

To be or not to be oneself in relation to others in an anti-consumption context An explanation using the concept of congruence

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Abstract

This research addresses reduction in the consumption of material objects. Its aim is to explain how individuals relate to other people in their anti-consumption approach. An analysis of twenty-four interviews with individuals in France who have committed themselves to a challenge to reduce their consumption reveals various forms that relations with others can take in this regard. These depend on the alignment between the self, the experience of anti-consumption practices, and discourses, which echoes the concept of congruence (Rogers, 1951). Four dimensions characterizing the relationship with others emerge, depending on whether individuals dare to engage in (doing) anti-consumption practices when these affect other people and/or talk (saying) about them: imposing the practices on others (doing and saying); raising their awareness (not doing and saying); camouflage (doing and not saying) and giving up (not doing and not saying), variously leading to positions of domination, aid/advice, flight, and withdrawal/abandonment. The findings enrich the work on sociability and identity transformation in anti-consumption by showing in particular the role of individuals' attitudes regarding communication. The theoretical and managerial implications are discussed as well as the limitations of the research.

Keywords: *anti-consumption; theory of congruence; sociability*

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