

Carrotmob. A win/win/win-approach to creating benefits for consumers, business, and society at large

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Abstract

The call for business practices that create benefits for companies, customers, and society is getting louder. This article analyzes a new implementation of such a win/win/win-approach: the carrotmob. Activists and managers jointly organize a shopping flashmob in which consumers collectively purchase the products of a target company to reward its intent to act more socially responsible. Given that carrotmobs are only efficient if they are supported by a critical mass of consumers, a survey study (337 young consumers) explores the critical drivers of carrotmob participation. Accordingly, object-oriented, personal, and social motives jointly determine carrotmob participation with social motives having the strongest impact.

Keywords: carrotmob, corporate social responsibility, sustainable consumption, win/win/win-opportunities, shopping flashmob

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The profit-oriented, aggressive strategies of some companies have made many consumers believe that the primary objective of businesses is to raise profits, and most frequently this happens at the expense of consumers and society (e.g., Murray, Ozanne, & Shapiro, 1994). The question arises how the discipline may help increase business profits *in concert with* consumer well-being and societal welfare. Owing to growing societal and environmental problems amplified by population growth and the aging of many societies, there is a strong need to establish business relationships that are beneficial to customers' and societal well-being as well (Orlitzky, Siegel, & Waldman, 2011; Schrempf-Stirling, 2014). Yet, the literature still lacks compelling examples of how to create win/win/win-opportunities for companies, consumers, and society at large.

Even from a less moralistic and a more instrumental point of view, managers need to be interested in finding new ways of market exchanges that are mutually beneficial, because a growing number of consumers ask for responsible corporate practices (Cooperative Bank, 2009). Particularly in industrialized countries, ethical and political consumption is becoming more and more widespread. This trend is mirrored in social movements, including consumer boycotts (e.g., Friedman, 1999; Klein, Smith, & John, 2004; Sen, Gürhan-Canli, & Morwitz, 2001). Yet, while boycotts sometimes are successful in uplifting consumer and society benefits, they are disadvantageous for companies as sales decline and reputation is damaged (Davidson, Worrell, & El-Jelly, 1995; Pruitt & Friedman, 1986). Notably, boycotts are often even disadvantageous for the participating consumers because they have to refrain from buying preferred products. Weakening a target company economically may also have negative impacts on society with regard to employment rates or taxes. Thus, even though boycotts are called for a good reason, they can still be considered a negative form of ethical consumption.

This paper aims to explore a new and more positive form of ethical consumption, which

has recently evolved and which promises to overcome the limitations of boycotting. Carrotmobs reward companies for their commitment to change corporate behavior (e.g., production methods, products) (Hoffmann & Hutter, 2012). In a shopping flashmob, an informal group of consumers (carrotmobbers) collectively swarms a company or store and purchases its goods or services during a predefined, short period of time. The target company has committed itself in advance to invest a predefined share of the carrotmob revenue for socially and/or environmentally responsible actions (e.g., environmental improvements). In a figurative sense, carrotmobbers offer a carrot to motivate the management to take socially responsible actions (instead of the stick as for boycotts) (Albinsson & Perera, 2012). This metaphor refers to a donkey that is made to move by dangling a carrot in front of it. In a carrotmob, the motivational aspect (“the carrot”) is realized in terms of increased sales and positive word of mouth.

The carrotmob’s basic idea of how activists and consumers attempt to influence managerial decisions diverges fundamentally from other forms of ethical consumption (e.g., boycott). Carrotmobs follow the logic of cooperating rather than competing and they strive for creating win/win/win-opportunities for all three parties involved (Hoffmann & Hutter, 2012). First, *consumers* benefit because they are able to force companies to behave in the intended way without having to restrict their consumption. Second, *society* benefits as the company allocates a share of its revenue to investments in social issues. Since they are unconventional and spectacular (Heiskanen et al., 2010; Pezzullo, 2011), the media coverage of a carrotmob will raise attention towards important societal and environmental problems among a wide audience. Finally, the *target company* benefits from increasing sales during the carrotmob. The carrotmob additionally helps foster the consumers’ perceptions of the target’s corporate social responsibility (Carroll,

1999; De Bakker, Groenewegen, & Den Hond, 2005). Hence, managers might even use the carrotmob as an instrument of reputation management.

Given the mutual benefits, it is not surprising that the idea of the carrotmob is fast diffusing around the globe. Although the idea was born no earlier than 2008, the website carrotmob.org states that over 250 carrotmobs were initiated in over 20 countries. Carrotmobs have been conducted in North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia (Hoffmann & Hutter, 2012). Target companies have been selected from several different branches, such as stores, gastronomy, and theatres. Previous carrotmobs have pursued different objectives, such as making the target save energy, reduce waste, or select socially responsible suppliers. For instance, in December 2008, a carrotmob took place in the “Tarzian Hardware” store in New York (US) and 22 percent of the revenue (12,000 US\$) was spent on energy efficiency improvements. Although the absolute number of carrotmobs is low compared to other forms of ethical consumption, we believe that research should investigate early new phenomena with a high potential to spread. In addition, carrotmobs are an instrument to increase corporate social responsibility, especially of small and medium-sized enterprises (Wickert, 2014). A recent study shows that the carrotmob might have a significant impact for ethical consumer behavior because it is an interesting alternative to boycotting for consumers unwilling to make sacrifices (Hutter & Hoffmann, 2013).

It is important to note that carrotmobs are only efficient if they are supported by a critical mass of consumers. Yet, as the carrotmob is a fairly new concept, little is known about the participation motivation (e.g., Albinsson & Perera, 2012). To fill this gap, an empirical study with 337 young consumers explores and quantifies the core factors that drive participation in carrotmobs. We investigate the relative impact of different object-oriented, personal, and social drivers of the motivation to support a carrotmob.

Conceptual Background

Carrotmobs are a subtype of consumer boycotts and, thus, the opposite concept of boycotts (Friedman, 1996). Boycotters reward companies for desirable behavior by intentionally buying their products (Friedman, 1999). A carrotmob is a form of a short-term boycott that aims to reward companies for the commitment to behave socially responsible in future times. Hoffmann and Hutter (2012, p. 218) define carrotmobs as “a temporary boycott in the form of a purchase flashmob by a group of consumers organized by activists”. Unlike for boycotts in which consumers demonstrate a “vote-against” behavior, carrotmobs reflect positive “vote-for” behavior (McGinnis & Gentry, 2009). Nonetheless, carrotmobs – like boycotts – are instruments with which stakeholders try to influence the social responsibility of business (Helmig, Spraul, & Ingenhoff, 2013) and to urge changes in the target company with favorable implications for the general public (Pezzullo, 2011).

Three parties are mainly involved in a carrotmob: activists, the target company, and the participating consumers (so-called carrotmobbers). Each carrotmob follows a typical procedure (Hoffmann & Hutter, 2012). Like in other social movements (Kurland & McCaffrey, 2014), activists initiate a carrotmob and invite selected companies to an auction. The company setting the best bid in terms of monetary (e.g., donations to environmental organizations) and/or non-monetary investments (e.g., reducing energy consumption in the production process) will be selected. Activists define a period of time (usually a specific day) and announce the carrotmob to consumers. Similar to a flashmob, consumers swarm the target company or store and collectively purchase its products or services. Since social media are frequently used to distribute the idea (Albinsson & Perera, 2010, 2012), and given that carrotmobs are stimulating and unconventional events, participating consumers are mostly well-educated young adults (Pezzullo, 2011).

A recent study of Hutter and Hoffmann (2013) reveals that consumers expect that target

companies benefit from increased sales as well as from improved reputation and brand image. Additionally, consumers expect that the impact of a carrotmob unfolds at a societal level. So far, no paper has explored whether activists and the carrotmob targets indeed share such a positive view of the concept. The perception of a win/win/win-situation, however, is essential to the conceptual framework that is developed in our main study.

To fill this gap, we conducted semi-structured interviews prior to our study with the president of an activist group that initiated a carrotmob and the manager of its target company. We used the case of a real carrotmob, which was carried out in December 2011 in a food store chain. The store managers agreed to donate 10 percent of the carrotmob's revenue to a regional NGO that helps people with little money by giving out free meals. The key findings, which provide the basis for the main study, are briefly reported.¹ In line with our expectations, the activist and manager perspectives largely overlap in the appraisal of how all three parties (companies, consumers, and society) benefit simultaneously. For the *company*, the carrotmob created economic ("hard") benefits by raising the sales of regular customers and attracting new customers. In addition, the activists and the manager reported that the carrotmob created non-economic ("soft") value as the media coverage drew attention to the fact that the company was engaged in a socially responsible action, which improves corporate reputation ("free advertising effect"). *Consumers* were expected to benefit as well because they indirectly spend money for a good purpose and they are able to "consume with a clear conscience", without having to change consumption habits and without having to bear additional costs. Finally, the manager and the activist agreed in their view that there was a substantial benefit for *society* because the target company was nudged to act in a desired manner and money was collected for a social purpose. In sum, the interviews support the

¹ The full report of the pretest is not included in this article. It can be obtained from the authors upon request.

basic claim that the carrotmob can indeed be regarded a win/win/win-situation.

Yet, knowledge is needed on how the idea of a win/win/win-approach is transferred into action. The literature provides only few conceptual studies from the perspective of carrotmob activists and target companies, and only few research on the consumer perspective (Table 1). It has been demonstrated that the dominant reasons to initiate or support a carrotmob are environmental issues (Hoffmann & Hutter, 2012). A recent study reveals that carrotmobs are especially attractive to consumers concerned about environmental issues, but unwilling to restrict their consumption (Hutter & Hoffmann, 2013). Evidently, there must be additional drivers that explain why consumers join carrotmobs other than the “negative” explanation that carrotmobbers are less willing to sacrifice than boycotters. We therefore build on the large body of literature on boycotts and pro-social consumer behavior to develop a multi-layer model of carrotmob participation.

Table 1 Overview of previous research on consumer boycotts and carrotmobs

	Boycott (negative, competing)	Carrotmob (positive, win/win/win)
General concept	e.g., Friedman (1999); Rea (1974); Smith (1987)	e.g., Den Hond & De Bakker (2007); Heiskanen et al. (2010); Pezzullo (2011); Hoffmann & Hutter (2012)
Activists/society perspective	e.g., Baron (2001); Friedman (1971); Garrett (1987); Innes (2006)	- no study known to the authors -
Company perspective	e.g., Garrett (1986); Innes (2006); Koku, Akhigbe, & Springer (1997); Pruitt & Friedman (1986)	- no study known to the authors -
Consumer perspective	e.g., Hoffmann (2011, 2013); John & Klein (2003); Klein, Smith, & John (2004); Sen, Gürhan-Canli, & Morwitz (2001)	e.g., Albinsson & Perera (2010, 2012); Hutter & Hoffmann (2013)

Notes. This figure exemplifies some relevant papers. The list is not complete.

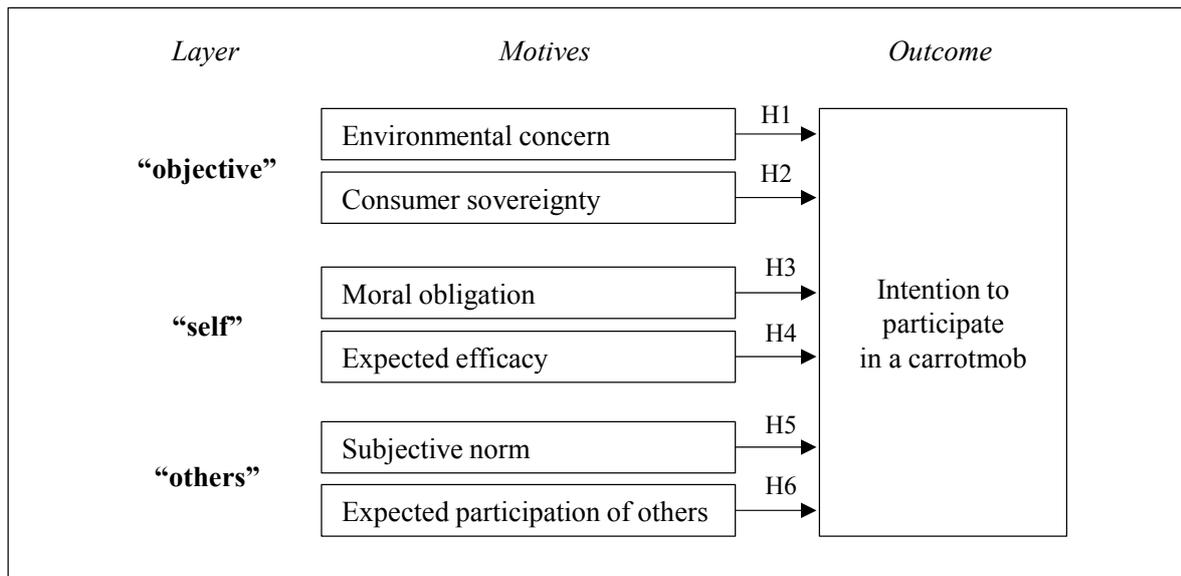
Our framework model of carrotmob participation is based on the assumption that there

are several distinct drivers, which may be conceptualized in three relevant layers of motives (Figure 1). We build on the findings of Albinsson and Perera (2010, 2012) and Hutter and Hoffmann (2013) to develop the set of drivers. Note that the present study differs from these studies by extending and reorganizing the mechanisms that motivate consumers to participate in carrotmobs. Additionally, we add insights from the interviews with the activist and the manager as well as the boycott literature. In this way, this study is the first to paint a holistic multi-layer picture of carrotmob drivers. Following Hutter and Hoffmann (2013), we include environmental concerns as objectives of the participation. Yet, these authors have solely focused on concerns and the distinction to make sacrifices between carrotmobbers and boycotters. Albinsson and Perera (2010, 2012) have pointed out that a carrotmob is a social phenomenon and that social media facilitate its organization. Nonetheless, the social component of carrotmob participation is so far underresearched. Hence, we include factors that consider the influence of other people in carrotmobs. Finally, we draw on the boycott literature to identify further factors that have not yet been considered in the carrotmob literature. By integrating and restructuring this set of motives, we suggest a new three-layer model with the layers “objectives”, “self”, and “others”.

The first layer “objectives” consists of ethical motives. These motives mirror the causes that initially stimulated the activists’ call for a carrotmob, such as urging the target company to make green improvements. We believe that these motives are the most basic drivers of carrotmob participation. People who consider the carrotmob objective to be relevant and worth fighting for (e.g., ecological concern) will have a higher intention to participate than those who consider these objectives less relevant. Second, actual participation in the carrotmob depends on the personal motives and beliefs of the consumer (“self”), such as moral obligation or expected efficacy. Finally, we expect that the intention to participate is affected by the consumer’s social

environment (“others”). Consumers are more likely to join carromobs if they are in a supportive social surrounding. In the following, we derive the most important drivers of these three layers.

Figure 1. Proposed model of the three layers of carromob participation



Ethical motives (“objectives”): Since carromobs are a form of ethical consumption, we expect that ethical motives guide carromob participation. In our study, we consider two facets of this inner layer of participation motives. First, consumers concerned about ethical issues (e.g., environmental protection, labor conditions, animal welfare) are prone to engage in ethical consumption, such as a boycotts or buycotts (e.g., Braunsberger & Buckler, 2009). We suggest that consumers will also be more likely to join a carromob if they agree with the objective of the carromob. Nowadays, one of the most threatening issues for humankind is ecological pollution. Most previous carromobs also centered on this issue (Hoffmann & Hutter, 2012). For this reason, the consumer’s ethical concern is specified with regard to this domain. Still, the carromob can, in principle, be applied to other issues as well. We suggest that consumers concerned about

environmental pollution are more likely to join a pro-environmental carrotmob.

H1: The stronger a consumer's concern about ethical issues (here environmental pollution), the more likely he or she is to participate in a carrotmob.

Second, participation is based on the consumers' assumption that they are the sovereign in the market and that they can "vote" through their consumption decisions (Shaw, Newholm, & Dickinson, 2006; Smith, 1987). Consumers may consider carrotmobs as a way to influence the supply-side. The more consumers believe that they are (and should be) the sovereign in the market who controls the company's behavior via purchase decisions, the more likely they are to join a carrotmob.

H2: The more consumers are convinced that they exert power in the market through their consumption decisions, the more likely they are to participate in a carrotmob.

Psychological motives ("self"): We suggest that carrotmob participation does not depend on general ethical motives alone, but also on the consumers' attitudes and beliefs. The boycott literature highlights several psychological promoters of boycott participation that may apply to carrotmobs as well. First, norm activation theory (Schwartz, 1977) suggests a central role of personal moral consideration. Moral obligation is based on personal, internalized norms rather than on social norms. If individuals perceive that a company's actions contradict their personal norms (e.g., polluting production) and if they are convinced of being able to contribute to a change in these actions (via carrotmobbing), they feel morally obligated to contribute. Hence, those who feel morally obligated to take part in a carrotmob show greater willingness to join this event.

H3: The more consumers feel a moral obligation, the more likely they are to participate in a carrotmob.

Second, the boycott literature stresses a utilitarian argument for boycott participation.

Consumers are more likely to join if they believe that the action can exert an effect on the target to change its behavior. Although some boycotts are expressive in nature, most are instrumental. Accordingly, previous research largely confirms that expected efficacy is an important driver of boycott participation (Klein, Smith, & John, 2004; Sen, Gürhan-Canli, & Morwitz, 2001). As carrotmobs are called to urge the target company to change towards a desired behavior, we expect that the participation in carrotmobs is also driven by this utilitarian argument.

H4: The more consumers expect the carrotmob to be effective in changing the target company's actions, the more likely they are to participate.

Social motives ("others"): Finally, we expect that the social environment influences carrotmob participation. This is based on a normative and a utilitarian argument. The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) suggests that a subjective norm is an individual perception of whether relevant others think that the specific behavior should be performed. Transferred to the carrotmob, we propose that if individuals believe that other people expect them to participate and if they are motivated to fulfill this expectation, they are more likely to take part in a carrotmob.

H5: The more consumers conform to a subjective norm, the more likely they are to participate in a carrotmob.

From a utilitarian perspective, consumer participation also depends on the perception of how many other people join the carrotmob. Consumers are more likely to join if they expect many others to participate (Sen, Gürhan-Canli, & Morwitz, 2001), because this is a necessary precondition for a carrotmob to be successful. The more people join the movement, the higher is the impulsion ("the carrot") for the target company. In other words, a critical mass is necessary to convince people to participate in social movements (Albinsson & Perera 2012).

H6: The more consumers presume that other consumers participate, the more likely they are

to participate in a carrotmob.

Design

This study builds on pencil-and-paper survey data gathered from 337 young consumers. We ran the study in Germany because, according to the website carrotmob.org, Germany (followed by the US and Finland) is the leading country in the number of carrotmobs. Data was gathered in Dresden, a larger city (population 530,000) in the Eastern part of Germany with a full university (approx. 37,000 students). There were already some carrotmobs in this city, but the concept is still perceived as new and unconventional. The survey used the example of a carrotmob at a local retailer and it was conducted only a few weeks after a Carrotmob was successfully conducted in a food store that has raised considerable media attention. Previous research in Germany has shown that retailer social responsibility affects the consumers' purchasing behaviors (Schramm-Klein et al., 2013). The participants were recruited at the premises of the local university. Students were selected for this study because they represent potential carrotmobbers. Note that the carrotmob is a pioneering and unusual concept of ethical consumption, which is attractive for and so far usually supported by young and well educated participants who are open to innovative concepts (Pezzullo, 2011). We recruited the respondents in a large class room in the beginning of an introductory course on business administration. Most of the participants are undergraduate students enrolled in various disciplines (mainly business administration, but also psychology, sociology, economics, industrial engineering etc.). Half of respondents were women (50.1%) with a mean age of $M = 21.4$ ($SD = 2.23$). The participants' major political orientation is spread across the focus of the five major parties in Germany at that time (social: 26.1%; liberal: 23.1%, green: 19.0%, conservative: 11.6%; left-wing: 8.0%; only recorded for strong approval; multiple approvals possible).

We adapted most of the predictor variables' indicators from prior research on boycott and buycott experiences. With regard to ethical motives ("objective"), a three-item scale of environmental concern and a three-item scale of consumer sovereignty were developed based on Hoffmann (2011) and Hoffmann and Schlicht (2013). To capture psychological motives ("self"), we adapted the scale of moral obligation (three-items) from Farah and Newman (2010) and the scale of perceived efficacy (three-items) from Klein, Smith, and John (2004). To assess social motives ("others"), we used a two-item measure of subjective norms adapted from Ajzen (1991). We developed two indicators for the expected participation of others building on Sen, Gürhan-Canli, and Morwitz (2001). For all measures (except for the expected participation of others), subjects indicated agreement on seven-point rating scales ranging from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree'. To assess a respondent's intention to participate in a carromob, we used a two-item measure adapted from Sen, Gürhan-Canli, and Morwitz (2001). The respondents were asked to indicate their intent on a scale ranging from 0 to 100%. The same scale was used to measure the expected participation of others. The wording of all items is given in the Appendix.

All multiple-item measurements display high *internal consistency*. All factor loadings are above .7, Cronbach's alpha (α) exceeds the threshold of $\alpha \geq .7$, and the average variance extracted (AVE) is above .6. Additionally, we ran a confirmatory factor analysis (with AMOS 22.0; maximum likelihood estimation). The analysis demonstrates a good fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.249$, CFI = .958, IFI = .959, RMSEA = .061). *Discriminant validity* is given according to the test suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981): each factor's AVE exceeds the squared correlation with every other factor.

As an *ex ante* means of avoiding *common method variance* (Podsakoff et al., 2003), we

applied different scale formats for the predictor variables (seven-point Likert scales) and the criterion variables (probabilities). In addition, we provided a cover story to create the impression that the measurement of the predictor variables was not connected to the criterion variables. Finally, we conducted the test suggested by Lindell and Withney (2001) to ex post check for common method variance. Correlations between a marker variable that is theoretically unrelated to all relevant constructs (“I do extreme sports.”) were insignificant ($|r| \leq .054$, $p \geq .32$). Hence, the test indicates that common method variance does not distort our data.

To rule out the possibility of a *social desirability bias*, we added six statements taken from Strahan and Gerbasi (1972). Participants were asked to state how strongly they agree with each statement on seven-point-scales ranging from -3 to +3. For four items (e.g., “I’m always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.”), agreement indicates social desirability and, for two items (e.g., “There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.”), disagreement indicates social desirability. An index of social desirability was calculated. On average, participants scored close to the expected value ($\Delta M = -.04$, $SD = .84$). We controlled for social desirability distortion in additional analysis. All results remain stable. Social desirability does not distort the reported results. Finally, the survey measured socio-demographic (gender and age) and psychographic control variables (collectivistic orientation and susceptibility).

Results

We conducted four multiple regression analyses to test the impact of ethical, psychological, and social motives on the intention to participate in a carromob (Table 2). The models were built in a hierarchical order. Model A includes only ethical motives (“objective”), which we believe are fundamental for carromob participation. We then successively included psychological motives

(“self”) in Model B and social motives (“others”) in Model C. Additionally, we checked the robustness of our model (Model D) by adding the control variables gender, age, collectivistic orientation and susceptibility as well as the index of social desirable answering tendencies.

Table 2 Influences on the intention to participate in a carrotmob

	Model A		Model B		Model C		Model D	
	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Ethical motives (“objective”)								
Environmental concernment	.267***	5.293	.106*	2.254	.062*	1.820	.058*	1.655
Consumer sovereignty	.282***	5.586	.199***	4.413	.088**	2.642	.092**	2.710
Psychological motives (“self”)								
Moral obligation			.334***	6.586	.148***	3.877	.147***	3.785
Expected efficacy			.222***	4.414	.074*	1.940	.066*	1.675
Social motives (“others”)								
Subjective norms					.183***	4.294	.187***	4.327
Expected participation of others					.531***	13.593	.532***	13.442
Control variables								
Gender							-.028	-.820
Age							-.046	-1.439
Susceptibility							-.001	-.040
Collectivistic orientation							.019	.574
Social desirability index							-.008	-.249
<i>R</i> ² (<i>adj. R</i> ²)	.18 (.18)		.37 (.37)		.68 (.67)		.68 (.67)	

Notes. OLS regression, level of significance (one-tailed), * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$, $n = 337$.

The analysis of ethical motives (Model A) shows that environmental concerns and consumer sovereignty guide the intention to join the carrotmob. Model B demonstrates that moral obligation and expected efficacy further improve the prediction of carrotmob participation. The examination of Model C then confirms that social motives (subjective norms and the expected participation of others) additionally shape participation intentions. When comparing these three nested models, Model A (which includes ethical motives only) explains the least ($R^2 = 18\%$) and the full Model C (which additionally includes psychological and social factors) explains the largest share of variance in carrotmob participation ($R^2 = 68\%$). When including control variables in the robustness check (Model D), all significant effects remain stable. Hence, the suggested three-

layer framework of carrotmob participation is highly robust.

The analysis supports our central premise that different layers of motives jointly guide participation intention and all drivers elicit incremental influences, supporting H1 to H6. The basic model of ethical motives (“objective”), which refer to the actual reasons for initiating a carrotmob, indicates that environmental concerns and consumer sovereignty exert unique effects. When including psychological motives (“self”), the impact of ethical motives is weaker. Thus, moral obligation and expected efficacy partly overlap with environmental concern and consumer sovereignty. The comprehensive model highlights that the effects of psychological motives are weaker when introducing social motives (“others”). Remarkably, the expected participation of others is by far the most important driver of carrotmob participation ($\beta = .531, p \leq .001$). The more consumers are convinced that their friends participate in a carrotmob, the more likely they will join themselves. Hence, consumers are primarily motivated by others rather than by the actual reason for a carrotmob. These results underscore the importance of the critical mass.

Discussion

There is a great need for approaches that yield benefits for consumers, companies, and society at large. Still, the literature provides too few examples of business relationships that are, indeed, win/win/win-opportunities. Presumably, incentives for managers are not sufficiently attractive. This article discussed a new way to overcome this limitation. We explored how win/win/win-approaches can be put into practice using the example of a new and more positive form of collective ethical consumer behavior that is initiated by activists and managers. Although most ethical consumption is rooted in social, ethical, or political issues, many approaches are not ideal as they attempt to threaten or attack companies.

This article has important implications for business and society, and it provides several

directives for future research. By identifying the key drivers and motivations of carrotmob participation, this research adds to previous conceptual and qualitative studies on carrotmobs and related forms of ethical consumption (Albinsson & Perera, 2010, 2012; Hoffmann & Hutter, 2012; Pezzullo, 2011). Most importantly, we provide insights into the psychological drivers as well as the individual and situational factors that influence whether or not consumers join carrotmobs. To help answering this question, the present study organizes them in three sets of underlying motives, namely ethical, psychological, and social motives. Note that up to date, only Hutter and Hoffmann (2013) quantitatively examined psychological carrotmob participation. Yet, they considered only a very narrow set of determinants (environmental concerns and the willingness to make sacrifices). To the best of our knowledge, the present three-layer framework is the only broad model of carrotmob participation. The model was empirically tested and confirmed in the main study. In this way, the paper contributes to the literature by providing the basis and framework for more empirical research on carrotmob participation that focusses on specific aspects.

In addition to providing a general multi-layer model of carrotmob participation, the study quantifies the role of the different drivers. This knowledge is beneficial to activists and managers who jointly organize carrotmobs. While ethical and psychological motives exert a moderate influence, social motives strongly guide participation motivation. In particular, consumers are more likely to participate in carrotmobs if they expect members of their peer group to do so. Hence, activists and target companies should attempt to motivate as many consumers as possible to join the movement. There should be great emphasis on eliciting word of mouth, for example, via social media marketing, to create a critical mass. Participants will motivate friends, which, in turn, motivates others. Previous successful carrotmobs should be used to illustrate that carrotmobs raise consumer power and that concerted purchases are an effective approach to ethical

consumption. Activists and managers of the target company should also stress that the carrotmob is a group activity in which friends jointly help achieve a social objective by enjoying a collective group feeling. These findings are in line with Albinsson and Perera's (2012) study, which identifies strong and weak ties in activism effort to recruit participants. Weak ties might be helpful as "virtual" participants (e.g. people liking a specific carrotmob on Facebook). Strong ties might provide social and psychological benefits, create trust and the obligation to share a norm (e.g., participation in a carrotmob). Future research should explicitly focus on strong and weak ties in a quantitative study.

Note that carrotmobs are usually limited to young social media literate persons who are interested in social causes (Pezzullo, 2011). One might reject the assumption that carrotmobbing truly is an ethical approach because carrotmobbers gather for one (presumably joyful) event without changing their usual ways of consumption. As the carrotmob is characterized as an "en masse mob event" (Albinsson & Perera, 2012, p. 117) centered on purchasing, people might feel post-purchase dissonance by questioning the impact of their contribution as a single person (Bray, Johns, & Kilburn, 2011). Nevertheless, carrotmobbers experience positive emotions resulting from the perception of being part of a movement. It is conceivable that some carrotmobbers participate for the fun and event character instead of a strong belief in doing something good for the general public or the environment. Still, participating in such an event may raise the consumer's awareness in the long run or exert meaningful feedback effects.

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Appendix

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	λ	α	AVE
Ethical motives ("objective")					
<i>Environmental concern</i>	.16	1.14		.70	.63
I am deeply affected by environmental degradation.	-.36	1.41	.85		
I am also responsible for environmental degradation.	.05	1.45	.78		
I feel angry about environmental destruction.	.80	1.45	.75		
<i>Consumer sovereignty</i>	.76	1.38		-	-
Consumers should use their purchase power to exert political influence.					
Psychological motives ("self")					
<i>Moral obligation</i>	-1.02	1.23		.79	.70
For me, it is a moral obligation to participate in a carrotmob.	-1.16	1.47	.87		
It would be morally unacceptable not to participate in a carrotmob.	-1.49	1.42	.83		
From a moral point of view, it is important to use methods such as the carrotmob.	-.41	1.51	.82		
<i>Expected efficacy</i>	-.06	1.40		.78	.69
I am certain that the target company's management would keep their promises.	.46	1.76	.80		
A carrotmob is able to convince the target company's management to act more socially responsible.	-.01	1.64	.81		
I am convinced that the target company's management would act more socially responsible in the future.	-.63	1.67	.88		
Social motives ("others")					
<i>Subjective norms</i>	.17	1.28		.76	.81
I expect many people to participate in carrotmobs.	-.20	1.43	.90		
My friends would expect me to support a carrotmob.	.55	1.44	.90		
<i>Expected participation of others (in %)</i>	35.17	21.03		.84	.86
How likely would your fellow students be to participate in this carrotmob?	39.34	21.35	.93		
How likely would your friends/family be to participate in this carrotmob?	31.00	23.94	.93		
Dependent variable					
<i>Participation intention (in %)</i>	33.66	24.41		.90	.91
How likely would you be to join this carrotmob?	31.90	25.98	.95		
How likely would you be to participate in a carrotmob in the future?	35.42	25.35	.95		

Notes. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; λ = factor loading; α = coefficient alpha; AVE = average variance extracted.