

HUMAN RIGHTS AND PUBLIC OPINION: FROM ATTITUDES TO ACTION

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Abstract:

This paper investigates American public opinion supporting human rights and willingness to engage in economic behavior consistent with such support. We look at three types of rights in particular: freedom of expression, freedom from torture, and the right to a guaranteed minimum standard of living. The current literature on human rights largely ignores public opinion, and vice versa. Based on our analysis of a 2006 national survey, we find that more Americans believe in a broader range of human rights (including economic rights) than has previously been assumed. We also find that most Americans report that they are willing to spend more on goods produced ethically and that those who are supportive of human rights may be more willing to pay for such goods. Our findings have implications for theories and practice of human rights, and for development of new markets for ethical consumption.

Overview

Contrary to the notion that civil and political rights trump economic rights in American popular consciousness, this article demonstrates that Americans widely view the right to a minimum standard of living as a human right -- and say they are willing to pay more for ethically produced goods in order to promote such rights. For the first time, there is data to demonstrate the connection between what Americans think about human rights, and how they are willing to behave. The national public opinion poll conducted by the authors and discussed in this article is the first in a series aimed at exploring such connections.

Nearly two decades ago, scholar Kathleen Pritchard noted that: “There is very little research on the role played by mass public opinion, and perhaps even less, on factors that shape and influence that opinion in the field of human rights.”¹ Her appraisal remains accurate almost twenty years later. Our research seeks to fill this gap. We do so in a new context – one in which the Cold War has ended, global trade barriers have dropped, and economic competitiveness has increased. Interestingly, even in a situation in which their own economic futures are often less secure, we find that Americans are willing to spend *more* to consume ethically.

Our review of all available American national public opinion surveys² conducted since 1990 revealed that such polls have typically included *either* questions on human rights attitudes³ *or* questions on various forms of ethical consumption⁴ -- *but not both*. Additionally, no national surveys have simultaneously asked about three core rights protected in international treaties: the right not to be tortured, the right to freedom of

thought and expression, and the right to a minimum guaranteed standard of living (itself a component of basic economic rights).⁵ Our survey does both.⁶

Finally, surveys have not explicitly linked human rights attitudes to ethical consumption. We do so by asking respondents to indicate their “willingness-to-pay-more” for two ethically produced goods: “sweatshop-free”⁷ clothing and “fair trade” coffee.⁸ Willingness-to-pay questions are a widely used contingent valuation tool in economics research on consumer preferences in incomplete and imperfect markets – both characteristics of the market for ethical consumption.⁹ One criticism that is commonly raised about such questions is that the answers are simply “cheap talk.” After all, people buy many goods that are not ethically produced. This is a valid criticism-- but only up to a point. Certified “ethically produced” goods generally do have less than one percent market-share in many sectors, and most such goods are not widely available.¹⁰ However, the problem with using market size as the gauge of preferences is that the absence of a market for something does not imply that people do not value it. (For instance, the tiny market for carbon offsets does not imply that public concern about global warming is just cheap talk.) There is simply a limited market for ethically produced goods in most localities, and a very incomplete one. But overall sales of fair trade commodities in North America and the Pacific Rim rose by close to 40 percent in 2003,¹¹ totaling \$291.75 million -- with coffee representing 32 percent of those sales¹² – so there is evidence of an emerging potential market.

Central to the quality of democracy is knowing what citizens think rights are, and ensuring that what citizens think about rights informs public policy formulation and outcomes.¹³ Understanding what the public does – and does not – think about particular

human rights can also promote democratic efforts to reconcile citizen attitudes and public policy. Of course, what people think about human rights cannot be fully captured in public opinion surveys alone. Nonetheless, more comprehensive public opinion data on human rights and on ethical consumption is important. Understanding mass attitudes about human rights is central to facilitating the implementation of existing legal principles. Understanding linkages between human rights, particularly economic rights, and ethical consumption can allow for new and innovative citizen-led, market-led, and government-led strategies for protecting and promote a fuller scope of rights. This article and the survey it draws upon are an initial contribution to what we hope will become a dynamic new research area in both human rights and public opinion scholarship and policy analysis.

Our results contain at least three significant findings. *First, there is a much higher acceptance of a minimum standard of living as an inviolable right among Americans than is commonly assumed.* There is also a high willingness-to-pay for ethically produced goods. This implies that the relative neglect of economic rights in American public policy discourse is out of step with what the average American citizen believes about such rights. *Second, privileged groups are more likely to support some sorts of rights over others.* White males, for example, are much more likely to support a human right to freedom of thought and expression than to support freedom from torture and a right to minimum guaranteed standard of living. These findings contradict the notion that more privileged groups tend to be less enthusiastic about human rights overall.¹⁴ *Third, we find that there is a weak connection between support for economic rights and willingness-to-pay more for ethically produced goods.*

Current Scholarship

There is a vast scholarly literature on human rights, spanning multiple disciplines.¹⁵ However, little work in the human rights field engages the question of public opinion. There have been a handful of scholarly articles on the subject produced over the past two decades – divided among scholars who focus principally on human rights attitudes in the United States¹⁶ and those who focus on public opinion internationally.¹⁷ Our work here focuses on American public opinion.

The existing public opinion literature on human rights has focused disproportionately on civil and political rights. Even when polls have taken up topics in the realm of economic rights, such as occupational standards in “sweatshops” or child labor, they have tended to be limited to the instrumental nature of such issues in American foreign policy rather than inquiring about respondents’ basic orientations about rights. Previous national polls have also failed to link attitudes about human rights to concrete expression in personal action – such as willingness to purchase ethically-produced goods. This is true even in previous surveys on child labor, anti-sweatshop purchasing, and fair trade. Our understanding of public opinion about human rights and related expressions of consumer behavior have also been hampered by a range of methodological weaknesses. Small or unrepresentative samples are the norm, and are often based on surveys of college students and/or faculty.¹⁸ None of the prior polling data we reviewed addressed the complexity of the multiple human rights relevant in everyday life and codified in international law. Our survey was designed to address these shortfalls.

Methods and Data

We integrated questions on human rights attitudes and ethical consumption within a larger nationally representative telephone survey conducted from November 15 to November 27, 2006. The number of respondents was 508. Responses were weighted based on standard demographics from the US Census Current Population Survey to be representative of the national adult population. Our questions about three types of human rights (i.e., protection from torture; freedom of thought and conscience; and right to a minimum guaranteed standard of living) all contained the following standard introduction:

Now I'm going to read you some possible human rights. For each one please tell me whether YOU think it is a right that should be guaranteed to every human being and never violated, a right that may be desirable but that can be violated under certain circumstances, or not really a right at all.¹⁹

One charge that might be leveled against these general questions is that they lead to over-reporting of support for human rights. They require little commitment by respondents beyond expressing support for different types of rights. This is a major reason why we utilized a subset of questions to probe in much greater depth whether those who express support for values are willing to trade-off something for such values. It is also important to note that the question wording was not phrased to inflate support. The questions state that support implies that the right be unconditional, and allows respondents to choose an “in-between” category that permits conditional violations of the prospective right.

We asked respondents how much *extra* they would be willing to pay for two common items, sweaters and coffee, if those products were produced under conditions that better provided for a minimum standard of living. The items were chosen to represent an import competing sector (textiles), and an item that is not domestically produced (coffee),

in part to test whether respondents' beliefs about the right to human rights protection may be linked to economic nationalism. (Though we do not discuss the results in this paper, we also included survey questions that asked more directly about economic nationalism.) We also designed the survey to avoid prompting respondents to refer back to their previous statements about human rights when giving their willingness-to-pay answers.

Findings on Human Rights Attitudes

Figure 1 displays the aggregate responses to each of the questions we asked about the three different types of rights. Support for the set of civil and political rights that have defined political liberalism for centuries is higher in the American population than support for economic rights. Nevertheless, a substantial majority of Americans do believe in basic economic rights. Over 70 percent of Americans say freedom from torture and freedom of expression are guaranteed rights to all people, and 64.5 percent of respondents consider a guaranteed minimum standard of living to be an inviolable human right. About 80 percent of those who support guaranteed civil and political rights also support a guaranteed minimum standard of living. This basic support for economic human rights is, in fact, consistent with other U.S. public opinion data. For example, the General Social Survey consistently finds that 65-70 percent of Americans support spending more on assistance to the poor.²⁰

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Interesting differences among social groups emerge in respondents' level of support for the more traditional civil and political rights (that is, freedom of speech and

freedom from torture). More people say that protection from torture is “not really a right at all” than is the case with regard to freedom of expression. Since almost identical numbers report that both rights should be inviolable, it is tempting to argue that the differences are due to the fact that torture has become much more legitimized in the context of the United States current “war on terrorism.”

Indeed, we have identified at least 29 public opinion polls that address the issue of torture, conducted nationally in the United States since 1990. Most of these have occurred since the beginning of the current Iraq War in 2002 – with the bulk conducted after the revelation that United States government has engaged in actions that are widely interpreted as torture. Public knowledge of torture in the context of current American anti-terrorism efforts may have altered public opinion on torture itself as a human rights issue. Richards and Anderson’s survey of American college students offers some insight into the demographic variation in tolerance of torture.²¹ However, the lack of detailed comparative survey data prevents us from answering this question more definitively.

Correlates of Support for Human Rights

Our survey included basic demographic and political identification information on respondents (along with the consumer behavior questions mentioned above). This survey design enabled us to analyze differences in support for human rights among several key demographic groups, such as race, gender, income, marital status, age, and political ideology. The independent variables are the groups defined as follows: the category “Non-white” includes all those not self-identifying as white. “Female” is self-explanatory. “Income less than \$50K” refers to those in households reporting annual income less than \$50,000. “Single” refers to respondents in a single-person household.

Age groups “over 60” and “under 30” are self-explanatory. Finally, “liberal” refers to those who identify as being either “somewhat liberal” or “very liberal” in their political ideology.

Table 1 displays an estimate of the proportion of the population in each demographic group claiming that the human right “should be guaranteed to every human being and never violated.” For each group, the table reports first number is the percentage *in* the group agreeing; the second number is the percentage *not* in the group agreeing. For example, if all whites and all non-whites though “freedom from torture” was an inviolable right, the percentages in the upper left of the table would be 100 and 100. Asterisks indicate when estimated *differences* between the groups (i.e., whites versus non-whites) fall outside of the sampling margin of error.²²

Table 2 provides “odds-ratio” estimates from a multivariate logistic regression (logit) model of support for each type of the three human rights included in the survey. For each column, each number reported number in the Table represents the likelihood that someone in the demographic category on the far left (non-white, female, etc.) considers the right to be inviolable, *divided by* the likelihood that someone not in the category considers the right inviolable holding all of the other variables constant. So, for example, the first number Table 2 indicates that non-whites are 2.28 times *more likely* than whites to say that torture is an inviolable human right, holding all of the other variables in the table constant. All a number greater than 1.00 mean that those in the corresponding demographic group are *more likely* than those not in the group to say the right is non-violable. Conversely, a number lower than 1.00 mean that those in the named group are less likely to say the right is inviolable than those not in the named group.

INSERT TABLE 1 and Table 2 about HERE

Consistent with other research, political ideology exerts a considerable effect on support for all three types of human rights. More liberal respondents are much more likely to say that they support human rights. Our results corroborate other scholars' findings.²³

One interesting pattern we identify is that politically more marginal demographic groups (women and non-whites) are more likely to support a human right to protection against torture and to a guaranteed minimum standard of living than are males and whites. In striking contrast, dominant social groups (e.g., white and males) are substantially more supportive of the absolute right to freedom of thought and expression: 80 percent of non-whites support an inviolable human right to protection from torture versus only 67 percent of whites. The respective proportions supporting a right to minimum income are 70 percent and 62 percent. Meanwhile, only 64 percent of non-whites support an absolute right to freedom of thought and expression versus 74 percent of whites. As the first row Table 2 suggests, we see similar results after we controlling for potentially confounding demographic factors. Non-white respondents are about twice as likely as whites to say that freedom from torture and a right to guaranteed minimum standard of living are unconditional rights, but they are only half as likely to support an unconditional right to freedom of thought and expression.

Gender is also an important factor differentiating support for particular human rights. While 78 percent of women, as opposed to 63 percent of men, support an absolute right to freedom from torture, men are substantially more likely to embrace an absolute right to freedom of thought and expression, by 77 percent to 65 percent. These

differences are statistically significant, that is, larger than the survey margin of error. (Income differences, by contrast, play no role in differentiating support for freedom from torture as a human right.) All three of these findings are corroborated in our logistic regression results in Table 2. Controlling for other factors, women are more than twice as likely to support a fundamental right to protection from torture and less than half as likely to support freedom of thought and expression.

If we examine the interaction effects between race and gender, about 83 percent of non-white females support freedom from torture as an unconditional right, while only 56 percent of white males support this as an unconditional right. The corresponding percentages for freedom of thought and expression are a mirror image: 57 percent of non-white females support an unconditional right to freedom of thought and expression versus 80 percent of white males.

These findings on attitudes regarding torture are in keeping with contemporary claims about the particular vulnerability of women to varied forms of violence. As Charlotte Bunch has argued: “The most pervasive violation of females is violence against women in all its manifestations... These abuses occur in every country... They cross class, race, age, and national lines.”²⁴ Our findings are also in line with theories about institutional racism, which are invoked to explain the unique vulnerability of certain minority groups in America (particularly African-Americans) to violence by agents of the state.²⁵

The only other major difference that we find in the level of support for human rights is the correlation between lower levels of education and greater support for economic rights. Though not a complete explanation, simple self-interest may play a role

here. Those with low education face a considerable and growing wage gap in the United States, so one might imagine that this group currently experiences, and can increasingly expect to face, poor economic prospects.²⁶

One might argue that the absence of a strong relationship between income and support for economic rights in our sample undermines this argument. Two additional factors support our argument. First, those with lower incomes are somewhat more likely to support a guaranteed standard of living. Second, the measure of income that we have used is current household income -- so it ignores future income prospects, differences in the size of households, and number of income earners. A family with one earner reporting an income of \$40,000 could be expected to have quite different economic prospects than one composed of two earners each making \$20,000 each.

To our knowledge, differences in the public's support for particular kinds of human rights has not been reported in the social science literature, even in psychology. Yet these findings are consistent with some psychological theories. Many explanations of human rights attitudes focus on the fact that human rights claims tend to demand greater egalitarianism, and represent "threats" to dominant social groups. This leads many psychologists to predict that socially powerful groups would oppose human rights more or less across the board.²⁷

Our findings are more nuanced. White males have historical social and economic dominance, which may explain their strong level of support in our sample for freedom of thought and expression.²⁸ Such findings are in line with feminist standpoint theory, which argues that hierarchical relationships between subordinated groups and dominant

ones endorse the communication practices of the dominant group,²⁹ including, in this case, the power to define the realm of free speech.

When thinking about public opinion about the international human rights regime in America, we might want to look beyond support for the individual human rights mentioned in our survey, and focus on support for *all three*. All three are codified in international human rights law, which the United States has signed.

Even on a generous counting, less than a majority of Americans (46 percent) answer that all three rights are inviolable. (This count includes those respondents who replied that the right is unconditional to two of the three items, and replied “don’t know” to the third.) An optimistic assessment of these numbers would point to widespread normative support for human rights. Two-thirds of Americans believe that two of these rights are guaranteed and that the third is at least conditionally guaranteed. Only a minority (18 percent) of respondents maintain that one or more of the three is not really a right at all. Almost 75 percent of the public believes that at least one of the three is an inalienable human right.

The final columns in Tables 1 and 2 show the level of individual support for *all three* human rights as inviolable. (Recall that based on our estimates, less than half of the American public as a whole considers all three rights inviolable.) We find large differences in support for only two groups of Americans: women versus men, and liberals versus non-liberals. Women are significantly more likely than men to support all three rights (51 percent versus 40 percent), though in the logistic regression results, estimates for gender differences are with the margin of sampling error (that is, the p-value is greater than .05), so the difference we found is not highly reliable. Liberals are much more likely

to consider all three rights inviolable (66 percent versus 40 percent). Controlling for demographic variation, we find that liberals are about 3 times more likely than non-liberals to support all three.

Findings on Ethical Consumption

Our questions about consumer willingness-to-pay for ethically produced goods focus on two classes of products: textiles produced under sweatshop-free conditions and coffee produced under the fair trade label. The textile question asked respondents how much more they would be willing to pay for a sweater that was guaranteed not to have been produced under sweatshop conditions. The fair trade coffee question asked respondents who regularly purchased coffee how much more they would be willing to pay for coffee with a fair trade label, a label that guarantees that producers receive a minimum price for their coffee. The exact question wording is provided in Appendix A.

A popular conception of ethical consumption is that it has a limited potential market, with demand limited to those with liberal political leanings or high disposable income. Our results, however, indicate that a large majority of Americans say they are willing to pay more for ethically produced goods. Based on our survey, about 68 percent of the population would pay significantly more for a twenty dollar sweater made under good working conditions. Such a high rate support for ethical consumption goals is, in fact, similar to findings of previous polls. A sizeable majority (62 percent) report that they are willing to pay at least five dollars more, and more than one-third of Americans report that they would be willing to spend ten dollars more. With respect to willingness-to-pay for fair trade coffee, our results suggest that more than 75 percent of coffee buyers would be willing to pay at least fifty cents more per pound for fair trade, while more than

half would pay a premium of one dollar or more. To put this amount in perspective, between 2001 and 2005, the average retail price of coffee in the United States was about three dollars per pound. This result is broadly consistent with previous surveys.³⁰

INSERT TABLES 3 and 4 HERE

Correlates of Support for Ethical Consumption

Table 3 provides the proportion of people in key social groups who say they are willing to pay at least a five dollar premium for a sweat-free sweater, and those willing to pay at least one dollar more per pound for coffee with a Fair Trade label.³¹ The first eight groups are the same ones we used previously in analyzing support for various human rights. We include one additional group: identification of economic rights as an inviolable human right.

Consistent with our findings on the general level of support for economic rights, respondents with limited education (high school diploma or less) were more willing to pay more for sweatshop-free goods. Those with less education are, on average, also more likely to say they will pay more for fair trade coffee, but the difference is small and less than the standard margin of sampling error. The largest difference in willingness-to-pay occurs between those over and under 60 years old. Older Americans are substantially *less* likely to say they are willing to pay more for ethically produced goods. While support for human rights is positively associated with willingness-to-pay for sweat-free clothing and fair-trade coffee, the estimated effect is within the survey margin of error.

It is notable that inter-group differences in willingness-to-pay are sometimes different from expressed support for a human right to a minimum living standard. First

of all, non-whites are *less* likely than whites to express a willingness-to-pay more for sweat-free clothing or for fair trade coffee. Second, gender differences in willingness-to-pay for sweat-free goods are small and within the margin of sampling error. Third, those with higher incomes generally are willing to pay more for ethically produced goods, though the difference is outside of the margin of error for sweat-free clothing, not for coffee.

The fact that those with higher incomes are more willing to pay for ethically produced goods is not terribly surprising. Insofar as individuals attach *some* positive value to ethically produced goods, we would expect higher incomes to increase their expressed willingness-to-pay. A more counter-intuitive finding is that non-whites are less willing than whites to pay more for ethically produced goods, even though we saw earlier that they were more likely to say that a minimum standard of living was an inviolable right. Since we controlled for things like income and education in the logit analysis, it is not likely that this group's lower *willingness*-to-pay is simply due to a lower *ability* to pay.

Significantly, willingness-to-pay more for one of the two ethically-produced goods was highly correlated with willingness-to-pay more for the other: 85 percent of those who say they would pay at least one dollar more for a pound of fair trade coffee also report a willingness-to-pay at least five dollars more for a sweatshop-free sweater. In other statistical analyses (available from the authors), willingness-to-pay for one item was associated with about a 10-fold increase in the willingness-to-pay for the other.

Theoretical and Policy Implications

In the context of increasing global economic integration, some Americans have invoked protectionist rhetoric to justify creating trade barriers while others have pointed to the challenge of global competition as a justification for reluctance to markedly raise wages or improve working conditions. Our survey suggests that American consumers are more likely to “put their money where their values are” in progressive defense of economic rights than has heretofore been suggested. In order to accurately represent the public interest, policymakers need a fuller sense of their constituents’ opinions about human rights. In order to risk innovation in developing “ethically produced” goods, entrepreneurs need evidence of market demand for this type of product. Research like the kind we presented here yields both kinds of data. Equally important is experimental research involving field-level observation of actual consumer purchasing behavior; such work was beyond the scope of our study but would be a useful compliment to it.³²

Our work also reveals a number of findings worthy of future study, particularly in terms of attitudes regarding “classic” liberal rights (such as protection from torture and freedom of thought and expression). For example, we find that more Americans believe protection from torture is “not really a right at all” than they do with regard to freedom of expression. Yet being in a politically more marginal group does indeed increase support for a human right to protection against torture. By contrast, traditionally more powerful social groups voice stronger support for freedom of thought and expression as an inviolable right. Another finding to explore is the greater willingness of non-whites to support a right to guaranteed living standard but their lower willingness to pay for products that would seem to support that human rights goal -- even after the lower average ability to pay is taken into account.

One of the main contributions of our study was to link willingness-to-pay data with respondents' attitudes about rights. The demographic anomalies uncovered in our research merit exploration through additional survey work. Beyond its scholarly value, such data could have public policy significance if it led to broader social mobilization or government responsiveness to human rights – in particular, economic rights. Notably, the United States is alone among industrialized nations in not having ratified the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, and is the only nation other than Somalia not to have ratified the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, a treaty with strong provisions on children's economic rights. Might the reluctance of members of Congress to champion ratification change if these treaties were linked to a groundswell of popular support for such rights? Might organizations involved in promoting ethical consumption enlarge their market base if they had access to better data on why certain groups are (or are not) willing to pay more for “sweat-free” or “fair-trade” products? Without public opinion data, we cannot know. This research is but a first step in forging deeper analytical and practical links between public opinion on human rights and popular action.

APPENDIX A

Question Wording about the inviolability of specific human rights

Now I'm going to read you some possible human rights. For each one please tell me whether YOU think it is a right that should be guaranteed to every human being and never violated, a right that may be desirable but that can be violated under certain circumstances, or not really a right at all.

...Freedom from physical and mental torture

...A guaranteed minimum standard of living

...Freedom of thought and expression

Willingness to Pay for Sweatshop-free Goods

Wording regarding sweatshop free goods consisted of two questions.

Some clothing producers in foreign countries make their employees work in unsafe conditions, often called sweat shops, to keep costs and prices low. Would you be willing to pay more for clothing that you knew was made under SAFE working conditions?

Only those responding "Yes" were asked the following follow up question

If you were considering buying a sweater priced around twenty dollars, how many MORE dollars would you be willing to pay for the sweater to get a guarantee that it was made under safe working conditions? (ENTER 2 DIGIT DOLLAR AMOUNT 0-96)(IF MORE THAN \$20 PROBE: Is that how much you would pay total or how much MORE you would pay?)

Responses were top coded at \$97, and don't know or refusals were coded 0.

Willingness to Pay for Fair Trade Coffee

Questions about willingness to pay for Fair trade coffee involved several were only asked to those who regularly purchase coffee. The following two questions were initially asked

of all respondents:

Some products from developing countries carry a label saying "Fair Trade," that means the product was produced under fair and safe working conditions, and that the workers who produced it received a living wage. Have you ever seen this type of label?

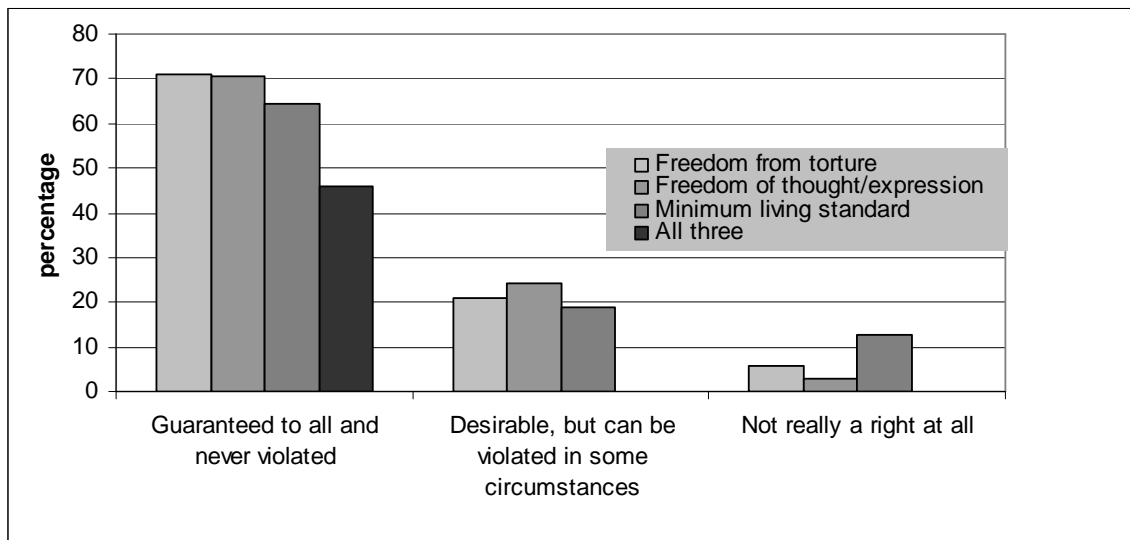
and

How often do you purchase coffee or coffee beans from a grocery store or supermarket? Regularly, sometimes, rarely, or never?

Only those who claim to regularly purchase coffee were asked the following about what they would pay for "Fair Trade"

Given what you currently pay for coffee, how much more per pound, if anything, would you be willing to pay for coffee that carries the 'Fair Trade' label....fifty cents, one dollar, two dollars, more than two dollars, or nothing at all?

FIGURE 1
Beliefs about Human Rights



Source: Ethical Consumption Survey

TABLE 1
Support for the inviolability of selected human rights by demographic group

	<i>Freedom from Torture</i>		<i>Minimum Standard of Living</i>		<i>Freedom of Thought & Expression</i>		<i>Combined</i>	
	<i>in group</i>	<i>in rest of population</i>	<i>in group</i>	<i>in rest of population</i>	<i>in group</i>	<i>in rest of population</i>	<i>in group</i>	<i>in rest of population</i>
Non-white (n=105)	80	67**	70	62	64	74	44	47
Female (n=276)	78	63**	65	64	65	77**	51	40*
Income less than 50K (n=172)	70	71	68	63	69	74	45	48
High School ed or less (n=132)	68	74	71	59**	69	71	46	45
Single (n=122)	79	70*	61	66	72	71	50	45
Over 60 (n=141)	67	72	62	66	73	71	50	45
Under 30 (n=48)	73	71	73	64	72	71	43	47
Liberal (n=120)	82	68**	77	61**	82	67**	66	40**

Source: Ethical Consumption Survey

Note: The "in group" column is the percentage in the group responding that the right is inviolable; "in rest of population" is the percentage *not in the group* responding that the right is inviolable. N is the number of survey respondents for the "in group."

* p< .10, ** p<.05, two-tailed

TABLE 2
Logit estimates of support for inviolable human rights

	<i>Freedom from Torture</i>	<i>Minimum standard of living</i>	<i>Freedom of Thought and Expression</i>	<i>Combined</i>
Non-white	2.28 **	1.96 **	0.71	1.25
Female	2.28 **	1.28	0.49 **	1.66 *
Income less than 50K	0.79	0.98	0.84	0.99
High School ed or less	0.96	2.38 **	1.08	1.27
Single	1.79	1	1.29	1.14
Over 60	0.81	0.83	1.39	1.05
Under 30	0.95	1.33	1.28	0.83
Liberal	1.71	2.36 **	2.1 *	2.96 ***
n	459	459	459	459
pseudo R-2	0.06	0.06	0.04	0.05

Source: Ethical Consumption Survey

Note: Coefficients are odds ratios from logit estimates

*p<.10, ** p<.05 two-tailed

TABLE 3
Willingness-to-pay for ethically produced goods

	<i>WTP at least \$5 more for Sweat-free sweater</i>			<i>WTP at least \$1 more for Fair Trade coffee</i>	
	<i>in group</i>	<i>in rest of population</i>		<i>in group</i>	<i>in rest of population</i>
Non-white (n=107)	53	65**	(n=53)	47	58
Female (n=284)	63	58	(n=165)	53	56
Income less than 50K (n=177)	58	67	(n=93)	53	57
High School ed or less (n=136)	68	56**	(n=80)	55	54
Single (n=126)	54	63	(n=59)	43	56
Over 60 (n=147)	48	66**	(n=94)	39	60**
Under 30 (n=48)	63	62	(n=17)	67	53
Liberal (n=94)	64	60	(n=68)	55	54
Human Right to Minimum Standard of Living (n=307)	65	54*	(n=187)	59	44*

Source: Ethical Consumption Survey

Note: The "in group" column is the percentage in the group responding that the right is inviolable; "in rest of population" is the percentage *not in the group* responding that the right is inviolable. n is the number of survey respondents for the "in group" for willingness to pay for a) the sweater and b) coffee. The n for coffee WTP is lower because the question

* p < .10, ** p < .05, two-tailed

TABLE 4
Logit Estimates for Determinants of Willingness to Pay for Ethical Consumption

	<i>WTP at least \$5 more for Sweat-free sweater</i>		<i>WTP at least \$1 more for Fair Trade coffee</i>	
Non-white	0.55 **	0.51 **	0.49	0.44 *
Female	1.57	1.54	0.76	0.78
Income less than 50K	0.54 **	0.54 **	0.93	0.95
High School ed or less	2.44 **	2.27 **	1.16	1.05
Single	1.01	1.02	0.82	0.78
Over 60	0.49 **	0.5 **	0.37 **	0.39 **
Under 30	0.88	0.85	1.44	1.43
Liberal	1.03	0.94	0.89	0.82
Human Right to Standard of Living	n.a.	1.58 *	n.a.	1.83 *
n	459	459	258	258
pseudo R-2	0.06	0.07	0.05	0.06

Source: Ethical Consumption Survey

Note: Coefficients are odds ratios from logit estimates. The n in last two columns is lower because the question was only asked to coffee buyers.

*p<.10, ** p<.05 two-tailed

ENDNOTES

¹ Kathleen Pritchard, "Human Rights: A Decent Respect for Public Opinion?" *Human Rights Quarterly* 13, 1 (1991): 123-142.

² Polling data was accessed through the iPOLL Databank and other resources provided by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut, on June 19 and June 27, 2007. A full listing of all polls reviewed is available via:
<http://sp.uconn.edu/~scruggs/nsflinks.htm> .

³ Sam McFarland and Melissa Mathews, "Who Cares About Human Rights?" *Political Psychology* 26, 3 (2005a): 365-385; Sam McFarland and Melissa Mathews, "Do Americans Care About Human Rights?" *Journal of Human Rights* 4, 3 (2005b): 305-319; Jeannette Diaz-Veizades, Keith F. Widaman, Todd D. Little, and Katherine W. Gibbs, "The Measurement of Human Rights Attitudes," *The Journal of Social Psychology* 135, 3 (1995): 313-328.

⁴ Marymount University, *The Consumer and Sweatshops* (Arlington, VA: Marymount University Center for Ethical Concerns, November 1999). Accessed at:
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⁵ See the *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (CAT); the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR); and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR). The United States has signed and ratified both the CAT and the ICCPR; however, it has signed but not ratified the ICESCR.

⁶ See Appendix A for question wordings.

⁷ The term "sweatshop" has traditionally been associated with the poor workplace conditions and low pay offered by individual firms. See Robert J.S Ross, *Slaves to Fashion: Poverty and Abuse in the New Sweatshops* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Robert J. Liubicic, "Corporate Codes of Conduct and Product Labeling Schemes: The Limits and Possibilities of Promoting International Labor Rights Through Private Initiatives," *Law and International Business* 30, 1 (Fall 1998): 112-158; César A. Rodríguez-Garavito, "Global Governance and Labor Rights: Codes of Conduct

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⁸ “Fair trade” encompasses a broader set of requirements related to mode of production and market prices, and may include both labor and environmental criteria (such as organic production). See Margaret Levi and April Linton, “Fair Trade: A Cup at a Time,” *Politics and Society* 31, 3 (September 2003): 407-432; Loureiro and Lotade, “Do fair trade and eco-labels in coffee wake up the consumer conscience?”; James A. Roberts, “Profiling Levels of Socially Responsible Consumer Behavior: A Cluster Analytic Approach and Its Implications for Marketing,” *Journal of Marketing* 3 (Fall 1995): 97-117.

⁹ Robert Cameron Mitchell and Richard T. Carson, *Using Surveys to Value Public Goods: The Contingent Valuation Method* (Washington, DC: Resources for the Future, 1989) and W. Michael Haneman, “Valuing the Environment Through Contingent Valuation,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 8, 4 (Fall 1994): 19-43.

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government respect for physical integrity rights,” *International Studies Quarterly* 43, 2 (June 1999): 407-417.

¹⁶ Anne E. Geyer and Robert Y. Shapiro, “A Report: Human Rights,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 52, 3 (1988): 386-398; Kathleen Pritchard, “Human Rights: A Decent Respect for Public Opinion?” op cit.

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¹⁹ Full question wording are available in Appendix A.

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³¹ International Coffee Organization, historical statistics, accessed at www.ico.org, 15 July, 2008.

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