

# The Link between the Belief in a Just World and the Unhealthy = Tasty Intuition in Food Consumption

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Cite as:

Laporte Sandra, Briers Barbara (2020), The Link between the Belief in a Just World and the Unhealthy = Tasty Intuition in Food Consumption. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 49th, (64334)

Paper from the 49th Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 26-29, 2020.



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## **Abstract**

Obesity is one of the greatest public health challenges of modern times and its prevalence is increasing worldwide. Many people face the conflict between short-term taste and long-term health. Consumers who believe in a trade-off between health and taste in food (the Unhealthy = Tasty Intuition, or “UTI”) tend to under-consume healthy food because they expect a bad taste. In support, there is a positive association between UTI and BMI. We propose that the UTI stems from a more general compensatory belief that functional benefits come with hedonic costs as described in the Protestant work ethic (PWE) and Belief in a Just World (BJW). Both the BJW and UTI have been proven to be generally higher in the US versus France, and so are the obesity rates. Therefore, we investigate whether BJW can explain (part) of the cultural variation in UTI. Our findings show how cultural lay beliefs can have pervasive and long-lasting effects on food perceptions and dietary practices worldwide.

**Keywords:** *Food behavior; Lay belief; Belief in a Just World*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour