

Understanding consumers' ethical orientation in consumption choices – An application to meat products

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INTRO

- Meat consumption is a prime example for ethicality in consumer decision-making.
- Today meat production systems are challenged by the consumers demands for farm animal welfare and sustainability (Birkle, Klink-Lehmann, & Hartmann, 2022).
- Ethicality in the meat production systems especially has been up for discussion, where consumers who are willing to reduce their meat consumption often expressed health, environmental and ethical concerns (Peschel, Kazemi, Liebichová, Sarraf, & Aschemann-Witzel, 2019; Verain, Sijtsema, & Antonides, 2016).
- Therefore, we need to include these aspects in order to understand consumers ethical orientation in their consumption choices.

AIM

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To understand European consumer preferences regarding responsible pork and poultry meat production and the role of ethicality and environmental concern therein

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METHODOLOGY

1. We conducted a discrete-choice experiment for purchase of pork (pork chops) and chicken (chicken breasts)
2. We analyzed the data with a latent class choice analysis to derive different segments of European consumers.
3. We profiled the segments by ethical orientation, environmental concern and trust

Discrete-Choice experiment

Latent class analysis

Profiling by ethical orientation and environmental concern

Ethical orientation

Inspired by Shanahan and Hyman's (2003), items were generated for the five domains 1. Empathy 2. Respect 3. Incorruptibility 4. Piety 5. Reliability

After 2 rounds of pre-testing, we reduced the scale from 21- items to 10-items.

Environmental concern

Measured by 4 items fro Hawes, Winterich & Naylor (2014)

Trust

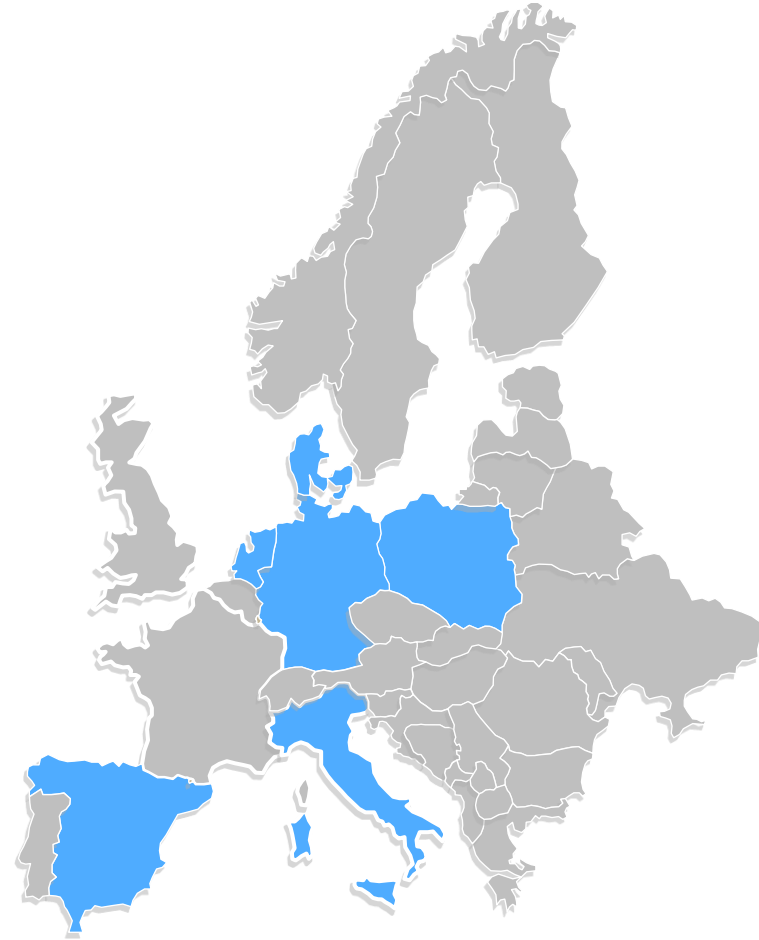
Measured by four items from Macready et al. (2020)

Ethical Orientation	
A	I have the capacity to act according to my ethical principles and follow my moral compass even if this can be challenging and displeasing to others.
B	I communicate my moral values to others both verbally and with my actions.
C	I aim to be transparent and unambiguous towards others regarding my values, objectives, and overall stance in life.
D	I strive to be kind and courteous to other people.
E	I have a generous nature, I usually have emotional, time and material surplus for others.
F	When I tend to other peoples' emotional, and material needs, I don't expect anything in return.
H	In my everyday life, I exercise tolerance with situations, practices, and people with whom I disagree.
I	I am truthful and sincere with others in all circumstances.
J	I believe in the reliability and truthfulness of other peoples' character and actions when interacting with them.
K	I generally feel calm and in control of myself when I interact with others.

DATA COLLECTION

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Online survey with 500 respondents representative of each country's distribution on gender, age, education and regional distribution in Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, Italy, Spain and Germany (3028 in total)





CHOICE EXPERIMENT

Attributes were selected based on the literature, validated by expert interviews, and narrowed down based on a pretest (n=200, Germany) using best-worst scaling

Overview of attributes and levels

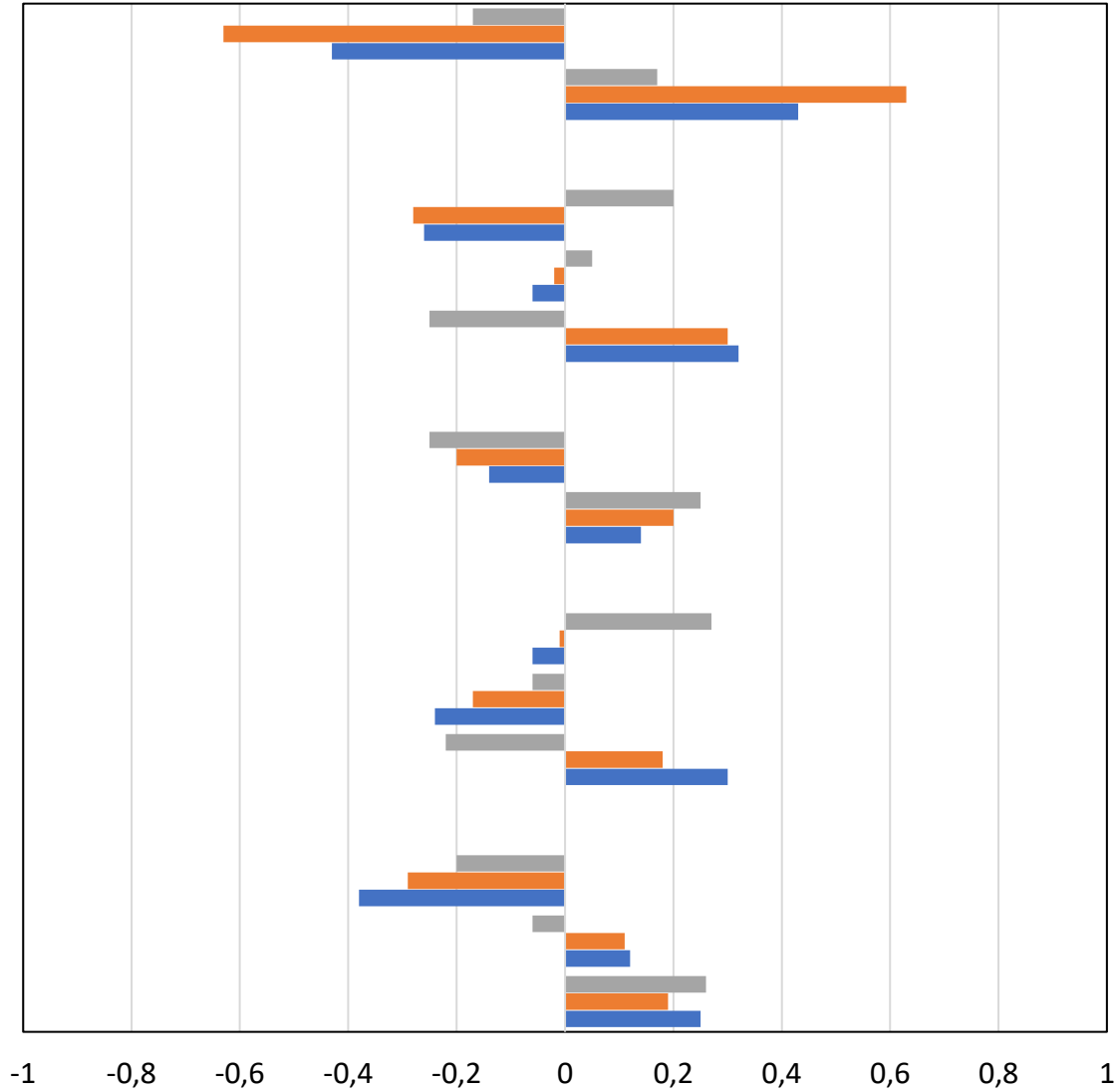
Overview of attributes and levels			
Sensory properties	Superior taste	Superior tenderness	None
Feed origin	On-farm production	Purchased in international market	Mix of on-farm production and purchased feed on international market
Breed	Traditional, local breed	Mainstream, conventional breed	
Space allocation	Current legislation	30% more than current legislation	100% more than current legislation
Space quality	Outdoor access	No outdoor access	None
Price	25% more than usual price	50% more than usual price	75% more than usual price

Example of a choice set for chicken breast

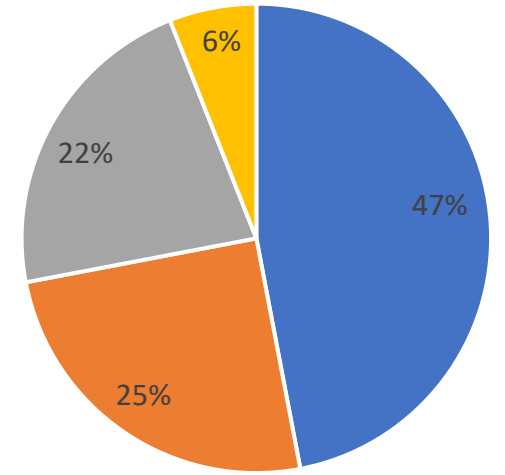
	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
			
Sensory properties	-	Superior taste	I choose to buy none of these products
Feed origin	Purchased feed on international market	On-farm production	
Breed	Local, traditional breed	Mainstream, conventional breed	
Space allocation in relation to current legislation	30% more space	100% more space	
Space quality	Outdoor access	No outdoor access	
Price	6,25€	7,50€	
I would choose:	A ___	B ___	

CHOICE EXPERIMENT

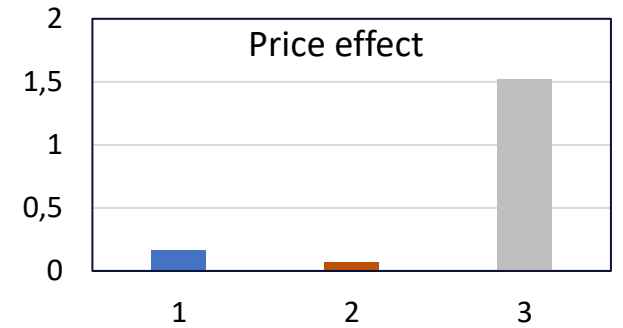
- Respondents were instructed to imagine choosing their preferred pork chops/chicken breast alternative in their usual grocery store
- Overall, the design compromised 36 choice sets, 9 per person per meat category in a randomized order
- Prices were computed based on self-reported reference price
 - Respondents with unrealistic reference prices ($> \text{mean} + 3 \cdot \text{SD}$) were excluded (2%)
- Respondents who always chose the no-choice option were excluded from the analysis (7%)
- We ran models with 1-6 classes; a model with 3 classes was chosen based on the BIC score, class size and interpretation
 - A multilevel analysis with country as grouping factor did not reveal major country differences
- Random parameter panel design with 4 blocks and no-choice option (D-error: .25)



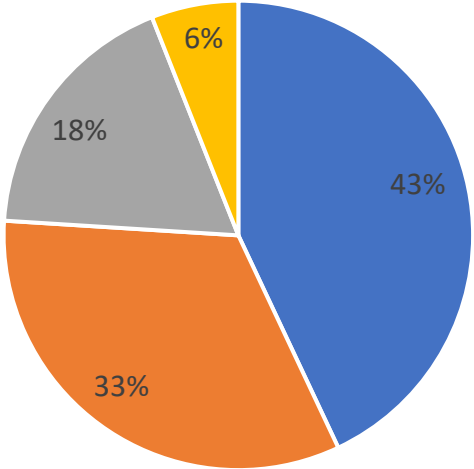
Pork



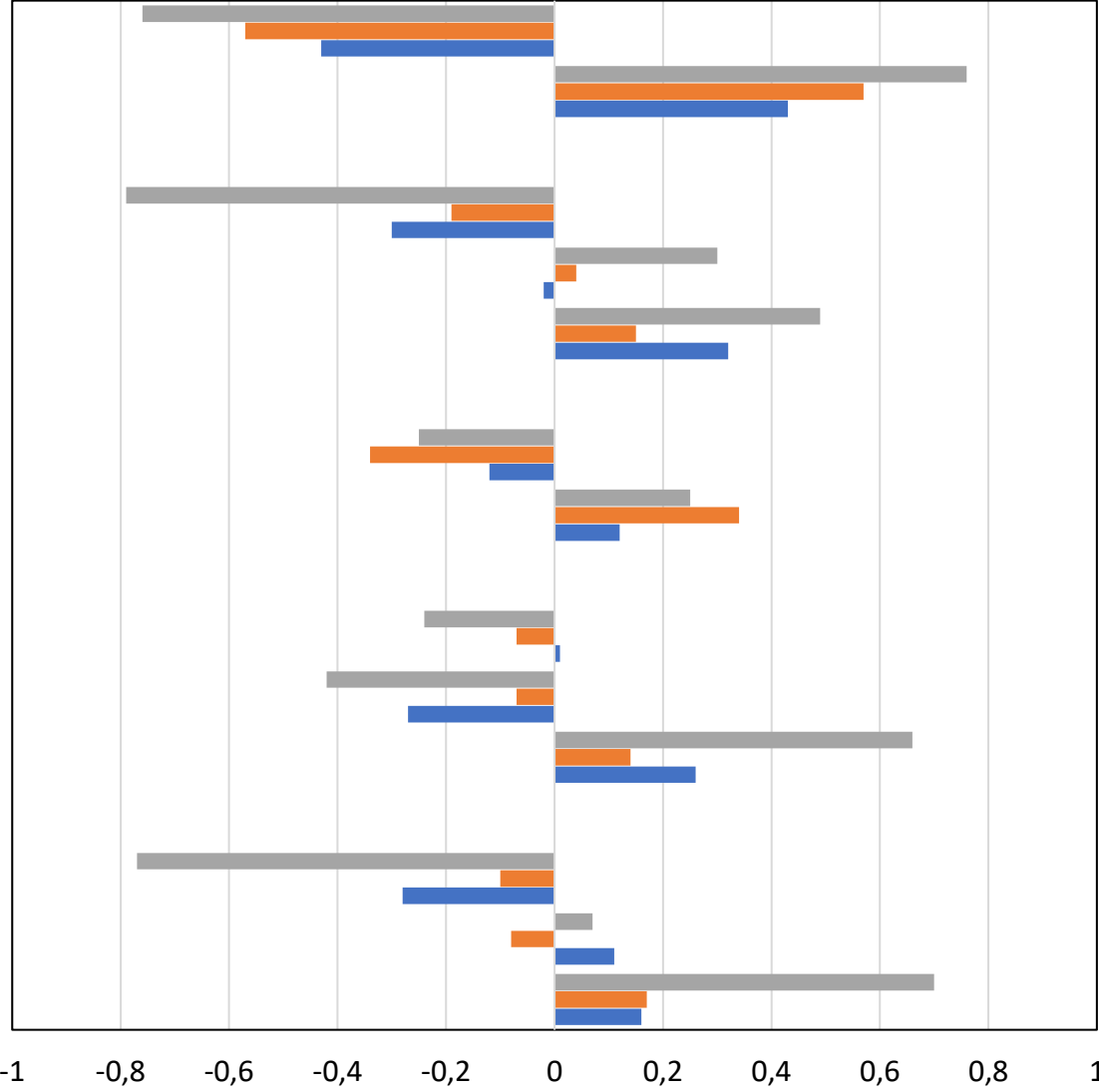
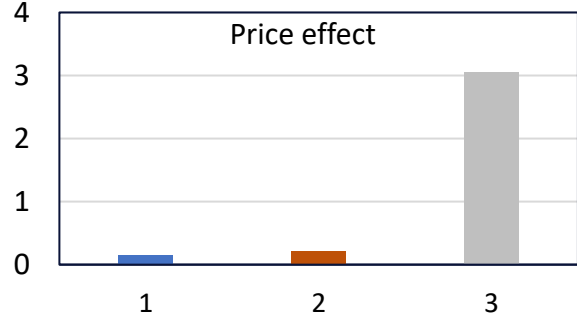
■ ethically oriented ■ welfare-minded
■ price sensitive ■ no WTP



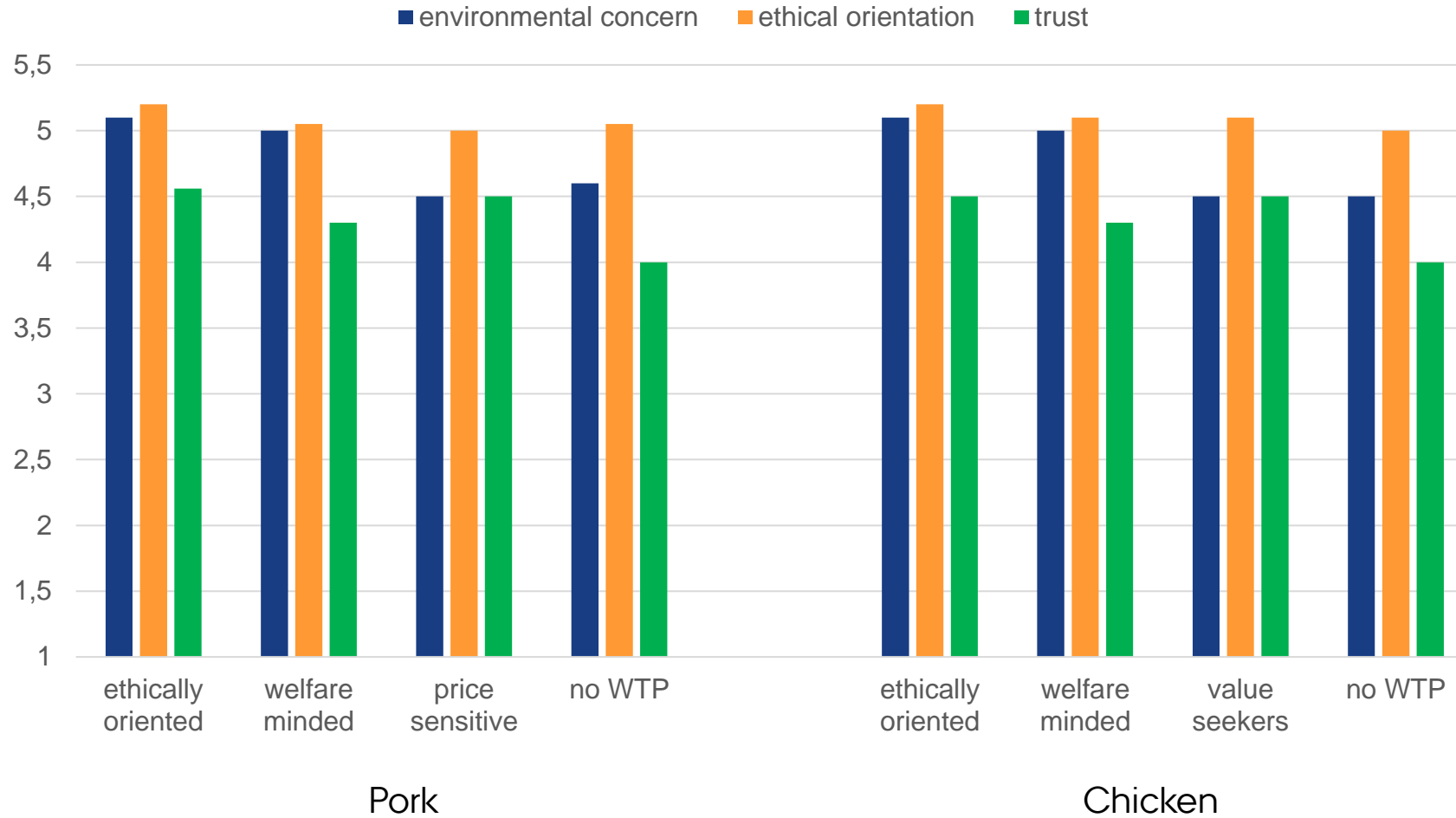
Chicken



■ ethically oriented ■ welfare minded
■ value seekers ■ no WTP



PROFILING



CONCLUSION

- In a pan-European study, a majority of consumers were interested in production attributes when choosing pork and chicken meat
- Both attributes related to animal welfare and to sustainability had appeal, but to different groups of consumers
- In addition, there are price-driven consumers and those that do not want to pay any premiums beyond current prices
- Preferences for production attributes are related to environmental concern, trust in the food chain, and ethical orientation
- Ethical orientation was conceptualized in a very broad way and its relationship to specific consumer choices need more investigation

Thank you for your attention!

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