

Delicate Snowflakes and Broken Bonds: A Conceptualization of Consumption-Based Offense

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When do consumers experience offense due to another individual's choice, use, display, gifting, sharing, or disposal of a product? Why do they experience offense, and does it matter if they do? In this article, we first draw from past work in multiple disciplines to offer a unique conceptualization of *consumption-based offense*. We then develop a framework of types of violations that may generate consumption-based offense and propose a set of affective, consumption, and cognitive outcomes we anticipate may follow. We close by offering an agenda for future research that may establish the antecedents and consequences of different types of consumption-based offense, glean new insights from past findings through integration of this novel construct, and offer practical insights into the effects and management of consumption-based offense both in consumers' lives and in the marketplace.

Keywords: offense, morality, identity, threat, norms, microaggression

Everyday experience offers many and varied opportunities to be offended by others' consumption. In some cases, others' consumption affronts our societal values, as we may find ourselves taken aback by post-election "Make America Great Again" hats or "I'm with Her" bumper

stickers, ill at ease due to others' choice to wear (or not wear) clothing with religious significance, or inconvenienced by a menu that forces us either to betray our ethical beliefs or go hungry. In other cases, we may be offended in more subtle ways—for example, via the types of "microaggressions" in debate on college campuses, where individuals argue that use of gendered, classist, or racially insensitive practices creates a real threat (Brown and Schulten 2016). In the market, we may find ourselves offended by the characterization of our group's presumed needs, as in the case of Bic's maligned "pens for her" (Ng 2012), or by apparent denial of our faith tradition, as captured in products labeled "Happy Holidays" rather than "Merry Christmas" (Ingraham 2016). Further, responses to expressed offense vary: we may find ourselves supported by others who similarly react to the violation of a shared prescriptive norm, or we may be excoriated as either "delicate snowflakes" because others find our reasons for offense trivial (Brown and Schulten 2016; Fingerhut 2016; Masciotra 2016) or as hypocrites because others believe that our "offense" is simply "political correctness" hiding

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behind a veil of alleged victimization (Krugman 2012; Nowrasteh 2016).

Because consumption offers such fertile ground for offense, it may be surprising that few consumer researchers have considered the reasons that a consumer may feel offense (e.g., see Coyne et al. 2016 for a discussion of the lack of research on offense giving in advertising) or its downstream consequences (Petersen 2016). As a result, we cannot identify the elements that raise the likelihood or intensity of consumption-based offense (and thus devise means to mitigate its occurrence) or speculate about the damage it may do, either to consumers or firms. The present article offers a framework to explore these questions.

We begin by defining consumption-based offense. Our definition draws from the legal, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and emotion literatures but augments and qualifies prior conceptualizations in ways distinctive to the consumption context. We conceptualize *consumption-based offense* from the perspective of the offended consumer: a consumer experiences offense when holding the perception that another consumer's intentional consumption violates a prescriptive normative standard, leading to a threat to one's self-view or worldview and, subsequently, the experience of a degree of anger. The key elements of this definition allow us to construct a theoretical system that places these elements in relation to one another (figure 1), while also helping us to determine when an experience can be properly termed consumption-based offense and when not (figure 2).

Given this definition, our second objective is to consider in detail the causes and consequences of consumption-based offense. Again integrating theory from multiple literatures, we identify potential causes of consumption-based offense, formalized into a typology of violations and accompanying propositions. We then consider the affective, behavioral, and cognitive experiences that may arise, each warranting future empirical investigation.

Conceptualizing offense in this way sparks a multitude of questions, which we hope our framework makes tractable for future researchers: What are the underlying reasons for experiencing consumption-based offense? How do different causes of offense vary in the intensity, emotional experience, and damage they evoke? Do situational or individual characteristics increase sensitivity to some causes of offenses more than others? What are the downstream consequences of consumption-based offenses, in terms of distancing from the products or perpetrators involved or behavioral consumption consequences? Can some damage caused be fairly easily absorbed or remedied by the offended consumer, or might some types of consumption-based offense leave lasting scars? We hope that by providing an initial high-level framework, we set the stage for work empirically exploring such questions, enriching not only our understanding of consumption-

based offense, but also deepening our understanding of related consumer theory and phenomena.

DEFINITION OF CONSUMPTION-BASED OFFENSE

What is consumption-based offense—and what is it not? And how is it similar to, yet distinct from, other forms of “offense” in different literatures? We begin by answering these questions, drawing from multiple literatures to inform our perspective.

Overall, we propose the following definition of consumption-based offense: **the perception that an offending party's (typically another consumer's¹) intentional consumption choice violates a prescriptive normative standard, leading to a threat to one's self-view or worldview and, subsequently, the experience of a degree of anger.** We capture this conceptualization in figure 1, which serves as a roadmap for this article.

In defining consumption-based offense, we also offer a flowchart (figure 2) that can help determine whether an experience constitutes consumption-based offense, discriminating between our focal construct and those in related literatures. Next we discuss each of these determining characteristics in turn.

An Intentional Consumption Choice

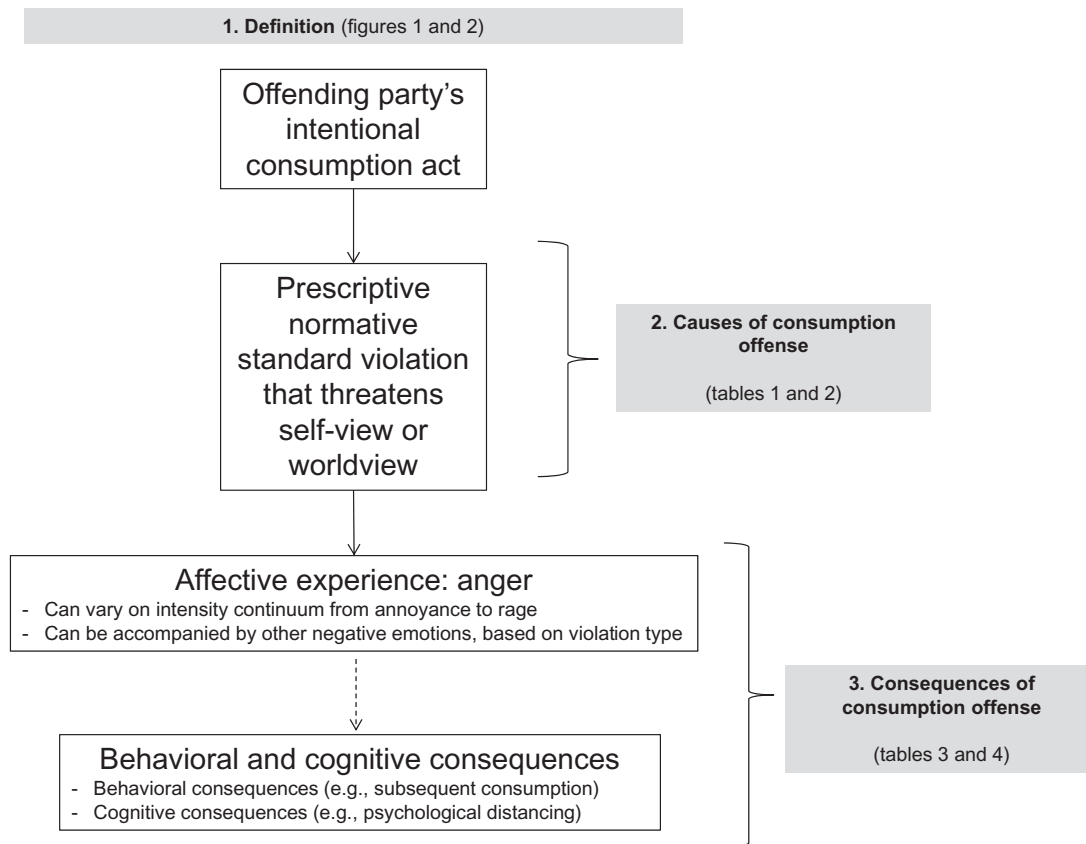
Per its name, consumption-based offense, unlike forms of offense in other literatures, has its genesis in consumption acts. But what is the nature of a consumption act that might create offense? We first propose that the consumption act itself should be perceived as intended by some actor. We ground this argument in the idea that for a consumption act to offer insight into an actor or an actor's motivations, one must perceive that the behavior was self-determined (deCharms 1968). To illustrate, by this criterion, from the perspective of a strict vegetarian with an ethical opposition to meat, another consumer *choosing* to eat meat over vegetables could qualify as an action that generates consumption-based offense. However, perceiving that another consumer is *forced* by a particular crop famine to eat meat when starving and without another food option would not meet this criterion. **Thus, we qualify the first key aspect of consumption-based offense as follows: consumption-based offense may be triggered if a consumer is perceived to engage in an intentional consumption act.**

With this qualification, a broad range of actions can still be involved in consumption-based offense. For instance,

1 Typically, the offending party is another consumer in our conceptualization, but as we note in the general discussion, our definition can be expanded here to involve other kinds of actors, such as service providers.

FIGURE 1

CONSUMPTION-BASED OFFENSE SYSTEM



NOTE.—Solid arrows define consumption-based offense. The dashed arrows are possible but not necessary links for qualifying as consumption-based offense. Namely, downstream consequences of various behavioral and cognitive forms are proposed, but at present, we cannot argue that all responses will occur to a given type of offense, nor that they will exist in equal proportion. The gray boxes provide a roadmap: we define consumption-based offense in this first main section and discuss causes and consequences of consumption-based offense in the second and third main sections. Finally, note that the offending party referred to in the top white box will typically also be the party who engages in the consumption act, but occasionally the offending party may act through a conduit (e.g., a parent may act through a young child as a conduit by intentionally having the child engage in a particular consumption act).

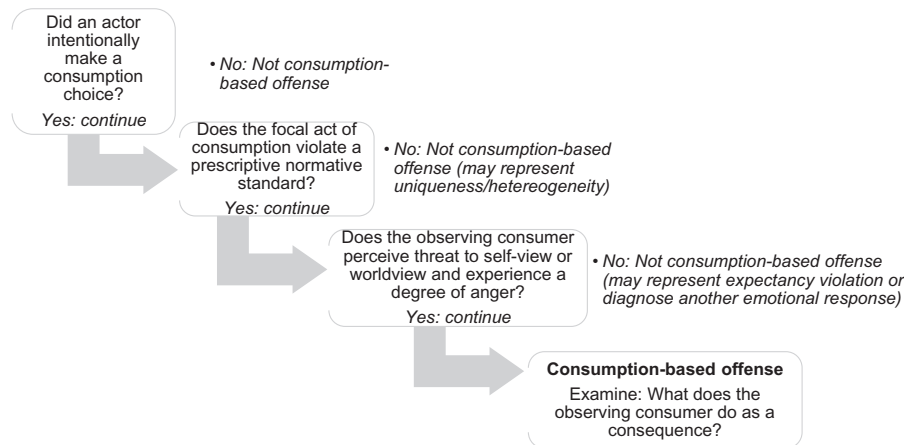
offense may arise when individuals acquire (e.g., purchase, borrow, steal), use (e.g., display, consume, share), transfer (e.g., gift), or distance themselves from products (e.g., disadopt, trash). Offense may also arise through intentional acts of omission (e.g., choosing not to use a gift). Furthermore, while the consumption act itself should be intended by some acting agent, this agent might occasionally act through another consumer as a conduit. For example, a parent might engage in an intentional consumption act of putting a t-shirt with an offensive symbol on a baby, such that the parent is the actor and the baby is a conduit of consumption-based offense. In such cases, consumption-based offense can still arise, though as we elaborate later in proposing moderators of

consumption-based offense, the resultant feelings of anger and other accompanying negative emotions are likely directed at the actor (parent), rather than the conduit (child).

Note that intentionality in the act of consumption is not the same as intentionality in the creation of offense. Indeed, consumption-based offense can easily occur when the consumption act is intentional, but there was no intention to offend by its enactment. While the perceived intention to offend is not required, it likely amplifies the resultant degree of offense experienced. This argument is consistent with the legal conceptualization of offense, which argues that offenses can be intentional or unintentional (e.g., criminal negligence)—that is, with the

FIGURE 2

FLOWCHART DEFINING A CONSUMPTION ACT AS A CONSUMPTION-BASED OFFENSE



recognition that negligence can nonetheless qualify as offense—although harsher judgments are handed down for intentional offenses (Fletcher 1971). In fact, the preponderance of evidence suggests that consumption-based offense will be unintentional as a rule, not the exception: people are fundamentally social, seeking acceptance and adhering to norms (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Hechter and Opp 2001; Maslow 1968) and are law-abiding for normative reasons, tending not to commit intentional offenses (Jackson et al. 2012). Evidence suggests further that consumers sometimes adjust their behavior precisely to avoid offending others (Adams, Flynn, and Norton 2012; Liu et al. 2013; Norton et al. 2012). Nonetheless, identifying factors that drive *perceptions* of the intentionality of the violation is critical for understanding the intensity and consequences of consumption-based offense. Indeed, later, we discuss consumers' attributions and factors that drive them to perceive a violation as more intentional (including how the foreseeability and preventability of a violation shape the resulting degree of offense).

Prescriptive Normative Standard Violation That Threatens One's Self-View or Worldview

We propose that consumption-based offense occurs when another's consumption violates one's prescriptive normative standards, leading to a threat to one's self-view or worldview. We define a prescriptive normative standard as one's beliefs about a required principle of conduct for behavior, drawing from both the definition of "prescriptive norms" (DeBono, Shmueli, and Muraven 2011) and of "standards" (Dictionary.com). As these standards are based on the perspective of the offended observer, a standard can

be widely shared (e.g., at a broad societal level) or more narrowly shared (e.g., an individual consumer's personal prescriptive norms), with both types having the potential to generate consumption-based offense.

This qualification combines insights from the legal, sociology, and psychology literatures. First, the idea that offensive behavior violates normative standards is consistent with legal theory. Feinberg (1985) argues that to be offensive, an act must be "wrongful," defined as being "in violation of one's rights." Simester and Von Hirsch (2006) further define "wrongdoing" as "consisting of treating other persons with a gross lack of respect or consideration" (120). Note that in our definition, consumption-based offense is different from the treatment of offense in the legal literature, for instance, which aims to set consistent standards that govern all members of a society (Timmer 2009): As argued by Judge Richard Posner, what is seen as wrong, and thus an offense, is generally linked with a violation of "community norms." However, we suggest that consumption-based offense may relate not only to the violation of community norms, but also to a lack of alignment with one's "personal values or codes of appropriateness," as suggested by Coyne et al. (2016, 373). Indeed, the level at which a given prescriptive normative standard is perceived to operate (widely or narrowly) can have important consequences for understanding the experience and consequences of consumption-based offense.

Second, sociology and social psychology add further nuance to this idea of norm violation, distinguishing between descriptive norms, which refer to the way that people typically act, and prescriptive norms, which refer to how people should act (Cialdini and Trost 1998; DeBono et al. 2011; Opp 1979). As DeBono et al. (2011) notes,

prescriptive norms create stronger social conformity pressure and are punished more harshly when violated. In our consumption context, therefore, we argue that a prescriptive (rather than descriptive) norm violation is required for an offense. Although prescriptive and descriptive norms often overlap (Prentice 2007), a purely descriptive norm violation does not meet our qualifications. For example, if a consumer wears rainbow-color nail polish, violating an observer's descriptive norms for "typical" colors but not her prescriptive norms about what should or should not be worn, we would not consider this situation relevant to consumption-based offense. On the contrary, others who violate descriptive norms can even be viewed as "cool" (Warren and Campbell 2014) rather than offensive.

Finally, we propose that a critical feature of consumption-based offense is that an individual feels that another consumer's behavior is inconsistent with his prescriptive normative standards in a way that threatens his self-view or worldview. Indeed, this critical feature is consistent both with Feinberg's (1985) argument that to be offensive, an act should involve "violation of one's rights" and with Feldman's (1984) argument that group norms function to protect the group's survival and its central values. As many consumers are chronically sensitive to real or implied threats (MacLeod and Mathews 1988) and/or deviance from group or individual norms (Feldman 1984; Hogg and Reid 2006), we anticipate that while very benign violations of narrowly held prescriptive norms may therefore not rise to the level of offense, many such violations will do so, at least among a segment of consumers. Finally, as we discuss later in considering different types of consumption-based offense, there is overlap but also a key distinction between self-threats in general (Baumeister, Smart, and Boden 1996) and the self-view type of consumption-based offense in our conceptualization; self-threats result in consumption-based offense only when they are rooted in others' consumption acts, violate prescriptive normative standards (e.g., one might experience a self-threat even when no norms are violated, such as simply via negative feedback), and generate a degree of anger.

Anger: Varying in Intensity from Irritation to Rage

The third qualification for an episode of consumption-based offense as defined in our framework—tightly linked to the requirement for the violation to threaten one's self-view or worldview—is that an act of consumption is expected to cause the observer to experience a degree of anger. Anger can be very broadly defined here, and may be manifest at lower intensity (e.g., mild irritation) or at higher intensity (e.g., rage). While other emotions may co-occur with anger, as discussed subsequently, we propose that some degree of anger constitutes the unifying emotion across all offense types in our typology.

The rationale for a degree of anger as an expected element of offense within the scope of our conceptualization is based first on the stipulation from past literature that offense will create an emotional response; both legal and psychological research specify that negative emotional or affective states of varying intensity levels ought to arise from offense (Coyne et al. 2016; Feinberg 1985; Nichols 2002). Second, some degree of anger has been shown to arise when one perceives that any of a wide range of transgressions of one's norms has occurred (Izard 1977; Plutchik 1980). Thus, the experience of consumption-based offense functions as both a mechanism for detecting threatening norm violations and as a potential response mechanism. For example, Lazarus (1991, 222) defines the core relational theme of anger as "a demeaning offense against me and mine." Importantly, anger also varies in its intensity on a continuum from annoyance to rage (O'Mara et al. 2011), such that milder offense may yield milder forms of anger and more severe offense, more severe forms.

Of note, for our conceptualization of consumption-based offense, anger is also an action-oriented emotion (Mackie, Devos, and Smith 2000) and is likely to lead consumers to alter their behavior in some way. Anger prepares people to respond to negative experiences (Frijda 1988; Frijda, Kuipers, and Ter Schure 1989), empowering us to address perceived transgressions. According to Lazarus (1991, 226), "the innate action tendency in anger is *attack* on the agent held to be blameworthy for the offense" (emphasis in the original). To this point, consumers have been shown to even choose to feel anger to prepare themselves for confrontation (Coleman and Williams 2013; Tamir 2009). Thus, anger is likely to shape relationships toward other consumers, firms, and future consumption opportunities.

Note that this experience of anger is not a defining feature for offense in all prior conceptualizations. For example, in the legal domain, greater anger does not necessarily indicate a more severe offense as defined by the law: a thief may swindle millions from a rich individual and evoke less anger than had she taken thousands from a poorer individual; in the eyes of the law, the swindling of millions of dollars would be a more severe offense, even if swindling thousands from a poorer individual evoked greater anger. In developmental psychology, a child may view "offensive" material and thus be offended, and yet the child may exhibit curiosity, not anger (Pierce et al. 2005). Thus, besides taking consumption as its focus, the construct of consumption-based offense is characteristically different than are these related conceptualizations.

While some degree of anger is thus anticipated to tie together different types of consumption-based offense, we also note that other negative emotions can and often will accompany anger depending on the type of consumption-based offense violation involved (e.g., disgust, hurt, embarrassment). In some cases, these accompanying negative emotions may even occur with greater intensity than anger. Such emotional co-occurrences are consistent with the

argument that emotion clusters commonly occur together (Diener 1999). Indeed, a central aspect of our framework is that the accompanying emotions vary systematically based on the type of subjective prescriptive normative standard violation involved (Rozin et al. 1999). If these other negative emotions occur alone in the absence of any degree of anger, though, then they may not be properly referred to as consumption-based offense in the scope of our framework.² We develop propositions later regarding the degree of anger generated and the companion emotions with which it appears given various forms of consumption-based offense.

Using the qualification that consumption-based offense in our framework involves a degree of anger (ranging from irritation to rage), we are able to tease apart phenomena that match and do not match this construct. For example, consumption-based offense occurs if a consumer chooses to eat meat in front of a vegetarian with strong value-based prescriptive normative standards against meat consumption, but only if this decision evokes some anger in the vegetarian observer. Consumption-based offense also occurs if a consumer is excluded from a holiday gift exchange by a friend, counter to relationship prescriptive normative standards for this friendship, leading the excluded friend to feel either some anger alone or anger and sadness. By contrast, if a vegetarian who chooses not to eat meat due to taste preferences experiences disgust upon exposure to a friend's hamburger, but does not experience any intensity of anger, we would not say that vegetarian experiences consumption-based offense. Similarly, if a consumer is excluded from a gift exchange by a distant acquaintance, leading to feeling loneliness or sadness but no intensity of anger, this would also not be deemed to be a consumption-based offense. In both of these latter two examples, unlike the former two examples, there likely existed no threatening prescriptive normative standard violation (i.e., generating a degree of anger) requisite for offense, even though another negative emotion was evoked in the complete absence of anger.

CAUSES AND TYPES OF CONSUMPTION-BASED OFFENSE

Having defined consumption-based offense, we next turn to a discussion of the types of prescriptive normative

standards whose violation causes threats to one's self-view or worldview. This analysis suggests a typology of consumption-based offense types, each defined by the norm perceived to have been violated.

Specifically, we propose three major sources of consumption-based offense: those generated by violations of standards relative to societal values, interpersonal relationships, and personal self-views. Table 1 summarizes these violation sources and aligns them with emotions that we predict will accompany anger. Table 2 describes the three theoretically derived offense sources and the way they can be separated into subtypes, which we discuss in detail next. We begin with consumption-based offense types that operate at the broadest, often societal level (values consumption-based offense), then proceed to the interpersonal level (relationship consumption-based offense), and finally consider the narrower individual level (self-view consumption-based offense).

Values Consumption-Based Offense

Values consumption-based offenses are defined in terms of culturally shared views about moral judgments and rights (Haidt, Koller, and Dias 1993). To characterize this type of offense, we begin by adopting ideas from anthropology work by Shweder et al. (1997), which proposes that three moral codes set norms: community, autonomy, and divinity. The community moral code determines the way that societal members enact their duties to the community at large. The autonomy moral code refers to ways that one enacts one's freedom and individual liberty. The divinity moral code refers to values concerning purity, nature, and sanctity. By combining these three moral codes with an understanding of consumer behavior and moral psychology (Graham et al. 2013; Haidt 2007; Rozin et al. 1999), we develop five subtypes of value violations that may generate consumption-based offense.

Controversial Symbols Violation. The most commonly studied source of offense results from the verbal or graphic communication of ideas that violate prescriptive norms for some members of the community. Some of these violations occur at an institutional level, when organizations use symbols that violate community moral codes (Shweder et al. 1997). For example, South Carolina's persistence in flying the Confederate flag on the state house grounds was seen as offensive to many members of communities damaged by the South's positions during the Civil War—most notably, communities affected by slavery, a hallmark of Confederate society. Explicit but anonymous communications can also be seen as offensive: appearances of swastikas after the election of Donald Trump in 2016 were widely interpreted as deliberate offenses against commitments to equality (Dickerson and Saul 2016), and the wearing of "pussy hats" by participants in the Women's March

² As suggested in the next paragraph, there are consumption acts in which no degree of anger may be experienced and yet one might colloquially use the term *offense* to refer to the act. Although such acts would not classify as consumption-based offense as covered within the scope of the present framework, future research could consider expanding on our understanding of consumption and offense by considering consumption acts in which other negative emotions (but no degree of anger) are centrally experienced. A possibility is that prescriptive normative standards are not threatened in such other cases but that the offended consumer's well-being is damaged in other ways.

TABLE 1

DEFINITION AND EMOTIONS CHARACTERIZING THE THREE MAIN TYPES OF VIOLATIONS FOR CONSUMPTION-BASED OFFENSE

		Values consumption-based offense	Relationship consumption-based offense	Self-view consumption-based offense
Definition		Arises when another consumer's consumption act violates one's beliefs about rights and principles within society and the world, causing threat	Arises when another consumer's consumption act violates one's standards for particular interpersonal relationships, causing threat	Arises when another consumer's consumption act violates one's views about oneself and one's identity, causing threat
Emotion	Intensity of anger	Can vary on anger spectrum from irritation to rage		
	Common simultaneous emotions	Disgust, contempt	Hurt, sadness	Self-conscious emotions (e.g., embarrassment, shame, defensive pride)

NOTE.—A degree of anger is the emotion that *ties together* the different types of consumption-based offense, without necessarily being the primary emotional driver of all instances of consumption-based offense. That is, anger to some degree is present for all types of consumption-based offense, even if it is not the strongest or primary emotion in every instance of consumption-based offense (see the common simultaneous emotions). The particular emotion profiles involved (i.e., the particular intensities of anger and other emotions, such as disgust) may predict the behavioral consequences of consumption-based offense, as discussed later.

of 2017 created anger in conservatives, who saw such behavior as a crass statement about women's role in society (Adesnik 2017). More recent scholarship has also argued that such offenses may be generated subtly via more ambiguous violations (using the term *microaggression*). For example, Nadal (2013) argues that using or tolerating the use of certain colloquialisms (e.g., "That's so gay") subtly violates minority beliefs about the legitimacy of their orientation or lifestyle by casting them in a negative light. Nowrasteh (2016) also uses the term *microaggression* to refer to NFL player Colin Kaepernick's decision to protest police brutality by sitting and then kneeling for the national anthem, suggesting that this ambiguous act can be perceived as a subtle transgression by a wealthy, liberal elite against military members and ideals of patriotism. The word *microaggression* has also entered everyday public discourse, with the *Global Language Monitor* calling it 2015's word of the year (Brown 2015), and recent psychological discourse involves a debate on future directions for researching microaggressions (Lilienfeld 2017a, 2017b).

Can consumption by typical individuals create similar offenses? Consumer research has a rich tradition of studying ways in which individuals signal their beliefs to one another via symbolic consumption. Such signaling may be quite blatant and explicit. For instance, bumper stickers often involve violations of moral or ethical prescriptive norms (Stern and Solomon 1992). Researchers have attempted to explain why people may use such controversial products. For instance, Thompson and Tian (2008) suggest that people display identity symbols, such as the Confederate flag or the rainbow banner, to express beliefs that are controversial to some members of the community. To the extent that such beliefs represent threats to a particular consumer's views of the community, they may create offense—and the consumer displaying the symbol may

have little concern about the offense created. After all, an individual offended by such a display is likely not a member of one's group. Additionally, Warren and McGraw (2011) suggest that some controversial symbolic products that violate moral or ethical norms could also be displayed by consumers who think that they represent benign—and thus humorous—violations. For instance, many bumper stickers contain not just controversial identity symbols but also jabs (e.g., a bumper sticker with a Confederate flag and the message "Say what you want to about the South, but no one retires and moves up North!"). Unfortunately, others—particularly members of minority groups whose beliefs are parodied—may view such products as nonbenign, and thus highly offensive, violations of their views.

Finally, the expression of one's beliefs via consumption may also inadvertently create consumption-based offense in subtler, potentially ambiguous ways, in a sense representing the consumption version of the types of microaggressions just described. For instance, an individual with an intractable habit for Chick-fil-A may, through his loyalty, generate a more ambiguous consumption offense in consumers who feel threatened by the firm's anti-LGBT position (Segarra 2017). Similarly, another consumer buying a Kaepernick jersey could generate an ambiguous consumption offense vis-à-vis the next consumer in line, who may feel that her beliefs about patriotism are being threatened (Nowrasteh 2016).

Status Violation. Besides being concerned with controversial symbols that often relate to majority-minority relations, the community moral code is also concerned with issues of vertical differences between members of a society—that is, status differences (Shweder et al. 1997), often signaled via consumption (Veblen 1899/1994). Consumers are highly attuned to differences in relative status or rank (Duesenberry 1949; Frank 1985) and are motivated to

TABLE 2

VIOLATION SUBTYPES AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF CONSUMPTION-BASED OFFENSES

Subtype of consumption-based offense	Illustrative examples of consumption-based offenses
Values consumption-based offense <i>Consumption associated with a perceived violation of the offended person's beliefs about rights and principles in society and the world</i>	
<i>Controversial symbols violation.</i> The product itself, its acquisition, or its use is perceived to violate values-based standards regarding some members of the community (often majority-minority interactions).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender displayed a Confederate flag. • Offender wore a hijab in front of non-Muslim family members.
<i>Status violation.</i> The product's acquisition or use is perceived to violate values-based standards regarding the existing status hierarchy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender acquired and bragged about a high-end TV. • Offender wore a "work-in-progress" shirt despite being somewhat in shape already.
<i>Autonomy violation.</i> The product itself, its acquisition, or its use is perceived to violate value-based standards regarding restrictions to one's freedom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender gave a religious t-shirt to offended person to try to encourage church attendance. • Offender uses the Bible to try to restrict offended person's behavior.
<i>Ethical source violation.</i> The product itself, its acquisition, or its use is perceived to violate value-based standards for ethical sourcing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender consumed meat. • Offender acquired dog from breeder, rather than animal shelter.
<i>Bodily purity violation.</i> The product itself, its acquisition, or its use is perceived to violate value-based standards for bodily purity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender used cigarettes. • Offender wore a miniskirt.
Relationship consumption-based offense <i>Consumption associated with a perceived violation of the offended person's particular relationship standards for the offender</i>	
<i>Opinion violation.</i> The product's acquisition or use is perceived to violate relationship standards for one's relationship partner to consider consumption opinions and preferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender asked offended person for an opinion on which laptop to purchase but did not take the opinion.
<i>Goal support violation.</i> The product's acquisition or use is perceived to violate relationship standards for one's relationship partner to provide or not derail goal support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender purchased the incorrect sports team's apparel for the offended person. • Offender bought a gift basket with unhealthy treats for the offended person, who was trying to lose weight.
<i>Relational priority violation.</i> The product's gifting or acquisition is perceived to violate relationship hierarchy standards for one's relationship partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender ate unhealthy food in front of the offended person, a dieter who struggles with weight. • Offender purchased a more expensive gift for another friend than for the offended person (best friend).
<i>Reciprocity violation.</i> The product's exchange or lack thereof is perceived to violate relationship standards for reciprocity by one's relationship partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender gave earrings both to offended person (girlfriend) and to another woman. • Offender bought the offended person a cheaper present than the offended person bought for the offender.
<i>Shared ownership violation.</i> The product's acquisition or use (including disposal) is perceived to violate relationship standards for one's relationship partner to address shared possessions and accounts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender did not return the offer to buy the offended person a hat while being at a store. • Offender didn't ask the offended person if she could give away a jointly owned product. • Offender didn't jointly decide on which car to purchase with the offended person (wife).
Self-view consumption-based offense <i>Consumption associated with a perceived violation of the offended person's views of self and identity</i>	
<i>Personal identity violation.</i> Another consumer's consumption act is perceived to violate one's positive view of the self.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender purchased a shirt for the offended person that had a less prestigious school's initials on it. • Offender (a salesperson) recommended a feminine skin care product to a male consumer.
<i>Group identity violation.</i> Another consumer's consumption act is perceived to violate one's positive view of one's in-group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender wore a sports jersey but was a bandwagon fan (i.e., someone who started liking the team only after the team won). • Offender wore a Harley-Davidson shirt but did not own a Harley-Davidson bike.

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

Subtype of consumption-based offense	Illustrative examples of consumption-based offenses
<i>Uniqueness identity violation.</i> Another consumer's consumption act is perceived to violate one's view of individual uniqueness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offender bought a shirt that the offended person first expressed a preference for, and the offended person didn't want to have the same shirt. • Offender bought an identical purse as the offended person.

NOTE.—These examples come from an initial data set examining autobiographical experiences of consumption-based offense. They are meant to be purely illustrative examples of different subtypes of offense. The [web appendix](#) contains the quotes from which these autobiographical examples were derived.

avoid being low in either (Kuziemko et al. 2014). We suggest that offense due to status violation may arise when higher-status consumers violate prescriptive normative standards regarding their use of status, causing threat and generating anger. For example, a consumer with high status with a given airline may offend others by overtly flaunting his higher status (i.e., bragging) or by suggesting that suffering as a lowly Platinum member is really making him admire his Diamond counterparts (i.e., humble bragging) (Bellezza, Paharia, and Keinan 2017; Sezer, Gino, and Norton 2018). Interestingly, as status involves a general value that is nonspecific to one's relationship with a given individual or to one's self-view, status offense may arise even when the implied superiority is not relevant to a given consumer, but to a group of consumers with whom she empathizes. That is, a lifelong economy flier whose company purchased her status may be offended by the behavior of her snooty first-class companions (e.g., offended by their bragging about the nice snacks in first class or humble-bragging about the weight gain caused by such treats), even though she has long since left the meager pretzels of the lower tiers behind.

Finally, just as prescriptive normative standards govern the acts of higher-status others, standards also exist for lower-status consumers. For instance, just as higher-status others are supposed to avoid flaunting their status, lower-status others are expected to “know their place” and not assert a higher status (Rudman et al. 2012). Consumption that suggests that lower-status individuals are attempting to claim higher-than-deserved positions—for example, an economy-class flier taking an empty first-class seat after the boarding doors have closed—may offend not only the higher-status individuals, but also other economy riders whose sense of fairness is threatened by this usurpation of privileged consumption.

Autonomy Violation. Consumers also hold norms regarding autonomy (Shweder et al. 1997). According to Brehm (1966), people believe that they have certain rights to determine their own behaviors volitionally; if such freedom is threatened, they seek its restoration (i.e., they experience psychological reactance). The tendency to experience psychological reactance varies between individuals (Hong and Faedda 1996). Highly reactant individuals generally try to resist others' influence, whether others are relationship partners (Chartrand, Dalton, and Fitzsimons 2007) or companies (Fitzsimons and Lehmann 2004).

Reactance has typically been studied in the context of store stockouts (Fitzsimons 2000), but may occur in a wide range of relationships.

Consistent with our definition, we posit that such autonomy restrictions rise to the level of consumption-based offense only when they threaten an individual's self-view or worldview. For example, a simple stockout of a college sweatshirt due to high demand on homecoming weekend may not generate consumption-based offense. However, a consumer who is restricted from purchasing a college sweatshirt by a controlling parent who wants him to aspire to another college may experience threat to his view that he should be able to choose his own college, feeling angry toward the parent and potentially the alternative college.

Ethical Source Violation. Since the Code of Hammurabi, people have been concerned with the ethicality of the means by which an individual obtained a product. For example, people generally accept that stealing is offensive, at least to the victim. Other product sources generate more societal disagreement. For instance, beliefs about the ethicality of wearing fur and consuming meat differ between cultures, religions, and individuals (Humane Research Council 2013; Lindeman and Väänänen 2000). Consumers may also experience offense if the company creating products endorses beliefs or engages in practices that violate their values-based standards in a threatening way (e.g., child labor, lack of fair trade, inadequate labor standards, imported products). Further, if a consumer acquires products perceived to be sacred via monetary purchase, others may be offended (e.g., buying human organs for transplant; Tetlock et al. 2000). Thus, even if the product in its essence is not an offensive symbol, the method by which it was sourced can be viewed as offensive.

Bodily Purity Violation. According to many spiritual beliefs, the body is a temple that houses aspects of the soul or spirit, such that “people should not be free to use their bodies in any way they please; rather, moral regulations should help people to control themselves and avoid sin and spiritual pollution in matters related to sexuality, food, and religious law more generally” (Haidt and Graham 2007, 103). As Rozin (1999) further states on the link between morality and the body, “Moralization frequently occurs in the health domain, because of a deep and pervasive link

between health and moral status, a link that extends throughout history and cultures” (218). Additionally, moralization is theorized to occur as a process, such that consumption of various substances can shift from being viewed as a matter of preference to a matter of morals (Rozin 1999). For instance, during the 1900s in the US, drugs ranging from alcohol to cigarettes to opiates became increasingly morally stigmatized (Moore and Gerstein 1981; Rozin 1999). As Rozin (1999) stated, “Fifty years ago, whether one smoked or not was a mere preference in American society; it is now a morally laden act” (218). The notion that moralization of consumption occurs over time means that some consumers will view an act of consumption as a mere preference, whereas others view it as a values offense.

Relationship Consumption-Based Offense

Relationship consumption-based offense is caused by violations of the prescriptive normative standards that people have for interactions over time. Hinde (1976) notes that each interaction in a relationship can either confirm the status quo of the relationship or change the nature of future interactions. Thus, relationships are dynamic, such that norms for interaction between individuals can be created, sustained, or challenged. Relationship consumption-based offense is grounded in precisely this understanding (Aggarwal 2004; Clark and Mills 1993). We propose that consumption-based offense can arise in relationships due to the following distinct kinds of threatening prescriptive norm violations.

Opinion Violation. Respect for one’s opinion is a universally sought form of social currency (Janoff-Bulman and Werther 2008), and believing that one has voice and impact is central to a feeling of respect (Janoff-Bulman and Werther 2008). Likewise, consumers have the prescriptive normative standard that their (close) relationship partners in particular should recognize, understand, and care about their preferences. Thus, consumption-related decisions that suggest a lack of understanding or concern about another’s opinions and preferences are dangerous territory. For instance, Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel (1999) found that gifts that do not take into account a recipient’s preferences (e.g., an impersonal gift or a gift that defied the recipient’s request) were associated with weak relationship ties, and Gino and Flynn (2011) and Ward and Broniarczyk (2016) found that unsolicited (vs. registry) gifts were deemed less thoughtful and less satisfying. Such experiences would be called opinion violations in our typology and arise to the level of offense to the extent that they evoke threat and resulting anger.

Goal Support Violation. Research increasingly documents the interpersonal nature of goal pursuit. To this end, Fitzsimons, Finkel, and vanDellen (2015) propose an

overarching theory (transactive goal dynamics, or TGD) to describe the connections between consumers’ goals and relationships. According to TGD theory, being supportive or instrumental for a relationship partner’s goals has interpersonal and relational implications (Fitzsimons et al. 2015). For instance, people feel closer to relationship partners who are instrumental for high-priority goals (Fitzsimons and Fishbach 2010; Fitzsimons and Shah 2008). When friends and family members fail to provide such support, and especially if their consumption acts actively impede or interfere with a consumer’s goal pursuits (counter to prescriptive normative standards), we posit that consumers may experience consumption-based offense. For example, if a consumer has a high-calorie dessert when eating at a restaurant with his partner who is on a strict diet, this may lead the partner to perceive a goal support violation and thus an episode of goal support offense.

Relational Priority Violation. Consumers expect close relationship partners to display a reciprocal sense of closeness and trust (Larzelere and Huston 1980). Further, people are often concerned not only with absolute closeness levels, but closeness as evaluated relative to other relationship partners as well (Parker et al. 2005). In a consumption context, when a relational partner makes consumption choices for both self and multiple other recipients (e.g., in a gift-giving context), people may evaluate whether such choices reflect the priority they believe their relationship status should afford. In the sociological literature, Caplow (1984) proposed eight relational scaling rules for gift giving. For instance, one rule was that “Parents with several children should value them equally throughout their lives” (Caplow 1984, 1313); another was that “Friends of either sex, aside from sexual partners treated as quasi-spouses, may be valued as much as siblings but should not be valued as much as spouses, parents, or children” (Caplow 1984, 1314). Lowrey, Otnes, and Ruth (2004) found that gift givers indeed used some of these scaling rules. We suggest that consumption-based offense arises when consumers perceive these rules are violated in ways that imply lower relational closeness than expected. The converse—violating rules in ways that imply one is higher in relative relationship value than expected—may also cause offense if the implied relationship is undesired or otherwise inappropriate. For example, giving a cheaper gift to a romantic partner than a coworker may generate relational priority violation in both parties: the romantic partner may feel the priority of their relationship has been underrecognized, while the coworker may feel that the gift violates the terms of their more distant relationship.

Reciprocity Violation. The concept of reciprocity (Gouldner 1960) is related to equity theory, which describes people’s concerns with the fairness of resource allocations within relationships (Adams 1965). The importance of reciprocity has been implicated in many domains

(Ruffle 1999), and the norm of reciprocity is strong across a variety of relationships, including noncommercial (Buunk and Schaufeli 1999) and commercial relationships (Goranson and Berkowitz 1966; Liu, Lamberton, and Haws 2015; Morales 2005). The precise nature of the reciprocity expected within relationships can vary depending on the extent to which the partners interact based on communal as opposed to exchange norms. Multiple frameworks exist that discuss the role of reciprocity across this continuum. For example, Fiske (1991, 1992) has presented a nuanced view of human relations involving four fundamental models: communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching, and market pricing (see also Rai and Fiske 2011). Whereas communal sharing relationships may not require strict 1:1 reciprocity, equality matching and market pricing relationships would be expected to have such norms. Similarly, Clark and Mills (1993) conceptualized relationships as varying in having exchange versus communal norms: "In exchange relationships, benefits are given with the expectation of receiving a comparable benefit in return or as repayment for a benefit received previously. In contrast, the norm in communal relationships is to give benefits in response to needs or to demonstrate a general concern for the other person" (684). Further, consumers also evaluate brands based on whether they perceive brands have acted in line with the communal or exchange norms governing the particular consumer-brand relationships (Aggarwal 2004). Note that even for communal relationships, some research suggests that reciprocation is still a norm, but that it may be fulfilled using different currency. For instance, as Bardhi and Eckhardt (2012) note in their exploration of sharing systems, in some groups, investments of money by one partner may be reciprocated by investments of time or talent by another. For example, a consumer viewing a relationship as based in exchange norms might experience offense if she buys a winter coat for a friend and the friend doesn't reciprocate by also buying a similarly priced product for her. By contrast, a consumer evaluating the relationship by communal norms might instead experience offense if the winter coat she provides out of concern for her friend is not later reciprocated with a much-needed chat or help with repairing a broken computer.

Shared Ownership Violation. Across relationships, especially familial ones, the sharing of resources and possessions is widespread (Belk 2010). Sharing blurs traditional notions of ownership, and the potential for offense may arise when fellow sharers have different prescriptive normative standards about how sharers can use shared resources and property. Typically, for decisions perceived as fairly trivial, the normative standard is that each person can use the shared resource or possession without the need to consult others. For instance, Belk (2010) notes that within families, most possessions are legally shared and that using such possessions does not require permission. Yet some

consumption decisions can be perceived as nontrivial (e.g., large purchases, the decision to dispose of possessions). In such cases, a common prescriptive norm is that a sharer may need to consult others before making a decision, and failure to do so may offend. The potential for unintentional offense may thus increase if one person views a consumption decision as fairly trivial and another views it as more important. Additionally, offense may be more likely to arise the more possessions are blurred (e.g., shared bank accounts vs. personal bank accounts), or when sharing partners have broadly different needs and contributions to a shared pool (Lamberton and Rose 2012). For example, individuals who participate in a tool-sharing library may run the risk of offense when the extent of ownership transfer is unclear: If I have put my snowblower into the community "pool," do I still have first dibs on the first storm of the season? Will others be offended if it is still stored in my garage, or will I be offended if someone with a much longer driveway puts more wear and tear on the shared tool than I do?

Self-View Consumption-Based Offense

Self-view consumption-based offense arises when another consumer's consumption act violates how people think and feel about themselves in a way that creates threat (Swann, Chang-Schneider, and McClarty 2007). We propose that self-view consumption-based offense is likely to occur when another consumer's consumption suggests that an individual does not have positive qualities he feels he possesses (or conversely, that the individual has negative identities and qualities that he feels he does not possess).

We note that self-view consumption offense bears some overlap with the general existing concept of self-threat, yet is also substantively distinct. Self-threats are defined conceptually as "when favorable views about oneself are questioned, contradicted, impugned, mocked, challenged, or otherwise put in jeopardy" (Baumeister et al. 1996, 8). Operationally, the antecedents of self-threats are typically feedback about one's failure on a given dimension, often via information about one's low score on an intelligence test (Leary et al. 2009; Sherman, Presson, and Chassin 1984). There is no requirement here that a norm be violated, and negative emotions may easily be directed toward the self. By comparison, while self-view consumption-based offense also involves views about oneself that are violated, the antecedent is another consumer's consumption act, and further, there is the perception that in challenging one's self-views, there is a violation to one's prescriptive normative standards.³

3 Additionally, in terms of consequences, self-threats generally lead to self-recrimination as well as self-evaluative consequences and self-targeted restoration attempts (Leary et al. 2009, 151). By contrast, self-view consumption-based offense leads to a degree of anger; as anger is more other-focused, consumption-based offense is generally less likely to lead to self-recrimination than self-threats.

Next, we derive the types of violations that may give rise to self-view consumption-based offense by combining research on identity, self-concept, and self-esteem (Brewer 1991; Swann et al. 2007; Tajfel 1982) with an understanding of consumer behavior.

Personal Identity Violation. People want others to view them in the same positive way as they view themselves, whether expressed through praise or acceptance of opinions (Aronson and Worchel 1966; Backman and Secord 1959; Jones 1973; Jones and Panitch 1971; Swann et al. 2007). Thus, people hope, and indeed expect, that others' consumption choices will affirm this positive view, especially if such views relate to attributes and goals important to them (Pelham 1991; Swann et al. 2007). If others' choices or recommendations suggest we hold dissociative identities or related traits, we may feel offended. We refer to this particular experience of norm violation and subsequent ego threat as a personal identity violation.

A classic example occurs in a matchmaking context, where being matched with a physically unattractive or boring person may feel offensive, as it suggests that the matchmaker also has a similarly negative view of the person being matched. As Goffman (1952) put it, "A proposal of marriage in our society tends to be a way in which a man sums up his social attributes and suggests to a woman that hers are not so much better as to preclude a merger or a partnership in these matters" (456). Consumer behavior research suggests that other actors in the marketing context may similarly cause offense through product recommendations; for example, if marketers recommend a product that matches a consumer's out-group, the negative identity label that is implied may be rejected (Summers, Smith, and Reczek 2016). The potential to offend may be higher when the type of product being chosen or recommended varies along a dimension in which one end of the dimension is seen as more positive than the other, such as clothing of varying sizes (Hoegg et al. 2014). Thus, consumers who feel that a negative evaluation of aspects of their identity is implied by others' consumption act will experience consumption-based offense.

Group Identity Violation. Views of one's in-groups are directly relevant to views of the self (Sherif 1966; Tajfel 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Thibaut and Kelley 1959). Given the importance of group identity (Sherif 1966), people often exhibit a "need to preserve or achieve a 'positive group distinctiveness', which in turn serves to protect, enhance, preserve, or achieve a positive social identity for members of the group" (Tajfel 1982, 24).

We suggest that self-view consumption-based offense will arise when perceived out-group members consume products that are used to symbolize in-group membership. For example, a "bandwagon fan" who becomes a fan of the Golden State Warriors NBA team after their 2015 championship might run the risk of offending long-time fans if he

dons a vintage Warriors jersey. This prediction is consistent with research finding that core brand users react negatively when noncore brand users obtain access to the brand and attempt to signal belonging to the in-group of core users (Bellezza and Keinan 2014). According to Bellezza and Keinan (2014), a negative reaction occurs because core users desire to maintain brand distinctiveness and exclusivity (Keller 2009; Kirmani, Sood, and Bridges 1999) and do not want their products to become linked to dissociative groups (Berger and Heath 2008; Escalas and Bettman 2005; White and Dahl 2006, 2007). For instance, as Harley-Davidson bikers view their shared group identity as centered on the ownership of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and committing to the biker identity (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), other individuals who don Harley-Davidson apparel without such commitments run the risk of offending the bikers. Indeed, marketers often face concern when their products become popular beyond existing core users (Byron 2007), because these core users may then diverge from consuming the product (Berger and Heath 2008). Marketers may also face tension if their products become associated with dissociative groups, a concern that former Abercrombie CEO Mike Jeffries controversially expressed (Guarino 2013). Thus, consumers who feel that others' consumption violates the positive meaning of their in-groups may also experience threat and anger relevant to consumption-based offense.

Uniqueness Identity Violation. Views of the manner in which one relates to other groups of people are also highly relevant to views of the self. According to Brewer's (1991) optimal distinctiveness theory, people aim to be different from others (out-group members) while also similar to others (in-group members). Further, even while wanting to be similar to in-group members, consumers also exhibit desires for uniqueness, wanting to be optimally distinct even from in-group members (Chan, Berger, and Van Boven 2012). Indeed, according to their theory of uniqueness, Snyder and Fromkin (1977, 1980) stated that the motive for uniqueness tends to arise in social situations in which people view themselves as highly similar to others, such that they attempt to reclaim their personal identity by engaging in distinguishing behaviors. Importantly for our theory, distinguishing behaviors often occur through material consumption (Snyder 1992). People also differ in their desire for uniqueness (Snyder 1992), and the desire for uniqueness may be culture-specific, with American culture valuing uniqueness and East Asian culture valuing conformity (Kim and Markus 1999). In the American consumption context, Tian, Bearden, and Hunter (2001) developed a scale of consumers' need for uniqueness, which they refer to "as an individual's pursuit of differentness relative to others that is achieved through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one's personal and social identity"

(50). Using this scale, White and Argo (2011) found that consumers who are high in need for uniqueness feel threatened when other consumers acquire the same products and respond by disposing of or customizing their own products.

According to our conceptualization, offense will therefore occur if another consumes in a way that violates a given individual's prescriptive normative standards for uniqueness, thereby leading to a degree of anger. Specifically, we posit that some consumers may believe that the consumer who first acquires or lays claim to a unique product has rights to it over others. Such a "first discoverer" or "finders-keepers" principle is commonly found in the entrepreneurship literature for inventions (Kirzner 2015). In such cases, we propose that consumption-based offense can occur: one's right to uniqueness is violated by subsequent users, depriving the first-adopter of her ability to self-define and thus creating anger. For example, a consumer who has a high need for uniqueness may experience consumption offense if a friend subsequently buys the same sweatshirt she has or adopts the same favorite book, threatening her ability to self-define by these products.

CONSEQUENCES OF CONSUMPTION-BASED OFFENSE

We now explore outcomes of consumption-based offense. We begin by discussing anger, as it represents the common emotional tie across the types of consumption-based offense. We also discuss other accompanying emotions that can, together with anger, shape the consequences of offense. Then, taking anger as the common spark for action across all types, we extrapolate to offer an array of potential behavioral and cognitive consequences of offense, while also discussing how the other accompanying emotions may shape such consequences. Table 3 summarizes these potential behavioral and cognitive consequences of consumption-based offense, arrayed from more direct ways of responding to consumption-based offense at the top of the table (i.e., involving confrontation of threat and restoration of the violated standard) to more indirect ways of responding at the bottom of the table (i.e., managing one's emotions).

Affective Responses to Consumption-Based Offense

We have argued that anger is an expected characteristic of consumption-based offense, as it arises when one perceives that any of a wide range of transgressions of one's norms has occurred (Izard 1977; Plutchik 1980). Further, anger also varies in its intensity on a continuum from annoyance to rage (O'Mara et al. 2011). Yet while we suggest that a degree of anger will be a unifying element across all types of consumption-based offense, we also note that other negative emotions can and often will accompany anger

depending on the type of consumption-based offense violation involved (i.e., values, relationship, self-view).

We suggest that, along with anger, individuals who experience values consumption-based offense will be likely to display disgust or contempt as part of an "emotion cluster" (Diener 1999) diagnostically characteristic of this experience. As noted by Izard (1977), Rozin et al. (1999), and Fischer and Roseman (2007), both disgust and contempt are often experienced together with anger in everyday experiences. In this context, disgust and contempt can aid in the crucial role of protecting people from aggressors who do not obey societal laws, who seek to restrain one's liberties, or who may have a disease and be contagious (Rozin et al. 1999). By functioning as distancing mechanisms, disgust and contempt, in combination with anger, can generate functionally adaptive responses intended to remove the source of the threat experienced by the consumer (Fischer and Roseman 2007; Tybur, Lieberman, and Griskevicius 2009; Tybur et al. 2013). As we discuss later in considering behavioral consequences, the particular nature of this response may depend in turn on which negative emotion is strongest in intensity. In sum, consumers who experience values consumption-based offense are likely to exhibit not only the anger we anticipate to be central in offense, but also feelings of disgust or contempt.

As with values consumption-based offense, we can delineate the emotional cluster that is most likely to emerge in the case of relationship consumption-based offense. Here, we draw on Hinde's (1976) conceptualization of relationships as involving a dynamic nature (such that each interaction sheds light on the status and future direction of the relationship). Because of the importance of each interaction, consumers require a monitoring system to detect violations to relational expectations and the potential need to change such relationships and solicit social support. As a result of such vigilance, we suggest that feelings of hurt and sadness are likely to accompany anger in relationship offense. Hurt feelings result from relational devaluation (Leary et al. 1998), and hurt and anger often occur together in day-to-day experiences (Leary et al. 1998). Sadness also often occurs with social losses, prompting a desire to change one's circumstances (Lerner, Small, and Loewenstein 2004) and draw social support (Fischer and Manstead 2008). Thus, the pain of these accompanying emotions is important, as it signals that the consumer's self-view or worldview may be damaged by continuing in the relationship, motivating actions to change the relationship, distance from it, or solicit other interpersonal support. Again, the particular response is likely to vary in part based on the relative intensities of anger and its accompanying emotions of hurt and/or sadness. In sum, consumers who experience relationship consumption-based offense will likely not only exhibit anger, but also experience feelings of hurt and sadness.

Finally, given the examples of the range of violations that can give rise to self-view consumption-based offense,

TABLE 3

BEHAVIORAL (CONSUMPTION) AND COGNITIVE CONSEQUENCES OF CONSUMPTION-BASED OFFENSE AND EXAMPLES

Downstream consequences	Examples
Behavioral (consumption) consequences	
Counterconsumption. The offended consumer engages in consumption that directly confronts the offensive norm violation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consumer offended by an offender's display of the Confederate flag chooses to subsequently wear a shirt with the statement "Not my flag" alongside an image of the Confederate flag, in front of the offender. A consumer offended by an offender's failure to ask about giving away a jointly owned product chooses to subsequently give away another jointly owned product without consulting the offender.
Corrective consumption. The offended consumer engages in consumption intended to change the offending consumer's norm-violating behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consumer offended by an offender's display of the Confederate flag subsequently buys the offender a book on the dark history of the Confederate flag. A consumer offended by an offender's failure to ask about giving away a jointly owned product chooses to subsequently engage in a conversation to decide whether to give away another jointly owned product.
Self-repairing consumption. The offended consumer engages in consumption that focuses on repairing the damage she has suffered. Two subtypes are:	
Standard-affirmative consumption. Offended consumer consumes specifically to bolster her self-view or worldview.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consumer offended by an offender's display of the Confederate flag subsequently buys a book on the dark history of the Confederate flag for personal reading. A consumer offended by an offender's failure to ask about giving away a jointly owned product buys a book on the qualities of a good relationship partner for personal reading.
Mood-repair consumption. Offended consumer consumes generally to mitigate her negative mood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consumer offended by an offender's display of the Confederate flag engages in impulsive shopping. A consumer offended by an offender's failure to ask about giving away a jointly owned product engages in indulgent food consumption.
Cognitive Consequences	
Cognitive reframing. The offended consumer cognitively reframes an offending consumption act such that it is no longer a threat to his self-view or worldview. Such reframing might occur via:	
Rationalization. Offended consumer thinks that the offending consumer must not have known better.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consumer offended by an offender's display of the Confederate flag subsequently thinks that the offender must be unaware of the negative meaning of the Confederate flag. A consumer offended by an offender's failure to ask about giving away a jointly owned product subsequently thinks that the offender must not have thought the offended consumer would mind.
Focusing on positive aspects. Offended consumer thinks about other aspects of the offender's consumption that affirms his standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consumer offended by a Confederate flag subsequently thinks about the offender's boycott of businesses that do not serve both straight and LGBTQ individuals. A consumer offended by an offender's failure to ask about giving away a jointly owned product subsequently thinks about the offender's thoughtful birthday gift.
Cognitive distancing. The offended consumer psychologically distances from the offending consumer and/or the associated product/brand.	
Cognitive distancing from offending party. Offended consumer cognitively distances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consumer offended by an offender's display of the Confederate flag subsequently feels greater cognitive distance from the offender.

TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)

Downstream consequences	Examples
from the offending consumer involved in the consumption-based offense.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consumer offended by an offender's failure to ask about giving away a jointly owned product subsequently feels greater cognitive distance from the offender.
Cognitive distancing from associated product/brand. Offended consumer cognitively distances from the product/brand involved in the consumption-based offense.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consumer offended by an offender's display of the Confederate flag subsequently feels even greater cognitive distance from the Confederate flag. • A consumer offended by an offender's failure to ask about giving away a jointly owned product subsequently feels greater cognitive distance from the jointly owned product (and/or its brand).

we can characterize the emotions that will be likely to accompany anger in this case. Theories of self-concept and self-esteem point to the benefits of detecting violations to one's important positive self-cognitions in order to maintain a consistent and positive structure for making sense of and responding appropriately to experience (Pelham 1991; Swann et al. 2007). We suggest that self-view consumption-based offense triggers self-conscious emotions, such as heightened embarrassment, shame, or defensive pride as a means of self-protection (Tangney 1999), alongside anger.⁴ These emotions serve to draw attention to one's own characteristics, such that one can either withdraw from the damaging situation (for embarrassment or shame) or repair his self-view (for pride). Though outside the scope of this article, future research may explore whether the negative or positive self-conscious emotions are more likely to occur when self-view consumption-based offense is experienced. As is the case with the other types of offense, the nature of the emotions that accompany anger, and their relative intensities compared to anger, will affect responses to the offense. To summarize for the present, we suggest that consumers who experience self-view consumption-based offense not only will exhibit anger, but also will experience heightened levels of self-conscious emotions such as embarrassment, shame, and defensive pride.

Downstream Behavioral and Cognitive Responses to Consumption-Based Offense

It is worthwhile to note that anger can cause an array of behavioral effects (Averill 1982, 1983), and we anticipate that these will include downstream consumption behaviors as well as cognitive consequences. As the emotion profile of consumption-based offense involves a degree of anger,

we suggest that offense experiences may spark an array of potential behavioral and cognitive consequences, both based on anger, but also based on the emotions we propose may accompany anger.

Behavioral Consequences. Anger leads people to take action. We focus on consumption-related behavioral responses taken by the offended consumer⁵ using Averill (1982, 1983), who identifies three intentions that anger may cue: malevolent intentions (the offended consumer develops a desire to hurt or "get back at" an offender), constructive intentions (the offended consumer develops a desire to fix the situation), and fractious intentions (the offended consumer develops a desire to "let off steam"). Drawing from this work, we propose three corresponding types of consumption responses to experiencing consumption-based offense.⁶

The first type of consumption response we propose, counterconsumption, corresponds to Averill's (1982) malevolent intentions. Counterconsumption occurs when the offended consumer engages in consumption that directly confronts the offensive norm violation. As an example, counterconsumption occurs in the case when an offended strict vegetarian chooses to subsequently purchase and wear clothes depicting gruesome factory farms in front of offending carnivores. As another example, counterconsumption would be manifest if a consumer who is offended by a friend's gift of a too-large shirt chooses to subsequently buy a too-large shirt for her friend. Drawing on Averill (1982), we propose that malevolent intentions in the context of consumption-based offense are driven by a desire to express dislike for the offender, to break off a relationship with the offender, and to gain revenge or get even with the offender. This type of consumption reaction thus relates most closely to the consumer behavior

4 Of the self-conscious emotions, guilt is less relevant to consumption-based offense, as it tends to occur privately, when people feel that they have committed transgression, not when they feel that they have been transgressed *against* as is the case for consumption-based offense (Tangney 1999). Although shame is sometimes considered related to guilt, shame is focused more on the image of the self as feeling small and defective to others, rather than on preoccupation with a transgression that one has committed (Tangney 1999).

5 There can also be various kinds of other behavioral responses to anger, such as verbal responses or physical nonconsumption responses (see, e.g., Tangney et al. 1996). As our conceptualization centers on consumption-based offense, we focus on delineating different kinds of behavioral consumption responses.

6 By laying out these potential responses, we hope to set the stage for investigating various kinds of responses; while we offer some propositions later on these various responses, this set of propositions is not meant to be exhaustive.

literature on consumer revenge responses (Folkes 1984), reactance in response to attempts to restrict one's behavior (Fitzsimons and Lehmann 2004), and Cutright et al.'s (2011) notion of direct consumption responses to system threats. For instance, Folkes (1984) mentions that product failure can lead consumers to experience anger and to seek revenge against the firm. Fitzsimons and Lehmann (2004) find that another person's unsolicited advice that contradicts consumers' initial choice impressions can lead to reactance (as measured by items including feeling a sense of resistance and anger); this reactance can then manifest in consumer engagement in responses that intentionally contradict the other person's advice. Finally, Cutright et al. (2011) describe direct consumption responses to system threats as outright and highly unambiguous in their threat opposition (e.g., t-shirts saying "100% Un-Hyphenated American").

The second type of consumption response we propose, corrective consumption, corresponds to constructive intentions. Corrective consumption consists of responding to offense with consumption choices intended to change the other consumer's norm-violating behavior. As an example, corrective consumption could involve the offended strict vegetarian subsequently inviting the offending consumer to an all-vegetarian dinner or buying him a subscription to a vegetarian prepared-meals delivery service. As another example, corrective consumption could involve the consumer offended by being gifted a too-large t-shirt subsequently inviting her friend to go shopping with her so that her friend sees the size of t-shirt she picks for herself. Drawing on Averill (1982), constructive intentions in the context of consumption-based offense are driven by a desire to strengthen a relationship with the offender as well as a desire to bring about a change for one's own good. This type of reaction thus relates most closely to the consumer behavior literature that explores a persuader's tendency to use persuasion tactics to prompt norm-consistent behavior (Cialdini 1985; Cialdini and Trost 1998; Kidwell, Farmer, and Hardesty 2013; Spiro 1983). For instance, Spiro (1983) examines purchase persuasion within families, identifying various strategies used to resolve disputes regarding joint purchases. Here, relationships are preserved, but prescriptive norm violations are both recognized and, ideally, corrected.

The third type of consumption response, corresponding to fractious intentions, we call self-repairing consumption. This response involves the offended consumer engaging in consumption that focuses on repairing damage that he has suffered. Within this type, we include both "standard-affirmative consumption" and "mood-repair consumption," depending on whether the offended consumer consumes specifically to bolster his own self-view or worldview or consumes generally to mitigate his negative mood. As examples of standard-affirmative consumption, an offended strict vegetarian may subsequently eat more vegetarian foods herself, buy more clothing clearly identifying herself as a proud vegetarian, or subscribe to vegetarian

magazines for her own consumption. As other examples, the consumer offended by receiving a too-large t-shirt might subsequently eat lower-calorie foods or exercise more. The standard-affirmative type of consumption reaction relates most closely to the consumer behavior literature on compensatory consumption, in which consumers who feel threatened on a given aspect of the self-view (e.g., intelligence) subsequently consume to affirm themselves on the threatened dimension (e.g., choosing intelligence-related products) (Gao, Wheeler, and Shiv 2009; Rucker and Galinsky 2008). In contrast to standard-affirmative consumption, mood-repair consumption involves the offended consumer instead seeking to repair his negative feelings. This may be accomplished via consumption that boosts mood but that is irrelevant to the source of the experienced offense and thus does not directly affirm one's threatened self-view or worldview. As examples, the offended strict vegetarian or the consumer offended by receiving the too-large t-shirt might engage in impulsive shopping or indulgent food consumption. This reaction has been documented in consumer behavior literature studying circumstances when negative emotions lead consumers to various forms of compulsive consumption, including impulse shopping and overeating (Faber and Christenson 1996; Rick, Pereira, and Burson 2014).

Cognitive Responses. Cognitive responses can also occur in response to consumption-based offense (Tangney et al. 1996), and in many cases allow us to cope with our anger. For example, an offended consumer could cognitively reframe an offending consumption act in a way that it is no longer a threat to her self-view or worldview, thus reducing anger's function as a norm-violation detector. For instance, in the context of taboo tradeoffs, Tetlock (2003) finds that reframing such tradeoffs as routine or tragic tradeoffs can increase their acceptability. In the context of our example about an offended strict vegetarian, such a consumer might reframe via rationalization (e.g., thinking that the offender did not know better than to consume meat) or focusing on other aspects of the offender's consumption that affirms one's standards (e.g., focusing on the thought that at least the offender buys all of his Christmas gifts from the Farm Sanctuary). The offending violation could even result in humor if successfully reframed as completely benign, resolving anger directly (McGraw and Warren 2010; Warren and McGraw 2015, 2016).

Finally, the consumption context explicitly presents two distinct potential sources for an offense: both the offending party and the consumption act (involving a brand/product). Accordingly, consumers may psychologically distance themselves from the offending consumer and the associated product, though different consumption episodes may prioritize one type of distancing over another. In some cases, the consumption-based offense may be independent of any offending consumer. For instance, displaying a

bumper sticker with a swastika may offend another consumer irrespective of the driver. In such cases, we anticipate that individuals will seek psychological distance from the offending product first—in this case, perhaps by paying for an expensive parking garage rather than parking in a free area alongside the offensive content. However, consistent with theories discussing cognitive consistency (e.g., balance theory; Heider 1958), individuals may also psychologically distance themselves from an imagined offending consumer, even if the offending consumer was not necessary or present for the offense. In other cases, there may be nothing particularly violating about the consumed product itself; instead, it is the specific combination of the consumption product and the other consumer that violates one's prescriptive normative standards. For instance, an individual watching another consumer give a valuable gift to a third party rather than to her is offensive only if she feels that she herself was the more appropriate recipient. In this case, she may distance herself from the offender, and it is an empirical question as to whether such feelings also spill over into negative feelings toward the involved products (Brick and Fitzsimons 2017).

Doing Nothing. Since intentions often do not translate into behavioral or even cognitive responses (Ajzen 1991), doing nothing is another possible consequence of offense-driven anger (Tangney et al. 1996). We anticipate that this is most likely at lower intensities of anger, or if counteractions are taken by the offender such that anger is addressed. For example, the consumption-based offense's effects may greatly depend on whether offended parties forgive offenders. Forgiveness in turn may depend on factors such as the perceived severity of the offense, beliefs about the intentionality of the violation, whether the offender apologizes, and whether the offender repeatedly offends (Struthers et al. 2008). It may also depend on the speed with which the offended party addresses the transgression, as research on service recovery indicates (Hart, Heskett, and Sasser Jr. 1990; Wirtz and Mattila 2004), and on the offender's personality, as exciting brands have been shown to be forgiven more readily than sincere brands (Aaker, Fournier, and Brasel 2004). Forgiveness, however, may sometimes be uncommon: in much political discourse, retrenching and refusing to apologize is a common response to others' expressions of offense (Hearn 2017; Morris 2017). Thus, though a null action is possible, we anticipate that it is fairly rare; consumption-based offense is likely to generate, at a minimum, cognitive or affective responses that allow consumers to cope. Forgiveness is likely to exist only *after* such responses signal to the offender that forgiveness is necessary and possible.

Consequences of Anger-Accompanying Emotions. While our conceptualization of consumption consequences involves the experience of some intensity of anger, we also proposed various other emotions that can accompany anger, depending on the type of offense experienced. Understanding the particular emotion profiles involved may

thus also help predict the consequences of consumption-based offense. Lerner and colleagues' Appraisal-Tendency Framework (ATF) (Lerner and Keltner 2000; Lerner and Tiedens 2006) may be especially useful for predicting distinct behavioral responses arising from some of the relevant emotions for consumption-based offense. For example, whereas anger is associated with approach, disgust is associated with avoidance. If the emotion profile in a particular instance of consumption-based offense involves a greater intensity of disgust than anger, then the likely behavioral consequence is withdrawal. By contrast, if the emotion profile in a particular instance of consumption-based offense involves stronger anger than disgust, then the likely behavioral consequence is engagement. Whether anger or disgust predominates may in turn depend on various factors, including intentionality and foreseeability, which heighten anger intensity as we discuss later.

This framework can also help to predict distinct *consumption* responses. For instance, Lerner et al. (2004) find that disgust prompts consumers to push away from goods, whereas sadness prompts the desire to change one's ownership state. Given that our framework argues that disgust often accompanies anger for values-based offenses, whereas sadness often accompanies anger for relationships-based offenses, an integration of Lerner et al.'s (2004) findings suggests that controlling for a given level of anger intensity, consumers' likelihood to engage in counterconsumption (vs. corrective consumption) increases when the consumption-based offense is of the values (vs. relationships) type. Further, this effect will likely be mediated by heightened disgust (vs. sadness). Other predictions about consequences can similarly be generated on the basis of drawing from ATF and other theories on emotion-specific consequences and combining their insights with the accompanying emotions posited by our typological framework. For instance, theories on self-conscious emotions suggest that they prompt self-evaluative consequences and self-targeted restoration attempts (Leary et al. 2009), and our framework posits that self-view consumption offenses often involve self-conscious emotions. Therefore, consumers' likelihood to engage in self-repairing consumption (vs. counterconsumption or corrective consumption) may increase when the offense is self-view-based (vs. values-based or relationships-based).

MODERATORS OF CONSUMPTION-BASED OFFENSE

Having laid out both a typology of causes of consumption-based offense as well as proposed affective, cognitive, and behavioral consequences, we next discuss moderators of the occurrence and consequences of offense. These moderators are grouped by three themes: characteristics of the prescriptive normative standard violation (ambiguity of the violation, legitimacy of the standard), attributions made by the offended consumer (regarding

TABLE 4

SUMMARY OF MODERATORS OF OCCURRENCE AND CONSEQUENCES OF CONSUMPTION-BASED OFFENSE

Characteristics of the prescriptive normative standard violation

Ambiguity of the violation. Consumption-based offenses vary in the extent to which they involve ambiguity (i.e., uncertainty) about whether a violation of a prescriptive normative standard has occurred.

- More ambiguous consumption-based offenses will be associated with greater variance in offended consumers' affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses (**P1**).
- More ambiguous consumption-based offenses will decrease offended consumers' direct responses to offense, which can manifest over time in greater anger and accompanying emotions (**P2**).
- If offended consumers express direct responses to more ambiguous consumption-based offenses, they will generate lower social support and greater trivialization (**P3**).

Legitimacy of the standard. Consumption-based offenses vary in the extent to which the prescriptive normative standard that is violated is perceived as legitimate (i.e., based on rational grounds and viewed as widely shared).

- As perceived legitimacy of the standard increases, the likelihood of relying on direct (vs. indirect) responses will increase (**P4**).

Intentionality attributions by the offended consumer

- Consumers will perceive greater intentionality (and thus experience higher anger intensity) when (i) a prescriptive normative standard violation causes greater threat to one's self-view or worldview, (ii) there is low justification for violation, and (iii) the resulting threat is more foreseeable (**P5**).
- Consumers will perceive a threat as more foreseeable (and thus experience higher anger intensity) when a standard is perceived to be high in legitimacy and if the offender is perceived to have greater knowledge of one's standards and sensitivity to threat (**P6**).
- Offended consumers will believe higher anger intensity levels are more appropriate than offending consumers (**P7**).

Consumer heterogeneity

Heterogeneity in group membership. Consumers differ in the groups or subcultures to which they belong.

- Stigmatized (vs. nonstigmatized) group members will be more susceptible to harm from threatening violations and thus more sensitive in detection and response (**P8**).

Heterogeneity in relationships between offender and offended. Individual preexisting relationships between the offender and the offended vary in interpersonal closeness and in other forms of psychological distance, such as perceived similarity.

- If consumers focus on expectations that close others care about them more and understand them better, then the same potentially offensive consumption act will cause greater offense if committed by a close (vs. distant) other (**P9a**). If consumers focus on others' intentions or focus on recalling prior interactions, then the same potentially offensive consumption act will cause lesser offense if committed by a close (vs. distant) other (**P9b**).
- The same potentially offensive consumption act will cause greater rumination, ultimately leading to more negative outcomes, if committed by a similar (vs. dissimilar) other (**P10**).

Heterogeneity in individual consumer characteristics. Consumers differ in an array of likely relevant individual difference characteristics, including interpersonal sensitivity, perspective taking, empathy, and need for belonging.

- As interpersonal sensitivity, perspective taking, empathy, and need for belonging increase, frequency and magnitude of anger experienced in consumption-based offense will increase, both on one's own and on others' behalf (**P11**).

intentionality), and consumer diversity/heterogeneity (i.e., in group membership, relationships, and individual characteristics). Many of these moderators present potentially fruitful directions for future research and thus are presented as testable propositions. Table 4 contains a summary of the moderators and propositions.

Characteristics of the Prescriptive Normative Standard Violation

Ambiguity in the Violation of a Prescriptive Normative Standard. Consumption-based offenses vary in the extent to which they involve ambiguity (i.e., uncertainty) about whether a violation of a prescriptive normative standard has indeed occurred. To understand the role of ambiguity,

we can draw an analogy between an ambiguous consumption-based offense and a microaggression. Microaggressions, as noted earlier, are more subtle violations than traditional aggressions. According to Sue (2017), as relevant to our definition of consumption-based offense, microaggressions are ambiguous in that it is not easy for individuals to determine whether a prescriptive normative standard has indeed been violated. Thus, whereas overt consumption offenses clearly violate prescriptive normative standards, subtle consumption offenses do not, instead leaving consumers unsure whether the conditions for offense have or have not been satisfied. We posit that:

P1: More ambiguous consumption-based offenses will be associated with greater variance in consumers' affective,

cognitive, and behavioral responses than will less ambiguous consumption-based offenses.

At the same time, Sue (2017) argues that the uncertainty of standards surrounding microaggressions will have two additional effects, which we suggest will also occur in the case of ambiguous violation of prescriptive normative standards. First, individuals may fear that others who do not interpret ambiguity in the same way they do will trivialize their concerns or fail to provide social support, thus opening them to further threat. Second, as a result, consumers may be less likely to exhibit direct responses to offense that confront the threat. For example, in a consumption context involving a values-type offense, there is a difference in ambiguity between a consumer's display of a blatant antigay symbol or slogan as opposed to a subtler Chick-fil-A symbol or logo; whereas there is little alternate interpretation to a clear antigay t-shirt, one may be unsure whether the Chick-fil-A diner simply likes their waffle fries or whether he aligns himself with the firm's antigay position. As another example, in a consumption context involving a relationships-type offense, a consumer may commit a more ambiguous offense if she has recently joined a tool-sharing library and calls dibs on the shared snowblower for the first storm of the season than if she is a long-standing tool sharer who enters the same claim. In this example, the potentially offensive consumption act may be the same, but the offended individual lacks understanding of the background and intentions of the recent joiner, who similarly may be unaware of the group's prescriptive norms, thus creating ambiguity. In both of these cases, we thus propose that while consumers may be slow to directly express their objection to a Chick-fil-A bumper sticker or to the recent joiner of the shared tool library, fearing negative responses (e.g., trivialization—that is, others downplaying the importance or seriousness of the threat), they will be more comfortable disputing consumption that presents an unambiguous threat. This means that ambiguous consumption offenses may go unchecked for longer periods of time, potentially creating greater degrees of anger and accompanying emotions without relief. In sum:

P2: Greater as opposed to less ambiguity in consumption-based offenses will decrease the likelihood that offended consumers exhibit direct responses to offense, either to offenders or to third parties. Thus, ambiguous consumption-based offenses may go unchecked over greater periods of time, leading to greater anger and accompanying emotions.

P3: When direct responses to ambiguous consumption-based offenses are expressed by the offended consumer, they will generate lower social support and greater trivialization than do less ambiguous forms of consumption-based offense.

Legitimacy of the Prescriptive Normative Standard. Consumption-based offenses also vary in the extent to which the prescriptive normative standard that is

violated is perceived as legitimate. We define *legitimate* as “in accordance with the laws of reasoning; logically inferable; logical” and “in accordance with established rules, principles, or standards” (Dictionary.com). Thus, two key aspects that increase the legitimacy of a prescriptive normative standard are the degree to which the standard is viewed as based on rational grounds and the degree to which the standard is viewed as widely shared.⁷

We posit that consumers' response to the perceived violation of a prescriptive normative standard will be explained by the level of perceived legitimacy associated with the standard. Cutright et al. (2011) find that consumers who are low in system confidence (in our context, when perceived norm legitimacy is low) are more likely to consume in ways that indirectly support the system when facing system threat, whereas consumers high in system confidence (in our context, when perceived norm legitimacy is high) are more likely to consume in ways that directly support the system when facing system threat (e.g., verbally defending the system). When we consider our consumption-based offense system and the array of potential responses we have laid out, we observe clear variance in whether potential responses are more or less direct in their restoration of the violated norm and thus their confrontation of the threat. For instance, cognitive responses such as psychologically distancing may help a consumer to become more psychologically comfortable, but will do little to reestablish the violated norm. Based on Cutright et al.'s (2011) work, such indirect responses to offense should be more likely when individuals perceive low legitimacy in the system of norms they feel was violated. This may occur, for example, when they feel that the violated prescriptive norm might be personally idiosyncratic or when they feel that the violated norm is not inherently rational. (We note that the question of perceived norm rationality, while outside the scope of the present article, offers fertile ground for exploration in itself.) By contrast, counterconsumption is a more direct response than is self-affirming consumption, and would be more likely to occur when one has more rather than less confidence in the legitimacy of the violated norm. For example, in a consumption context involving a values-type offense, a strict vegetarian consumer offended by her coworker's meat consumption might perceive that her standard against meat consumption is legitimate (e.g., viewing this standard as rationally based and a widely shared standard at the workplace) and thus react in ways that directly support her prescriptive normative standard (e.g., behaviorally demonstrating her support for

7 Note that ambiguity and legitimacy are conceptually orthogonal: a consumer may be convinced of the legitimacy of a prescriptive normative standard and yet be ambiguous or uncertain about whether a given consumption act has violated that standard. Likewise, a consumer may be convinced that a given consumption act has violated a standard and yet be unconvinced that the standard is highly legitimate.

vegetarianism, such as by wearing an animal rights shirt). By contrast, if the strict vegetarian consumer were less confident in the legitimacy of her prescriptive normative standard (e.g., viewing her standard as nonrational and not widely shared at work), she might instead exhibit indirect responses (e.g., cognitively distancing from the meat-eating coworker without engaging in any behavioral response or engaging in only more indirect forms of behavioral response, such as going shopping, to repair her negative mood). In sum, building on these lines of thought:

P4: Consumers' likelihood to engage in direct (vs. indirect) responses to consumption-based offense increases as the perceived legitimacy of the violated prescriptive norm increases.

Intentionality Attributions by the Offended Consumer

As our framework (figure 1) indicates, the perceived degree of threat to one's self-view or worldview is one major input to the intensity of anger. However, the offended consumer's attributions about the intentionality of the violation are also important. Indeed, just as there is evidence that the harshest blame, retaliation, and legal punishments are for offenses that cause greater damage or harm (Cushman, Young, and Hauser 2006; Wittman 1977), the same is true for offenses deemed intentional (Dyck and Rule 1978; McGillis 1978; Shaver 2012). This prediction is also consistent with attribution theory (Folkes 1988; Jones and Davis 1966; Kelley 1973; Kelley and Michela 1980; Weiner 1985), which examines the process by which people make inferences about the reasons behind others' actions. We discuss two insights from attribution theory with particular relevance for understanding the intensity of anger resulting from consumption-based offense.

First, attribution theory has argued that individuals are more likely to attribute intentionality to an act of aggression if it is uncommonly severe, if there was low justification for the act, and if the effects were foreseeable (Dyck and Rule 1978; Kelley and Michela 1980). In the context of consumption-based offense, this may be easily applied as follows:

P5: Consumers are likely to perceive greater intentionality, and therefore, experience higher-intensity anger, when (i) a prescriptive normative standard violation causes a greater threat to one's self-view or worldview, (ii) there is low justification for the violation, and (iii) the resulting threat is more foreseeable.

Further, regarding (iii) the foreseeability of the threat, we posit:

P6: Consumers are more likely to perceive a threat as foreseeable, and therefore experience higher-intensity anger,

when a prescriptive normative standard is perceived to be high in legitimacy (i.e., widely shared and/or based in logic) and if the offending consumer is perceived to have greater knowledge of one's prescriptive normative standards and sensitivity to threat.

Another relevant insight from attribution theory concerns differences in actor and observer perspectives. Considering these implications may help us understand why disagreements arise about the appropriateness of anger in response to consumption acts. According to attribution theory, actors are more likely to ascribe negative outcomes to causes external to the actor, whereas observers are more likely to ascribe them to causes internal to the actor (Jones and Nisbett 1971). This tendency arises at least in part because of ego-defensive impulses, as people construct causal explanations that protect their self-esteem (Heider 1958; Kelley 1973; Weiner 1985). As applied to our context, the actor is the consumer who causes offense, and the observer is the consumer who experiences offense. Given these differences in perspective, the offending individual may be more likely to ascribe his behavior to external causes as a way to defend the self from being viewed in a negative light. Offended consumers, on the other hand, may be more likely to attribute the offensive act to stable characteristics of the offender's character, either as a way to justify their negative feelings or to demand greater recompense from the offender. This discrepancy may lead the parties to disagree about the amount of anger justified by a given episode: the actor may see little justification for anger compared to the observer. For example, in a consumption context involving a relationships-type offense, an offender who fails to reciprocate a Christmas gift until a month later might ascribe the delay to the busyness of that time of year (such that higher levels of anger by the offended consumer are not appropriate), whereas the offended consumer might ascribe the delay to the offender's lack of caring (such that higher levels of anger are appropriate). Thus, we posit:

P7: Offending and offended consumers will perceive different levels of anger to be normative responses to consumption-based offense, with offended consumers believing that higher levels of anger are more appropriate than offending consumers.

Consumer Heterogeneity

As is the case for many consumer behavior phenomena, individual and group differences may operate as moderators. While we cannot exhaust the potential sources of consumer heterogeneity that may alter experiences and responses to consumption-based offense, in this section we note three broad concepts that may alter some of the relationships posited thus far: heterogeneity related to group membership, heterogeneity in the relationship between

offended and offender, and heterogeneity due to individual consumer characteristics.

Heterogeneity in Group Membership. Consumers differ in the groups or subcultures to which they belong. This heterogeneity is important because many prescriptive normative standards are shared within distinct groups. Indeed, a social benefit of experiencing shared offense may be to cement one's belonging in particular social groups. These groups may be marked by a wide variety of demographic variables (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, political affiliation) or other affiliations (e.g., brand communities). Given these differences in prescriptive normative standards, it will be quite easy for an individual to consume in a way that offends an individual belonging to a different group or subculture. Further, because a particular prescriptive normative standard may be viewed as highly legitimate in one group, yet be viewed as low in legitimacy in another group, the consequences of a given violation may differ depending on group membership.

Group membership heterogeneity may also systematically alter the frequency or severity of the experience of consumption-based offense. Members of some groups (e.g., stigmatized groups, as opposed to nonstigmatized or elite groups) may be more susceptible to harm and hence more sensitive to detection of offenses. For such groups, it is particularly important to be able to discriminate "safe" groups that share one's prescriptive normative standards from "threatening" groups that violate them. For instance, not only may a stigmatized group experience more actual offense, but group members may have increased tendencies to appraise activities as threatening as well (Major and O'Brien 2005). Thus, members of stigmatized groups may perceive a broader range of violations of their prescriptive normative standards than would less vigilant individuals, leading to more frequent experiences of offense. In addition, stigmatized group members may also have reduced coping resources, raising the psychological damage that such offenses may cause (Major and O'Brien 2005). Thus, we propose:

P8: Members of stigmatized groups may be more susceptible to harm from threatening violations and thus be more sensitive in detection and response than are members of nonstigmatized groups.

Finally, the group membership status of the offender or the conduit of an offensive act may also matter for the severity of offense. As members of some groups (e.g., children and decisionally impaired individuals) may have lower volition and agency, a weaker, more diffused feeling of offense may occur when an offended consumer recognizes that the actor has lower volition (and the resultant anger may be directed at the actor, not the conduit of offense). For instance, a consumer offended by a child wearing a mini-skirt may recognize that the child has lower volition, and the resultant anger may be directed at the

perceived actor (i.e., the parent presumably held responsible for the mini-skirt).

Heterogeneity in Relationships between the Offender and Offended. The closeness of the individual preexisting relationship between the offender and the offended can also affect the perceived potential for threat from a prescriptive normative standard violation. On the one hand, close others may be expected to care about and understand us better (Reis and Shaver 1988). As a result, violation of a norm that was believed shared constitutes a double offense: the violation of both the prescriptive norm and the expectation of self-other consistency. On the other hand, to the extent that we can recall more prior positive experiences with close others, we may ascribe positive intentions to them and be more likely to interpret their behaviors in a more positive and less threatening manner. If we ascribe less negative intentionality to close others, then, we may feel less anger. Accordingly, the effect of relational closeness as a moderator of the degree of offense may depend on the offended consumer's focus: her expectations for the relationship or the other person's intentions. Whether the offended consumer focuses on expectations or intentions/prior actions might in turn depend on such antecedent factors as the offended consumer's other-oriented perfectionism (other-oriented perfectionists adhere to particularly high expectations for close others; Hope et al. 2016) and dispositional tendency to forgive (McCullough and Witvliet 2002). For instance, in the context of a values consumption-based offense involving a best friend bragging about having bought a new high-end car, an offended consumer (perhaps one who is an other-oriented perfectionist) might focus on her high expectations for her best friend and experience greater offense than if the bragging were by a stranger. By contrast, an offended consumer (perhaps one with a high dispositional tendency to forgive) might focus on prior experiences with her best friend, in which she did not behave offensively, and ascribe more positive intentions (e.g., overwhelming excitement about the new car) and thus experience lesser offense than if the bragging were by a stranger. Interestingly, other-oriented perfectionism appears associated with lower mental well-being, whereas the tendency to forgive appears associated with better well-being. In sum, we propose:

P9: (a) To the extent that consumers focus on their expectations that close others care about them more and understand them better, then the same potentially offensive consumption act will cause greater offense if committed by a close (vs. distant) other.

(b) To the extent that consumers focus on others' intentions or focus on recalling prior interactions, then the same potentially offensive consumption act will cause lesser offense if committed by a close (vs. distant) other.

Finally, also related to interpersonal closeness is another form of psychological distance between individuals: perceived similarity. Perceiving a given prescriptive normative standard violation as committed by a more similar other (e.g., if I observe someone I perceive as similar to me using an offensive bumper sticker) may lead to greater rumination and perceived threat because such a violation is more counter to one's normative expectations. As rumination is associated with anxiety and other negative outcomes (Nolen-Hoeksema 2000), we posit that:

P10: The same potentially offensive consumption act will cause greater rumination, ultimately leading to more negative outcomes, if committed by a similar (vs. dissimilar) other.

Heterogeneity in Individual Consumer Characteristics. Finally, consumers also vary on an array of individual difference characteristics. Differences in interpersonal sensitivity, perspective taking, empathy, and need for belonging may alter the frequency or magnitude of anger consumers experience in offense. Individuals higher in these traits may be more sensitive to prescriptive normative standard violations, not only on their own behalf, but also on others' behalf—and may ascribe greater intentionality to offenders as well. Conversely, individuals lower on these traits may be more likely to offend others, either unintentionally, by failing to consider their violating potential, or intentionally, if they believe such standards interfere with their autonomy or that offense creates personal growth (Friedersdorf 2016). Of note, some of these individual differences map onto demographics as well: these traits tend to be higher among females (Toussaint and Webb 2005) and subordinates (Snodgrass 1992) and to develop during adolescence (Van der Graaff et al. 2014), indicating lower likelihood for some demographics to commit offense, but greater tendencies to experience it.

P11: As interpersonal sensitivity, perspective taking, empathy, and need for belonging increase, the frequency and magnitude of anger experienced in consumption-based offense increases, both on one's own and others' behalf.

Moderators in Light of the Overall Function of Consumption-Based Offense

In sum, we posit that two major functions of experiencing consumption-based offense are to detect threatening norm violations against “me and mine” and to prepare potential responses. The moderating factors discussed play a critical role in such functions. First, the characteristics of violations matter. For instance, if a consumption act presents a more ambiguous violation, the difficulty of detecting the true threat level of the norm violation increases, and it is less clear whether a strong response is

warranted. If a consumption act is perceived as violating a more legitimate prescriptive normative standard, it justifies greater anger and a stronger behavioral or cognitive response. Second, the offended consumer's attributions about the intentionality of the offender also matter: intentional offenses pose a greater threat both for the present and future and warrant both greater anger and stronger responses. Finally, consumer diversity may matter in multiple ways. For instance, members of some groups (e.g., stigmatized groups) may be more susceptible to harm and hence more sensitive to detection of offenses. For such groups, it is important to be able to distinguish between “safe” groups that share one's prescriptive normative standards from “threatening” groups that violate them. Indeed, a social benefit of experiencing shared offense may be to cement one's belonging in particular social groups. Relationship diversity also matters, as the prescriptive normative standards and the potential for threat from violations differs depending on the kind of preexisting relationship between the offended and offender. Finally, we posit that there may be important heterogeneity among individuals in terms of their chronic sensitivity to prescriptive normative standard violations both on their own and on others' behalf: such sensitivity may represent differences in beliefs about the damage (or lack thereof) caused by offenses.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

We have proposed a definition of consumption-based offense that offers a typology of causal prescriptive norm violations, a framework for considering its consequences, and a set of propositions related to some moderators of the occurrence and consequences of offense. While not exhaustive, we hope that the conceptualization of consumption-based offense offers a starting place to explore this domain. We next highlight implications of consumption-based offense for both theory and practice, and close by offering our thoughts on the importance of studying consumption-based offense.

Implications and Questions for Theory and Practice in Various Consumer Research Domains

Order of Cognitive Appraisal and Emotional Responses. We suggest that the prescriptive norm violation that triggers offense should involve both the emotional experience of anger and the perception that an offending party's consumption act has threatened one's self-view or worldview. As our conceptualization is based on the offended consumer's perspective, an open question is which actually occurs first: the anger or the perception of threat? Perhaps for some kinds of consumption-based offenses in our typology (e.g., values offenses), a quick emotional response (anger and accompanying disgust) is adaptive or engrained for physical protection, followed by

reasoning that the emotional response occurred due to a self-view or worldview threat. This is consistent with Haidt's intuitionist model for moral judgments (Greene and Haidt 2002; Haidt 2001; Haidt 2007; Haidt and Bjorkland 2008). By contrast, other consumption-based offenses in our typology (relationship or self-view offenses) may be developmentally acquired and operate more slowly, as they serve relationship-distancing and sense-making functions, such that reasoning about the violation may precede the emotional experience.

Goal Pursuit. Consumption-based offense has implications for goal pursuit, particularly joint goal pursuit. These implications were laid out earlier in considering relationship violations using Fitzsimons et al.'s (2015) TGD theory notion of transactive goal conflict, which exists when one person's goal pursuit impedes another's, counter to prescriptive normative standards. Combining the goals literature with our conceptualization raises other questions: for instance, does a conflict involving one consumer pursuing a values goal and the other pursuing a relationship goal differ in affective, behavioral, or cognitive consequences compared to the violation that arises when one consumer pursues a self-view goal and the other a relationship goal? Is there a hierarchy of prescriptive normative standards that determines which goals should be pursued and prioritized?

Identity. Our typology of consumption-based offense also has implications for research on identity. Recent research has examined identity threats as a driver of and consequence of consumption (Escalas 2013). As three subtypes of offense in our framework involve identity threats (personal identity violations, group identity violations, and uniqueness identity violations), our conceptualization raises the question of whether these different identity threats lead to different consequences, whether for the offended individual's identity, for other markers of well-being, or for interpersonal relationships. Further, among increasing numbers of individuals identifying as bicultural (Benet-Martínez et al. 2002), some report feeling tension that their component identities are incompatible (Cheng, Lee, and Benet-Martínez 2006; Phinney and Devich-Navarro 1997). Using our conceptualization's terminology, perhaps this tension arises because different (conflicting) prescriptive normative standards govern such biculturals' component identities. If so, might other consumers be more likely to commit inadvertent consumption-based offense against bicultural individuals, engaging in consumption that meets some of a bicultural's prescriptive normative standards but violates others? For instance, Cheryan and Monin (2005) documented that Asian Americans commonly face comments such as "Where are you really from?" that recognize one identity (Asian) while denying another identity (American) and thus are a source of offense. Might this also occur in consumption domains

and, if so, might it generate further conflict and distance between component identities?

Social Support, Social Networks, and Brand Relationships. Consumption-based offense may also have implications for understanding social support, social networks, and brand relationships. For instance, how do various types of offenses affect consumers' social networks? Further, do some types of offenses lead to weaker social ties with offense-involved actors and stronger social ties with other available individuals who are not involved in the offense? Do some types of offenses damage brand relationships in ways that are not salvageable, while others may be easily addressed through token gifts or admissions of error?

Word of Mouth. Many consumption-based offenses may involve discussions about consumption, either as a source of offense or as a consequence, offering potential implications for the word-of-mouth (WOM) literature. Berger (2014) suggests five main motives for interpersonal communication: impression management, emotion regulation, information acquisition, social bonding, and persuasion. Our conceptualization raises the notion that some of these WOM motives may be more likely to act as drivers of offense (e.g., norm-violating impression management), whereas others may primarily occur as consequences of offense (e.g., emotion regulation), and still others may be either drivers or consequences (e.g., norm-violating social bonding as a driver and changes in social bonding as a consequence). In conversations involving offense, then, one interesting possibility is whether various WOM motives might sometimes occur in detectable and predictable sequences between offender, offended, and outside parties: for instance, might impression management-driven WOM by an offender to an offended party be followed by emotion-regulation and social-bonding WOM by offended parties either to the offender or to outside parties?

Another implication of consumption-based offense for word of mouth is that there may be variance in whether consumers express that they have been offended or keep silent about their experience. Expression is likely affected by power (Van Kleef and Côté 2007) but may also be influenced by other factors, such as perceived intentionality and the type of offense. Future work on what leads to expression versus keeping silent is important, as keeping silent may have negative health consequences (Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser, and Glaser 1988).

Gift Giving, Choices for Others, and Joint Consumption. Many consumption-based offenses, especially of the relationship-based type, may involve choosing products for others or for both self and others as a cause of offense. Thus, although most work in these areas has focused on positive aspects of gift giving, choosing for others, and joint consumption (Caprariello and Reis 2013;

Chan and Mogilner 2017; Etkin 2016; Min, Liu, and Kim 2018; Ruth et al. 1999), our conceptualization suggests that such consumption acts may generate consumption-based offense and points toward the circumstances that increase the occurrence of offense and the consequences of such offenses (Liu et al. 2013; Ward and Broniarczyk 2011).

Firm-Customer Interactions. If we consider firms as potential offenders, it is vital to consider which prescriptive normative standards are the same and which are different for consumer-consumer relationships and customer-provider relationships. For instance, consumers may have similar values-based standards both for other consumers and for service providers. However, autonomy restrictions by service providers may be more common (e.g., stockouts, limited-time promotions), such that they are less likely to violate consumers' prescriptive normative standards, provided there is a valid reason for the restriction (Schmitt, Dube, and Leclerc 1992). For relationship-based standards, implications may be laid out by considering literature on the relationship standards consumers have for service providers, and vice versa (Price and Arnould 1999; Rupp and Spencer 2006). Examining whether and, if so, how the success of service recovery attempts varies by the type of offense committed offers interesting questions for future work.

Societal, Relationship, and Personal Change. Finally, our work has potential implications for literature on consumers living dynamic lives in changing worlds (Kenrick, Li, and Butner 2003; Kenrick et al. 2002; Morgan 1985; Smith and Lux 1993). As our conceptualization highlights that prescriptive normative standards are subjective, being in contexts undergoing high rates of change or diversity may increase the likelihood of encountering others who have not adopted the same standards. This may increase the likelihood of experiencing or creating consumption-based offense. For instance, diverse societies with increased rates of intermingling may have high potential to create violations of one's standards, particularly values-based standards, but other standards as well (e.g., relationship standards can vary across cultures [Miller, Akiyama, and Kapadia 2017]). Analogously, relationship transitions, such as the transition from being hook-up buddies to becoming a couple, may create situations where one partner operates by previous standards and another by new standards (see, e.g., Fiske 1992 and Clark and Mills 1993 for relationship models with different prescriptive normative standards). Further, life transitions such as entering college (Ruble 1994) or aging may present mismatches between one's own self-views and others' views or may force exposure to groups that do not share one's standards. Thus, such periods of change may be especially fraught for offense. However, potentially for the better, such interactions may also prompt consumers' normative standards to evolve with time and learning (Kenrick et al. 2003).

Final Remarks

We note that though many of us dislike feeling offended—or offending others—it is not clear that consumption-based offense is always negative in its effects. As we have argued, anger and its accompanying emotions may serve an adaptive purpose, prompting behavioral and cognitive responses that address potential threat. However, it is an important question as to whether such responses increasingly insulate consumers from others who may challenge their subjective prescriptive norms, perhaps to societal detriment. We hope that the present framework can allow consumer researchers to begin to explore causes and consequences of consumption-based offense on a micro-level, with the hope that eventually we can provide insight into the cases when we may be able to manage offense-driven anger most productively and find opportunities to share and learn from one another's norms and beliefs. If so, ultimately, we might learn to better manage consumption-based offense in ways that help society as a whole, from the most delicate “snowflake” to the most fearless and armored consumption warrior.

DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION

In this conceptual article, we included data from an autobiographical survey to provide illustrative examples of different types of consumption-based offense. The autobiographical survey data were collected from Amazon Mechanical Turk in spring 2014 by the first author. The data were analyzed by the first author with input from the other authors.

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