

# From Tradition to Greenwash: How Heritage Imagery Shapes green-perceptions

**Arancha Larranaga**

Universidad Pontificia Comillas

**Carmen Valor**

Universidad Pontificia Comillas

**Paolo ANTONETTI**

EDHEC Business School

Cite as:

Larranaga Arancha, Valor Carmen, ANTONETTI Paolo (2025), From Tradition to Greenwash: How Heritage Imagery Shapes green-perceptions. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 54th, (124024)

Paper from the 54th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, Spain, May 25-30, 2025



## **From Tradition to Greenwash: How Heritage Imagery Shapes green-perceptions**

This study explores tradition-washing, where consumers mistakenly perceive traditionally marketed food products as eco-friendly or green due to associations with naturalness, healthiness, or authenticity. Despite limited evidence that traditional methods lower environmental impact, the study investigates how communication of traditionality influences green perceptions and the role of psychological mechanisms, such as groundedness. An online experiment with 280 participants reveals that promoting traditional production enhances consumer preferences and green perceptions, especially among those with low nostalgia, and applies equally across vice and virtue product categories. Highlighting the risk of tradition-washing, this research underscores the mediating role of groundedness in driving green perceptions, with practical recommendations for companies, policymakers, and consumer organizations to mitigate misperceptions.

**Keywords:** *tradition-washing; greenness; groundedness*

**Track:** *Advertising & Marketing Communications*