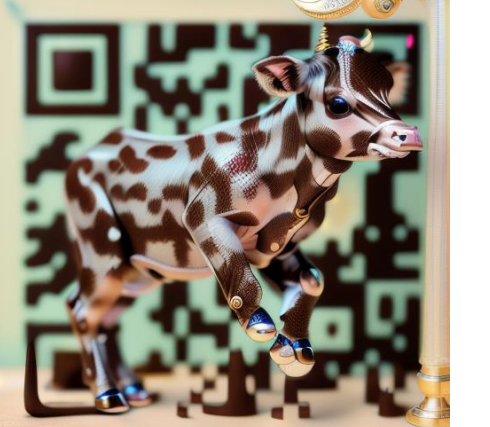


Giving farm animals a name and a face: Eliciting animal advocacy among omnivores using the identifiable victim effect

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Abstract:

❖ A single identified victim tends to increase prosociality. We extended the effect to a farm animal. Participants were more likely to sign and share a petition to save an identified calf (Study 1), which we extended to actual petition support and signing (Study 2) in addition to donations (Study 3). Sympathy (Study 1) and ambivalence towards meat (Study 3) mediated the effect, whereas concern, empathy, identification with animals (Study 2), and environmental identity (Study 3) moderated it.

Introduction:

❖ Animal based diets are costly to our health and planet and often inflict suffering to animals. What actions can we take to elicit animal advocacy?
❖ As a first step, the current study addressed this question by appealing to compassion to farm animals, based on the identifiable victim effect (Small & Loewenstein, 2003).
❖ People are more willing to help an identifiable recipient (Kogut & Ritov, 2005; Small & Loewenstein, 2003)

The Identified condition

Farm Sanctuary, which operates as a sanctuary for farm animals which were saved from slaughter, is in contact with our lab and asked us to present people the following case:

This is Lucky, a 1-year old calf who managed to escape from a New York City slaughterhouse, a meat market that keeps live animals and allows customers to choose the animals they want butchered.



After hearing the screams of other animals, Lucky made his own choice — Lucky ran several blocks through the streets of New York City. Though he avoided capture at first, he was finally caught after a wild chase with NYPD cars, local authorities and a tranquilizer gun.

This is why Sanctuary Farm created a petition to reach the desired number of signatures required to put public pressure on his breeder to sell him to Farm Sanctuary where he could live out the remainder of his life. But if they fail to get a sufficient number of signatures, he can't be saved.

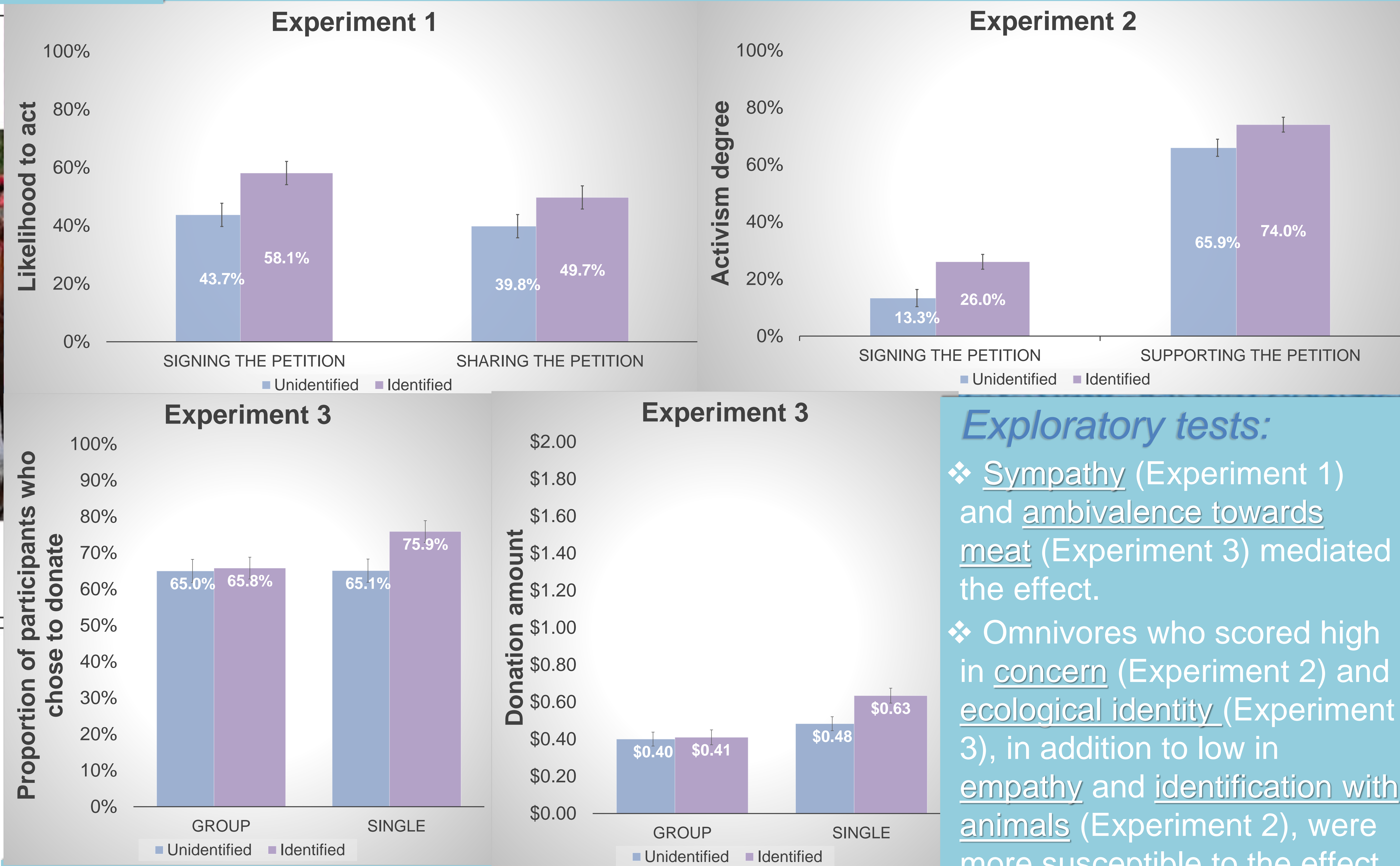
The Unidentified condition

Farm Sanctuary, which operates as a sanctuary for farm animals which were saved from slaughter, is in contact with our lab and asked us to present people the following case:

Several calves managed to escape from a New York City slaughterhouse, a meat market that keeps live animals and allows customers to choose the animals they want butchered.

After hearing the screams of other animals, they made their own choice — they ran several blocks through the streets of New York City. Though they avoided capture at first, they were finally caught after a wild chase with NYPD cars, local authorities and a tranquilizer gun.

This is why Sanctuary Farm created a petition to reach the desired number of signatures required to put public pressure on their breeders to sell them to Farm Sanctuary where they could live out the remainder of their lives. But if they fail to get a sufficient number of signatures, they can't be saved.



Exploratory tests:

❖ Sympathy (Experiment 1) and ambivalence towards meat (Experiment 3) mediated the effect.
❖ Omnivores who scored high in concern (Experiment 2) and ecological identity (Experiment 3), in addition to low in empathy and identification with animals (Experiment 2), were more susceptible to the effect.

Discussion :

❖ We have shown that a single identifiable farm animal victim (compared to unidentifiable victims) elicits more compassion, even when appealing to participants who, as omnivores, are not only alienated from the victim's group but also responsible for this group being victimized.
❖ This is the first study to explore this complex relationship between compassion and prosocial activity when the helper is the one responsible for the victim's state.
❖ A more effective advocacy than “statistics-talk” might be to present a single, identifiable

References:

*Kogut, T., & Ritov, I. (2005). The “identified victim” effect: An identified group, or just a single individual?. *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 18(3), 157-167.
*Small, D. A., & Loewenstein, G. (2003). Helping a victim or helping the victim: Altruism and identifiability. *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty*, 26, 5-16.