

# Green for the Rich, But Not for the Poor: How Income Bias Affects the Perceived Greenness of Repair Behavior

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## **Abstract**

Low-income consumers face negative judgments for various consumer behaviors, including green behaviors like purchasing an electric car. These consumers are often criticized due to perceptions of financial wastefulness associated with such behaviors. Here, we examine whether income also influences the judgments of consumers who engage in frugal green behavior, specifically focusing on product repair. Across five experiments, we reveal a disconcerting bias: Low-income consumers, compared to consumers with high and unknown income, do not receive equal green credit for repairing products. This bias stems from observers inferring that low-income individuals repair products out of necessity, driven by extrinsic motivations such as cost, rather than intrinsic motivations such as genuine environmental values. This bias therefore does not occur for green behaviors such as recycling and does not occur when repairing has a high cost.

**Subject Areas:** *Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making, Information Processing*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour