varphi_{ij}}{1 - \varphi_{ij}}\right) = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{female})_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(\text{education})_{ij} + \beta_{3j}(\text{income})_{ij} + \beta_{4j}(\text{gentrust})_{ij} + \beta_{5j}(\text{instrust})_{ij} + \beta_{6j}(\text{assn})_{ij} + \beta_{7j}(\text{socialmt})_{ij}$$

Level2

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{gentrust2})_j + \gamma_{02}(\text{instrust2})_j + \gamma_{03}(\text{assn2})_j + \gamma_{04}(\text{socialmt2})_j + \gamma_{05}(\text{opentochange})_j + \gamma_{06}(\text{selftranscendence})_j + u_{0j}, u_{0j} \sim N(0, \tau_{00})$$

$$\beta_{4j} = \gamma_{40} + u_{4j}$$

$$\beta_{5j} = \gamma_{50} + u_{5j}$$

$$\beta_{6j} = \gamma_{60} + u_{6j}$$

$$\beta_{7j} = \gamma_{70} + u_{7j}$$

To answer my final research question, “Do the relationships between social capital and political consumerism vary depending on whether an individual practices boycotting, buycotting, or both?” I regress the independent variables on my second dependent variable, a 4 category measure of political consumerism. For this analysis I use hierarchical multinomial logit modeling. Models 7, 8 and 9 contain the same variables as the Bernoulli models 4, 5 and 6 described above, where η_{0ij} is the log-odds of having boycotted only, η_{1ij} is the log-odds of having buycotted only, and η_{2ij} is the log-odds of having both boycotted and buycotted. In models 7, 8 and 9 all effects remain fixed.

RESULTS

Bivariate Associations

All bivariate associations are in the expected direction. Association involvement and two of the controls—education and income—have the strongest individual-level associations with political consumerism (Table 2, see Appendix). My two measures of trust are not strongly associated with each other ($r=0.38$), and the frequency of social meetings and association involvement are only weakly related ($r=0.18$); this helps justify the use of multiple social capital measures at the individual level. At the region level (Table 3, see Appendix), all predictors are positively correlated. Generalized trust and association involvement are strongly correlated ($r=0.80$), a possible indication of multicollinearity.

Predicting Political Consumerism Using Hierarchical Bernoulli Logit Models

Table 4 (see Appendix) presents the results for the hierarchical Bernoulli logit models predicting political consumerism as a dichotomous outcome. The results of the unconditional model (model 1) show that the predicted probability of a respondent being a political consumer is 27.96% (average log odds = -0.947). The region-level variance component is 0.728 ($p<0.001$), with the 95% plausible values range indicating the

predicted percentage of political consumers in a region varies from 6.79% to 67.40%. From this it can be concluded that political consumerism varies significantly across regions.

Effects of Individual-Level Variables

In each of the 5 conditional models predicting the dichotomous political consumerism outcome, the individual level controls are all significant, and in the predicted direction; the average log odds of being a political consumer are greater for females, those with higher education levels, and those with higher household income, where females are predicted to have a 7.20% greater probability of being political consumers than males, a 1 unit increase in education level increases the predicted probability of being a political consumer by 5.44%, and a 1 unit increase in household income increases the predicted probability of being a political consumer by 0.93% (model 3).

When individual-level social capital variables are included, the effects are significant and in the predicted directions for generalized trust, association involvement, and frequency of social meetings. The results of model 3, for example, show that a 1 unit increase in generalized trust score increases the predicted probability of being a political consumer by 0.81% (0.044 increase in the average log odds, $p < 0.001$); a 1 unit increase in association involvement increases the predicted probability of being a political consumer by 3.73% (0.196 increase in the average log odds, $p < 0.001$); and a 1 unit increase in frequency of social meetings increases the predicted probability of being a political consumer by 1.06% (0.058 increase in the average log odds, $p < 0.001$). The

results for the effect of trust in institutions on political consumerism are interesting. In three of four models, there is no effect of trust in institutions, and where the effect is significant (model 3) it is negative. Those with lower trust in institutions are more likely to be political consumers. In model 3, the coefficient for trust in institutions is -0.028, indicating that a 1 unit increase in trust in institutions score decreases the predicted probability of being a political consumer 0.51%.

Of note, the errors for the individual-level social capital variables were allowed to vary randomly across regions. The variance component for association involvement shows significant variation across regions in its effect on political consumerism ($\tau = 0.001$, $p < 0.05$). There is no significant variation across regions in the effects of generalized trust, trust in institutions, or frequency of social meetings on political consumerism.

Effects of Region-Level Variables

Models 4, 5 and 6 add step-wise the effects of region-level social associations, trust, and values, respectively. The effect of association involvement on political consumerism is initially significant and positive; for each unit increase in association involvement the predicted probability of being a political consumer increases by 2.97% (0.159 increase in average log odds, $p < 0.001$). There is no effect from frequency of social meetings.

When the two trust variables are added in model 5, this effect is eliminated and generalized trust emerges as a significant predictor of political consumerism with each

unit increase in generalized trust corresponding with an increased predicted probability of 5.80% (0.300 increase in average log odds, $p < 0.01$). Trust in institutions does not affect political consumerism.

Similarly, the significant positive effect of generalized trust on political consumerism disappears in model 6 when the two values variables are included. Respondents living in regions with higher average scores on the “openness to change” or “self-transcendence” dimensions of social values are more likely to be political consumers. A 1 unit increase in the openness to change score increases the predicted probability of being a political consumer by 18.60% (0.860 increase in average log odds, $p < 0.001$), and a 1 unit increase in the self-transcendence score increases the predicted probability of being a political consumer by 23.93% (1.076 increase in the average log odds, $p < 0.001$). This sequence of results suggests the relationship between association involvement and political consumerism may be mediated by generalized trust, and the relationship between generalized trust and political consumerism may be, in turn, mediated by social values.

Looking at all of the individual and region level variables in model 6, the control and social values variables generally have the largest effects: the odds of females being political consumers are 1.44 times that of males, and an increase of one standard deviation in education level, self-transcendence, or openness to change increases the odds of being a political consumer 1.53 times, 1.34 times, or 1.29 times respectively. Individual-level association involvement, however, yields the largest effect, with an increase of one standard deviation increasing the odds of being a political consumer 1.82

times. The effects of region-level generalized trust, individual-level frequency of social meetings, and individual-level generalized trust are comparable to that of household income, with a one standard deviation increase in each increasing the odds of being a political consumer by 1.13, 1.09, 1.07, and 1.11 respectively.

Explaining Regional Variation

Comparison of region-level variances across models provides some insight into the relative contributions of social capital variables. The proportion of variance in political consumerism explained at the region level in model 6 is 75.5%⁸. Individual-level social capital variables account for 23.21% of the residual region-level variance in political consumerism, while the gender, income, and education controls account for 30.22%. Region-level social capital and social values account for 10.03% and 12.09% of the residual region-level variance in political consumerism, respectively. The full model (model 6) explains 54.3% of the variance in coefficients.

Predicting Political Consumerism Using Hierarchical Multinomial Logit Models

Effects of Individual-Level Variables

Table 5 (see Appendix) presents the results of the multinomial logit models predicting political consumerism as a 4 category variable, showing the varying effects of controls and social capital on the log odds of boycotting, buycotting, and both boycotting and buycotting.

⁸ $(\tau_{00}(\text{model 1}) - \tau_{00}(\text{model 6})) / \tau_{00}(\text{model 1}) = 0.755$

Gender, which was a significant predictor of political consumerism in models 1 through 6, remains a significant predictor of boycotting and dual boycotting/buycotting behavior, with women more likely to boycott or boycott/buycott than men, for models 7, 8 and 9. Gender does *not*, however, affect boycotting. The other control variables, education level and household income, show consistent effects for all three categories of political consumers, each significant in the predicted direction.

The effects of individual-level social capital vary by category as well. Generalized trust does not significantly predict boycotting, but it does have a significant positive effect on boycotting and boycott/buycott dual behavior. Trust in institutions, on the other hand, has a negative significant effect on boycotting and on dual boycott/buycott behavior; people with less trust in institutions are more likely to boycott. Boycotting is affected in the opposite direction; individuals with greater trust in institutions are more likely to boycott.

Association involvement affects each category of political consumerism significantly; individuals with higher association involvement scores are more likely to be political consumers, regardless of their category of political consumption behavior. This relationship is consistent with that found in the dichotomous political consumerism models. Frequency of social meetings, on the other hand, shows no significant effect on boycotting behavior, but it does predict boycotting and dual boycott/buycott behavior, with those who socialize more frequently more likely to be boycotters or boycotters/buycotters.

Effects of Region-Level Variables

The region-level variance components are all statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that political consumerism varies across regions, regardless of the category of political consumerism.

At the region level, none of the social capital variables affect boycotting. The results for predictors of boycotting and dual boycott/buycott behavior are consistent with those found for predictors of political consumerism, in that association involvement is a significant positive predictor when modeled without trust and values variables (model 7). The addition of trust to the model (model 8) eliminates the effect of association involvement and reveals generalized trust as a significant positive predictor.

Generalized trust maintains its significance for the prediction of boycotting when social values are added to the model (model 9), whereas the relationship disappears for boycotter/buycotters. Not only does generalized trust remain an important predictor of boycotting, but frequency of social meetings is significantly related to boycotting in both models 8 and 9. The effect is negative, indicating that people who live in regions in which social meetings tend to occur more frequently are less likely to boycott.

For all three categories of political consumers, there is no significant influence of region-level trust in institutions. Conversely, the effect of social values is a positive predictor of boycotting, boycotting, and dual boycott/buycott behavior.

DISCUSSION

Relationship between Social Capital and Political Consumerism

Overall, there is a positive relationship between social capital and political consumerism. As hypothesized, individuals who have greater personal social capital are more likely to be political consumers than those with less social capital, as indicated by the effects of individual-level generalized trust, association involvement, and frequency of social meetings. Trust in institutions is an exception. Political consumerism measured as a dichotomous variable is not associated with trust in institutions, but this flat result may be a consequence of the variable's opposing significant relationships with boycotting and buycotting.

The general finding that social capital among individuals positively predicts political consumerism is consistent with findings from other studies of political consumerism and of other forms of civic engagement, suggesting that: 1) the relationship between social capital and political consumerism is stable enough to hold up not only in societies with the greatest prevalence of political consumerism but also in a generalized context, and 2) predictors of other forms of civic engagement can be effectively applied to political consumerism. If individuals with greater social capital are more likely to be

political consumers, the implication is that people with more social ties and greater trust have more power in the marketplace and therefore more power to guide social change in a direction that matches their values and goals.

Support is less clear for the hypothesis that individuals in societies whose members are socially integrated and trusting of each other and their institutions are more likely to be political consumers than individuals in societies with lower social capital. Region-level trust in institutions and frequency of social meetings do not affect political consumerism. There are positive relationships between political consumerism and association involvement, generalized trust, and social values; however, it is important to note that the relationships may be mediated. This could produce the pattern of effects seen in Tables 4 and 5—the effects of association involvement and generalized trust disappear once social values are included in the model. So, regions which are characterized as being more open to change and more self-transcendent have higher levels of generalized trust, which is in turn associated with association involvement⁹. The relationship between values and political consumerism supports the link between individual-level postmaterialism and political consumerism found by Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti (2005), as well as societal-level relationships reported by Inglehart and Catterberg (2002) and Rossman (2004). Societies with values that lean more toward openness to change and self-transcendence, then, can be expected to be leaders of political consumerism.

⁹ Stolle (1998) demonstrates both the creation of generalized trust from involvement in voluntary associations and the self-selection of trusting individuals into voluntary associations.

Importance of Social Capital Compared to Other Predictors

The relative importance of social capital variables in predicting political consumerism can be assessed by considering both the size of the effect of each variable and the proportion of variance in political consumerism across regions that is explained by each variable. Effect sizes expressed as the increase in odds of being a political consumer resulting from a one standard deviation increase for any given variable suggest that social capital is an important predictor of political consumerism. Not only does individual-level association involvement show the largest effect, but the effect sizes of generalized trust (both at the individual and region levels) and individual-level frequency of social meetings are comparable to that of the household income control.

The contribution of social capital to the explanation of differences in levels of political consumerism across regions is noteworthy as well, as the social capital variables account for about a third of the explained variance. Social capital is, however, a less important determinant of political consumerism than individual-level demographic controls and region-level social values.

Importance of Region-Level versus Individual-Level Characteristics

The large variation in the proportion of political consumers across regions, along with consistently (across models) significant region-level variance components highlights the importance of examining regional characteristics as predictors of political consumerism. The contribution of individual-level characteristics, however, outweighs the contribution of region-level characteristics in predicting political consumerism.

Social Capital and Political Consumerism: Boycotting versus Buycotting

There are definite differences in predictors of boycotting versus buycotting. Boycotting is unique in that it is neither affected by gender, nor by generalized trust, frequency of social meetings, or any region-level social capital variables. The social capital variables that do predict boycotting are individual-level association involvement (positively) and trust in institutions (negatively).

Predictors of buycotting, on the other hand, mostly mirror predictors of political consumerism. Interestingly, individual-level trust in institutions positively predicts buycotting. Region-level social capital predicts buycotting in the same way as it does political consumerism, except that generalized trust continues to contribute significantly independent of the effects of social values. The finding that buycotting is more likely for people who live in regions with lower average frequency of social meetings is unexpected and needs further investigation.

Boycotting and buycotting are clearly motivated by different factors, meaning that we must be careful not to apply findings from the study of one to understand the other. Nearly all of the literature reports either on the collective concept of political consumerism or on boycotting. Since the predictors of buycotting are unique, and since buycotting is far more prevalent than boycotting (at least in Europe), it should be studied further.

CONCLUSION

For some consumers, political consumerism serves as a form of civic engagement. With both consumption behavior and civic engagement embedded in social relations, it is not surprising to find that the link between the two—political consumerism—can be effectively predicted using social capital variables. This study focused on the relationship between social capital and political consumerism, expanding on previous studies to consider not only individual-level effects but also region-level effects. I used multilevel modeling of data from the 2002/2003 European Social Survey to test the effects of individual and regional social capital on political consumerism. I found that while individual-level effects are more important, region-level effects are not inconsequential in predicting political consumerism.

The finding that the social capital of individuals predicts political consumerism implies that greater trust and association involvement provides these individuals with motivation, information and skills to be purposeful in their consumption, directing marketplace practices in favor of social changes they wish to see. The effect of the social capital of a region on political consumerism appears to be a mediated relationship between association involvement, generalized trust, and social values. This study demonstrates that not only do the characteristics of individuals matter for political

consumerism, but so does the societal context in which they live. To better understand this societal context, the mechanism through which political consumerism is related to social capital is one that should be investigated further.

This study also shows that the effects of the components of social capital on political consumption vary depending on the type of behavior being predicted—the predictors of boycotting are different from those of buycotting. Boycotting is less affected by social capital than is buycotting; perhaps boycotting is more often instigated by well-publicized events that everyone would have equal access to regardless of their social networks, whereas buycotting may be more often initiated through interpersonal exchanges of information. The implication is that the targets of boycotting may be fewer and more collectively defined than buycotting targets. Boycotting and buycotting should be studied in greater depth individually, with a particular focus on the currently understudied buycotting. Of special interest for future studies is the finding that an individual's trust in institutions is negatively associated with boycotting but positively associated with buycotting. Additionally, more work needs to be done to explain why those who live in regions with a lower average frequency of social meetings are more likely to be political consumers.

Overall, opportunities exist to improve and expand upon this research in future studies. First, there are some measurement shortcomings. The trust in institutions variable does not include economic institutions such as banks and corporations. In addition, validity of the dependent variable could be improved by specifying reasons for boycotting. The questionnaire simply asks respondents to indicate whether or not they

have boycotted in the past year, without qualifying the behavior as being for political, ethical, or environmental reasons. Political consumerism is defined by public rather than private motivation, yet it is possible that some of those identified as boycotters from this survey are in fact privately motivated.

Second, this analysis considers the relationship between social capital and political consumerism only in terms of social capital as a predictor of political consumerism. The reverse relationship may also be true in that political consumerism can create social capital by uniting like-minded consumers in pursuit of common interests (Micheletti 2003).

Third, a more nuanced understanding of political consumerism could be achieved by measuring not only whether or not an individual boycotts or buycotts, but also by determining commitment to this behavior—Does he or she boycott with every purchase, or was it a one-time occurrence? Does he or she boycott or buycott several products, or only one? The nature of the boycott or buycott also seems important—boycotters of Wal*Mart are likely different from boycotters of American Dolls, for example. Perhaps the greatest contribution that could be made to the understanding the regional variance in political consumerism is detailed marketplace data, including number and variety of retailers and product offerings per region, since political consumers are limited or enabled by the availability of alternative consumption choices.

Finally, we could gain a broader understanding of political consumerism by surveying a greater number and variety of societies. While the ESS is extraordinarily valuable, the societies it represents are relatively homogeneous in terms of wealth,

economic development, literacy, and media usage. Political consumerism data from developing countries in Asia, Africa, and South America would enable a richer societal-level analysis.

The large scale of the ESS gives confidence that these findings can be generalized to better understand the behaviors of political consumers in developed societies. By continuing to investigate political consumerism we can learn more about ways in which social actors engage with the marketplace and with each other to affect social change.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

		%	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
<i>Dependent Variables (N=23,746)</i>						
	Political Consumers (dummy)		0.35	0.48	0.00	1.00
	Political Consumers (4 categories)		2.40	0.91	0.00	3.00
	Boycott only	4.60				
	Buycott only	15.86				
	Both boycott and buycott	14.07				
<i>Individual-Level Independent Variables</i>						
Controls	Female		0.50	0.50	0.00	1.00
	Education Level		3.06	1.50	0.00	6.00
	Household Income		6.09	2.42	1.00	12.00
Social Capital	Generalized Trust		5.28	1.97	0.00	10.00
	Trust in Institutions		4.94	1.90	0.00	10.00
	Association Involvement		3.58	3.06	0.00	8.00
	Frequency of Social Meetings		5.03	1.54	1.00	7.00
<i>Region-Level Independent Variables (N=209)</i>						
Social values	Openness to Change vs. Conservation		-0.19	0.30	-0.99	0.93
	Self-Transcendence vs. Self-Enhancement		1.25	0.27	0.43	2.04
Social Capital	Generalized Trust		5.23	0.92	2.62	6.99
	Trust in Institutions		4.90	0.56	3.79	6.46
	Association Involvement		3.51	1.57	0.60	5.98
	Frequency of Social Meetings		5.01	0.45	3.53	6.16

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (ESS 2002/2003)

Individual Level Predictors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Political Consumerism (dummy)	1.00								
2.Political Consumerism ¹⁰ (4 categories)	-0.90	1.00							
3.Female	0.05	-0.03	1.00						
4.Education Level	0.28	-0.22	-0.02	1.00					
5.Household Income	0.25	-0.21	-0.08	0.40	1.00				
6.Generalized Trust	0.19	-0.15	0.01	0.18	0.29	1.00			
7.Trust in Institutions	0.09	-0.07	-0.03	0.14	0.18	0.38	1.00		
8.Association Involvement	0.37	-0.29	-0.03	0.32	0.39	0.30	0.18	1.00	
9.Frequency of Social Meetings	0.11	-0.08	-0.01	0.10	0.14	0.18	0.09	0.18	1.00

Table 2. Correlations among individual level variables

¹⁰ Correlations are negative because non-political consumers are coded with the highest value. This has been done so that HLM will read non-political consumers as the reference category.

Region Level Predictors	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Openness to Change dimension	1.00					
2.Self-Transcendence dimension	0.16	1.00				
3.Generalized Trust	0.60	0.46	1.00			
4.Trust in Institutions	0.33	0.18	0.55	1.00		
5.Association Involvement	0.64	0.40	0.80	0.40	1.00	
6.Frequency of Social Meetings	0.49	0.29	0.64	0.20	0.59	1.00

Table 3. Correlations among region level predictors

Independent Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Individual-Level Controls</i>						
Female	—	0.353*** (0.030)	0.364*** (0.032)	0.365*** (0.032)	0.366*** (0.032)	0.366** (0.032)
Education Level	—	0.358*** (0.009)	0.280*** (0.010)	0.283*** (0.011)	0.284*** (0.012)	0.283** (0.012)
Household Income	—	0.085*** (0.007)	0.051*** (0.007)	0.044*** (0.008)	0.043*** (0.008)	0.043*** (0.008)
<i>Individual-Level Social Capital</i>						
Generalized Trust	—	—	0.044*** (0.011)	0.041** (0.011)	0.036** (0.011)	0.035* (0.011)
Trust in Institutions	—	—	-0.028 ⁺⁺⁺ (0.008)	-0.017 (0.011)	-0.017 (0.011)	-0.012 (0.012)
Associations	—	—	0.196*** (0.005)	0.199*** (0.007)	0.198*** (0.012)	0.196** (0.007)
Social Meetings	—	—	0.058*** (0.013)	0.054*** (0.014)	0.055*** (0.014)	0.057** (0.014)
<i>Region-Level Social values</i>						
Openness to Change	—	—	—	—	—	0.860** (0.208)
Self-Transcendence	—	—	—	—	—	1.076** (0.172)
<i>Region-Level Social Capital</i>						
Generalized Trust	—	—	—	—	0.300** (0.110)	0.134 (0.103)
Trust in Institutions	—	—	—	—	-0.008 (0.111)	0.026 (0.098)
Associations	—	—	—	0.159*** (0.038)	0.051 (0.049)	-0.029 (0.048)
Social Meetings	—	—	—	-0.008 (0.138)	-0.164 (0.149)	-0.235 (0.147)
Intercept	-0.947*** (0.065)	-1.128*** (0.065)	-1.164*** (0.056)	-1.181*** (0.054)	-1.181*** (0.054)	-1.174** (0.048)
Tau _{intercept}	0.728***	0.508***	0.339***	0.292***	0.266***	0.178***
Tau _{gentrst2}	—	—	—	0.000	0.000	0.000
Tau _{instrst2}	—	—	—	0.003	0.003	0.004
Tau _{asntyp2}	—	—	—	0.001*	0.002*	0.001*
Tau _{sclmeet}	—	—	—	0.000	0.000	0.000
Reliability _{intercept}	0.873	0.829	0.768	0.632	0.616	0.543

Region level N=209; individual level N=23746.

*p<.05, **p<.01, and ***p<0.001 (one-tailed tests); + p<.05, ++ p<.01, +++p<.001 (two-tailed tests)

Note: Data shown are regression coefficients (log odds) with standard error in parentheses. All coefficients and reliability estimates are EM LaPlace estimates. Tau values are unit specific because HLM does not calculate a chi-square test for significance of tau when using EM LaPlace iterations.

Table 4. Hierarchical Bernoulli logit models of political consumerism on gender, education, income, individual social capital, regional values, and regional social capital (ESS 2002/03)

Independent Variables	Model 7 Boycotter	Boycotter	Both	Model 8 Boycotter	Boycotter	Both	Model 9 Boycotter	Boycotter	Both
<i>Individual-Level Controls</i>									
Female	-0.065 (0.065)	0.418*** (0.040)	0.459*** (0.043)	-0.066 (0.065)	0.421*** (0.040)	0.460*** (0.043)	-0.067 (0.065)	0.421*** (0.040)	0.459*** (0.043)
Education Level	0.166*** (0.024)	0.261*** (0.015)	0.353*** (0.016)	0.166** (0.024)	0.263*** (0.015)	0.354*** (0.016)	0.166*** (0.024)	0.264*** (0.015)	0.354*** (0.016)
Household Income	0.044** (0.016)	0.054*** (0.010)	0.032** (0.011)	0.043* (0.016)	0.052*** (0.010)	0.031** (0.011)	0.042* (0.016)	0.053*** (0.010)	0.033** (0.011)
<i>Individual-Level Social Capital</i>									
Generalized Trust	-0.025 (0.019)	0.057*** (0.013)	0.045** (0.014)	-0.022 (0.020)	0.049*** (0.013)	0.042** (0.014)	-0.022 (0.020)	0.049*** (0.013)	0.042** (0.014)
Trust in Institutions	-0.127+++ (0.019)	0.038++ (0.012)	-0.061+++ (0.013)	-0.128++ (0.019)	0.040++ (0.012)	-0.063+++ (0.013)	-0.128+++ (0.019)	0.039++ (0.012)	-0.063+++ (0.013)
Associations	0.127*** (0.012)	0.164*** (0.008)	0.247*** (0.008)	0.127** (0.012)	0.165*** (0.008)	0.247*** (0.008)	0.127*** (0.012)	0.165*** (0.008)	0.248*** (0.008)
Social Meetings	0.027 (0.023)	0.045** (0.014)	0.082*** (0.016)	0.027 (0.023)	0.046** (0.014)	0.083*** (0.016)	0.027 (0.023)	0.046** (0.014)	0.082*** (0.016)
<i>Region-Level Social values</i>									
Openness to Change	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.946** (0.261)	0.447** (0.155)	1.212*** (0.229)
Self-Transcendence	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.890*** (0.232)	0.773*** (0.146)	1.396*** (0.213)

<i>Region-Level Social Capital</i>									
Generalized Trust	—	—	—	-0.010	0.466***	0.338*	-0.167	0.327**	0.111
				(0.146)	(0.094)	(0.144)	(0.148)	(0.092)	(0.132)
Trust in Institutions	—	—	—	0.139	-0.158	0.030	0.152	-0.122	0.060
				(0.143)	(0.093)	(0.142)	(0.140)	(0.088)	(0.126)
Associations	0.099	0.201**	0.187**	0.075	0.056	0.049	-0.020	0.013	-0.067
	(0.052)	(0.035)	(0.052)	(0.072)	(0.045)	(0.069)	(0.074)	(0.044)	(0.064)
Social Meetings	0.169	-0.111	0.084	0.185	-0.354**	-0.088	0.121	-0.382**	-0.196
	(0.174)	(0.118)	(0.177)	(0.195)	(0.122)	(0.191)	(0.188)	(0.114)	(0.167)
Intercept	-2.888***	-1.891***	-2.386***	-2.891***	-1.901***	-2.387***	-2.894***	-1.894***	-2.382***
	(0.067)	(0.046)	(0.067)	(0.068)	(0.044)	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.042)	(0.059)
Tau _{intercept}	0.407***	0.199***	0.552***	0.427***	0.167***	0.529***	0.358***	0.121***	0.349***
Reliability _{intercept}	0.507	0.582	0.693	0.515	0.546	0.687	0.480	0.483	0.616

Region level N=209; individual level N=23746.

*p<.05, **p<.01, and ***p<0.001 (one-tailed tests); + p<.05, ++ p<.01, +++p<.001 (two-tailed tests)

Note: Data shown are regression coefficients (log odds) with standard error in parentheses.

Table 5. Hierarchical multinomial logit models of political consumerism on gender, education, income, individual social capital, regional values and regional social capital (ESS 2002/2003)