

# Do you buy local? Your consumer ethnocentrism may be showing

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Are you one of the many consumers who prefer domestic to foreign products, even when the domestic products are lower in quality and cost more? Why is that? As a new study in the *Journal of International Marketing* explains, you are exhibiting what is known as consumer ethnocentrism—a thirty-year-old concept, says the study, whose conceptual boundaries and measurement need to be extended.

"Since its initial formulation in 1987, the concept of consumer ethnocentrism has remained by and large unchanged," write the authors of the study, Nikoletta-Theofania Siamagka (King's College London) and George Balbanis (City University London). "But [empirical evidence](#) from a number of studies shows that consumer ethnocentrism has a multidimensional structure, a structure too complicated for the current working definition, which basically considers only one dimension, the moral dimension, of purchasing foreign [products](#)."

The study identifies new components of consumer ethnocentrism, establishing, in consultation with other research on the topic, five distinct dimensions in the process: prosociality, in which the interest of one's country is more important than one's own; cognition, or interpreting the world from the point of view of one's own ethnic group; insecurity, or regarding foreign products as a threat to the domestic economy; reflexiveness, meaning that one's ethnocentrism is automatically activated; and habituation, in which ethnocentrism becomes a habit.

Siamagka and Balbanis use the five dimensions to develop a new scale to measure consumer ethnocentrism. Through an empirical study using data from the United Kingdom and the United States, they establish that the scale, which they call the Consumer Ethnocentrism Extended Scale, or CEESCALE. This new scale provides researchers with a better way to

measure consumer ethnocentrism, as it better predicts the preferences of [consumers](#) for domestic brands.

"Buy-local campaigns are important tools for promoting domestic products. Most of those campaigns revolve around the ethnocentrism of consumers. With its attention to such nuances as insecurity, our CEESCALE can help governments and organizations write suitable messages that can appeal to consumers," Siamagka and Balbanis write.

**More information:** Nikoletta-Theofania Siamagka et al. Revisiting Consumer Ethnocentrism: Review, Reconceptualization, and Empirical Testing, *Journal of International Marketing* (2015). [DOI: 10.1509/jim.14.0085](#)

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