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# Perceived spiritual value: a key to encourage deconsumption

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Research dissertation

# **Perceived Spiritual Value: A Key to encourage Deconsumption**

**Presented by: FAYOLLE Guillaume**

**Supervisor: GAVARD-PERRET Marie-Laure**

**Master 2 R  
Program Advanced Research in Marketing  
2019 - 2020**



Research dissertation

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Preface:

Grenoble IAE, University Grenoble Alpes, does not validate the opinions expressed in theses of masters in alternance candidates; these opinions are considered those of their author.

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## SUMMARY

Associating deconsumption with stimulating values is a tall order. Actually, environmentally-friendly actions, including responsible consumption, are generally presented in communications as obligations. Happiness promises from advertisements encouraging more consumption turn out to be more mobilising than this environmental speech, a bit punitive. However, Kotler (2010) spurs to use a Marketing 3.0 which is focused on values and meaning quest. Consumers and some individuals' generations (such as Millennials) bring to light cues of search for meaning in their daily life. Confering a spiritual value, then as a positive one, to deconsumption could be a route to convince consumers to reduce their consumption, often too excessive and detrimental to society and to our planet. This is precisely the objective of this thesis, particularly original as research did not get really interested to the spiritual value and was even less interested to deconsumption strictly speaking. The challenge of this work is to identify, through a literature review and one qualitative study on deconsumption, communication levers (goals activation as ideals vs. oughts ; motivations as self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence ; emphasising the choice or not) likely to increase the perceived spiritual value. In consequence, these levers will be tested through at least three experiments to understand: 1) their effects on deconsumption intention, 2) involved psychological mechanisms (perception of personal role, perceived situational control, anticipated happiness) as well as 3) potential moderating effects (generation, self-control as a personality trait). This research will deliver effective means to communicators to insure transitions to a deconsumption society and other transitions.

**KEYWORDS:** deconsumption, spiritual value, persuasive communication, ideals, control

## RÉSUMÉ

Associer la déconsommation à des valeurs stimulantes constitue un défi de taille. En effet, les actions en faveur de la planète, dont la consommation responsable, sont généralement présentées dans les communications comme des obligations. Les promesses de bonheur des publicités incitant à davantage de consommation s'avèrent plus mobilisatrices que ce discours un peu punitif. Or, Kotler (2010) incite à un marketing 3.0, centré sur les valeurs et la quête de sens. Dans le même temps, des consommateurs et certaines générations d'individus (les Millennials notamment) montrent des signes de recherche de sens dans leur quotidien. Conférer une valeur spirituelle, donc positive, à la déconsommation pourrait être une voie pour convaincre les consommateurs de réduire leur consommation, souvent largement excessive et préjudiciable à la société et à la planète. C'est donc l'objectif de ce mémoire, particulièrement original puisque la recherche s'est pour l'instant peu intéressée à la valeur spirituelle en général, et encore moins à celle de la déconsommation. Le challenge de ce travail est d'identifier, au travers d'une revue de la littérature et d'une étude qualitative sur la déconsommation, des leviers de communication (activation de buts de type idéaux vs. devoirs ; motivations d'amélioration de soi vs. de transcendance de soi ; accent mis sur le choix) susceptibles d'accroître la perception de valeur spirituelle. Ils seront ensuite testés au travers d'au moins trois expérimentations pour en comprendre 1) les effets sur l'intention de déconsommer, 2) les mécanismes psychologiques impliqués (perception du rôle personnel, du contrôle situationnel perçu, du bonheur anticipé) ainsi que 3) les potentiels modérateurs (génération ; trait de recherche de contrôle). Cette recherche fournira aux communicants des moyens efficaces pour assurer la transition nécessaire à une société de déconsommation ainsi qu'à d'autres transitions.

**MOTS CLÉS :** déconsommation, valeur spirituelle, communication persuasive, idéaux, contrôle



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## INTRODUCTION

- **An undeniable relation between consumption and environment degradation**

In this more and more sensitive economics, social, societal and environmental context, societies have to turn the corner of multiple transitions as the environmental one. The relation between consumption and environment degradation can not be impugned anymore. Indeed, several ADEME (Agence de l'Environnement et De la Maîtrise de l'énergie) expert reports clearly indicated and evaluated the link between consumption and environmental impact<sup>1</sup>. Likewise, French Material Footprint (raw material consumption), indicator of materials quantity necessary to consumption in every scale (goods, services, infrastructures use), was estimated in 2014 at 13,2 tonnes per inhabitant by the Service des données et études statistiques (SDES, statistics studies department) from the French government.

- **Looking for soberer consumption modes**

Societies have to organise themselves and implement any effective means to be able to move fastly towards soberer consumptions mode. As a result, deconsumption seems to be a practice that we need to develop to move from a consumption society to a deconsumption society, constituted of responsible consumption, voluntary simplicity or minimalism.

- **« Still more » and hyperconsumption are still dominants**

In spite of these alarming observations and a realisation that it seems to be imposed on the necessity to perceptibly and quickly change our consumption behaviours<sup>2</sup>, Marketing, capitalistic economics, behavioural inertia and so much more mechanisms currently ongoing seem rather be in advantage to maintaining the « still more » system and hyperconsumption. Sharpened advertising practices for decades, recently relayed through « traditional » and social media, promising happiness and well-being based on buying new products. These practices made the « want more » or « always faster » or « everything, here and now » norms that rule our lives. In a more pernicious way, industrial capitalism and consumerist marketing also brought built-in obsolescence (for instance, planned obsolescence used in smartphones industry, electrical appliances, etc.) to make people consuming not by choice but by obligation and constraints.

- **Fragility of traditional consumption models**

In front of hyperconsumption, signs indicating a certain fragility of these traditional consumption models with materialistic values appear. So the hoped-for happiness from fast-paced consumption seems to be impossible to reach. Then, consumers suffer to never feel fully satisfied or to be satisfied

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ademe.fr/expertises/consommer-autrement/elements-contexte/impacts-environnementaux-consommation>

<sup>2</sup> *Nota bene*: this thesis was written in British English because I am more comfortable with it. However, the citations might appear in American English for most of them.

only in the very short run. The planet starts to send clearer and alarmer cues about the hazardous nature of our hyperconsumption behaviours (eg. pollution, melting of the glaciers, disappearance of several animal species, etc.). The consequences on health of an immoderate consumption start equally to be more and more observed (eg. liver cancer, fat accumulation related to an overconsumption of sugar, particularly an overconsumption of sodas). When it comes to the promised well-being, this one step by step became ill-being or angst for numerous individuals that are daily confronted and simultaneously to frustrations (cannot affording the umpteenth pair of trendy and too expensive trainers), to loss of points of reference and sense (which meaning would have to buy this umpteenth pair of trendy trainers whereas the shoes or dressing room is spillovering ?), to perceived guilt (why am I buying this umpteenth pair of trendy trainers whereas refugees with ripped shoes live in front of my place ? Or because I know that children were employed with inhuman conditions to make this pair of trainers ?), to weariness and loss of pleasure (this umpteenth pair of trainers could still have the ability to make me happy even during a very small time ?), to disappointment (I do not run faster with this new pair of trainers unlike what the advertisement of it suggested), to isolation (a lot of material goods but only little true links with others, with communication means that isolate more than they connect people, etc.) and to so much other observations and negative experiences that punctuate a consumer's life.

- **Evolutions in support of deconsumption**

These dissatisfactions, disappointments, regrets, etc. from the consumer, engendered by its overconsumption, lead to the emergence of new behaviours. Happy sobriety is shown as an example. *Slow consumption* is raising against *fast fashion*. The « homemade », Circular Economy, hand-me-down products consumption and Sharing and Social Solidarity Economy become practices more and more common. The Guardian of July 11th, 2019, dealt with consuming less services by writing about a new Dutch airline KLM campaign relating with « Flying sustainably » asking to their customers to think more before travelling<sup>3</sup>. In addition to recommendations to avoid greenwashing, in April 28th, 2020, the ARPP, an authority in charge to regulate advertising in France, introduced some recommendations and rules demanding to advertisers to stop inciting to excessive consumption modes or opposite to the Circular Economy.<sup>4</sup> French daily newspapers Les Echos, in september 2019 ran as an headline « *La déconsommation s'installe pour les produits du quotidien* » (translation: deconsumption is setting up on daily-use products), noted that mass market products sales decreased of 1% in volume during the first half of 2019 and that it already decreased of 1% in 2018.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2019/jul/11/dutch-airline-klm-calls-for-people-to-fly-less-carbon-offsetting-scheme>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.arpp.org/nous-consulter/regles/regles-de-deontologie/recommandation-developpement-durable-v3/>

Marketing would be passing at a 3.0 version supported by Kotler (2010) based on the sense (or meaning) search quest.

- **Marketing research is not really focused on deconsumption**

These last decades, research in Marketing has mainly tried to understand why people consume and what can make them buy. The perceived value, especially structured around Utilitarian benefits vs. Hedonic ones which was then placed to the centre of research related to consumption and consumer behaviour. However, research in Marketing did not really address deconsumption. If some articles got interested on anti-consumption movements or resistance to consumption as boycotts, brand hate, rejecting advertising, etc. (for instance, there was a special issue of JBR about this theme in 2009, eg. Lee et al., 2009 ; Iyer and Muncy, 2009), unusual are the articles that draw their attention on deconsumption strictly speaking (Cova, 1996 ; De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin, 2013 ; Burgiel and Zrałek, 2015 ; Dugar, 2018).

- **Deconsumption is not well connoted**

The consumption that is called « responsible » as the deconsumption are often associated to responsibility, to the obligation or to the duty. And this is owing to the fact of the « anticonsumption » dimension, of the « reasons against » (against Capitalism for instance) rather than the « reasons for » (Chatzidakis et Lee, 2013). Due to this fact, deconsumption and/or responsible consumption are seen as rational and utilitarian. Notwithstanding, in their article about deconsumption, De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) bring out three other values associated to deconsumption practices. The first one is classic in the food consumption field considered in their study : the hedonic value. The other two are less common : the social value and the spiritual one.

- **Changing perceptions of associated values to deconsumption**

Associating deconsumption to more positive values, more motivating, more stimulating may more transcendent, could turn to be more effective in the perspective of modifying individuals consumption behaviours. Indeed, current vision of deconsumption entails a punitive dimension, not much attractive even totally repellent. In addition, even if orientations towards a more responsible consumption seem unavoidable, numerous people do not like to feel forced to do something or they need a stronger motivation, more essential to see through a transition project as the one represented by deconsumption. It is yet truer when the interest of the action at the individual scale is not directly obvious, even if collective conscience related to environmental issues that we are already have to face is growing every day. Finally, between stating supporting environmental-friendly actions (sometimes only by social desirability and conformism to the social norm) and doing it concretely with daily behaviours (particularly of consumption), there is a huge step forward to pass for the large majority of the individuals. And everyone will not do it spontaneously.

- **The benefit of persuasive social and societal communication**

To act at the different scales mentioned hitherto, Social Marketing and Persuasive Communication with social or societal purpose can and must play a role. First of all, to be able to **understand the Deconsumption notion itself** and motivations and psychological mechanisms that are inherent in. Then, endeavour to identify individuals levers to activate to manage to convince the biggest number of consumers to inflect their current consumption practices to move towards a more responsible and narrowed consumption. Keep developing communications incitating to sustainable consumption starting with the principle that people are, by nature, altruists or have to be altruistic people results to finally leave in this fight an important part of consumers out. Altruistic people represent only a small part of consumers. Therefore, there is a major environmental interest to identify appropriate means to persuade people that have more self-centered motivations. Consequently, we have to determine scientifically and then rigorously what are **deconsumption promotion messages characteristics** that can make the latter effective. To be able to notice these characteristics, it is necessary to understand what are the **psychological mechanisms** to engage on the consumer to make this one want to deconsume. That is here that a reflection around value perception is necessary, in particular perceived spiritual value (Kotler, 2010). It is also through this reflection on value that can be highlighted **internal processes** (for instance, personal role perception, situational control, well-being) liable to explain consumers' reactions and responses to deconsumption incentives. Also, it is essential to examine if every **generation of consumers** (baby-boomers, millennials, Generation X, Generation Z, etc.) react in the same way to the deconsumption incitements. In the field work, it was noted that Millennials look for sense (for meaning)<sup>5</sup>. Perception of spiritual value attached to deconsumption could therefore be more effective for this generation than for the others. All these objectives conduct us to the following **general research issue** :

***Identifying persuasive communication characteristics likely to encourage deconsumption through an increase of its perceived spiritual value and to understand its action mechanisms.***

Consequently, it is by taking in account the perceived value and more specially the spiritual one, that we are not only going to try enriching the understanding of deconsumers but also to identify levers to influence consumers by acting on their perception of the spiritual value. It would be orientated communication towards the goals, the ideals of the individuals to increase the perceived spiritual value of the deconsumption and, then, incitating them to consume less. Spiritual value is very scarcely studied in research. This enables to get a previously unseen and original perspective.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.focusrh.com/strategie-rh/attirer-et-fideliser-les-salaries/quete-de-sens-et-leadership-les-attentes-de-la-generation-y-27564.html>

This thesis is designed to improve communication promoting deconsumption to increase the deconsumption intentions. The envisioned thesis work will seek to understand on what it would be judicious and effective to bring into play in the deconsumption promotion messages to manage persuading the consumer to act this way. **A structuring hypothesis of this thesis work is that deconsumption could reply to a search for meaning by the consumers, to an unsatisfied spiritual quest by materialism and unbridled consumption.**

With this in mind, this research will have diverse implications. Theoretically, we will help to clarify the definition of deconsumption. We will also try to update a part of the messages composition able to trigger this perception of spiritual value but also to identify the operational modes from the deconsumption promotion message exposure to the intention (or not) of deconsumption. With the use of serial mediations. Methodologically, we will develop new measurement scales for deconsumption intention and to measure the spiritual value. Practically, it will have numerous impacts on society, to make the deconsumption more attractive, on communicators' ways of making the deconsumption-aimed messages, on consumers health and well-being but also to have effective tools that could work for other transition contexts (environmental but also economic, industrial or digital).

In a first part, we will define the Conceptual background through a Literature Review. Then, following a detailed delineation of the Research Question, after presenting a preliminary qualitative study, we will propose our models and hypotheses. To finish, we will explain the methodology we will implement to make this project possible.

**PART 1 :**

-

**LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND**

The goal of this part is to study the concepts forementioned in the introduction in order to identify the gaps through the comparison of the existing research works. We are going to explore and review by splitting it in three chapters. The Chapter 1 is dealing with Deconsumption, the Chapter 2 is about Spiritual Value and the Chapter 3 is on Individual's Functioning Mode.

## **CHAPTER 1 – DECONSUMPTION**

There is not much literature on deconsumption. As an evidence, a search on one of the most known worldwide bibliographic data base (EBSCO), with the key word « deconsumption » looked through the title of the articles from academic journals. This search enabled us to identify only one article on deconsumption (strictly speaking) in Poland in 2015 (Burgiel et Zrałek). A conference to the American Marketing Association (AMA) congress was also found on the topic (Dugar, 2018). In French, with the keyword « déconsommation » (deconsumption in French), only one article from an academic journal is brought out (De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin, 2013). By making wider the search to less well referenced, optimised, sources we were able to find some publications by Bernard Cova. However, these publications let us noticing that the deconsumption notion is sometimes apprehended in a quite wide way since this author uses the word « deconsumption » in the title of the French version of his article but he uses « counter-consumption » in his English version.

The research work will then begin by developing a conceptual framework that is absolutely necessary to clarify and precise the deconsumption notion and to position it in relation to other types of consumer's resistance actions or « demarketing ». It is important to precise that we study only the voluntary deconsumption and not the endured one that could be due to financial resources limits.

In this Chapter 1, we aim to understand this term of « Deconsumption » and to what it refers to, from its definition to how it can be practiced by the individuals. Firstly, we will compare the Deconsumption notion with other close concepts of it. Secondly, we will examine with details if there is a consensus among the authors about a Deconsumption definition. Finally, we will define well the Deconsumption practices features in order to deal with the deconsumers motivations.

### **I. DECONSUMPTION AND CLOSE CONCEPTS**

Chosen frugality, happy sobriety, voluntary simplicity, anticonsumption, minimalism in Consumption, self-sufficiency, consumer's resistance to consumption, etc. A lot of words emerged in the literature that may be more or less directly related to deconsumption. How to define this Deconsumption concept? Are these notions dealing with the same concept? What are the

differences ? In this section, we will compare Deconsumption to several close notions to it to try to understand what are the deconsumption outlines. For that, a meticulous examination of the whole of the literature around sustainable consumption, anticonsumption and voluntary simplicity will be carried out in order to determine well their respective contours and their distinction points.

#### A. *Deconsumption and Sustainable Consumption*

For De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013), deconsumption can be defined as « *a behaviour by an individual aiming to reduce in a voluntary way its consumption, to consume less* » (p.71). This deconsumption can be put closer of the sustainable consumption because, as Scott and Weaver (2018) mentioned it, sustainable consumption was traditionally apprehended through three types of actions : reduction, reusing and recycling. Consequently, if we consider that deconsumption aims to reduce consumption, we can consider that these three pillars of sustainable consumption are at the heart of deconsumption. Likewise, White, Habib and Hardisty (2019) refer to the decrease by defining the sustainable consumption behaviour as « *actions that result in decreases in adverse environmental impacts as well as decreased utilization of natural resources across the lifecycle of the product, behavior, or service* » (p.24). On the basis of these elements of definition, reduction (of natural resources, of consumptions, of wastes, etc.) would be then central in the sustainable consumption as in the deconsumption, even if these two notions are not completely overlaid.

Another common point seems to be found in the intention and the objectives behind these two notions. Indeed, when the authors deal with sustainable consumption, most of them refer to green and social behaviours. As we previously mentioned with the definition by White, Habib and Hardisty (2019) dealing with « *adverse environmental impacts* » (p.24) but they are not the only ones referring to this. Indeed, Bonnin-De Toffoli, and Lazaric (2013) stated « *Sustainable consumption put the emphasis on the necessity to take on viable consumption modes to insure at once a perdurable economic development and an environmental protection in the interests of present generations and the future ones* » (p.627). The same authors argued that the environmental issues are often the only ones referred when dealing with sustainable consumption when there is also a social dimension and an economic one. In addition, Schaefer and Crane (2005) advised to take in account the sociocultural dimension when dealing with concepts that are in line with sustainable consumption. Therefore, we can deduce that even if this is mainly the environmental argument that is highlighted when talking about sustainable consumption, this type of consumption is delimited by this one but also by the social or even sociocultural and economic scopes.

As the sustainable consumption behaviours, the deconsumption ones can also be defined as environmentally-friendly. Indeed, Fuller (1999), in his work about sustainable Marketing, describes



deconsumption as « *a lifestyle that requires that requires fewer material resources to support, and, therefore, reduces their individual impact on ecosystems* » (p.340). We can infer that he is referring of kind of « conscious » deconsumption. Auger et al. (2005), in their work about imagining deconsumption scenarios that would happen in 2050, mentioned this « *conscious deconsumption* » (vs. non-conscious one) (p.8) as when an individual is aware about deconsuming opposed to when he is not aware of doing it. When dealing to deconsumption, the authors of both of these works also talk about the responsibility of consumers (Fuller, 1999 ; Auger et al., 2005). We can notice that some authors mentioned only « sustainable consumption » others only the responsible one and others are using these terms as almost equal ones. Indeed, in their work about relating sustainability to consumption, Schaefer and Crane (2005) deal with « responsible consumption » and « sustainable consumption » inferring that they form the same notion. They even admit it as a note at the end of their article « *The terms green consumption, environmentally responsible consumption, and sustainable consumption are often used relatively loosely and even interchangeably in the literature.* » (p.90). In this remark they made a slight difference between them: « green consumption » is the wider term to describe all the consumption behaviours with environmentally-friendly goals, « environmentally responsible consumption » is just another name for « green consumption » and the difference is about « sustainable consumption » that is according to them, when you deal with it strictly speaking, « *is probably rare for affluent consumers, perhaps practiced only by a small number of highly committed environmentalists* » (Schaefer and Crane, 2005, p. 90). Lim (2017) did differentiate two of these concepts by considering the responsible consumption as a form of sustainable consumption where consumers awareness have a matter role to make their negative impact on sustainability reduces.

By looking closely at these definitions, it appears that the main difference between deconsumption and sustainable consumption seems the objectives behind it. This difference is, to our knowledge, not directly referred or mentioned in the literature but it seems that there could be a deconsumption considered as not « sustainable » (eg. deconsuming bikes and then consuming cars instead, could this be a kind of « negative deconsumption » ?) and a sustainable consumption is not always a deconsumption. Consequently, we see that if deconsumption seems to be a possible option of sustainable consumption, it could also distinguished itself and to implement itself outside of this scope of sustainability.

### ***B. Deconsumption and Anticonsumption***

It appears from the first analysed elements of the literature, that, if deconsumption is rarely mentioned directly and explicitly, deconsumption can be put closer of anticonsumption, that is a more widely studied concept. Thus, Scott and Weaver (2018), even if they strictly speaking do not

refer to deconsumption, they precise that «*Sustainable consumption and anticonsumption concepts overlap in the goal of keeping materials in circulation, expanding life spans [of the objects], and decreasing waste, regardless of the motivation.*» (p.292). On the basis of Lee et al. (2011) propositions, they note that the different forms of anticonsumption rest upon the « 3 R » : Reject, Restrict, Reclaim. Then, some goods can be rejected of the consumption cycle or have their use restricted (limiting consumption of one good, by reusing, by acquiring or obtaining the wastes of the others) or more by repairing or the repurposing of the aim of the object (for instance, we can imagine the example of an old t-shirt that becomes a rag), some goods can be reclaimed and/or recycled. The Restricting side, characterised by limiting, cutting and reducing consumption, appears when a complete anti-consumption is not possible (Lee et al., 2011 ; Scott and Weaver, 2018). Lim (2017) also referred to these « 3 R » (Reject, Restrict, Reclaim) by describing them as alternatives to a more « classic » anti-consumption which is characterised by « *aversion, avoidance and abandonment* » (Lim, 2017, p. 73). Indeed, he made the following integrative model for anti-consumption (cf. Figure 1):

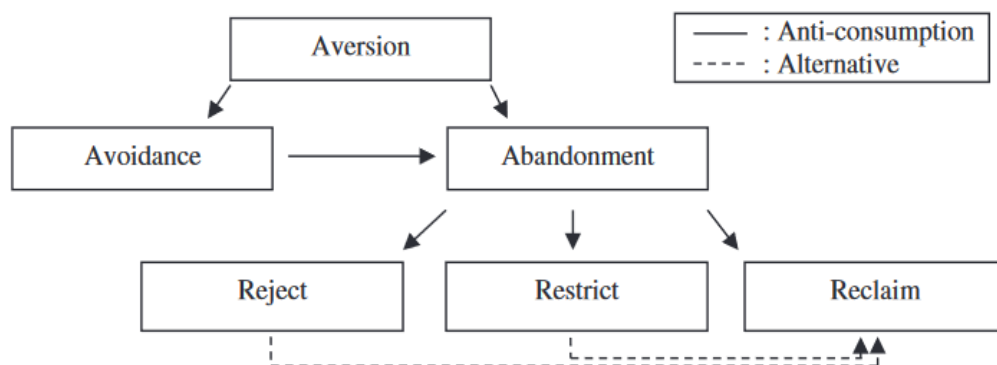


Figure 1: an integrated model for anti-consumption (Lim, 2017)

The “Aversion, Avoidance, Abandonment’ part of the model is the « *consumers’ expressed commitment to anticonsumption* » (p.74). And for some authors this part defines anti-consumption on its own. Indeed, for Zavestoski (2002) it is an attitude translated by « *a resistance to, distaste of, or even resentment of consumption more generally*» (p. 121). The « Reject, Restrict, Reclaim » refers to the reduction of the consumption which as we previously said is the aim of deconsumption. Consequently, based on that we may deduce that the second one refers to the deconsumption we mentioned so far. However, the first part of it can refer to motives to deconsume too that are anti-consumption oriented. Iyer and Muncy (2009) defined four types of Anticonsumption behaviours (cf. Figure 2).

		Purpose of Anti-Consumption	
		Societal Concerns	Personal Concerns
Object of Anti-Consumption	General (All Consumption)	Global Impact Consumers	Simplifiers
	Specific (Individual Brands or Products)	Market Activists	Anti-Loyal Consumers

Figure 2: Four anti-consumption behaviours (Iyer, Muncy, 2008)

Firstly, we think that Market Activist and Anti-loyal Consumers are too specific groups to find a concrete comparison to deconsumption because their behaviours could be another one than a reduction of the consumption for instance. However, we can observe that the two others appear to present more similarities with deconsumption. First, the Global Impact Consumers are the ones aiming to reduce their consumption for « *the benefit of society or the planet* » (p.1). From our knowledge (based on what we previously mentioned in the A.), we can infer that this is a type of deconsumption with a sustainable consumption (in every sense with the three pillars of it : environmental, economic and social justice) orientation. The Simplifiers are the ones in favour of the slow consumption and the authors mentioned that they may have spiritual or ethical beliefs (Iyer and Muncy, 2009) with a reduction of their consumption. We can deduce that this is strictly speaking a deconsumption behaviour but with different motivations than the sustainability. Also, Iyer and Muncy (2009) mentioned Lastovica (2006) by precisising that the Simplifiers are different from the frugal materialists. The frugal materialists decrease their consumption on one hand and increase on the other hand. This notion is not a synonym of the negative deconsumption behaviour we tried previously infer. Indeed, we can deduce the negative deconsumption would happened only if this deconsumption results to a global increase. For instance, a frugal materialist can decrease his/her red meat consumption and increase his/her white meat to compensate which would result to a general positive impact if the white meat pollutes less than the red one (eg. Eshel et al., 2014).

Research about anti-consumption seems to mainly centre behaviours due to reasons against « classic » consumption. In the same way, Lee et al. (2011) noticed that anti-consumption literature « *focuses on phenomena that are against the acquisition use and dispossession of certain goods* » (p.1681). In consequence, we can infer that anti-consumption behaviours are only a part of the deconsumption ones because it is again a matter of objectives that are behind, a matter of motivations. For instance, we think a non-conscious deconsumption (Auger et al., 2005) may not really be an anti-consumption behaviour because the intention is not to be against consumption.

However, we also emphasised with the literature that the Deconsumption notion is overlapping other notions as « sufficiency » and « voluntary simplicity ». So are these notions all refer to a sustainable consumption? Are they referring to deconsumption? Are they wider?

### C. *Deconsumption, Minimalism and Voluntary Simplicity*

We decided to widen the research about the notion of Deconsumption with the aim to understand this concept in a better way. Indeed, as we discussed it overhead, other close notions exist in the existing literature. At first sight, several of them seem very similar. Voluntary simplicity, minimalism, sufficiency or happy sobriety, do they have the same meaning? Are they synonyms for deconsumption? For instance, the notion of « sufficiency ». According to Gorge et al. (2015), this notion translates into a «*reorganisation of the consumption priorities*» (p.1). Gorge et al. (2015) underline possible distinctions between sufficiency and sustainable consumption, especially by the fact that sufficiency is a questioning of the consumption itself whereas the sustainable consumption principles do not face directly this question. The sufficiency (voluntary) could be a path enabling to express deconsumption. In addition, Scott and Weaver (2018) argued that the reducing part of the sustainable consumption is examined from the angle of lifestyles that adopt the « voluntary simplicity » or the frugality that seems to refer to the same phenomenon.

Unlike the « voluntary simplicity », the sufficiency seems to insist much more on the « essential needs » side (Gorge et al., 2015). However, these notions remain very close and both of them point out reducing consumption behaviours. According to Scott and Weaver (2018), the voluntary simplicity prioritises Rejecting and Restricting. The Reclaiming part is less important in voluntary simplicity than in anticonsumption for instance. Voluntary simplicity can be defined as «*the degree to which an individual selects a lifestyle intended to maximize his/her direct control over daily activities and to minimize his/her consumption and dependency. I stress that this choice is voluntary*» (Leonard-Barton, 1981, p.244). Based on this definition, we may say the notion of control seems more important in the voluntary simplicity than in the sufficiency. Shaw and Newholm (2002) refer to another term that is « *Downshifting* » and compare it to voluntary simplicity. According to them, both deal with a reduction of the consumption but voluntary simplicity would simply be more « generic » when downshifting would be one practice of voluntary simplicity that would care more about quality of life and moral issues. They also mentioned that the « *ethical simplicity* » is also, to our understanding, another form of voluntary simplicity but only for ethical reasons and that this one is « *illustrative of the inextricable link between social and environmental futures and voluntary simplicity* » (Shaw and Newholm, 2002, pp.170-171). We can infer that voluntary simplicity would be a practice of deconsumption and that this way of deconsuming includes more specific practices within it.

Secondly, we tried to play on words to see if there is literature we might have not seen. Then, we looked for « Stripped-down consumption » but this notion does not exist in the literature to our knowledge. However, when we look for « Minimalism in consumption», « Minimalistic consumption », « Minimalist living » or « Minimalistic lifestyle » we can find a small quantity of articles (eg. Dopierała, R., 2017) on databases as Google Scholar, Sages Journal or Cairn. We can find links to Fumio Sasaki (2017) book about Minimalistic lifestyle. This Japanese author started his book by explaining, with the help of pictures, how he became minimalist. He also introduced his book with the sentence « *there is happiness in having less. That's why it's time to say Goodbye to all our extra things* » (introduction). He relates his thoughts to the traditional tea ceremony in Japan by precisising that even the samurai were not allowed to bring their weapon in the tea ceremony room that was very stripped-down. He also mentioned several times the importance of value and alludes to a place reserved for social and human exchanges by sharing « thoughts to about one another » around tea (Sasaki, 2017).

However, Dopierała (2017), Polish sociologist (of culture) specialised in « everydaylife and anticonsumerism », is to our knowledge one of the only authors to relate directly minimalism and consumption. Through a qualitative study, she tried to find the main characteristics of people adopting Minimalism. As Sasaki (2017), she defined it as something that get rid of what is unnecessary in life, focusing on what is important by removing the « *excess in the material sense (the redundancy of goods, objects)* » (Dopierała, 2017, p.68). « Excess » is opposed with « Deficit ». She concludes her work with the ambivalence of minimalism characterised by the « *negation of hyper-consumption* » (p.81). And so, we can deduce that minimalism can happen also with an anti-consumption mindset.

The only other authors referring to Minimalism in Consumption are Błoński and Witek (2019). And they are also the only ones to have tried to directly compare voluntary simplicity, minimalism and deconsumption as we are trying to do here (by adding some others close concepts). For them, there are several forms of deconsumption. There is the deconsumption that aims to limit the consumption. And then, the other form for them is the sustainable consumption. We can suppose here that what they call « limitation of the consumption » is what we call « anti-consumption ». Here they mention sustainable consumption as a way of practising deconsumption. Then, it appears that deconsumption is a very wide term including several practices. They referred to « *conscious consumption (ethical consumption, responsible consumption)*» (Błoński and Witek, 2019, p.12) as a part of the sustainable consumption. Also they said that minimalism can have a role in these different types of deconsumption as the conscious one. We can then infer that minimalism would be more an ideal in which deconsumption can be practiced. A close concept to conscious consumption

is the « mindful consumption » defined by Lim (2017) as « *A mindset developed through awareness and attention that reflects receptivity to an engagement with the present moment (a sense of care toward the self, community, and nature), which reinforces temperance in consumption practices (private and public goods and services)* » (p.72). However, based on these elements of definitions, we can deduce that the reduction of consumption would be only a possibility of mindful consumption and that a consumption can be mindful by not reducing it even if mindful consumers seem to tend to reduce their consumption.

To conclude, deconsumption as a « *simple life* » or with the idea of the « *less is more* » was already referred in Fuller book (1999, p.360). And what we can deduce with these terms referring to more simplicity, to come back to the essential, is that they can all be different motivations to deconsume. That would mean that we can consider a minimalistic consumption, a voluntary simplicity and all the other consumptions going to the same way as forms of deconsumption, deconsumption lifestyles or ways of deconsuming.

Therefore, in this section, by discussing about deconsumption and its close concepts, it appears that deconsumption is then a notion encompassing several other concepts (voluntary simplicity, anticonsumption, sustainable consumption) that aim to reduce their consumption. However, what we brought out is that the main differences between all these concepts and deconsumption are the motivations behind. In the following section, we will look through what is admitted by the majority of the authors and what diverge.

## II. DECONSUMPTION, DEBATES AND CONVERGENCES

We clarified the differences between deconsumption and very similar concepts to it, now we will try to define it more accurately. This section aims to find the clearest and the most relevant definition according to the literature. For that reason that we will examine if there is only one common definition of it? If there is a debate? Or a consensus? If not where are the common points between their definitions and where are the differences? And if we could deduce a guiding principle of deconsumption.

### A. *Deconsumption Consensus*

With the elements of literature we previously studied, there seem to be a « consensus » about the fact all these notions are about reducing. Then, we will look here if this consensus is only about a decrease of the consumption or if there are other consensuses made by the authors.

The few times deconsumption is mentioned in the literature, this notion deals with a reduction of the consumption. Indeed, several articles deal with deconsumption as a decrease of the

consumption. For instance, Innocent and François-Lecompte (2020) refer to it as a decrease of the energy/electricity consumption. Grinstein & Nisan (2009) allude deconsumption in a water decrease context. Sheth (2020), call for research on deconsumption policy necessary in an international context. About that, he alludes to several deconsumption-oriented policies as the reduction of smoking. Burgiel and Zralek (2015) even use « consumption reduction » as a keyword of their article without using « deconsumption » that was mentioned in their title and abstract.

Dugar (2017) made an important work about deconsumption. His goal was to develop a deconsumption measurement scale. He divided deconsumption in two categories: the voluntary and the involuntary one but here we are interested only in the voluntary one. With his study he was able to define the voluntary deconsumption as making « *a voluntary/conscious decision on their own will to reduce (or to totally abandon) the consumption of a product, service, brand, or consumption experience that you used to consume in the past.* » (p. 410). De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) that also did an important job about deconsumption, also define it as a voluntary behaviour with the aim to reduce the consumption as we previously mentioned it.

We can observe that the consuming less side of deconsumption makes agree most of the literature. Then, why this term looks to be most complex to define than a simple reduction consumption? What divide the authors in the way of defining deconsumption?

### *B. Deconsumption Divergences*

Even if there is a clear absence of literature about deconsumption, the literature about the close concepts we mentioned earlier is wider. And the divergences really seem to be once again related to the motivations to deconsumption.

Some authors said deconsumption is about environmental reasons. For instance, Ballantine and Creery (2010) explained that one of the reasons of why voluntary simplifiers adopts this consumption reduction behaviour is their environmental concerns. Other authors mention consumer resistance behaviours or anti-consumption as Chatzidakis and Lee (2013). They did not directly refer to deconsumption but they said that anti-consumption is about the reasons against consumption.

Some others deal with back to the essential or quality. Then, by deduction, deconsumption can be adopted for reasons against. Burgiel et Zralek (2015) referred directly to deconsumption as a limitation in their literature review. Quality was referred by Ballantine, P. W., & Creery, S. (2010) as one of the reasons why individuals adopt the voluntary simplicity, that we explained as to be a possible practice to deconsumption. DopieRała (2017) reviewed the Polish literature about minimalism in consumption. She noted that this type of consumption, or this type of deconsumption, can be used as a therapy, as a trend, as an anti-consumerism and against the spirituality around

consumption but also as a limitation of the possession and a substitute, an option for the individual to satisfy his/her needs by other ways than overconsumption.

Even if, the deconsumption notion is still scarce in the literature, our confrontations between the notion in our first section (deconsumption and close concepts) enable us to observe some divergences through the different notions. Indeed, that is why these concepts have different names because they do not refer to the exact same behaviour. However, we can see that these concepts interconnect each others around the deconsumption. De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) defined the socially responsible consumption, the voluntary simplicity, the optimisation of resources by the individual and resaling/reclaiming of objects as ways of delimiting the deconsumption depending on the relation an individual has with the market. So these elements would be the outlines of deconsumption?

### C. Deconsumption Contours

The principle that deconsumption is about consuming less or reducing consumption is, to our knowledge admitted by the literature. We also understood that the motivations, the contexts, ideals can be different and that there are different types of deconsumption. For these reasons, here we are going to try proposing the outlines of deconsumption through a definition that gathers the notions we aforementioned. These other concepts, as voluntary simplicity, for example, were compared to the previous ones in order to delimit well the perimeter of the deconsumption. For that matter, De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013, p. 58) bring these confused outlines of close concepts up: « *Consumer's resistance, degrowth, anticonsumption, voluntary simplicity, demarketing, socially responsible consumption, expert consumption, creating or alternative consumption, reclaiming ... are as much as facets of these new trends assert the adoption of deconsumption behaviours* ». As the outcome of their qualitative study, they propose the following structure (to them, purchases cessation and consumption cessation mean « suppression » ; purchases cessation and consumption pursuance mean « self-production » ; purchases pursuance and consumption cessation mean « replacing » ; purchase pursuance and consumption pursuance means « reducing » ) :

**Tableau 2 – Contours de la déconsommation**

	Arrêt de la consommation	Poursuite de la consommation
Arrêt des achats	<b>Suppression</b> « Supprimer les barres chocolatées »	<b>Auto-production</b> « Faire son pain »
Poursuite des achats	<b>Remplacement</b> « Manger des tartines plutôt que des gâteaux »	<b>Réduction</b> « Manger moins de viande »

**Figure 3: Contours of deconsumption (De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin, 2013)**



Nevertheless, their article bring some first answers and keys to structure this universe, it does not distinguish clearly these different notions. Even there is still a substantial work to do hereabouts, the work we bring add some insights to clarify and find a primary definition. Also, there is the term « demarketing » used by Grinstein & Nisan (2009) that quote the definition by « *Kotler and Levy (1971, p. 75): Demarketing is the aspect of marketing that deals with discouraging customers in general or a certain class of customers in particular on either atemporary or a permanent basis.* » (p.107). Demarketing would be more about make consumers not wanting to buy a certain product or a certain service that then may be a form of deconsumption.

Therefore, including the consensus and taking in account the divergences we discussed about in this section, we would define Deconsumption as practices designed to reduce the consumption for diverse motives that could be fulfilled by the voluntary simplicity, minimalism, frugality, anticonsumption, sustainable consumption or a unconscious deconsumption. To complete this definition, it is important to understand the practices and motivations of it.

### III. DECONSUMPTION PRACTICES AND MOTIVATIONS

Here we will look through the research works that are in keeping with Deconsumption or close practices. What do we know in terms of personal characteristics (of deconsumers for instance)? Looking at the benefits deconsumers look for through their behaviours. And trying to understand deconsumers' seeking for meaning in their consumption.

#### A. *Deconsumption Practices and Characteristics*

To understand what are the personal characteristics of deconsumption we will try to understand the deconsumer term, their motivations and their behaviours. Deconsumers is the name of the individuals that practice deconsumption, that « deconsume ». However, this term was left aside by the literature. On Google scholar and other platforms, only one article was found using the french word « Déconsommateur ». Nevertheless, this term was used in a very particular context that study the digital consumption behaviours of cultural products online (for instance movies consume legally or illegally). And they were associated to people that disconnect themselves, and stop consuming culture online (Mabilot, 2014, p.76). Then we can infer two different research gaps here. One about the fact the "Deconsumer" notion is, to our knowledge, not defined by the literature. The second one about the fact these deconsumption behaviours may be adapted to a large variety of contexts as the digital one even if here, from our understanding, the author was not dealing with a strictly speaking direct reduction of consumption. Indeed, he was talking more about the total abandonment of a particular consumption, phenomena (the abandonment of consumption) that is considered as part of the deconsumption for Dugar (2017).

The individuals do not deconsume all in the same way and for the same reasons. In their article about practices and motivations to deconsumption, Seré De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) mention several practices of deconsumption. Indeed, according to them, the deconsumer can reduce the amount of money she/he spent. This would be a monetary deconsumption. Then, they refer to the most common perception of deconsumption with buying less or more generally reducing the quantity. Also, they referred to the fact some deconsumers will deconsume some products then consume more other ones considered as more valuable for them. Or they can deal with a more quality-oriented motivation « according to the principle “consuming better is consuming less” » (Seré De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin, 2013, p.57).

However, as there are several forms of deconsumptions it appears that there are different types of deconsumers too. Kotler (1986) discussed about the Prosumers movement by alluding to their consumption reduction behaviours even before that research has started to get (a little bit) interested to deconsumption. For that matter, he explains Toffler’s vision about it. Toffler (1980), sociologist, deals with the « rise of the prosumer » that he characterised as being the producers of some of their own consumption goods and that they adopt a prosumption behaviour. For instance, from our understanding, we can imagine that someone making her/his own clothes is a prosumer. Kotler (1986) describes the historical perspective of Toffler (1980) that divide the period in three « waves » : during the first wave (agriculture period) most of people were prosumers, during the second one (industrial period where the goods are central) only few of them were prosumers. And finally, the third wave with the « individuation », the « demassification » and the « demarketisation » (Kotler, 1986, p.510-513 ; Toffler, 1980) were there are more prosumers, and a decrease of the number of consumers as showed in the following table (cf. Figure 3: Toffler’s Paradigm):

	Thesis First Wave	Antithesis Second Wave	Synthesis Third Wave
<b>Dominant Institution</b>	<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>Industry (factory)</b>	<b>Home</b>
Mix of prosumers and consumers	Many prosumers (Sector A is large) Few consumers (Sector B is small)	Few prosumers (Sector A is small) Many consumers (Sector B is large)	More prosumers (Sector A gets larger) Fewer consumers (Sector B gets smaller)
<b>Dominant processes</b>	Self-production	Industrialization Marketization	De-industrialization De-marketization De-massification
<b>Norm</b>	Survival	Efficiency (as producers) Indulgence (as consumers)	Individuation
<b>Social nexus</b>	Kinship and friendship; tribe	Contracts and transactions; workplace	Family and friends; neighborhood

Source: This chart is not found in Toffler but prepared by the author to draw together his main ideas.

Figure 4: Toffler's Paradigm (source: The Association for Consumer Research)

We can deduce that a prosumer can be considered as a kind of deconsumer in a society transitioning to this Third Wave. Some of them would find the enjoyment of making their own goods and the pleasure of consuming what they make (De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin, 2013). By doing so we can say that, for example, they practice deconsumption by consuming less industrial food, clothes if they make their own, less transportation if they produce at home their own clothes, fruits, vegetables, etc. We can deduce that a prosumer needs to fully prosume to be considered as a self-sufficient or living in « self-autonomy ». To deal with Prosumers, Kreziak and Cova (2010) talks about the « consommateur ferrailleux » as adopting recycling, reusing or even repurposing behaviours.

DopieRała (2017) explained that minimalists, that we previously discussed about, being a possible type of deconsumers, match with the collaborative and sharing economy where a part of their practices can take place. She stated that this kind of practices is reassessing the notion of propriety by emphasising the notion of sharing : « *The economy of cooperation (also known as the sharing economy or collaborative economy) is based on the notion that “access is better than ownership.”* » (p.78). Hwang and Griffiths (2017) illustrate this vision with the example of the Millennials with doing studies about their perceptions on collaborative and sharing services as clothing or “tech accessories”.

Deconsumers' practices, even though they are forsaken by the literature seem to be more alluded than directly mentioned. In consequence, there is a real need to investigate deeply in deconsumers' behaviours to understand them better in particular that their practices seem to be really diverse. The prosuming appears to be a way to practice deconsumption. And passing through the Circular Economy seems to be a convenient way for deconsumers to deconsume. Nevertheless, what do individuals gain by deconsuming? Are there more personal benefits? Or more altruistic ones?

### *B. Deconsumption Benefits*

Only some deconsumption practices were really studied by the literature. Some works exist the understanding why people shift from the consumption to the deconsumption but they still scarce. Then, we wish here to understand what deconsumers look for, what are the benefits of deconsumption for them?

The environmental motive may be the « top-of-mind » benefit when dealing with deconsumption. For instance, according to Leonard-Barton (1981) or Ballantine and Creery (2010), the voluntary simplifiers care about environment. De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) refer to these concerns for environment as deconsumption motivations. Grinstein and Nisan (2009) stated that « *there are many products and behaviors whose deconsumption would benefit the environment*

*but whose personal benefits to consumers are only secondary* » (p.107). Therefore, we can suppose that these benefits are more altruistic or that deconsumers having environmental concerns may have a certain holistic vision of their consumption. However, several authors relates more with the personal benefits to deconsumption.

In an energy savings context, Schwartz et al. (2015) showed that money advantages as saving money interested as much as people no matter if the advertisement introduced highlighted money, environment or both at the same time. Consequently, that means the money saving is the most salient argument. De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) explain that money and cost-related reasons are motives that are easily mentioned as their reasons to deconsume. So money seems to have its importance in deconsumption too. Even if, we tend to think there would be a need to study it in several different contexts to see if money saving is important in deconsumption no matter the context.

De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) deal with other reasons than saving money for deconsumption. They deal with the utilitarian motivations that they associate with saving money but also with hedonic motivations that we mentioned earlier as the pleasure to make what they consume (for the prosumers) or just the pleasure of rediscover the real sense of the products. De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) also referred to social motivations but more health-oriented (eg. buying healthy food or caring more about hygiene) and spiritual ones more related to the environment, politics, economics model, thinking about the society. These authors explained that individuals motivations to deconsume are dictated by the search for values and that these motivations «often interlocked the one another » (De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin, 2013, p. 23).

Then the personal interests can be saving money, health social reasons, hedonic reasons, and more altruistic ones as the environmental and spiritual reasons (that can also be a personal interest). Dugar (2018) referred to « *Positivity, anticipation of a promising future, and being role models or torchbearers* » (p.32) as being the main individual perceived benefits to deconsumption. Even if these elements of literature enable to have a quick overview of the deconsumption benefits, there still need to be detailed then there is here a research gap then a need to inspect and study these benefits for the individuals to deconsume. However, there seem to be a kind of « baseline » alluded in the literature that turn around the seek for meaning from the individuals that want to become deconsumes. Would it be the main motivation? Or is this motivation a link between all the other ones?

### C. Main Motivation: a seeking of Meaning?

In his study about deconsumption, Dugar (2017) stated that when « *voluntary deconsumers experienced changes in consumption experiences, changes in lifestyle/culture, when consumption became prohibitive (for reasons of health, finances, or non-availability), when they experienced life-changing events, when they felt betrayal, or when they crossed a threshold of the need for simplification, they were motivated to voluntarily deconsume.* » (pp.137-138). Then it appears here that their prior consumption experiences may explain a part individuals' deconsumption behaviours. Can we suppose these reasons could be linked by a search for meaning?

Through the search for meaning it seems that individuals try to match their values with what they buy. De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) explained that deconsumers motivations are directly linked with a seeking for values that are : the utilitarian value to focus on essential needs, the hedonic one to look for pleasure or happiness, a social one mainly for health motives and, a spiritual value that is more related to the care for the future. Kennedy, Krahn, and Krogman (2013) showed that downshifting behaviours (that we mentioned earlier) are positively significantly related to sustainable domestic practices. We can infer that this may to look for more free time by the individuals for themselves. Dugar (2017) deals with the search for harmony in individual's life through the deconsumption.

The search for meaning was forsaken by the literature in the deconsumption context, we lack of elements to infer a real link between these motivations by this meaning quest even if this one seem to have a particular place for the individuals.

In this section, we discussed about the characteristics and practices of deconsumption that appear to be diversified, that there could be several types of deconsumers and that the reasons can be mainly related to four values that are the utilitarian one, the hedonic one, the social one and the spiritual one. The search for meaning, that we perceive as more spiritual-related, may explain the deconsumption behaviours but need to be examined in detail.

To conclude this chapter, it appears that consuming less is admitted by the literature as a common feature to all deconsumption deconsumption in the literature. In addition, the differences between the deconsumption and all the close concepts to it, that themselves can be ways of practicing deconsumption, are the motivation and the objective behind each of them. For instance, the important difference between sustainable consumption and deconsumption seems to be found in the main motivation that lead to one or the other. Thereby, the consumer can go into deconsumption for other reasons than the « sustainable » features. The consumer may want giving more meaning to her/his life by detaching herself/himself from the too materialistic characteristic of

consumption. The consumer may also look for more harmonisation, more « matching » in his personal values with her/his lifestyles and their consumption (and deconsumption) modes. Then, the aspects we have seen to orient us towards the question of values in particular the spiritual one.

## CHAPTER 2 – SPIRITUAL VALUE

In the previous chapter, after defining deconsumption, we discussed about what Individuals look for when practicing it. In addition, to some benefits, the few research works dealing with it explained that it seems that deconsumers are in seeking for meaning in their consumption. Indeed, it appears that this search for sense would be related to the spiritual Value.

However, what a value is? What would be the common point between values in consumption and values in deconsumption and what are the differences? Also what is the meaning of this spiritual value? How is it defined? And why people would look for spirituality in their consumption?

In this Chapter 2, we first propose to define what is the value. Then, we will look at the spiritual value more in detail and explaining why people seeks for spirituality.

### I. WHAT IS THE VALUE?

In this section, we are going to define what is a personal value. Then, what are the common points and differences between values in Consumption and values in Deconsumption.

#### A. *Value for an Individual*

A value for a person can be perceived differently depending on the culture according to the historical context of the place the value is perceived (Boudon, 2006) or it can be universal (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1990). It can also be related to the dominant orientation of a person. For instance, the political identity, if a person perceives herself/himself sharing more the values of the left or more the values of the right. It can be defined a « political identity » that is often linked with the values the individuals decide to share (Bréchon, 2006). Also the value can be applied to more managerial notions. For instance, some authors as Khalifa (2004) deal with the customer value buildup focused on the benefits, dynamics focused on the customers' assessments, or in exchange as the differences between what the customer expects to gain compared to the total losses. An as gains, this author mention the utilitarian value and the « psychic » one when the loss are cost-related (Khalifa, 2004). However, this article was meant to be in a business and managerial context, then some others authors worked about individuals' values more generally.

Schwartz (2006) worked on the nature of the values. He explained that according to his own theory of values, that each value share these common points : they are « *beliefs* », they have « *desirable objectives* », they « *transcend specific situations and specific actions* », they serve as « *standard or criteria* », they are « *classified in order of importance from one another* », « *the relative importance of multiple value guide the action, each attitude an action needs more than one value* »

(Schwartz, 2006, p. 5). According to him, this is the goal or the motivation expressed through it that distinguish each value. Schwartz (1990 ; 2006) also explained that each value may be related to the social interactions, biological needs and the need for the groups to survive and functioning well.

Schwartz (2006) also defined the ten basic values through their objectives. First he mentioned Autonomy that is, for example, related to control, self-esteem (Deci and Ryan, 1987) or self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and Schwartz (2006) refers to freedom, choice, creativity, etc. He talked about nine other values. Indeed, he deals also with Stimulation related, for instance, to challenges, being adventurous, ... Hedonism that he associates with pleasure related to the satisfaction of the vital needs. Success, that he relates to self-esteem, intelligence, ambition, social recognition... Power that he relates to control, authority, richness and that this one, as Success, aims to social recognition. Security, linked to harmony, sense of belonging, etc. Conformity as a « *moderation of the actions, tastes, preferences* » (p.16) related to education or self-control. And then, Schwartz (2006) talked about a close value to Conformity that is Tradition that he relates to respect, commitment, humility, moderation, spiritual life. Conformity and Tradition respond to expectations. He also mention the Goodwill, linked with honesty, loyal, responsible, etc. Universality with understanding, tolerance, social justice, equality, unity with nature, environment protection, wisdom, internal connection and internal harmony and a spiritual life. He precised that if these values are universal some others as Spirituality can be seen in a different way depending on the culture (Schwartz, 2006).

Here, we mainly referred to Schwartz (1990 ; 2003 ; 2006) works because he is, to our knowledge, the author that did the most complete work about values of the individuals. Also, the fact he studied the universality characteristics of the basic human values enable us to have a wide vision of what is a value. However, sometimes the values can be perceived differently depending on the context. We will focus on the differences and similarities between Consumption and Deconsumption contexts.

### *B. Consumption and Deconsumption Values: Similarities*

Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991), in their work about values in consumption, stated a consumption decision could be influenced by all the functional value (i.e. utilitarian one), social value as the image it reflects, related to the choice of « *highly visible products* » (p.161). Emotional value that could be associated with causes, religion called « *aesthetic alternatives* » (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991, p.161). Epistemic value that can be provided by new experiences, a change of pace. For instance, the social switching cost mentioned by Shukla (2016) in his work about customer commitment to luxury brand going or not to another brand depending on how much the consumer invested himself symbocally, socially, etc. to the brand. Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) referred



also to the conditional value. For instance products that has a seasonal value (Easter eggs, Christmas gifts, cards, etc.), unique events (wedding, graduation ceremony), emergency situation, conditional associations (popcorn to the cinema).

De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013), took a value perspective of deconsumption. They explained that deconsumers look for additional value in the utilitarian, the hedonic, social and spiritual ones. We can observe that there are common points in the values, the utilitarian and social ones were also mentioned by Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991).

It seems that several values are in common in consumption and in deconsumption context. These ones are mainly the functional one, the hedonic, the social and the spiritual ones. However, by looking closely at them, we may find some clear differences between consumption and deconsumption values.

### C. Consumption and Deconsumption Values: Differences

Aurier, Evrard and N'Goala (2004) summarised what constituted the values of consumption in a table:

**Tableau 3. – Essai d'intégration des approches de la valeur et des significations de la consommation**

		Holbrook (1994)	Holt (1995)	Lai (1995)	Richins (1994)	Evrard et Aurier (1996)
Orienté vers soi	Intrinsèque	Jeu (amusement) Esthétique	Expérience (émotion)	Hédonique Affectif Esthétique	Plaisir Apparence (beauté)	Hédonique Stimulation expérientielle
	Extrinsèque	Efficience Excellence	Intégration (acquisition et utilisation)	Fonctionnel (utilitaire) Épistémique	Utilitaire	Connaissance (recherche d'information, expertise)
Orienté vers les autres	Intrinsèque	Éthique Spiritualité	Jeu (pratique sociale et partage)		Spirituel	Pratique sociale
	Extrinsèque	Statut Estime	Classification (appartenance et distinction sociale)	Social	Statut Expression de soi Liens inter-personnels (représentation facilitation) Réalisation de soi	Expression de soi Lien social
Non classé				Holistique Situationnel	Histoire personnelle Aspects financiers	

Figure 5: Try to integrate consumption values and meaning approach (Aurier, Evrard and N'Goala, 2004)

They tried to classify the consumption values if they are more oriented toward the Self of the individual or towards the others by basing themselves on 5 different works (Holbrook, 1994 ; Holt, 1995 ; Lai, 1995 ; Richins, 1994 ; Evrard and Aurier, 1996).

Firstly, about the self-oriented consumption. We can observe in their table that the intrinsic values are mostly hedonic or pleasure-related. Or related to stimulation, experience or just having fun (Aurier, Evrard and N'Goala, 2004). In deconsumption, in addition to be brought by the experience (as in the « classic » consumption), the hedonic value can be perceived through quality or/and by the « *opportunity to find the real sense of the products again* » (De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin, 2013, p. 69). The extrinsic values of self-oriented consumption are mainly related to the use of what they buy or consume. Functional or utilitarian values are referred, it can be linked to the efficiency or the symbolic use of it. And the last value is the search for Information, Knowledge (Aurier, Evrard and N'Goala, 2004). About deconsumption values, De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) deal with the utilitarian value in deconsumption as the utility focused on what is essential, wholesome and what is pared-down.

Secondly, about the others-oriented consumption. On one hand, about the intrinsic values, what stands out are the social and the spiritual values. The social one is linked with the Hedonic value (Evrard and Aurier, 1996) for the satisfaction to be with others and with others interpersonal values (Holt, 1995). And also the ethic and sharing are mentioned (Aurier, Evrard and N'Goala, 2004). In a deconsumption context, De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) figured out that social and spiritual values have their importance for numerous reasons. First, in relation to the social, health motivations (eg. related to the bad image have some products of the food industry as the ones with too much sugar on them or the ones with palm oil, people will look for deconsumption and suggest to their close relations what they should avoid to consume) are among the most importants directly link to the information they have at their disposition and their knowledge about a product (eg. waiting that research show that a product is not bad for health before buy it). Then, in respect to the Spiritual value, the realisation, self-assessment, the care for the future and the awareness are important related to the « *societal and environmental costs* » (De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin, 2013, p.70). On the other hand, concerning the extrinsic values of others-oriented consumption. Social and Self-Enhancement (eg. in front of the society, with the social links) are the two values that emerge from them (Aurier, Evrard and N'Goala, 2004). When in deconsumption, De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) largely referred to collective and altruistic values with a more global vision that they relate to questioning about the current economic system with the degrowth movements, more richness sharing for the reduction of inequality. Altruistic values were also mentonned several times in the Dugar (2017) study.

Here we mainly dealt with the work of Aurier, Evrard and N'Goala (2004). In the B., we referred to Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) work. Comparing these works about values in consumption to the works about values in deconsumption mentioned in Dugar (2017) and De Lanauze and Siadou-

Martin (2013) we can observe that even when the values are in common, their perception can be different in a deconsumption context. Even if characteristics of the basic values still universal for the individual as explained in Schwartz (2006) work.

In addition to the fact the perception may be different depending of the context, we note that deconsumption may bring almost the same universal (and basic) values usually provided by deconsumption but with additional benefits. Indeed, about the self-oriented values, the meaning deconsumption provides to products, going back to the essentials were elements that were not obtained with the « classic » consumption. And about others-oriented values, it seems that the differences are clearer on this side. When the traditional consumption values tend to push individuals to desire being put on a pedestal then will self-enhanced themselves and will do a lot of social activities mainly for themselves. In deconsumption, when it is intrinsic, individuals seem to emphasise their spirituality and spiritual values and when it is extrinsic it is more about doing for the others, thinking of the consequences of their action to the others and questioning themselves and questioning the current societal and economic model.

Then based on these elements of literature we can define a value as a perception the individual accept (consciously or unconsciously) to follow with different motivations and objectives that can be changed or be perceived differently depending on the situation.

This section about values enabled us to understand more the convergence and divergences points of values between consumption and deconsumption. It guided us to infer that the additional value provided by deconsumption that, based on the literature, appears to be the search for meaning that may be translated by the Spiritual value.

## II. WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL VALUE?

Now that we discussed about the place of the value for the individual, and that we talked about what gather them and what differ in consumption and in deconsumption contexts, we will study more closely at the spirituality to define what is the Spiritual Value.

### A. *Spirituality Characteristics*

Husemann and Eckhardt (2019) made a research agenda about consumer's spirituality. They mentioned the need to understand more this search for meaning. Spirituality used to be jumbled with religion (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Elkins (1988) is one of the first authors, to our knowledge, to have started dissociating spirituality from religion. He organised spirituality in these following dimensions: « Transcendent »; « Meaning and purpose in life »; « Mission in life'' ; « Sacredness of life »; « Material values » as a « *substitutue for frustrated spiritual needs* » (p. 11); « Altruism »;

« Idealism » ; « Awareness of the tragic » as « *deeply aware of human pain, suffering, and death* » (p.11) ; « Fruits of spirituality » (Elkins, 1988). We understand that spirituality can be applied to other contexts than the religious one. For instance, even if the authors compared that with the religion context, Miller and Thoresen (2003) called for research in the spirituality applied to the health context.

Zinnbauer et al. (1997) tried to find similarities and differences between religion and spirituality. They confirmed a significant correlation between both concepts but they found several differences. Indeed, in their study religion appears to be more associated with institutionalism and authoritarianism when spirituality was more associated with « *mystical experiences* » (p. 561). Also, among their participants, a group of them defined themselves as spiritual people but not religious.

Then, some authors deal with spirituality as an experience, as part of a context or part of a lifestyle. For instance, Camus and Poulain (2009) studied spirituality in the context of organic food consumption. They also clarified the notions of sacred, religion and spirituality (cf. Figure 6). They explained that the sacred is linked to God(s) (depending of the beliefs). For them, religion has a « *collective perspective* » and is about the human practices where the « *objectif is to lift the individual to "God" thought* » (page of the part « Définition du concept de Spiritualité » and Figure)<sup>6</sup>. About Spirituality they characterise it as an « *individual perspective* » and as a « *posture of inner quest often in contrast to the physical, the material and the external* » (page of the part « Définition du concept de Spiritualité, Camus and Poulain, 2009).



Figure 6: Spirituality compared to Religion and Sacred (Camus and Poulain, 2009)

<sup>6</sup> Nota bene: I could not find a version of Camus and Poulain (2009) paper with a pagination but the presented quotations here come either from the figure or from the same part that is called in French « Définition du concept de Spiritualité ».

Then, even if spirituality can be part of it, it appears that this value got observed as something detached from religion. Also, the spirituality appears to be linked to experiences and lifestyle choices. How this spirituality is seen as a value in consumption and deconsumption contexts? What is a spiritual value in consumption or in deconsumption?

### B. Spiritual Value in Consumption

Dawson (2011) deals with the spirituality in consumption and he stated « *new spirituality employs a process of re-signification which inverts contemporary value systems* » (p.4) but then he concluded that in the end, it does not imply a rejection neither an acceptance of the current society but it involves more what he called « *mystified consumptions* » (p.5).

About the value perception by the consumer, Aurier, Evrard, et N'goala, G. (2004) showed « links between consumption value components and perceived global value » (cf. Figure 7).

According to them, the spiritual value is one of the components of the consumption value and that they are part of one of the received benefits. Bearing in mind that their study was conducted in the indoor cinema and in this context the spiritual value was not part of the dominant values in this context (according to them, it is the utilitarian value, the experiential stimulation and the social tie). As part of this study, Aurier, Evrard, et N'goala, G. (2004) defined Spiritual Value as « *the capacity of the cinema to arouse the self-examination and questioning of the individual facing the others, "others" defined here in the wider and universal sense of "humanity" as suggested by Holbrook (1994)* » (p.11).

According to the literature, the spiritual value can also depend on the fact that the consumer is active or reactive in his/her way to consume (Holbrook, 1999 ; Poulain, Parise et Badot, 2016). Holbrook (1999) classified this value as a social value, extrinsic and reactive and Kotler (2010) made it one of the pillars of the Marketing 3.0.

In a consumption context, Poulain, Parise and Badot (2016) follow the same « line » than Schwartz (2006) in their way of defining the spirituality. Indeed, for Schwartz (2006) « *Spirituality values objective are the sense, coherence and inner harmony* » (p. 935) that an individual get by « *transcending the daily reality* » (p. 935). They deal with this quest for meaning in the consumption.

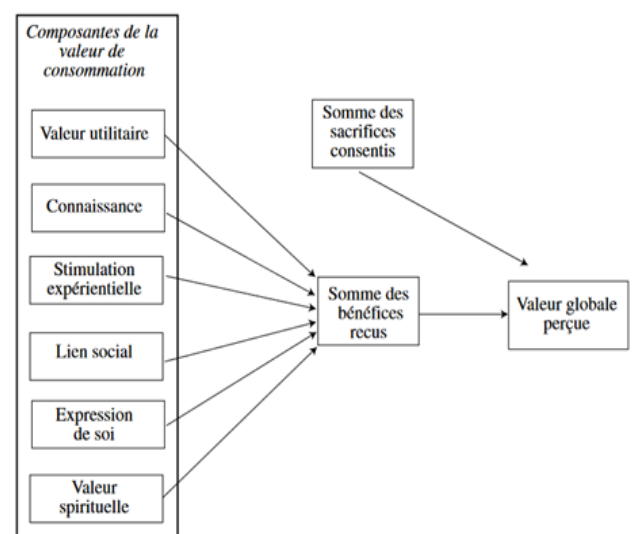


Figure 7: Links between components of consumption value and global value (Aurier, Evrard and N'goala, 2004)

The literature about spirituality in a consumption context seems to confirm the differences we noted earlier between the value in consumption and the value in deconsumption. Indeed, the spiritual value looks to not be the most important one in a consumption even if some individuals seem to look for it but what about this spiritual value in deconsumption?

### C. Spiritual Value in Deconsumption

We found only one work dealing with the Spiritual value in Deconsumption, the one from De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013). They explained that this value is one that people look for when they shift to a deconsumption behaviours. However, we inferred earlier that several Deconsumption behaviours are possible and that the Voluntary simplicity, for instance, may be one of them. In her work, Leonard-Barton (1981) explains that

this term was first mentioned by the philosopher Richard Gregg in 1936 in his book « Voluntary Simplicity ». She said that Gregg (1936) « *have emphasized the spiritual dimension of this conservation-oriented lifestyle* » (p.243). Then, the spirituality was already in the first work about one, from how it appears to be a consumption reduction, potential deconsumption behaviour.

DopieRała (2017) explained that the minimalistic consumption, that we also deduced as a potential form of deconsumption, would be due to a deficit in the « *psycho-spiritual* » (p. 68) aspects then there is a need to gain this spirituality (that she mentioned several times).

Starting from their quantitative data analysis, De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) tied the value and the deconsumption through a typology (cf. Figure 8). We can note that in the elements characterising the Spiritual value, they made mention of the environmental value, the ethical one and even the political one. They explain that the spiritual value may help giving back or giving more value to these aforementioned elements and also giving more spirituality to the object. However, their analysis drew attention the spiritual valued attached to what is consumed in a logic of deconsumption that the spiritual value of the deconsumption itself. It seems then matter to think another logic and, rather than focusing our attention on the consumption value and of what is consumed, it would be more preferable to be focused on the spiritual value attached to deconsumption.

Type de valeur recherchée <i>Démarche du « déconsommateur »</i> Exemple de pratiques	Extrinsèque <i>Lié au produit lui-même</i>	Intrinsèque <i>Lié aux process de fabrication/ commercialisation</i>
Orientée vers soi	<b>Valeur utilitaire</b> <i>Redonner de la valeur utilitaire à l'objet, considéré comme un moyen pour satisfaire un besoin individuel</i>  Acheter moins, moins cher, meilleur	<b>Valeur hédonique</b> <i>Redonner de la valeur de plaisir à l'objet, considéré comme porteur de valeur individuelle par sa production et son utilisation</i>  Faire soi-même
Orientée vers les autres	<b>Valeur sociale</b> <i>Redonner de la valeur sociale à l'objet, considéré comme porteur en lui-même d'un bénéfice pour la santé et la société</i>  Acheter bio, plus sain	<b>Valeur spirituelle</b> <i>Redonner de la valeur environnementale, éthique, voire politique, à l'objet, en tenant compte de l'ensemble des implications</i>  Acheter équitable, éduquer, militer

Figure 8: Forms of the sought value through deconsumption practices (De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin, 2013)

The Spiritual Value was quite forsaken aside by the literature for the moment. Well, this value could turn out to be particularly interesting in the understanding of the deconsumption and it could motivates this latter.

### III. CRITERIA OF THE SEARCH FOR SPIRITUALITY

Schwartz (1992) showed that the spirituality can be perceived differently according to the culture and explained that a spiritual life is characterised by no material matters. As we discussed previously, it seems that individuals look for spirituality for several reasons. Is it then for a quest of interiority ? Is it to transcend themselves? Or because of their ideals? We are looking at these motives through a deconsumption by focusing on the seeking for well-being, on the looking for internal, external connection and experiences. Then, the motives related to the self-transformation.

#### A. *Look for Well-Being*

Poulain, Parise and Badot (2016), in their work, refer several times that individuals look for some forms of spirituality in their consumption search for well-being. Indeed, for instance, they mention a «*Soft spirituality* » as «*well-being techniques or higher standards of well-being for stressed modern men and women by their lifestyles* » (p.4) as the reading of horoscope for example. They add that consumers now look more for the experience of the consumption than buying the product itself.

DopieRała (2017) gives an explanation of this by the growth of the « *culture of subjective well-being* » that transforms « *spirituality into goods confined within consumer activities* » (p. 73). Indeed, mercantil forms of spirituality appear but also new ones that can not be sold and these two forms of spirituality have became visible from individuals that look for sense and well-being (Poulain, Parise and Badot, 2016). For instance, the business around personal development, that these previous authors make reference to it.

The literature about this criterion of well-being for the spirituality seems absent. Then there is a need to study this point in detail. However, it appears that the look for internal harmony and connection with the outside seem to be elements that characterise this search for spirituality (eg. Schwartz, 2006).

#### B. *Experiences, Internal and External Connection*

Then as we allude to it several times, the literature about spirituality is still scarce. Camus and Poulain (2009) did the same observation more than ten years ago by dealing with the spirituality literature as limited. They made mention of Gavard-Perret (2000). In her works about the evolution of the marketing towards more feminine values, she explained that « *the human-being became a master in the art of the external exploration and today ask for the discovery of her/his body, and in*

*particular her/his spirit, in an existential quest of interiority* » (p.16). We can infer that this search for knowing their inner self may be important in the seeking for spirituality.

DopieRała (2017) by referring to the fact people with minimalistic behaviours, in a certain way, stay in a consumption logics but by looking more for quality goods, experiences. She referred to a « new spirituality » as a « *need for individual growth, internal self-improvement and “raising the consciousness to another level”* » (p.73).

### C. A Self-Transformation

In one of her articles, Özçağlar-Toulouse (2009) deals with the search for meaning in the consumption by people that consume responsibly. Indeed, in her study she asked people to make narratives, she noted that responsible consumers perceive their consumption as « *an impression of impoverishment of their real and authentic “self”* » (p.9). She made the following synthesis about the place of spirituality in marketing (Figure 9) :

<b>SPIRITUALITÉ ET MARKETING EXPÉRIENTIEL</b>	<b>SPIRITUALITÉ ET VALEUR</b>	<b>SPIRITUALITÉ ET NOUVELLES FORMES D'EXPÉRIENCES DANS LA CONSOMMATION</b>
<p>L'expérience vécue des individus peut être plus importante que les attributs du produit ou du service consommé (14)</p> <p>La consommation peut :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- toucher la quête identitaire du consommateur (6).</li> <li>- renfermer un processus de production (13).</li> <li>- Être un outil de renouvellement de soi (19).</li> </ul>	<p>La spiritualité :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- est une source de dépassement de soi (26)</li> <li>- permet à l'individu d'accéder à une expérience par laquelle il se transforme lui-même (16)</li> <li>- a une influence sur la valeur globale perçue (1)</li> </ul>	<p>Le <i>New Age</i> :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- une volonté de réalisation de soi (21)</li> <li>- se transformer soi pour transformer le monde (7)</li> <li>- permettre aux hommes d'expérimenter le « soi intérieur » (10)</li> </ul>

Figure 9: Place of the spirituality in Marketing (Özçağlar-Toulouse, 2009)

For instance, spirituality could be a source of self-transcendence by surpassing yourself. Her results show that consumers have four different actions to deal with the « ambiguity » of the consumption that they associate with positive symbols for : « escaping ill-being », « searching for the “authentic” self », « avoiding isolation » and « controlling one's own life. ».



From our understanding and by making assumptions we may relate with these elements into four concepts : well-being or subjective well-being that would be the consequence of escaping the ill-being (even if escaping ill-being could be wider) and Lu and Gilmour (2004) sees happiness, component of well-being according to them, as a way of escaping ill-being; spirituality by looking at the internal self ; a need for social interactions, the social value to avoid isolation and self-control or situational one.

Özçağlar-Toulouse (2009) mention in her study the fact that responsible consumers talk about the distinction Materialist vs. Spiritual Ideologies. The author refers to Hirschman (1988) that mentioned it in her article as « secular » vs. « sacred » consumption. In the narratives of the article by Özçağlar-Toulouse (2009), consumers described several situations where they reduce their consumption. She explained that the responsible consumers have these consumption reduction behaviours for political reasons by seeing each choice as a vote in the « *democracy based on purchase power* » (p.12) but also for moral and liberating reasons. For moral motives to not harm the others and to follow their ideals for instance. Also, for liberating motivations to stop being defined as consumers only but to be defined as « real » human-being by calling into questions the possessions and by a need to control their own consumption to feel free (Özçağlar-Toulouse, 2009).

It appears that spirituality could be a source of motivations that could be the well-being, looking for more connection and experiences or self-transcendence. There would be a need to understand more these elements through this study.

In this chapter about spiritual value, we looked at the meaning of a value for the individual, in consumption and in deconsumption. Some values are universal for the individual but in the particular case of deconsumption some of them can be perceived from another angle than in consumption. The spiritual value is one of the possible of the perceived benefits of consumption and could be a more important one in deconsumption even if there is a clear lack of literature about it to affirm this. Thus, the criteria for spirituality seems to mainly self-transcendent even if the well-being and the experience may play a role in this quest.

To understand better this search for meaning and spirituality, we will look at the individuals' behaviours and functioning modes.

## CHAPTER 3 – INDIVIDUAL’S FUNCTIONING MODE

One of the main objectives of this work is to find persuasive ways enabling to encourage people to deconsume. To reach this goal, it is then important to understand how individuals operate and to what their way of function refer to. To which aspects? Is spirituality more an ideal? Is sustainable consumption more a duty? What an individual that is in a meaning seeking looks for? A more important role? More control of her/his life, of herself/himself or of the situation?

In this chapter, we will first look at concepts that could characterise individuals’ behaviours. Then, we will consider the control seeking part of individuals that hunt meaning to their life. And then we will discuss about how having an effect on individual behaviour through Persuasive Communication techniques. This will help to understand how our communication messages can be made.

### I. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

In this section we will try to understand to what the individual aspires to, what are their objectives in life and their characteristics.

#### A. Goals aspirations: Ideals vs. Oughts

To what the individual aspires to? In his article about deconsumption, Dugar (2018) brings an important point up about this latter. He emphasised the interaction that the deconsumption have with dreams, hopes and happiness of the consumers. In the Psychology literature, used to understand consumer behaviour, there is a section that got interested about individuals’ goals and especially about the goals as « ideals » and the goals as « duties » also called « oughts » or « obligations ».

Higgins et al. (1994) deal with ideals and oughts as « self-guides » for the individual. They make a distinction between ideals, that are related to hope, desires, wishes, and oughts that are linked to responsibility or sense of obligations. Most of the authors dealing with Ideals and Oughts referred to the Regulatory focus (eg. Higgins, 1995 ; Förster, Higgins, and Idson, 1998).

Pham and Avnet (2004) explained that some individuals aspire more to Ideals goals and some other more to Oughts goals. Righetti and Kumashiro (2012) showed that « *when it comes to receiving interpersonal goal support, the individuals’ regulatory orientation predicts benefits, regardless of the goal type* » (p.4). Boyatzis, Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) studied the « Ideal Self » explaining that it is constituted by a picture of the future the individual desires, by hope and the understanding of her/her core identity.

This question of goals seems to be particularly relevant within the scope of a better understanding of deconsumption decision with a wish to determine the psychological processes that need to be activated to influence this decision. What are the motivations of the individuals that could be adapted to the deconsumption context?

### B. Motivation aspirations: Self-Transcendence vs. Self-Enhancement

Schwartz (2006) describes 4 main motivations that would lead to some values features (cf. Figure 10). According to this author the Self-Enhancement motivation (« Affirmation de soi ») is related to achievement or success and power that are both linked by a search for social recognition which is a self-centered value. Whereas the self-transcendence (« Dépassement de soi ») motivation is characterised by universalism and good-heartedness or benevolence gives « the priority to the others » and go beyond the egoistic interests.

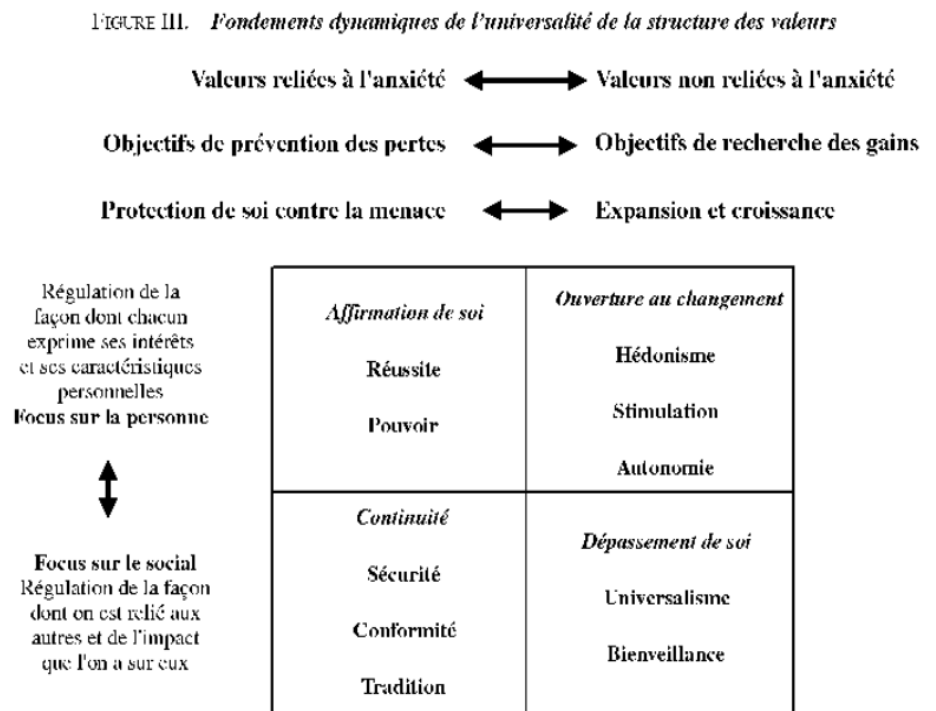


Figure 10: Dynamic founding principles of the universality of the values' structure (Schwartz, 2006)

The Self-enhancement would be more linked to egoistic needs, to pursue own interests whereas the self-transcendence would more features well-being concerns and others' interests (Schwartz, 2006). Without mentioning directly these concepts, Poulain, Parise et Badot (2016) come to the assessments, as part of their qualitative analysis, that refer to the self-enhancement and et self-transcendence notions. Then, with the illustration of the « vegetarian eater », the authors note that the participants with this profil exclude meat of their diet with a « volition of internal transformation » (that we can link to the self-enhancement), and also with a « getting back self-control in a world that is beyond use» (that we can connect with self-transcendence).

These values are part of the universality of the values' stucture according to Schwartz (2006). Then, it seems that these two motivations of self-enhancement and self-transcendence would be the ones fitting with the search of meaning of the individuals that could be related to their well-being

too. Earlier, we looked at the well-being as criteria for spirituality, in the C. we will look at it more as an aspiration related to the happiness the individuals look for.

### *C. Happiness and Well-Being*

Shin and Johnson (1978) clarified that happiness is not a state of pleasure. They define happiness as « *primarily a product of the positive assessment of life situations and the favorable comparison of these life situations with those of others and the past.* » (p.491). They added that happiness is proper to each individual. We can add that it can change also depending on the culture. Indeed, according to Lu and Gilmour (2004), in China they perceive happiness more as an « *harmonious homeostasis* » (p.286) and Chinese emphasise the spirituality whereas in the United States of America they are more upbeat about it and see it as personal achievement.

The notion of happiness is often related to well-being in the literature. For instance, Lu and Gilmour (2004) perceive happiness as a critical aspect of subjective well-being. That means, happiness is an essential element for the individuals looking for well-being. Also they see happiness as a way to free individuals from ill-being.

Also, the consumption society seems to foster the culture of money for decades. Some authors tried to study the effect of money on happiness and well-being. Stutzer (2004) relates incomes aspirations of individuals and their wellbeing and they noticed a decrease of people's satisfaction in life when they aspire to more income. Then they showed a negative effect of the increase of income's aspiration on well-being.

Seligman (2012) summarises the theory of the well-being construct (he precised that well-being is a construct whereas happiness is not) and compared it to the notion happiness. He explained that happiness is one of the positive emotions that contributes to well-being and that have three aspects in common with well-being. These characteristics are then the positive emotions, engagement and meaning. Seligman (2012) added that happiness is central in the authentic happiness theory and that « *strengths and virtues – kindness, social intelligence, humor, courage, integrity and the like (there [strengths] are twenty-four of them) – are support for the engagement* » (p.24). He clarified that this well-being is not something that exists only in the individual's head because it mixes feeling good, having meaning, fulfillment and good interpersonal relationships. We can deduce that happiness for increasing their well-being is what individuals may aspire to.

To measure the psychological well-being, Riff and Keyes (1995) use components as Personal Growth, Purpose in Life or Environmental Mastery. Personal Growth and Purpose in Life are two elements we previously referred to respectively with spiritual value and individuals' goals. We even

alluded to Self-Acceptance with the spiritual value and self-enhancement and positive Relations with Others in the goals part for instance.

We can deduce that the concepts previously we discussed about and the search for well-being have similarities in what an individual looks for. The last component mentioned by Riff and Keyes (1995), Environmental Mastery is an individual's characteristics we did not really studied yet. However, we made the assumption that an individual can look for more control in her/his life. We can infer that the mastery of his/her life is a form of control. Then now, we will look through an individual's search for control.

## II. INDIVIDUAL IN SEARCH FOR CONTROL

With the assumption that an individual may try to look for more control in his life, we will try to get what role and control an individual can look for based on the literature.

### A. *Perceived Personal Role and Choice*

In his study about store choice, Fotheringham (1988) defined choice as the result of the evaluation of different alternatives that is prior to the selection among one of these alternatives.

Choice can be linked with the perception of the personal role. Botti and McGill (2011) showed that when we leave a choice to the consumers, they think they are « *meaningful agents* » (p. 1066) in their experience when exercising this choice. This has as a consequence that consumers perceive a higher personal causality, a larger perceived role (Robinson et al., 2012). And, by this way, consumers attribute more the positive consequences of their actions. The perceived personal causality could lead to more positive evaluations of the outcomes. We can deduce that for instance, underlining the choice of deconsumption could give the consumer the impression that he/she is a meaningful agent and then make him/her feels, by this way, a superior spiritual value attributed to a deconsumption choice.

There is a need to study more this link between the perception of the personal role and choice in particular in a deconsumption context. In their article Robinson et al. (2012) also mention a need for future research in the ways campaigns could enhance the perceived personal role.

However, what we did not mention yet is that choice can have negative consequences on the perception of the personal role. Indeed, if the consumer perceive that the actions of the company does not fulfill enough the cause(s) referred in their campaign, then « *choice may decrease perceived role and diminish campaign success* » (Robinson et al., 2012, p. 131).

The literature about the perception of the personal role is scarce. However, we can make the assumption that the need for control of the individuals is not only about their role and choices but also may result from a need to have a sort of control of the situation, that we will examine now.

### *B. Situational Control and Self-Control*

Behind the Situational Control there is the idea depending on the circumstances, the Control can change. In their review chapter about how individuals are dealing with « *situationally elicited motives* » (p.538), Trope and Fishbach (2005) took the example of a student that knows how to study for an important exam that is matter for her/his long-term goals but an appealing TV programme interrupted her/him and then this short-term goal is interrupting the long-term ones. What the authors mean, to our understanding, is that here the student had a low control of the situation due to a circumstance.

Trope and Fishbach (2005) bring to mind the fact this is « *necessary to take into account self-control processes in predicting the motivational and behavioral consequences of priming a motive* » (p.545). Indeed, they showed that people can adopt some counteractive behaviours if an induced motive does not fit with their long-term objectives.

According to (Tangney., Baumeister and Boone, A. L., 2004), Self-Control is « *widely regarded as a capacity to change and adapt the self so as to produce a better, more optimal fit between self and world* » (p.275) and they define it as « *the ability to override or change one's inner responses, as well as to interrupt undesired behavioral tendencies and refrain from acting on them* » (p.275).

Then, the situational control seems to have been studied by the literature, to our knowledge, mainly with the angle of its negative effects, then we could study it through its potential positive effects. The self-control as a trait appears to be a way from the individual to insure her/his actions and behaviours fit the most as possible to her/his values and objectives.

In this section, we exchanged views around the need for control of the individuals. Firstly, through their role and choices that have a positive relation but also a negative one depending on the context. Then, the situational control was studied more through the negative side of it when the self-control seems to moderate the actions of an individual. Then, taking in account these aspects, we will look at the literature showing how we can persuade an individual to deconsume.

## III. PERSUADING THE INDIVIDUAL TO DECONSUME

After having an understanding of individuals aspirations and perceptions. Now, we will look through the literature enabling to understand how to communicate in a persuasive way on them in a deconsumption context. Is through social communication? With what channels?

### A. *Social and Sustainable Communication*

Peattie and Peattie (2009) called for research in the consumption reducing communication by the way of Social Marketing that is used to be more health focused according to them. In their article, these authors in a certain way shared a need to communicate in consumption reduction « *across all branches of policy-making (and not just in those with responsibility for the environment)* » (p.7). We can infer that their perception can converge with our vision except that ours is not focused on policy-making but more largely focused on the fact there is a need for Persuasive Communication tools encouraging Deconsumption that enables to deal with something else than the Environmental issues. Communicating that deconsuming reduces the negative environmental impacts is a possibility but why limiting the communication to this issue and not extending the communication to all others' people concerns? According to Peattie and Peattie (2009) the « *versatility* » of Social Marketing (p.7) would enable that by targeting not only the final consumers but also the decision-makers. We can take an example to illustrate our understanding of their thoughts. What they say would mean, if we adapt their thought in a deconsumption context, that if the goals are financial, it is possible to present deconsumption as a reduction of expenses for instance.

White, Habib and Hardisty (2019) mentioned in their literature review article that « *many companies are recognizing the need for a sustainable way of doing business, and across industries we see firms such as Interface Carpet, Unilever, Nike, and Starbucks embedding sustainability into the DNA of their brands* » (p. 22) referring to Hardcastle (2013). Then, some companies seem aware of the need of communicating around sustainability because what Hardcastle mentioned it the fact these brands signed a statement promoting sustainable behaviours. And as Peattie and Peattie (2009) said, the biggest challenge of this Communication is to make this Consumption reduction « *viewed as normal* » (p.8).

Mazar and Zhong (2010) showed that a simple exposition to "green" products (products that are more careful about their environmental impact as rechargeable batteries instead of disposable ones) leads to more altruistic behaviours than when participants are exposed to "conventional" products. This means that Communication of these products can influence the motivations the individuals behaviours. However, once the « green » product is bought, participants tend to justify egoistic and irresponsible behaviours (for instance stealing) because they perceived their consumption as « ethical » and esteem that they can allow themselves to have this « bad » behaviour (Mazar and Zhong, 2010). This is a counterintuitive manner that would be countercurrent of the sustainable consumption speech, for instance very oriented towards future generation and very altruist. Then,

we can deduce it would be preferable to use a communication pointing out self-centered motivations rather than motivations centered on the others.

However, regarding the Communication encouraging to consume less, there is an absence of articles in the literature. Indeed, most of the articles are focused on the questioning of the mass consumption, on the possible other consumption behaviours or else be about why people adopt these other consumption behaviours. When it is a question to deal with Persuasive Communication, articles are generally about « green consumption » or else sustainable products consumption. For instance, articles that are oriented « consuming better », not necessarily « consuming less ».

To our knowledge, only Peattie and Peattie (2009) brought some insights through a Social Marketing and Policy-making focused vision about needs for research in a reduction consumption context. Then there is a research gap here. We will then examine how can we activate individuals goals, that are one of their main aspirations.

### *B. Activating Goals*

We previously discussed about individuals aspirations, understanding them enable us to see where orienting our communication to incitate deconsumption. Hence, it would be about activating goals as « Ideals » associated to deconsumption situations that will be promoted in the messages that will be tested. In the literature, authors showed that each individual have two types of goals, at once « Oughts» and « Ideals» (Pham and Avnet, 2004). However, each person has a dominant orientation towards a type of goals, some individuals are more positioned towards ideals and others more towards oughts. Consequently, we could infer that « ideals » advertisements would not have a significant meaning for “Oughts” - oriented individuals for instance. However, Pham and Avnet (2004) showed that it is possible to stimulate, to activate (with a priming) an orientation towards specific goals (oughts or ideals) even if this orientation is not dominant for the considered individuals. If there is a match between the goal activated and the chronic goal orientation of the individual there should be better results (Shah, Higgins and Friedman, 1998).

To activate these goals, some communication tools can be used as storytelling for instance. Pham and Avnet (2004) mention Higgins (1998) that suggested a link between Regulatory Focus and ideals vs. oughts. Indeed, Higgins (1998) brought up that ideals would be drawn more in the promotion regulatory focus system whereas oughts would be found in the prevention regulatory Focus system.



Therefore, this leads us to the link with storytelling. In their article about brand storytelling and reeregulatory focus, Lin and Chen (2015) showed that prevention-focus people tend to be hooked after reading an Typical brand story when promotion-focus people prone to be hooked after reading an Atypical story.

If we still follow Higgins (1998) logic that would mean that it would be interesting to reinforce the activation of « Ideals » goal with the help of an Atypical story and reinforcing the priming of « oughts » goal with the help of a Typical story. According to Lin and Chen (2015), a Typical story could be expected with information that could be easily checked whereas the Atypical story has to bring unexpected elements and more focused on achievements. For instance, in their study 2 they used the example of an ice cream story. For the Typical story, the vision related to icecream and how the brand owner pursued his goal were described. Whereas, for the Atypical story « *the brand owner described the motivation for starting a business that was related to helping his wife recall memories of her father* » (Lin and Chen, 2015, p.702).

Therefore, we can see that this fits with our reasoning because the type of storytelling used can fit more with oughts (then Typical story) and the other type more with Ideals (then Atypical story). This is the only existing link to our knowledge that can be found in the literature. However that does not mean there are no other possibilities.

In this section we discussed about what has been done on the literature to communicate through social and sustainable communication and to activate goals. Firstly, we noted that there is, to the best of our knowledge, no communication-oriented research works that is about encouraging deconsumption strictly speaking. However, by looking at the literature of the communication that could lead to sustainable consumption or the green one that could translate some deconsumption behaviours as we discussed about in our Chapter 1, we noticed that some communications can have positive but also negative effects on individuals' intentions to consume more sustainably. For instance, justifying a less sustainable behaviour after having one previously (Mazar and Zhong, 2010). Therefore, there is a need to explore how to create communication that will have a positive influence on individuals' deconsumption intentions. Secondly, we noticed that the literature studied some effective ways to activate goals with the type of story in the communication message. There is nevertheless an important research gap in the communication to deconsumption.

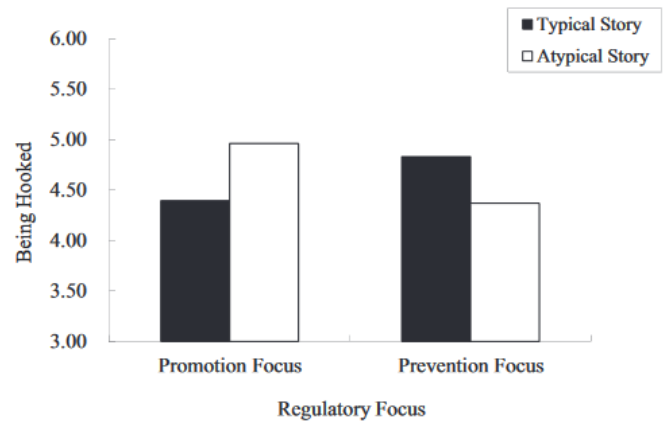


Figure 11: Typical story and Atypical one (Lin and Chen, 2015)

In this Chapter, we looked at the aspirations of the individuals as their goals (ideals and oughts), their motivations (self-enhancement and self-transcendence), their search for happiness and well-being that are all notions that could characterise individuals' behaviours. We also discussed about the control seeking part of individuals and the search for meaning to their life with the perception of the personal role and choice but also the self-control and the situational control. This latter was mainly studied, to our knowledge, in the negative side, which means that there is a need to look at its positive effects. Moreover, we talked about how having an effect on individual behaviour through Persuasive Communication techniques. Among what we observed, the activation of goals could be enhanced through the use of stories. However, non of the communication articles were strictly about deconsumption or bringing concrete communication tools to foster deconsumption. From this point of view, our research would be original. Also, it would enable decision-makers to make spurring campaigns, to better understand the levers to activate and the potential effects of the characteristics of their messages.

So, in the first part of this work, we dealt with the literature review and conceptual background about deconsumption, spiritual value and individual's functioning modes. Now, we will precise our research objectives and concepts by looking in details to the relations between the variables through a preliminary qualitative study to help to the delineation of our research model by proposing our hypotheses.

## PART 2

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## STUDY, MODELS AND HYPOTHESES

We previously reviewed the literature about deconsumption, spiritual value and individuals' functioning mode. In this part, we intend to link the concepts mentioned in Chapter 1, 2 and 3, in order to build several research models by the raising of hypotheses.

As a reminder, this work is designed to improve the communication aiming to increase the deconsumption intentions. We will seek to understand on what it would be relevant to bring into play in the deconsumption promotion messages to manage persuading the consumer to act this way. As we aforementioned in the introduction, **a structuring hypothesis of this thesis work is that deconsumption could reply to a search for meaning by the consumers, to an unsatisfied spiritual quest by materialism and immoderate consumption.** With this in mind, we will try to update a part of the messages composition able to trigger this increase of the perceived spiritual value but also to identify the operational modes from the deconsumption promotion message exposure to the intention (or not) of deconsumption.

Firstly, we will present the results of a qualitative preliminary study that aims to help enriching our vision of the literature. Then, we will explain our choices of variables, hypotheses and models.

## **CHAPTER 4 – PRELIMINARY STUDY**

Due to a limited literature, a qualitative study was conducted in order to find some consensus in a cultural diversity of opinions but also thinking about variables that were not studied in the literature. This preliminary study has to be regarded as a bonus that can bring some illustrations of deconsumption practices, confirming the literature or looking at variables we did not think to look at before.

### **I. PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY**

*Intercultural Preliminary Study: Interviewing Millennials about Deconsumption and Communication during covid-19 period in April 2020*

#### *A. Context and Objectives*

In a global pandemic time, consumption has been the centre of the talks these last three months. Indeed, following China in Asia and then Italy in Europe, most of the countries in the world started to quarantine themselves. Consequently, it seems people increased their consumption of the products they can keep by rushing on pasta packets or on toilet papers. However, it was also possible to observe people rushing on fruits and vegetables, which are not products you can preserve a long time so these behaviours might have create a lot of food wastes (and also the recycling seems to be

put aside during the quarantine) at the beginning of the lockdown. Then, once it has been understood that supermarkets were actively working to avoid shortage, these behaviours started to reduce. And that is how a new spotlight started to be turned towards consumption but this time to deal with the observation that people mechanically consumed less because several types of shops were closed in different countries.

During the quarantine, hearing from friends talking more about environmentally-friendly brands or influencers that decided to stop a year ago receiving gifts from brands to reduce their negative impact on the environment, made me think about formalising these conversations with a qualitative study. Indeed, talking about this with acquaintances in a more formal way has some advantages. For instance, the sample is easier to find and you know their background which makes the analysis more accurate. For example, being able to ask follow-up questions related to the topic based on what I previously know about them. However, this choice of interviewing acquaintances is mainly due to time reasons and it has some disadvantages. For instance, it could create some biases as trying to guess my thoughts from what they know of me, trying to answer in a way to please me (or the total opposite) or being afraid to disappoint or being afraid to be useless for the study. Then, in order to reduce these biases, it was explained well to them that there is not one answer better than another and that sharing their thoughts is enough. Also, I asked to participate in the study only to people that knew nothing more than the fact I work on deconsumption in my thesis. Then, when I asked them to participate in the interviews I said it was about deconsumption and that it does not matter to know what it is or not. Some of them might have checked before.

### *Objectives of the Study*

**The main objective of this qualitative study is to help delineate well the research project with confirmations and potential complements (that will be studied afterwards) of the literature.**

Firstly, it aims to understand how deconsumption and sustainable communication are perceived by Millennials comparing them with their Consumer society perception. Also, it is about having a first look at some potential evolutions to consumption related to Covid-19 quarantine context.

Secondly, it intends to try grasping the changing consumption practices by this generation with a comparison of people's thoughts from different countries to observe differences of behaviours depending on the country of origins. Then, it has also a cultural aspect in order to anticipate a potential extension of this work on communication and deconsumption to other countries or regions of the world.

It has also some purely theoretical goals as trying to have some insights enabling to confirm and complete the literature, seeing if the results support some planned variables (or on the contrary do

not stand for the selected ones) or if new ones appear. Also, it may help in making the hypotheses, even if more importance is given to the existing literature due to the limitations of this preliminary study.

Finally, one of the goals is also to improve the way deconsumption communication will be experimented and conveyed in order to make the messages the most accurate and persuasive as possible. This preliminary qualitative study is also just a bonus to have a wider vision to where to go afterwards (completing the general model, helping to make the hypotheses, etc.) and it does not intend to replace any planned studies that will be presented in the following parts later hereinbelow.

### *B. Sample*

All the interviewees' profiles are available in the Appendix 1. Initially, 10 people wanted to participate but in the end I chose to keep only Millennials (people born between 1986 and 1999) due to the lack of time but also because it is the generation I am able to understand the best by being part of it. Then, 7 interviews were kept in the final sample. 4 women and 3 men. The participants were recruited through my acquaintances and I excluded people with the ones I had already previously talked about this topic with more details. To summarize, the criteria I followed to select the interviewees were the following ones. First, all the people with the ones I previously had informal conversations about that could not be selected in the final sample used for the analysis. Secondly, interviewing only Millennials and trying to have a variety of profiles in terms of age but also in terms of occupations (in the end only people that studied at least a couple of years in higher education were found to constitute the final sample). Thirdly, each interviewee had to be from different nationalities to increase the chances of having different opinions potentially impacted by their culture. Then, it was also about making possible to conduct the interview in the language they are the most at ease at each time it was possible to obtain the most developed answers as possible.

### *C. Data Collection*

For this qualitative study, I conducted 7 semistructured interviews on WhatsApp. The video feature on the app was used for each interview to have sounds and image and each interviewee allowed me to record vocally the interviews in order to transcribe and do the analysis.

I used principally open-ended questions and two hypothetical situations where I read them 2 communication messages (that I created) in the last part of each interview. The name of each of the interviewees was changed in order to preserve their anonymity. Their new names were chosen by the interviewees themselves directly after each interview following the condition that the name has to fit with their country of origins names (eg. avoiding to get a name from a unrelated fictional character that might have confused the understanding of the analysis afterwards). Their data were

collected between April 21st and April 25th (included), 2020 during the quarantine due to the covid-19 global pandemics crisis. This particular situation was taken in account before, during and after the data collection, and for the analysis that is related to the participants or to my own perception also impacted by this crisis. The quarantine period was at its 4th until its 8th week for some participants depending in which country they live.

French (Lucas), Chilean (Carolina), Italian (Ginetto), Russian-Latvian (Veronica), Swedish-Polish (Klara), German (Anna) and Dutch (Ben) people were interviewed and they were all in quarantine at the moment of the interview. For instance, despite living in Sweden, a country that had no real restrictions and quarantine obligation before and at the moment of the interview, Klara, the Swedish-Polish interviewee, quarantined herself from the beginning of March 2020. Then, I did an interview guide in 4 different languages (English, French, Italian and Spanish) in order to interview the participants in their mother tongue when it was in my ability. For the ones I was not able to speak their mothertongue, I chose only people that studied or worked several years in English in order to have the most relevant content as possible for each participant. For instance, the Italian participant was interviewed in Italian but the Russian participant was interviewed in English because she studied in English and she works in this language too which was convenient when speaking Russian was not in my abilities.

All the interviews were transcribed. Due to the lack of time, I inially planned an interview guide that was supposed to last approximately for 30-minute interviews. In the end, the interview lenght was between 30 minutes to 1 hour depending on each interviewee. Needless to say that the semantic saturation/semantic satiation (interviewing a sufficient number of people in order to do not get new information related to the topic) could not be reached for practical reasons to have the time to transcribe and analyse everything in only some weeks.

The themes that were adressed with the interview guide were : 1) Consumption and Consumer Society in general (warming) including questions about Advertising influence ; 2) Deconsumption, 3) Advertising and Sustainable Consumption 4) In depth : Communication messages and Deconsumption related to values and goals [this part was just presented as « dealing with the themes more in-depth » during the interviews] 5) Deconsumption and Covid-19 context. To give additional precisions, to deal with *Deconsumption*, I used the word *Déconsommation* for the interview in French, the word *Deconsumo* for the one in Italian and the word *Desconsumo* in Spanish.

## II. ANALYSIS

### A. Methods

The whole analysis was realised manually. I did a first vertical « preanalysis » in order to code and index the data. This enables to classify the themes and subthemes based on the initial interview guide and about what the interviewees said. Also, it was about seeing if I could start observing some profiles or not. The data was not corrected but it was reduced and the parts off the topic were just summarised. And then, after organising the data by categories, I horizontally analysed what they said to get the sense of these data. For instance, opinions of the interviewees were compared to infer some variables that were more or less explicitly mentioned. As I previously explained, conducting only 7 interviews was not enough to get a semantic satiation even if as we are going to observe it definitely enables to get interesting insights with a glimpse of their motivations, behaviours, thoughts, opinions, experiences, etc.

### B. Results

The full 22-page analysis illustrated with verbatims, is available on the Appendix 2 p.118. The corpus was written based on the presentation of the interviewees' perceptions classified by category subsequently to the analysis. So when a remark, note, assumption or else was made based on something else, it is precised clearly.

- **A positive opinion of their own consumption**

To summary the results, most of them have a positive perception of their consumption. First, they consume in a better way by focusing on quality products for their durability, some of them buy less than before and can see their consumption as balanced because they buy what they need. Only one mentioned being aware consuming too much.

- **A global awareness of the Consumer Society vices**

Globally, they are aware of the vices of the Consumer Society. All of the interviewees referred to the word « overconsumption » additionally to talk negatively about it without I even pronounced this word in all interviews taken together. Then, I could make two nay three different groups here. The first group would be dealing with Irresponsible behaviours referring to Awareness, Habits and explaining it by Elite Interests. The second group dealing with the Consciousness to not be sustainable. For instance, an advantage of Consumer Society that was mentioned was being able to easily buy everything you want at low prices but it was perceived as a « *problem* » especially for environment, mentioning the problem of wastes and built-in obsolescence. And the last group dealing with the fact that "*too much is too much*" as a common sense. The few positives comments alluded from them about Consumer Society were about Social values. For instance, some of them have their favourite brand for social reasons (discrete logo, « *brands make me feel more 'wow!'*»). Some of the



participants proposed a criticism of Materialism. Also a kind of narcissism flaw related to this consumption was mentioned (eg. consuming a product or at a place to « *show off* » on social media for instance with great pictures on Instagram). One of them thinks that this way of consuming and materialism is affecting too much people feelings, behaviours, thoughts, the human spirit by saying, that it impacts directly the Self. According to some of them this Society fosters Egoism and then according to them there is a need to be more altruistic in the society.

- **Values in their consumption**

When dealing about values in their consumption, almost all of them verbalised the importance of the utility of what they possess. Also the Social value, the Self-Expression, the Quality, Sustainability, the Experiential and Spiritual ones through Altruistic behaviours were also mentioned. Still related to consumption, Hedonic values were only slightly mentioned except when it was about having a good moment. By contrast, the Social value is associated to consumption for everyone! This value was more or less directly linked to Self-Expression and Self-Enhancement values by the interviewees. Anna summarised well the global thoughts we can sort out among all the interviewees by saying « *I think a lot of products that we buy are status symbols*» and then she added « *the materialism is like a kind of validation to feel accepted, to be part of the society*». The monetary aspect was mentioned here only by one participant about this subtheme of values in consumption.

- **Favourite Communication Channels of the Millennials**

Most of them explained not watching TV. Then, we can deduce that communicating through online channels may be more appropriate to reach Millennials. Indeed, everyone mentioned Social Media as an influencing channel one that never was on Facebook, Instagram and all the main social networks but Whatsapp with the one we made possible the interviews. Their favourite media depends of their habits. For instance, websites ads, dailypapers ads, ads on billboards in the streets and emailing were mentioned as particular preferences and habits. Three of them referred to Brands when dealing with ads. For two of them Influencers are their privileged communication message senders because seeing what they wear and their lifestyle influence them either for monetary reasons and for utilitarian ones because they propose discounts or because it is inspiring. For one of them Influencers have more impact on her than TV ads. Some showed me examples of adverts they like. For example, a Volkswagen advert<sup>7</sup> seen as « *dynamic* », with « *cool music* » and the person precised not caring of cars. What can also influence them are the repetition of an add, notion that was mentioned several times, that for instance make them think first to this product name that was repeated in the moment of buying this product category. Also the repetition through Social Media

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydzHiVOUt5k>

and Emailing channels. Then, the importance of the topic of the advert is for one of them the most influencing part of it. Once again the Social Value seems the most influent here. That is through Uniqueness and Self-enhancement values that are important in the adverts they like. Also one of them referred to Awareness and Knowledge when dealing with traditional ads.

- **Influencing variables and Values in Advertising**

For most of them the ads they like fit with their values. The others mentioned the fact adverts are congruent with their values. Absolutely no one had a positive opinion of ads in general because they think they are everywhere now as in the social media (Eg. Facebook, Youtube, Twitch<sup>8</sup>), or because ads show things you cannot test, or they skip them because they know it is about selling or because it fosters people to have dangerous practices for themselves as opting for consumer credits (the person mentioned that referred to American society). To summary we can observe that several values are mentioned by them : the social one, awareness, the importance of knowledge and the monetary issues Consumer society can creates. They have some consumer resistance thoughts related to awareness as trying to understand how an ad is influencing them for instance.

- **Deconsumption Definition**

About defining deconsumption. First of all, only 3 interviewees heard slightly about deconsumption before I programmed the interview with them! However, for most of the interviewees there seem to be a consensus about the fact Deconsumption relates to a decrease of something or the decrease of consumption, decrease of buying and consuming less. And the only ones that did not referred to the word « reduction » directly, made an allusion to it by explaining it is the opposite of consumption and it is related to coming back to essentials things. Two of them said it is about focusing on quality and not on quantity.

- **Perception of Deconsumers**

Except two of them, they all know someone deconsuming. Two of the interviewees defined deconsumers with Minimalistic lifestyles and others said either that they are people loving simple things or defined as careful or people that are rather into ecology. They globally all perceive deconsumers well and even feel admiring to them. Actually, they underlined the fact they perceived them more as exceptional people by precisising that we should all have their practices. However, even whether they said positive remarks or not, four of them have different negative comments about deconsumers. They explained that when these people are too « extreme », they are too far from their reality then this can be repulsive for them to adopt their behaviours. They expressed a need to relate to more similar people to them. They also explained that these practises can create some difficulties depending on the situation due to the social norms and habits. Also one

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<sup>8</sup> Twitch is a live streaming platform originally used by gamers but for some months this one is more and more spread among Millennials

of them referred to the fact that people will claim they are deconsumers and will reduce their consumption on one side but then will catch it with another side of their consumption.

- **Deconsumption practices**

The interviewees proposed diverse deconsumption actions. Most of them mentioned the 3 R by Lee (2011) Reject, Restrict, Reclaim. However, the most referred was the Reclaim one (even if the Reject and Restrict ones go along with it). For instance, with Second-Hand shops in Sweden or the Second-Hand section inside the « traditional » shops or the fact some brands ask to bring back old products in exchange of discounts. The reuse of products and Buying sustainable products as sustainable clothes were also mentioned. Also, one of them explained the « *necessity* » to reject credit cards that are not adapted for a change in Society. Several of them suggested solutions using the circular and sharing economy. For instance, having a kind of toolbox shared in one neighbourhood. Some of them delt with buying only what we really need and give what we don't need. For instance Ginetto said « *for example if you tell me that eating at Mc Donald is necessary, it is not necessary eating at Mc Donalds, it is necessary to feed yourself* ». <sup>9</sup> Carolina summaries the thoughts of everyone by enumerating deconsumption actions « *taking care, preserving, conserving, recycling, reusing things* ». <sup>10</sup>

Among the Deconsumption practices some of them are more mental, thoughts, etc. For instance, Awareness, Consciousness, questioning yourself, to do self-examination or self-assessment were mentioned. Also, the importance of frequency. Veronica declared « *just think about 'how many of them you actually were on regular bases ? ' it might be just two sweaters and a pair of jeans [...] and then the question is 'do you really needed to buy them or then can you borrow it to friend ?* ». And another one shared a similar thought. Two of them agreed about the fact each action count and that we have to think as a society not as an individual. The need to save money could be important too. Some of them naturally gave concrete examples of Deconsumption or Sustainable consumption practices. For instance, Lucas mentioned me Sport brands. Also he joked about it by saying « *they just need to make hogs if they want make them sustainable* ». <sup>11</sup> About country and cultural experiences, I mentioned to Ben the environmentally-friendly image that his country has outside and he strongly disapproved (he was shaking « no » with his head) that the Netherlands is an environmentally-friendly country. However, Klara said that consuming less « *is totally a thing in Sweden* » ! Indeed, she added « *here it's very popular to buy at second-hand shops !* » and « *They made these second-*

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<sup>9</sup>Original verbatim in Italian : « per esempio se mi dici che consumare Mc Donalds è necessario, non è necessario consumare Mc Donalds, è necessario nutrirsi »

<sup>10</sup>Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) : « cuidar, presevar, en conservar, en reciclar, en reutilizar las cosas. »

<sup>11</sup>Original verbatim in French : « ils ont qu'à faire des sabots s'ils veulent que ça soit durable »

*hand shops very fancy ! »* (eg. of Swedish second-hand shops she referred to me: Arkivet ; Myrorna<sup>12</sup>).

- **Personal experiences of deconsumption**

About personal experience with deconsumption, Lucas mentioned the inconsistency of Second-Hand websites (eg. he referred to Vinted). That is the reason why he prefers giving to the Secours Populaire (Popular relief in France). Klara shared about her Erasmus semester as the « *biggest consumption time* » of her life except during Lent (that she does every year) as a time when she stop every « *luxurious* » practices to not disturb « *her relationship with God* » because she shared about her Religious values. She also talked about the importance of knowing herself to reinforce her altruistic values « *That is the time when I'm fully focused on how I can be a better person, how i could help other people, in different ways* » and that is what gives sense to her life and where she « *stop focusing on these material things* ». Then, Anna mentioned the fact she backpacked during one year and she learnt to live with few things during this period! « *I experienced it [Deconsumption] a little bit I think when I was backpacking because I just live with my backpack for one year. And I did not have yeah the choice of other clothes, I just had what was in my backpack and yeah I was happy with it so it was a proof that you don't need that many things to be happy* ». Finally Carolina explained the fact she was used to consume a lot to the USA and that she started to deconsume. Indeed, she explained « *deconsuming made me much happier than consuming and I also helped others and it enabled me to save money too, I'm more conscious in taking care [...] and prioritise the consumption maybe of the things because we are always going to consume but it depends what is important too*». <sup>13</sup>

We can observe that the common value (between all the ones that shared personal examples) is the Spiritual one through the common sense for Lucas, the religious, altruistic, ethical and moral vision for Klara, by the way of the experience for Anna and through the consumption fatigue. According to her, the increase of her happiness in this period was directly related to this deconsumption practice with more altruistic values and positive individual consequences as saving money. Then we can infer that their prior experiences may have influenced them to change their consumption practices.

They are globally all trying to reduce their consumption. They all said that they will deconsume in the future in some ways but not for everything. For example, the minimalistic lifestyle was directly referred. Ben mentioned that he tries to cope with a travel issue since he never thought of stopping travelling before the covid-19 period and for him travelling gives values to his life. Indeed, he

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<sup>12</sup> <https://arkivetshtm.se/> ; <https://www.myrorna.se/>

<sup>13</sup> Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) : « *« desconsumir me hizo mucho mas feliz que consumir y tambien he ayudado a otros y tambien me ha permitido como el ahorro, estoy mas consciente en cuidar [...] y priorizar el consumo quizas de las cosas porque siempre vamos a estar consumiendo pero depende que es importante tambien* »

said about flying: « *I know that I shouldn't do it but I do it anyway because it gives value to my life I think. So that's really difficult, it's difficult to make what you claim fitting with your acts in that case* ». All the others said they will deconsume then I tried to understand what are their motives to do it.

- **Values and Motivations to Deconsumption**

I noted that for most of the interviewees Deconsumption or the reduction of the consumption is associated principally with Environment. Either to limit environmental impact or to deal with sustainable consumption. However, also for personal interests as the need for space, the Monetary motive. Veronica said that « *cost-saving* » reasons are more important than the user-friendly ones and indeed saving money was the most referred motivation. Some would deconsume also for Self-Enhancement, Self-Transcendence and Social values motivations. Then, Spiritual and Moral reasons (Klara, Ginetto, Carolina, Ben) as Happiness/Hedonic reasons (Lucas, Anna, Carolina) were also mentioned. For Anna, Compassion and Empathy are the most important values in deconsumption and she said : « *empathy because I think if you don't have this mindset you won't see the need of changing something and yeah if you just focus on yourself you then you will always prioritise your needs and don't care about anything else then I think that's important* ».

However, Social Values in Deconsumption would be more altruistic and the Happiness would be more egoistic. In their opinion the ethical aspect has also its importance. Five of them referred of child labour. However, in order to avoid the same mistakes that were done in the current Environmental Communication, we can note that some interviewees would not appreciate being said that they must do something by an advertisement. Indeed, they think it would be like infantilising instead of making them more responsible so that would be a backfire effect of the « classic » environmental communication focused on duties for instance. This is consistent with the assumptions that we made when we started this work about Deconsumption.

Several of them expressed that they prefer moments than the consumption in itself and that the experience has its importance. Other variables were verbalised as Consciousness from Ben that thinks « *consciousness is quite rather important, because people know about their choices, consciouness leads to action* ». Also quality was mentioned by almost all the interviewees.

- **Generations and Deconsumption**

This study is about the perception of one Generation : the Millennials. Then this part was not a direct question I asked them but it only gathers generation perceptions or roles mentioned by some interviewees. A lot of Millenials perceive their lifestyle as healthy and environmentally-friendly or at least they perceive as tending to that. Lucas and Veronica both of them mentioned the baby boomers generation. And depending on the place their grandparents (from the baby boomers generation) used to live, their experience with consumption is completely different. Then this is the

reason why History and Culture are variables that are necessarily needed to be taken in consideration while interviewing different generations from different countries! Then Lucas mentioned his grandmother that was born in the beginning of the 30-year post war boom! Then he described her as an over consumer and thinks that she would take a dim view of deconsumption. Lucas thinks that money was more important before than now. The point about overconsumption starting from the baby boomer period is indeed an historical fact in the western society. However, Veronica mentioned that her grandparents lived during Soviet Union! So they are used to consume few ! She told me : « *so therefore people were not so much attached to material products even buying a sofa it was... it was a big occasion [...] this is also the mentality they still live with* » which shows the role of habits. According to Veronica there would be no problem for her grandparents to consume less because they have already this mindset « *They don't like to buy things, they don't like to throw out things they prefer just to keep what they have* ».

Veronica thinks that Millennials is a « *spoiled* » generation ! Indeed, she stated « *we've got such a variety of products you can find, it doesn't matter what type you're talking about but you can now find it in so many different sizes, in so many different shapes, in so many different colors, materials, etc. so we are spoiled in this way sort that we can buy whatever we imagine*», that shows once again that Consumer Society made us used to Choice. She however thinks that things start to change in Millennials generation « *at least in some countries and for some people we start to see the drawbacks of that* ». Carolina mentioned the impact of advertising on new generations as Millennials and Generation Z « *Advertising are the strongest elements of the consumerism. It has a power on the new generations.* »<sup>14</sup>.

- **Sustainable consumption and Advertisements**

All made positive comments about environmental ads! It could be because they think that environment can be a « *powerful argument* » or because that is good that they exist. However, Greenwashing was referred by 4 of them! Some companies claim being environmentally-friendly in their advertisements but sometimes behind there is no concrete actions which create a distrust of these kinds of ads. Ginetto summarised that by mentioning the importance of Knowledge, of studying what is behind and he added that he does not really trust neither ads nor what the media said, he trusts way more his friends that study in particular these kinds of things. We can infer that the Credibility of the companies play a role in particular through that the match between their advertisements and what they really do. Ginetto added that the ads should be more educative and

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<sup>14</sup>Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) : « las propagandas, son el elemento mas fuerte del consumismo. Tiene un poder sobre las nuevas generaciones fuerte »

pedagogic and they should give the proof that they are really taking responsible actions. Or at least enable him to check.

Three of the interviewees felt « *over-the-top* » with this topic of environment in ads. Veronica thoughts summarised well what the three of them think about these environmental arguments : « *2 months ago we were all talking about environmental sustainability everywhere, Greta, here and there...it's already so so so tiring ! Now we have another topic of dicussion which is corona...* ». She added « *maybe it gets too much atention to the media...we should stop talking about it we should start acting !* ». Ben thinks this kind of arguments are presented in a too « *simplistic way* » and this undermines the effectiveness of the message. Oppositely, Lucas thinks that media doest not talk enough about this or when they do it, he thinks it is presented as an incredible achievement at each time.

Four of them saw an Ad incitating to consume less according to them. Ben mentioned a KLM campaign incitating to fly less, Veronica thinks she saw an ad about sustainable menstrual cups, Klara saw these kinds of ads with H&M giving discounts when they bring back their all H&M clothes to recycle them or sell them as second-hand products and Carolina mentioned a Chilean shop called « Paris »<sup>15</sup> that deal with advert to collect clothes and reuse them. Anna thinks that an ad making people consuming less would be a bad one because the companies need to do profit but Klara contrasted that with talking about the brand image.

- **Ought vs. Ideals messages : reactions**

These messages were made based on the literature. The oughts message was: « *Each human has to play its part. It is your duty to act for a sustainable future, it is then your role to reduce your consumption that will enable you to meet your responsibility* ». I invented this message but it was inspired by what Pham and Avnet (2004) said about oughts and what we discussed about in the litertaure review. Six of them had a positive reaction about the oughts message. But what is noticeable is they had this positive reaction because they all agreed with the message. That means it might be persuasive only to people already convinced by this message. Four of them expressed a negative reaction because of fatigue of this topic and had the feeling that the message was too « *enforcing* » or because some people will not care at all of messages like these.

I made the Ideals message based on the article of Özçağlar-Toulouse (2009) by taking 3 of the most important Ideals by « responsible consumers » according to their study. The Ideals message was the following one: « *Whether your ideals are moral: to do not hurt others. Political, so that each of your purchasing choice can be perceived as "votes" toward a better society. Or for other reasons as*

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<sup>15</sup> <https://ayuda.paris.cl/>

*liberating yourself from the “good consumer” label to be seen as a human-being. Consuming less or deconsuming will enable you to do that.*” All of them had positive reactions about this message! The message was perceived as deep, as a way to give choice, it impressed them, some agreed with the sense of it, this message involves more the audience, it makes people think and was seen as good by referring to the ethical aspect and perceived as philosophical by one of them. Despite provoking more positive reactions than the oughts message it also created more negative ones! The first thing is that several of them found this message too complicated for an advertisement. For instance, Veronica and Klara did not get the message directly when I read them and they got it only when I made them read it. Also, some of the interviewees found this ad might be too provocative or even hurtful for some people that are not as the ad describe. For instance, Klara said « *they can motivate or demotivate you because people can become depressed when they feel they are guilty to something but you have some people that can be motivated about it* » and she added « *it makes me think too much... in the end we are not less human because we are consumers* ». Lucas totally agreed about that. Ginetto explained the same thing in more explicit way « *I think that a person that consume a lot could feel attacked by this advertisement because it would be saying that people that consume less are better than you. Then, in this case, that maybe would attack people values* ». <sup>16</sup> And he added that then this person would not feel convinced at all or would feel repelled by it.

However, it was suggested by Carolina that presenting the message as an opportunity would be more effective. In the end as much as people (five) felt convinced by this message than the Oughts one. Obviously the goal of this study was not experiential so it did not conform with all the experimental rules as for instance switching the messages for half of the interviewees to limit biases due to the position! But it still gives a glimpse of it that and making sure the next time to do not make the messages too complicated for instance and also caring of the way of conveying it and presenting it! Also it shows that Ideals are indeed convincing but they are hard to present in an advert without having negative impacts on people on one hand even if the goal of this message was positive.

- **Ideals vs. Oughts, Deconsumption Communication Messages: Improvements and Impressions**

The improvements they proposed were interesting because all were different. First of all, several of them mentioned the need to show Facts whether the message was Oughts-oriented or Ideals-oriented to increase the credibility of the ad and the credibility of the brand. This variable can also help improving the making of these messages in themselves. An interesting thing is when I asked

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<sup>16</sup> Original verbatim in Italian « penso che una persona che consuma tanto potrebbe sentirsi attaccata di questa pubblicità perché sarebbe come dire quelle persone consumano meno sono migliori di te. Quindi questo caso magari attacca i valori della gente. »



Ginetto how to improve the Oughts message, he gave me an Ideal example that would makes people more responsible according to him: «*For example, showing how much we consume/buy extra in comparison to what is necessary. OK ? It is about making understand how much in addition could be useful for instance to the poor populations, that is to say population that we disregard. They would be satisfied, they would be rescued*»<sup>17</sup>. For the Ideals message Veronica suggested presenting Facts this way « *This is how this beach looked fifty years ago, this how it looks now* ».

Then, Visuals was the second most mentioned variable after Facts or Credibility. In particular for the Ideals message they express the need to see pictures or videos. All the others agree that would make it more convincing. Also, Ginetto and Veronica referred to experiences. The way of conveying the message was also mentioned some times and they related it with the Generation role. For instance, on social media as an ad on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. Some mentioned the generation role, for instance by saying it would work maybe better on young people or children. Then, to improve the message, some of them said that the Ideals message needs to be simpler and clearer by being more specific.

Finally, I asked them which message gives them the best impression. Five on seven interviewees preferred the first one then the oughts one! Their explanations from the ones preferring the Ideals one said it was more positive because it gives the choice and more convincing that the oughts one. About the ones preferring the oughts-oriented one, there are two groups. One group that thinks we need to use both of these messages because both are effective and will not work on the same people and the others that didn't feel convinced at by the Ideals one and they suggested to don't use the Ideals one in this way or not using at all because it deals too much with personal values.

To limit bad reactions to the ad, Carolina adviced to adapt the ad to the generation, Ginetto suggested to adapt to the profile and Klara suggested to do not use values at all because it can creates « *double-standard* » or « *cognitive dissonance* » (as Ben said) on people consuming less or on people seing them consuming a product from a Brand that has different values! They referred to the congruence between the values of the brand, the ad and the person. We can infer that the Similarity can play a role for them.

- **Deconsumption and Covid-19 crisis quarantine**

What is happening now<sup>18</sup> in the world simply cannot be ignored when you deal with consumption and even less neglected when you deal with Deconsumption. This is a moment where changing our way of consumption is at the heart of the conversations.

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<sup>17</sup>Original verbatim in Italian «ad esempio, mostrare quanto consumiamo in più rispetto al necessario. OK ? E far capire quanto di più potrebbe essere utile alle popolazioni povere cioè popolazioni che noi spregiamo. Sarebbero soddisfatte, sarebbero salavare »

<sup>18</sup>Written in May 2020 during Covid-19 pandemics

First of all, about their mindset before quarantine, for some of them their mindset fits with what they said before about consumer society which mean they thought already we were consuming too much and that they were already trying to do effort to make their consumption more sustainable. Some others think that there is not that big change with the lockdown except differences is their ways of buying (eg. buying more online). However, some of the interviewees agreed that there is a change in their consumption that is related to support more locals products and producers comparing to before the crisis, a reduction of their consumption and also of how they spent their money because of an uncertain economic future. However, it is important to remind that here we are interested to a deconsumption that is not endured! Also they noticed improvements in the environment as the reduction of pollution.

I asked them about their mindset related to their consumption « now », at the end of April 2020. Veronica, Ben, Klara, Lucas and Ginetto all mentioned that this quarantine shows we don't need much to be fine. Also, they all verbalised a decrease in their consumption. Ben referred to an example of reflection he had about Fashion industry. Indeed to share his thoughts he explained « *I read today a short article about fashion currently that fashion industry produced clothes for the summer season but nobody is buying them so what would happen with those, would you postpone your fashion sense to next year ?* ». Since Fashion has always been renewed he added « *would means that all things produced for the last 3-4-5 months would be destroyed because it does not fit with our fashion sense in 5 months from that ? That's an interesting thought.*».

I asked them all if they were missing their former consumption during the quarantine. Lucas and Ginetto referred to the fact they miss going out with their friends. They took the example of having a beer with their friends and they said that in the end they don't need the beer, they just miss to have social interactions. They both miss the experience brought by consumption. Ben also mentioned a similar example. Carolina added that she misses the moments too. Only three of them (Lucas, Veronica and Ben) admitted missing their former consumption strictly speaking (eg. the need for travelling). Interviewees that do not miss their consumption highlighted different reasons. The common reasons of missing it were consuming services. In addition, the ones stating not missing their consumption are in the end mentioning moments more than the service in itself. Carolina for example, by saying she does not miss her consumption, she mentioned the need to go out to a bar or a pub for the social interactions.

Four of them (Lucas, Veronica, Ben and Anna) said that people (including themselves) will catch up their consumption after the quarantine due to the deprivation. For instance, Lucas said « *I think*

that [consumption] will strongly start again!»<sup>19</sup>. Veronica stated « I will definitely try to catch up with things I missed as going to the cinema, it will be consumption of services primarily not physical things you buy ». Ben said « maybe in food and drinks outside of my house yes, otherwise no » and Anna explained that consumption will indeed increase again. Several of them think that either they were already trying deconsuming or they were already not consuming much as Veronica, Ben, Klara, Ginetto and Carolina. Some of them explained that because they buy already only the necessary according to them (Veronica, Klara, Ginetto). For instance, Klara said that she already had the realisation that she needed to consume less after her Erasmus semester two years ago because she consumed way too much according to her. Only Lucas and Anna said that deconsumption or consuming less is a goal because they know consumption is harmful for the environment. Also Lucas mentioned the alienating side of the society, he mentioned a duality that was referred, as I explained earlier, by Klara as "double-standard" or "cognitive dissonance" by Ben.

- **General thoughts**

About the interviews in general. All expressed their interest for the topic or mentioned the importance of it! Some of them appreciated the fact we had this conversation in a more formal way. I noticed for most of them only minimal changes in their way of speaking in particular at the beginning because they knew they were recorded but then these changes disappeared through the interview. Knowing their background enabled me to bring them deeper than I planned on the topic and Lucas even noticed that. For instance, I asked follow-up questions related to what I knew about them. Carolina really loves the word « deconsumption », it is something new for her, she had never heard it before I mentioned it. As acquaintances that participated to it, they all wish to reach the thesis afterwards. Lucas, Ginetto and Carolina summarised the interview in the end and Ginetto took this time to remind what is the most important thing in his opinion about this topic. He said that the « *media aspect, of the advertising, is really important. And also how to interact with the consumer?* ». Ginetto referred to the need to study more psychology of consumers and that it is « *useless to do beautiful advertisements* » if it is to convince people that are already convinced. He also said that there is a need to study more the psychology, and people behaviours precisely « *to convince people that are not convinced!* »<sup>20</sup> and this latest is one of the reasons why this work exists.

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<sup>19</sup> Original verbatim in French : « je pense que ça va repartir en balle ! »

<sup>20</sup> Original verbatims in Italian : « è molto importante l'aspetto dei media, della pubblicità ! E anche come interfacciarsi con il consumatore ? »  
« i media devono convincere chi non è convinto, non devono convincere chi è già convinto e quindi non bisogna fare delle pubblicità belle ma bisogna studiare meglio la psicologia, i comportamenti »

### III. DISCUSSION

#### A. Conclusion

By participating at the delimitation of this project, this study aims to help understanding better the perception of Millennials from different origins about Communication and Deconsumption during a particular period that is the covid-19 quarantine. Also it enables the interviewees to contribute, through their thoughts shared in semistructured interviews, to build better Communication tools to encourage people reducing their consumption. To persuade a generation to adopt deconsumption, who is better than people from this generation themselves to know what they would prefer in the messages practioners send to them. The fact of interviewing acquaintances really enabled me to go deeper in some aspects of the topic.

One of the first things brought out by this study is that Millennials consumers are really dealing with splited thoughts, between what Society valorises and what they wish to do. Most of them said being aware being part of Consumer society but this one is really frowned upon among Millennials. For instance, overconsumption and materialism were really criticised by all of them without exception. At the same time, most of them perceive positively their own consumption! They have always known this way of functioning and several think that they are already trying their best to have a « responsible » lifestyle related to their consumption. That is why, Deconsumption is perceived way more positively by the interviewees than the « classic » consumption. Also, Deconsumers are perceived as exceptional or admirable as long as they are not « extreme as some ecologists » (opinion of several interviewees) which is something important to take in account in the communication. Also Deconsumer and Deconsumption practices were defined several times as a Minimalistic lifestyle.

The second point is that this study confirm our literature review about deconsumption (cf. Chapter 1). Indeed, there is a consensus about seeing Deconsumption as a decrease of consumption but the explanations of it were varied. Some said it is to come back to the essential, some others said it is to shift the focus from quantities to quality and some others told me it is about « *trying to break with the idea of consumerism* ». The possible Deconsumption practices referred to the 3R (Restrict, Reclaim, Reject) by Lee (2011). Sharing economy was the most mentioned practice. Cultural practices were also described as the fact it is normal to go to « *fancy* » second-hand shops in Sweden for instance. Or that a lot of brands have second-hand section next to the «classic » one.

Thirdly, about Communication Channels there is one to favour: Social Media ; one to avoid: TV. By taking only the people interviewed for this study, all of them agreed that they almost never watch the TV ! By taking a larger view, most of the Millennials I know (no matter if they are my friends or

not) do not watch Television or only very occasionally or only for a specific TV programme. Consumer Society made Millennials to choose what they want even more than the previous generations. For instance, with the development of the streaming platforms, the personalisation of the products, etc. Research about Personalising Deconsumption, after finding the persuasive communication messages, would be interesting since it would enable to make this change softer and easier for this generation. The Communication Channels they prefer are Social Media. Indeed, even one of the participant that did not use them, with the exception of Whatsapp, told me that Social Media is the channel that should work the most on Millennials. For instance, the most mentioned social network was Instagram through Influencers (the use of Stories was also referred). However, Millennials is a difficult generation to follow because first they were watching TV a lot when they were younger, they brought new ways of consuming videogames and then they gave up TV for Social Media and now we can start to observe that some of them are step by step leaving Social Media. Indeed, when there is a Social Media fatigue for some of them then they prefer Emailing subscriptions letter (in particular for workers) or other Websites ads, Ads on the street or Dailypapers were also secondly cited. Proposing a Storytelling through these media could be a possibility some of them referred to.

Fourthly, the prior experiences may appear to be a moderator of their wish to adopt deconsumption. About all the ones that experienced Deconsumption from a personal experience, thought that they started reducing their consumption after a particular event, period or moment in their life. Even if one referred to Hedonic values, the common value they shared was the Spiritual one. This one was through the common sense, religious reasons, altruistic ones, ethical or moral motives or by the way of the experience. Also a kind of consumption fatigue was referred too.

Fifthly, Millennials motivations to Deconsumption are Environmental because they are aware consumption harms the planet. Personal benefits as ergonomy (more space), saving money or self-enhancement (« *self-help* », « *feeling as a better person* »), altruistic reasons and the Self-Transcendence, the need to help others, to be more connected to others, a need for unity. Also Hedonic motives, ethical ones, etc. All the variables they mentioned were explained in Appendix 3.

Sixthly, Millennials are torned about environmental arguments. Some are exhausted to hear about them and some other said that we need to talk more about them. This could also be explained by the place they live but also by the frequency they are in contact with communication media. Also, at the beginning there seems to be a relation between the fact people already got the realisation they need to consume less and the tiredness of environmental arguments. Then, by comparing the profiles I concluded that it was a simplest reason that was the repetition of these environmental arguments that could makes them tired.

Then, to improve communication in advertisements. The results show the need to make the messages more simple, to use facts and to adapt the way of conveying it (depending on the generation for instance). There is a need to have a certain control on the situation to check if what said in the ads is accurate or not in particular if it is related to commitment to causes or if the ads claim wanting to make people reduce their consumption. Ideals message gave more positive impressions than the oughts ones but the ideals one also led to more negative ones ! The risk with ideals is to hurt people that do not share the values presented. Then ideals can be persuasive but they are not easy to introduce in an advert without creating some negative reactions whether the aim behind it is positive. Even if makes them know the goal behind it (after acknowledging their reaction) seems to have a more or less subtle positive impact in their reactions.

Finally, based on these interviews, the covid-19/ « new coronavirus » might not lead to a consequent shift to deconsumption (at least for this sample). For most of them, this is not the covid-19 that made them changed their consumption. At best, it is only seen as an additional argument to do it. However, it made them reflect. Some said being motivated by the positive changes it creates in the environment and that they will keep good habits as supporting more local farmers and local groceries but some others said they will catch up their consumption due to the deprivation related to the quarantine. Only some of them said that they missed their former consumption (before the quarantine). However, they almost all agree to say that the moments (and not the products themselves) provided more by the social interactions than the consumption in itself are what they missed the most during the quarantine. This is explained by the fact we were actually only partly deprived of consumption while we were more deprived of social interactions.

The limits of deconsumption were referred too. For example one mentioned ergonomic reasons to travelling by saying « *the less things you own the easier it is just to pack your one piece of luggage and fly* » which could be a good argument used by an airline to encourage buying flight ticket which is not environmentally-friendly. As another interviewee said if you decrease on one side and increase in another then your impact might never ever reduce.

## *B. Variables*

The complete list of variables is available in Appendix 3. Here referred only to the variables we decided to keep.

They are several variables emphasised by the study that we did not think about earlier. As Credibility or Perceived Credibility that was observed several times in the interviews. It raised questions as to what extent the source of the message is credible or not ? An association would it be

more credible for deconsumption than a brand (that may be perceived as hypocrite) ? What is the source of the communication?

Also the Similarity is another variable referred in the study translate as a need to have practices not too far from their realities but also about the fit between their values and the ones in the communications. Here it would be then more a Similarity of values, feeling close, comparable or different from the advertisement.

Then, Prior Experiences is related to the fact that the interviewees that experienced deconsumption were in a certain context. This emphasised that manifestly if a moment, a situation, the environment of the individual is patently able to influence her/him then this could make sense to influence people with the messages. Indeed, the communication messages, by the creation of a specific context, may trigger this deconsumption intention.

Finally, Repetition that was one of the most referred notions among all the interviews, may increase the messages' strength but this one would be used only if a longitudinal study is making possible. Or for instance through a partner of the research project in a controlled communication but on field then not everything can be controlled and it would be a « quasi-experimental » situation.

These four variables are ones that we may integrate to our research models later, after a meticulous investigation of their literature. Then they will not be directly integrated to the models we will present in this current work. The others variables (Appendix 3) will not be integrated to our model but they can be taken in account to improve the communication messages and the understanding of deconsumption.

In addition initially planned variables were mainly confirmed by this study. For our central variable, the Spiritual value was associated to religious values (only one interviewee was openly religious). However, most of them mentioned the need to give a sense to their life, the need for experience, the need to feel useful for causes, the need to feel they are better people, to deal more with moments than with things, etc. then the spiritual value seems to be definitely relevant. About the goals, ideals was perceived as important in deconsumption but with the condition of being careful in the way of presenting it to not « hurt » people. Oughts seems to work mainly on people already convinced, the results suggested that presenting ideals or oughts as an opportunity could be a clue to make them more persuasive. Then about the motivations, Self-Enhancement was referred more through personal interests and Self-Transcendence because one of the interviewee that did experienced a deconsumption, explained it was a very personal process that makes her act but that she could not explain at the same time and she did it also for altruistic reasons.

About other variables as the Generation that could impact (positively or negatively) the persuasive effect of the message then the way of conveying the message may have to vary depending on the generation. However, maybe testing with the same channel on all the generations and then with a different one to see on which generation one channel enables to make the message more persuasive or not. Choice was emphasised as an habit that the Consumer Society created and that it enables them to feel free. Some interviewees felt they have more the choice with the Ideals message.

About the control-related variables, the perception of the personal role might have a negative impact on deconsumption intention because the one alluding to it explained that they think have done enough already or that this is not their role. However, for some of them this perception of the personal role can have a positive impact as they already started doing efforts and they really want to keep reducing their consumption. The perceived situational control was referred more as a need to stop being defined by their consumption and also in the way of being tired having to conform themselves to the society, to the others. In addition, it mentioned by most of the interviewees as a need to check if the actions of the companies and brand fit with the supposed values they sell in their advertisements. Whereas the self-control was showed by expressions related to being careful, or « *trying to balance their consumption* », consuming only the necessary which show that the self-control may need to be measured in a certain way maybe adapted to the deconsumption context.

And finally, the anticipated happiness and the perceived well-being were also referred because the majority of them think that deconsuming will make them happier and make them feel better. They think they could anticipate it but they also said being aware happiness does not come that easily. They actually did anticipate it when I asked if they would deconsume in the future and why, most of them anticipated this potential happiness.

### *C. Limitations and Future Research*

Even if the interviews bring some interesting indications that will be studied with details, the results of this study made in a short time will have to be taken the pinch of salt. Ideed, the limitations are mainly due to methodological and practical reasons. Firstly, all the biases related to interviewing acquaintances as the try to please the investigator thoughts (even if this was not directly observed in the final sample, it might happened unconsciously), the small number of interviewees (only 7) or the short period available to conduct this study. Also that they are currently studying or working all interviewees' profiles were people that have known at least some years of higher education. This means that there is a need for future research in interviewing people with a larger variety of profiles as people that did not have a job requiring higher education for instance.



In addition, only people from Millennials generation were interviewed. It shows a need for future research to interview other generations about the topic. To compare answers between deconsumers and more « classic » consumers in order to convince and even persuade people that are not already convinced.

Also this study has a kind of cultural bias. Indeed, the interviewees were all from different countries and have all perceptions that are influenced by their own culture (even if it enabled to have more ideas). In addition, each country is not at the same step of progression in terms of sustainable consumption then there is a need to understand the behaviours of one culture to adapt the communication to it. A future research is needed by being focused only in one culture (and eventually comparing with another).

Before conducting this study, we already intended to conduct an explorative study. Then, this one, with all its methodological imperfections mainly related to delay (the study was conducted with the analysis included only in three-four weeks) but also with mistake in terms of sample choice (an intercultural study on a small sample and that early in the project), enabled to have a first glimpse of opinions and perceptions about deconsumption. And most of all, this study enabled to have new ideas to take a wider view of the topic. Then, based on all these observations (conclusions and limitations), we will conduct a qualitative study that will aim to understand better the deconsumption concept and deconsumers' motivations by being focus on French people only and on a sample that is more important. We will give more details about this planned study in the methodological part of this thesis (cf. part 3.).

The study of this chapter mainly confirmed several elements of literature. Now, we will propose our hypotheses and models.

## CHAPTER 5 – MODELS AND HYPOTHESES

In this chapter we will delimit the research proposal. First by presenting with details the research question and the objectives of this work by explaining our choices of variables. Then, by showing the links we make with the presentation of the hypotheses and models.

### I. RESEARCH QUESTION, OBJECTIVES AND VARIABLES

The **general research issue** is the following one:

***Identifying persuasive communication characteristics likely to encourage deconsumption through an increase of its perceived spiritual value and to understand its action mechanisms.***

From this general issue follow on different research objectives that will be accompanied by the choice of our variables.

#### A. Deconsumption Concept

One of the main objective of this research work is to grasp better the **deconsumption concept**.

What are the specific features of deconsumption in comparison to other forms of consumer resistance? In the Chapter 1 – Deconsumption, we discussed around this term of « Deconsumption » and to what it refers to, from its definition to how it can be practiced by the individuals and all along compare it with other shapes of consumer resistance. In the II. we look through the convergences and divergences of the authors about Deconsumption. We intend to do a qualitative study to clarify this term.

On which bases can we differentiate deconsumption to close concepts such as: voluntary simplicity, minimalism, anticonsumption, etc. ? In the I. of the chapter about Deconsumption we compared the Deconsumption concept with other similar or close notions of it and our qualitative study will complete this work.

What are the motivations to deconsumption and intentions of the consumers that undertake to the deconsumption that were discovered in the existing literature? In the III. we defined the Deconsumption practices features in order to deal with the deconsumers motivations. We can also wonder how is built up a deconsumption decision ? In the literature there is an absence of work about it but De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) work enable to give some insights about it and the study conducted in the Chapter 4 too. The qualitative study that has an explorative aim will help to complete the literature about it.

In our work, the **deconsumption intention** is our dependent variable.

### *B. Motivational Mechanisms*

A second research objective is to identify **motivational mechanisms** likely to favourably influence individual decision to deconsume.

What are the whole motivational mechanisms involved in the deconsumption decision-making process (utilitarian motivations vs. hedonic vs. social vs. spiritual ones ; egoistic motivations vs altruistic ones ; motivations through duties/obligations vs. motivations through ideals ; motivations of control ; motivations of self-fulfilment/self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence)? In the Chapter 1 – Deconsumption III. and in the Chapter 3 we discussed about that. The motivations will be also studied through our explorative study.

What are the mechanisms the most explanatories in the deconsumption decision-making process? In the I. and II. of the Chapter 3 – Individual's Functioning Mode, we examined these mechanisms around Ideals vs. Oughts goals (I.A.), Self-enhancement vs. Self-transcendence motivations (I.B.), the search for Happiness and Well-being (I.C.) but also around the control with the Perception of the Personal Role and Choice (II.A.) and the Situational Control and Self-Control (II.B). The **self-enhancement and self-transcendence motivations** will be manipulated in one of our quantitative studies.

What are the links between these motivations and the value search (utilitarian, hedonic, social and more especially spiritual) in the deconsumption? We looked through these links in the III. of the Chapter 1, the Chapter 2 – Spiritual Value and the Chapter 3. About the value, the variable « **Spiritual Value** » will be our main mediator.

### *C. Persuasive Communication Characteristics*

A third objective is imagining **persuasive communication characteristics** (as part of the deconsumption promotion) likely to stimulate these motivational mechanisms and to try them out in a scientific and controlled way.

Is it more effective to prime goals as « ideals» *versus* goals as « duties/obligations/oughts » ? We looked at these mechanisms in the B. Activating Goals of the Chapter 3. Is it more effective to highlight self-enhancement motivations or self-transcendence ones ? There is Urien and Kilbourne (2011) work showing that self-enhancement values affect positively the intention to behave environmentally responsibly. However, there is to our knowledge no study about these motivations (self-enhancement and self-transcendence) related to deconsumption strictly speaking. Our study brought out that these motivations may have an importance in fostering deconsumption. Then, there is a need to experiment the effect of the emphasis of these motivations on deconsumption intentions. The **ideals and oughts goals is the first independent variable** we considered. It will be a

factor we intend to manipulate in each of our experimentations (at least the first, the second and the third one).

Is it more effective to point up the fact an individual has the choice of a deconsumption behaviour or to not doing it? We related the choice to the perception of the personal role in our Chapter 3 but we will study this choice in a deconsumption context. Then the **choice** will be manipulated in one of our experiments.

#### *D. Psychological Processes, Mediating Effects*

A central objective is to precise **psychological processes (cognitive and affective ones), mediating effects** that would explain the effect of some persuasive communication characteristics on intentions of deconsumption and modelling them. For instance, we discussed about the spiritual value in the Chapter 2.

Through our experiments we will examine the potentially mediating role of the perception of felt control by the consumer in front of different kinds of deconsumption promotion messages. We look through the control literature on the Chapter 3 II.B. The **perceived situational control will be a mediator** in our first experiment.

Also, we will look into the potentially mediating role of the consumer's perception of personal role facing these different types of deconsumption promotion messages. We discussed about it through our Chapter 3 II.A (Robinson et al., 2012 ; Botti and McGill, 2011). The **perception of the personal role will be a mediator** in the same experiment where choice will be used as a manipulated factor.

Then, studying the perceived well-being by the consumer that stem from a higher spiritual value of deconsumption. This literature was studied on Chapter 2 III.A. and Chapter 3 I.C. **The perceived well-being will be a mediator** in several of our experimentations.

#### *E. Individual or Situational Moderating Variables*

A last objective is to detect **individual or situational moderating variables** likely to make vary the effects and including them to the tested research model.

Verifying if the effects and mechanisms are the same no matter the considered generation (baby-boomers, generation X, millennials, generation Z). The preliminary study conducted moves towards

this generation role that was referred several times. We will investigate about the **generation moderating effect** through an experiment.

Looking if there is an effect of the anticipation of the happiness of the deconsumption. In the Chapter 3, we referred to happiness. The **anticipated happiness will be a moderator** in several experiments.

Checking a possible effect of the trait (individual's tendency) of control. In the Chapter 3 we look through the self-control literature. **The self-control will be a moderator** in each of our (first three) experimentations.

We precise that other sociodemographic variables will have to be controlled too. Now that we introduced our choices of variables with the definition of our research objectives, we will present our hypotheses in the following section.

## II. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

After detailing the use of each variables through the research objectives, we will now build three research models. Indeed, we planned to do four studies, one qualitative to explore more the deconsumption concept (study 1) and three quantitative studies (study 2, 3 and 4). Then, in order to avoid confusions about the links between the variables, the hypotheses start again at "H1" for each research model for the handiness.

We took as a starting point the idea that the spiritual value aroused by a deconsumption perspective could encourage to deconsume or consuming less because the spiritual value would give more meaning to the deconsumption.

The main point of this work is to show the importance of mediation effects. Then, even if we will look at the direct effects during the analysis, here we focus our hypotheses on the mediating effects of the variables because what we want to show is that through the rise of this spiritual value, there would be an increase of the intention to deconsume.

### A. *Perceived Situational Control and Motivations Model*

Our first hypothesis is about the link between the activation of ideals vs. oughts goals and perceived situational control.

We got interested to the ideals/oughts distinction because the communication and the speech conveyed by the media around sustainable consumption let often an important place to the topic of duties and obligations. The speech around this type of consumption says that the citizen « has to »

be a « good » citizen by bending herself/himself to the sustainability diktat. The consumer is duty-bound to be more reasonable, to face his obligations regarding the planet, the future generations, etc. As we explained earlier and as showed in our preliminary study, this vision a bit punitive does not take in consideration the fact that durably consuming and deconsuming could correspond to stimulating and motivating life choices then bestowing more meaning to her/his life, to her/his consumption, to her/his voluntary deconsumption. Even though consumption is often presented as a mean to reach ideals, to be happy, to have well-being, to fulfill ourselves, etc. it is not what is emphasised in the prevailing speech around sustainable consumption and deconsumption.

In the preliminary study we conducted, having the control of the situation was alluded by most of the interviewees as a need to check what the company or the brand says, having a fit to their values and not having to conform to what the society sells them. Then from this perspective, Ideals could be a way to match with their value and giving them more control in a deconsumption situation. In addition, several of the interviewees in the study said that they do not appreciate when an advertisement tells them what they should do. Then, we can imagine that an oughts message might be looked more unfavourably. However, we intend to activate them no matter if the individual is more ideal-oriented or ought-oriented as Pham and Avnet (2004) showed it. Then, we can infer that the activation of « Ideals » goals could be interesting as part of a communication message encouraging deconsumption by verifying if this one would be more effective than an activation of « Oughts » goals.

Then, the control perception seems to be linked with the question of the goals that we previously mentioned. Indeed, Trope and Fishbach (2005) showed that individuals, depending on the situation, their control can be strongly impacted and can stop them during a situation to pursue their long term objectives. Also the situation can impact them in the positive way and then individuals may prefer fulfill their long term goals or objectives. We can suppose that activating goals may prevent this conflict between their long term goals and the situation.

With this in mind, highlighting (activating them with a kind of « emphasis » close from a « priming » included within the message) « Ideals » goals (vs. « Oughts » goals) could increase the perception of having the control of the situation because the ideal appears freer, less constraining than the obligation, the ought.

**H1:** The perceived situational control mediates the effect of the activation of goals (Ideals vs. Oughts) on the perceived spiritual value. When the Ideals (vs. Oughts) are activated, the situational control will be perceived as higher (lower) by the individual

(H1a). More (less) the situational control is perceived as high, more (less) the spiritual value will be perceived as high (H1b).

About the self-enhancement and self-transcendence values. According to Poulain, Parise and Badot (2016), « *the spirituality of a consumption experience is an action of self-transformation, in a market setting, motivating by a search for meaning and wisdom with an immanent or a transcendent perspective (Poulain, 2009)* » (p.5). Here, these authors may refer to the self-enhancement concept (immanent) opposed to the Self-transcendence concept or the fact of surpassing yourself (transcendent). Schwartz (2006) connects the good-heartedness with the spiritual value which means the self-transcendence may help increasing the perception of the spiritual value of the deconsumption. However, according to him, the universality of the spiritual value is debatable which would mean there would be different way to trigger it depending on people culture. However, according to Schwartz (2006), tradition would also be related to the spiritual value which is part of the conservation (« *continuité* ») motivation that we did not mention. We can deduce that depending on how we try to trigger an increasing of spiritual value in the individual perceptions, this one could either go in the deconsumption direction or in the consumption one if the motivation to conserve a previous life is linked to a spiritual value that itself is linked with consumption. This conservation is opposite to openness to change, motivation with the one no link is made with spiritual value even if it might have one for example if someone look for stimulation in his/her life that would maybe pass by the way of spiritual values.

Some authors found that self-transcendent individuals may be more careful with their way of consuming. Indeed, in their article about self-enhancement and generativity related to environmental and responsible consumption behaviour, Urien & Kilbourne (2011) mentioned the complexity of understanding these behaviours and that the diversity of variables do not enable us to take them all in consideration. For instance, they mentionend the article by Kilbourne, Grünhagen, and Foley (2005) showing through a crosscultural study that individuals motivated by self-enhancement « *are more materialistic than self-transcendent individuals and consequently should be less concerned about the impact their consumption has on the environment* » and they also showed that these findings do not varied between the 3 countries (Germany, Canada and the USA) where they conducted their study. Here we are looking for finding motivations we can induced with a communication through the increase of several mediators especially the spiritual value (but also the situational control) so these are elements we can take in account. However, as we alluded previously, deconsumption would not be linked only to environmental motivations then by the emphasis of self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement motivations, the environment is just one of the

possibilities but they are many others as we understood in our preliminary study (eg. social issues, money, quality, etc.).

The self-enhancement and self-transcendence motivations could have a positive impact on the perceived situational control that would impact positively the perceived spiritual value and this would in the end increase the deconsumption intention. However, the self-transcendence motivations could lead to a superior perceived spiritual value than the one perceived when the individual is motivated by the self-enhancement only. As we previously explained, the perception of the control of the situation may have a positive impact on the spiritual value. Then, the perceived situational control would mediate the relation between the highlighting of these motivations and the spiritual value.

**H2:** The perceived situational control mediates the effect of the emphasis of motivations (self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence) on the perceived spiritual value. When the self-transcendence (vs. self-enhancement) is highlighted, the situational control will be perceived as higher (lower) by the individual (H2a). When the situational control is perceived as higher (lower) by the individual, the spiritual value will be perceived as higher (lower) (H2b).

The combination of goals activation and motivations emphasise would increase the perceived situational control. This would consequently increase the perceived spiritual value through this control by a meaningful agent, by this mean, the deconsuming intention. According to Schwartz (2006), « *what distinguishes a value from another is the type of goal or motivation that this value express* » (p.932). We suppose that combining both goals and motivations will lead to the increase of the perceived situational control.

Would it be possible to use all these motivations and goals in a communication ? It could be but depending of how it is presented as we discussed in our preliminary study, these could be seen as manipulations or provocations that could make people averse of an advertisement with for instance using in a communication message the reasons found by Özçağlar-Toulouse (2009) that were motives proposed by « responsible consumers ». However, here we intend to activate these goals within the communication message. Our preliminary study showed that some individuals may feel that fulfilling their duties may help them to feel as a better person or to improve themselves. Then the oughts value might maybe work a little bit better with the self-enhancement motivation. However, some of them do not like being told what they have to do to be a good person. Then, ideals messages may help them to feel freer of their decision and having more control of the situation.



Then, activating goals (ideals vs. oughts) associated with the emphasis of motivations (self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence) may positively influence the perceived situational control that will positively influence the spiritual value.

**H3:** The perceived situational control mediates the combined effect of the activation of goals (ideals vs. oughts) associated with the emphasis of motivations on the perceived spiritual value. When the ideals are activated, the situational control will be perceived as higher (lower) when the self-transcendence (vs. self-enhancement) motivations are emphasised (H3a). When the oughts are activated, the situational control will be perceived as lower (higher) when the self-transcendence (vs. self-enhancement) will be emphasised (H3b). When the situational control is perceived as higher (lower), the spiritual value is also perceived as higher (lower) (H3c).

Trope and Fishbach (2005) showed that individuals, according to their perceived control, may prefer fulfill their long term goals or objectives. However, they explained that when they are not sure of their objective, their self-control can be lower than the ones that are surer. Then, they could concede to some short term « temptations » that would run counter their goal. However, in the case that we activate a type of goal through a kind of « priming » that would have previously increased the perceived situational control, we can make the assumption the individuals do not need to be sure of their goals because they will be oriented towards either an ideals goal or an oughts one. Then, here we perceive the self-control as a moderator that would reinforce the relation between perceived control and spiritual value. Also, the self-control was highly alluded in our preliminary study.

**H4:** The self-control as trait moderates the relation between perceived situational control and perceived spiritual value.

About the link between deconsumption and spiritual value, there is an absence of literature. For instance, Stillman et al. (2012) showed that higher levels of spirituality decrease the intention to consume material good in a conspicuous way. However, to not consume conspicuously does not mean reducing the consumption or deconsuming. It means that when the spirituality is high people reduce the « noticeability » of their consumption. Also, here Stillman et al. (2012) manipulates Spirituality with a Control Group with « no spirituality » and a group with. In our perception, the spiritual value would not be something we manipulate because we look for increasing it through the communication around goals and motivations. De Lanauze and Siadou-Martin (2013) explained that individuals look for the spiritual value when dealing with deconsumption. As these authors, we

perceive this spiritual value as really important in the deconsumption process. Here, we consider it as a mediator that when perceived as high enough could trigger the desire to deconsume.

**H5:** The perceived spiritual value mediates the relation between the perceived situational control and the deconsumption intention. When the situational control is perceived as higher (lower), the spiritual value is perceived as higher (lower) (H5a). When the spiritual value is perceived as higher (lower), the deconsumption intention will be higher (lower) (H5b).

In our first model here the summary of all of the hypotheses for our study 2 that we will explain more in details later (here we focus only on the hypotheses and the construction of our research models):

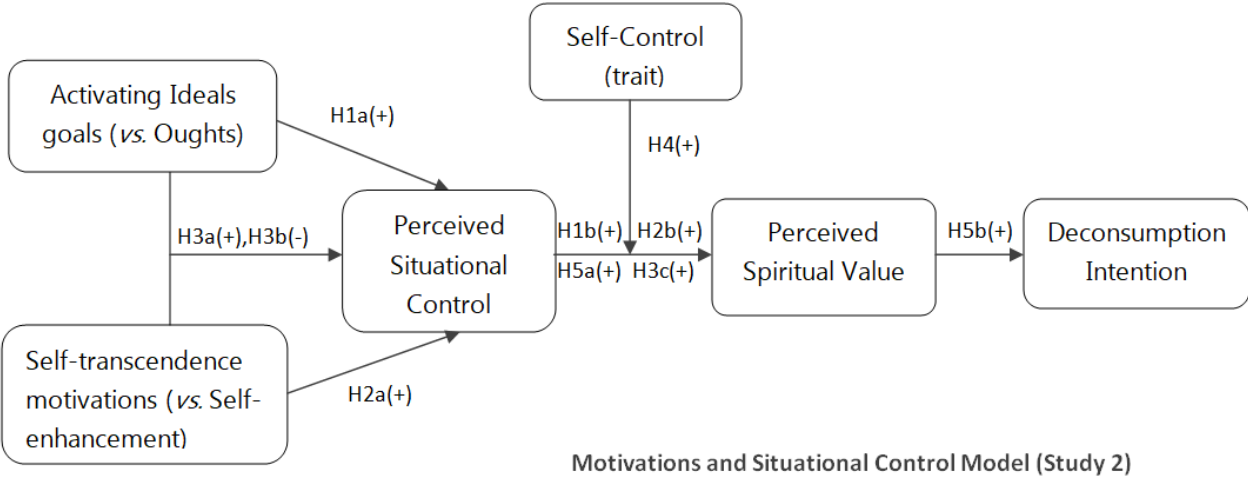


Figure 12: Model 1

**B. Personal Role and Choice Model**

Robinson et al., 2012 referred that people « *tend to magnify their own contributions* » (p.128). Then, we can suppose that when people feel they have an important personal role, they spread their contributions which may have two different effects. Either irking other people or being seen as a trendsetter and fostering other people to take this role too. Maybe this depends also of the social position of the person, maybe an influencer can convince her/his followers that it is great to behave in a certain way. In the interviews we conducted, two of the interviewees explained that influencers influence them because they follow them precisely because their way of life or at least the messages they spread fits with their ideals. We are interesting here in the mediating effect the personal role can have on the effect of the activation of goals through Communication message. We suppose that this activation of goals will have a positive impact on the spiritual value, as we previously explained, and that the perception of the personal role may highlight ever more this value if the goal activated is an Ideals one.

**H1:** The perception of the personal role mediates the effect of the activation of goals (ideals vs. oughts) on the perceived spiritual value. When the ideals (vs. oughts) are activated, the personal role will be perceived as higher (lower) by the individual (H1a). More (less) the personal role is perceived as high, more (less) the spiritual value will be perceived as high (H1b).

We think that leaving the choice could increase the perception of the personal role, which, by a rise of the perceived causality, could raise the perceived spiritual value.

**H2:** The perception of the personal role mediates the effect of the choice (vs. non-choice) on the perceived spiritual value. When the choice (vs. non-choice) will be highlighted, the personal role will be perceived as higher (lower) by the individual (H2a). When the personal role is perceived as higher (lower), more (less) the spiritual value is perceived as high (H2b).

Now we will deal with the potential interaction between goals and choice. We think that activating goals (ideals vs. oughts) associated with the emphasis of choice (vs. non-choice) will positively influence the perception of the personal role. However, Robinson et al. (2012) precised that when the financial objective of a company is far from the cause they show standing for, then the Perception of Personal Role decreases because the consumer feels not sure of doing the right choice by supporting a company that lacks of consistency. Our preliminary study confirmed this insight. However, some of the people we interviewed made us understand that ideals message can enable to leave the choice more than the oughts one. Robinson et al. (2012) choice makes think people they have a more important role.

Then here, by crossing the choice (vs. non-choice) with the ideals (vs. oughts). The ideals goals may have a more positive impact on the personal role when choice is emphasised.

**H3:** The perception of the personal role mediates the combined effect of the activation of goals (ideals vs. oughts) associated with the emphasis of choice (vs. non-choice) on the perceived spiritual value. When the ideals are activated, the personal role will be perceived as higher (lower) when the choice (vs. non-choice) is emphasised (H3a). When the oughts are activated, the personal role will be perceived as lower (higher) when the choice is emphasised (not emphasised) (H3b). Higher (lower) is perceived the personal role, higher (lower) will be perceived the spiritual value (H3c).

Trope and Fishbach (2005) explained that the individuals they could concede to some short term « temptations » that would run counter their goals. They can change their choices according to the

goals they allocate to these one and depending on their self-control (Trope and Fishbach, 2005). Thus, choice seems to be a variable closely related to the question of control. For that matter, choice can indeed increase implication and perceived control (Wortman, 1975). Here we perceive the self-control as a moderator of the personal role on the spiritual value.

**H4:** The self-control moderates the relation between perception of the personal role and perceived spiritual value.

In their article, Peattie and Peattie (2009), as other authors we previously mentioned, they also relate consuming less to Happiness indicator. Additionally, we did the assumption that consumers could more or less could anticipate the happiness that they would have by engaging in this action of deconsuming. The anticipated happiness of the action would be then a potential moderator.

Choice could also be related by an anticipation of the happiness people that have by taking an action of deconsumption. Ruan, Hsee, and Lu, (2018) showed a link between Happiness and improving the presentation and choices. However they observed this by inducing an uncertainty situation by asking questions to the participants and giving the answer a little bit later through a kind of orienteering in a museum. Here the context is different. In our preliminary study, some interviewees explained that this happiness can be anticipated even if they were conscious that happiness is something more complicated. Also, most of the interviewees did anticipated this happiness when they were asked if they will deconsume in the future and for what reasons. Here we would see the anticipation of the happiness (characterised by the excitement of a future action) as a moderator between the perception of the personal role and the spiritual value. The spiritual value will also be perceived as higher when their role is perceived as more importance and the well-being related to this anticipation, will be also a mediator that will impact positively the intention to deconsume. Then we can observe here a succession of mediators which is a serial mediation of perception of the personal role, perceived spiritual value and perceived well-being.

**H5:** The anticipated happiness moderates the relation between perception of the personal role and perceived spiritual value.

**H6:** The perceived spiritual value mediates the relation between the perception of the personal role and the perceived well-being. Higher (lower) is perceived the personal role, higher (lower) will be the spiritual value (H6a). Higher (lower) is perceived the spiritual value, higher (lower) will be perceived the well-being (H6b).

**H7:** The perceived well-being mediates the relation between the perceived spiritual value and the deconsumption intention. Higher (lower) is perceived the spiritual value,

higher (lower) will be perceived the well-being by the individual (H7a). Higher (lower) is perceived the well-being, higher (lower) will be the deconsumption intention (H7b).

In our second model below, here the summary of all of the hypotheses for our study 3 with the serial mediation and the perceived spiritual value as the centre of it:

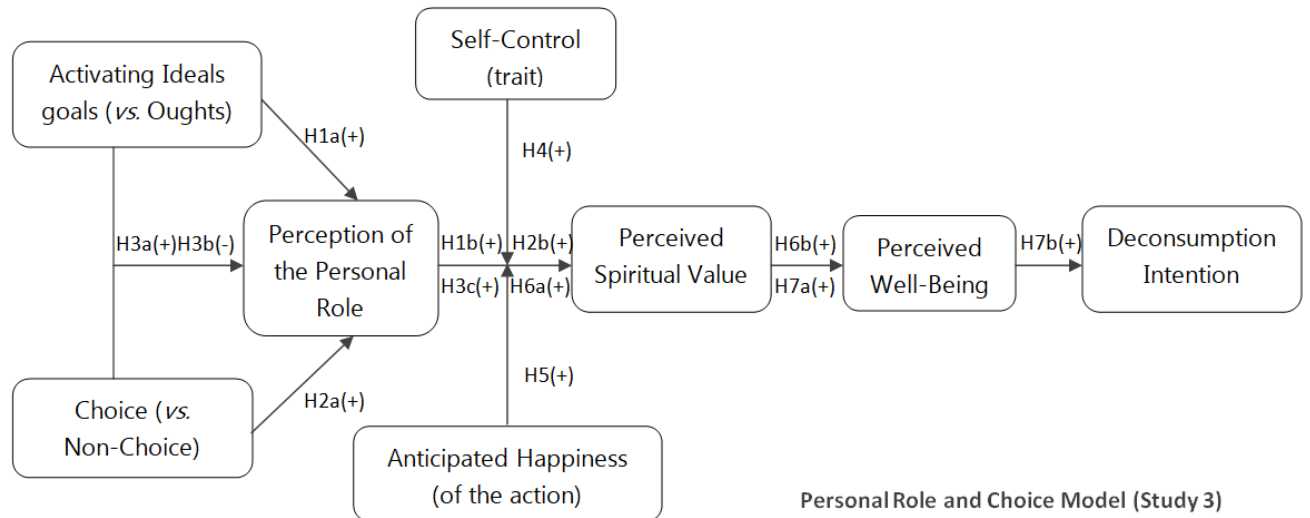


Figure 13: Model 2

### C. Generation model

Bardi and Schwartz (2003) found relations between values and behaviours. They showed that « *tradition and stimulation values correlate highly with common behaviors that express them, and hedonism, self-direction, universalism, and power values show reasonable associations with such behaviors* » (p.20). We discussed about the criteria for spirituality on our III. Chapter 2 and we understood that the well-being was one of these criteria. Even if, there is, to our knowledge, no work on the link between ideals vs. oughts goals and the spiritual value in the literature, we suppose that it would be easier to trigger an increase of the perceived spiritual value with the ideals than we the oughts communication messages.

Then, the increase of this spiritual value would increase the perceived well-being and then the deconsumption intention. Again, we have here a succession of mediators. The generation would moderate by strengthening or weakening (depending on the generation so the effect can be positive, moderate or negative) the effect of the goals on the perceived spiritual value. Then the strengthening or weakening effect of the generation may have the effect either to make the serial mediation effect higher or lower.

**H1:** The perceived spiritual value mediates the effect of the activation of goals (ideals vs. oughts) on well-being. When the ideals (vs. oughts) are activated, the spiritual value will

be perceived as higher (lower) by the individual (H1a). More (less) the spiritual value is perceived as high, more (less) the well-being will be perceived as high too (H1b).

**H2:** The Generation (as an age bracket) moderates the relation between goals (Ideals vs. Oughts) activation and perceived spiritual value.

About the anticipated happiness a part that it was more or less left by the literature, we perceive it here as a moderator between the goals activation and the perceived spiritual value. The closest article from our perception of this anticipated happiness of an action is the paper from Mogilner, Aaker, and Kamvar (2012). Indeed these authors showed that when people are focused on a future action, they feel an association between happiness and excitement and when it is related to the present the happiness is associated with the calm. Then it might be an indication to measure it. They also showed that that the age can influence these effects (Mogilner, Aaker, and Kamvar, 2012).

Then, we can relate this anticipated happiness to the goals. In their article about anticipated emotions in goal-directed behaviours Perugini & Bagozzi (2001) shed the light about the fact an anticipated emotion is actually a desire to achieve a goal and if a person thinks he/she will fail this goal the anticipating emotions will be « negative » if not it will be « positive ». These observations were made by taking these anticipated emotions as mediators. However, taking the anticipation of the happiness as a moderator would enables us to understand if this anticipation would make the effect of goals activation stronger.

**H3:** The anticipated happiness moderates the relation between goals (ideals vs. oughts) activation and perceived spiritual value.

As we already explained, depending on the situation, individuals' control can be strongly impacted and can stop them during a situation to pursue their long term goals (Trope and Fishbach, 2005) and that we consider Self-Control as a moderator. Here it would reinforce the positive link between activating « Ideals » goals and the perceived spiritual value because people would not feel this motive as opposed to their long-term goals. However, in the Oughts goals priming situation we can supposed that the Self-Control would be more counteractive from what we aimed to do because in an individual mind these Oughts, these obligations would have a too high "cost" (in the sense used by Trope and Fishbach, 2005) to make them having the intention to deconsume or consuming less.

**H4:** The self-control moderates relation between goals (ideals vs. oughts) activation and perceived spiritual value.

Camus and Poulain (2009) emphasised through her qualitative study about the organic products consumption context that the consumers having a spiritual experience by buying these product feel well-being. Also this spiritual experience enables them to be « *detached from material*

considerations »<sup>21</sup> and to give more meaning to his/her existence. Even if they underlined the fact this was a short term feeling and that is still analysed about consumption and not deconsumption. In addition, it was not about spiritual value but spiritual experience and maybe here is the point that this with associated the consumption with the Spiritual Value that this Well-Being would increase in a more long-term way. Then, the perceived well-being would be then a mediator between spiritual value and the intention to deconsume.

**H5:** The perceived well-being mediates the relation between the perceived spiritual value and the deconsumption intention. When the spiritual value is perceived as higher (lower) the well-being is perceived as higher (lower) by the individual (H5a). Higher (lower) is perceived the well-being, higher (lower) is the deconsumption intention (H5b).

In our third model hereinbelow, here the summary of all of the hypotheses for our study with the perceived spiritual value as the centre of it again. Here the moderating effect of the generation is important and may impact the succession of mediators but we have not enough insights<sup>22</sup> to know which generation will strengthen the relation between activating goals and perceived spiritual value or if it will makes it weaker.

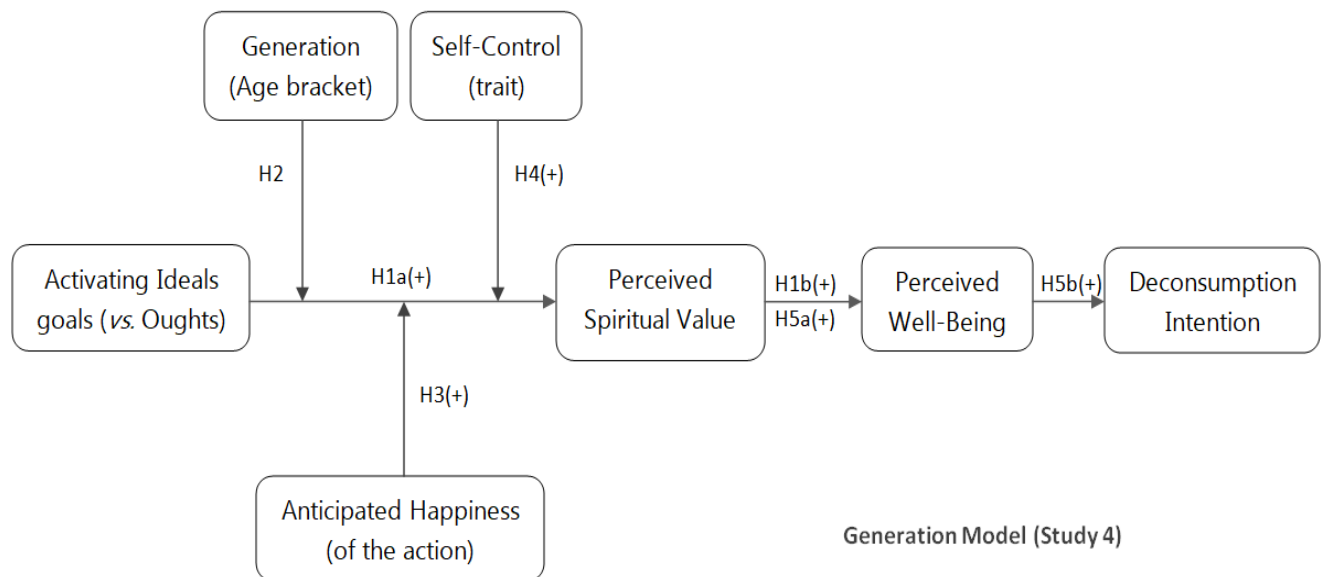


Figure 14: Model 3

So, after the construction of our three models, we will now look at the methodology we planned for our future studies.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. conclusion part of the article by Camus and Poulain (2009), cf. bibliography because there was no pagination in the version of the article I read

<sup>22</sup> For instance, our preliminary study was only on one generation (Millennials) and it was not a representative sample in addition to be too small then we can not consider these results even if our results go in the sense that the Millennials may strengthen the relation. In addition, there is, to our knowledge no existing work about this link then it is difficult to write a more precise hypothesis than the general one we made about generation.

PART 3

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



In the first part we discussed about the literature. In the second one we made links between the variables to build research models. In this last part, we will present what will be the planned methodology to conduct the studies we propose.

Firstly, in the Chapter 6 we will explain how the data will be collected for each study. Then, in the Chapter 7, we will present how we will measure our variables. And finally, in the Chapter 8, we will shed light on how we will analyse the data.

## **CHAPTER 6 – DATA COLLECTION**

We planned to conduct four different studies. First, a qualitative one to explore deconsumption. Then, three quantitative studies as experimentations to test communication messages aiming to foster deconsumption intention, our dependent variable.

### **I. EXPLORATORY STUDY**

#### *Study 1 : exploring Deconsumption*

First of all, we will begin with a qualitative study with an exploratory ambition. This study will enable to grasp well the deconsumption concept and how to improve communication messages encouraging deconsumption. It will also enable us to complete the literature about the topic, improving our hypotheses, refining the current variables we want to use on our models and finding some substitution ones or complementary variables. This study will take place in a French context.

#### *A. Semistructured Interviews*

In order to understand well the processes and mechanisms of deconsumption, we will conduct single semistructured interviews. Indeed, these interviews will enable to get an in-depth knowledge of the dependent variable (deconsumption). They will be conducted through face-to-face. However, depending on how evolves the covid-19 situation or if there are no other possibilities, the interviews might be conducted through Skype, Zoom or Whatsapp Video.

About the place of the interview, if possible it will be at a « neutral » place. That is to say in a place that is not too informal, too well-known for the interviewees except if it is a particular place where the deconsumption is practised or that could help the interviewees talking about the topic. Also, it will not be at the research centre to avoid that the interviewees feel it is like a test where there would be « good » answers to help research and « wrong » ones. This is also why it is important to precise before each interview that there is no wrong or right answers that giving their own opinion is enough or a sentence that can reassure them.

To conduct this study, an interview guide will be written in French. Some follow-up questions will be prepared in advance and some others will be improvised during the interviews and kept for the following ones in order to favour the comparison between the interviewees. Hypothetical situations may be used to help the interviewees to answer to some questions with more details.

Each interview will be transcribed, voice recorded and coded. It would be about conducting an adequate number of individual interviews to get a semantics satiation point and be sure we collected detailed data.

We will present this study as a study about deconsumption. We are particularly interested in understanding deconsumers' motivations (eg. using projective techniques during the interviews) to reduce their consumption and the mechanisms that could encourage the deconsumption.

### *B. Sample*

The sample will be constituted with French people of different sex, that are in different socio-professional categories (even place of residences if possible) and different age brackets to benefit from a sufficiently diversified sample. We will probably make a « pre-selection » questionnaire with screening questions to help at the diversification of the sample. Also the deconsumer profile, that we will define as someone that did reduce her/his consumption, that experienced deconsumption, will be our first choice to really have a better understanding of this notion of deconsumption. Also, having profiles that are not « deconsumers » would be interesting to learn more about how to persuade people that are not persuaded.

As in our preliminary study, in this one the anonymity of the interviewees will be also kept by changing their names.

Even if we need to interview a certain number of people to get a semantic saturation, the sample must not be too considerable in order to do an analysis that is rich enough to bring out the most accurate elements as possible.

This qualitative study will enable to understand more the processes that can influence deconsumption to conduct the most accurate and relevant experimental studies as possible.

## II. EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES

Then, we will conduct three quantitative studies with an experimental approach. These studies will take the shape of experimentations in order to manipulate the explicative variables previously mentioned. And, if necessary, we will also use the concepts that will be brought out with the qualitative study we will conduct.

For the moment, we have in mind the idea to keep the spiritual value at the heart of our general models because this concept seems to us to be a major key to understand deconsumption intentions. We think about mobilising people ideals vs. oughts in each of these experimentations. Goals as ideals/oughts and the spiritual value will be then systematically mobilised variables in the course of these three experimental quantitative studies. Our independent variables are subjective then manipulation checks will be planned and will be detailed in the Chapter 7 related to measurement. The participants will be randomly assigned to the experimental conditions and some variables (eg. the gender) will be controlled in order to make sure that they do not influence the obtained results.

The common feature to each of our studies will be the use of storytelling or narrative structures (that is to say communication messages in the form of stories, of tales, generally constructed around key characters) with this aim to highlight effectively (in the way of priming) individuals' ideals vs. oughts.

In this part we will explain how we will collect the data of each experimental study we planned to conduct.

#### A. Study 2

*Study 2: Understanding the impact of motivations towards Self-Enhancement and Self-Transcendence on the individual Situational Perceived Control (cf. Figure 12p.82).*

This first experiment will use a between-group full factorial design 2x2 that will cross the goals modalities « Ideals » vs. « Oughts » with the « Self-enhancement » vs. « Self-transcendence » motivations in the messages. We will study the impact of these communications on the perceived situational control, then, through this mediator, on the perceived spiritual value. It is by the increase of the perceived well-being that the spiritual Value will have an effect on the intention to deconsume (cf. Chapter 5, II. A. Perceived Situation Control and Motivations).

To manipulate our goals and motivations factors we will use communication messages. As we previously explained, to activate these goals with motivations emphasis we will use storytellings, that is to say communication messages in the form of stories, of tales, generally constructed around key characters.

We want to create a story fostering deconsumption by highlighting effectively (in the way of priming but more as an activation because no prior tasks will be done) individuals' goals with two different modalities « Ideals » vs. « Oughts » with individuals' motivations « Self-transcendence » vs. « Self-enhancement ». We can orient our storytelling towards the individual either through a character with the one the consumer could identify herself/himself or by addressing directly to

her/him. For the « Ideals » we will make a message around wishes, hopes and aspirations and for the « Oughts » we will make a message around duties, responsibilities and obligations, inspired by Pham and Avnet (2004) work. However, these authors had their participants do a preliminary priming tasks, here we will directly send the message to the sample then we can not do a priming but more an activation of our variables through the storytelling. And to cross this with self-transcendence, we will deal with « surpassing yourself »-oriented messages with sentences as « expand your boundaries » for ideals and « expand your promises » for oughts. Whereas the Self-enhancement will be related to « blossoming » with sentences as « believing in your qualities to improve your life » for ideals and « being seen as a better person by being responsible » for oughts.

However, only dealing with goals and motivations in a storytelling message does not mean activating them. Then how can we concretely activate them? We think about doing it at the manner of Pham and Avnet (2004) but inside the message. That is to say, for the Ideals it is about asking more or less directly to the audience to think of one hope or one dream they have, etc. And for the Oughts, it is about asking the audience to think of one responsibility, duty or obligation they have. And then making the narrative in a way that would be adapt to any ideals or oughts related to the context of the communication.

We have to meticulously think about how to make these messages in order to make them effect and measurable by being sure we emphasise the right effects. To illustrate our intentions, we can take a temporary example with a Gillette ad that exist already. This advertisement is mainly oriented towards Oughts, a bit with Ideals and a lot with self-enhancement and self-transcendence values. We will get inspired mainly by the short version<sup>23</sup> of the advertisement that was broadcasted in 2019. In this ad Gillette play on « men responsibilities » by saying « *is it the best a man can get?* » after hearing news about sexual harassment, and then « *instead of excuses* » while seing a bullying scene. After, the main speaker of the ad plays with the oughts by saying « *we need to make change...because the action we take today will be seen by the men of tommorow*» and at the same time a message is displayed « *the best a man can get* ». In addition, the long version of it they use the self-transcendent sentence « *It's only by challenging ourselves to do more that we can get closer to our best* »<sup>24</sup>.

For our study, the final message we will use may be totally invented but at the moment we will base us on this Gillette ad to show how the message could be in all of our different experimental conditions by adapting it to the deconsumption context. The part that seems to highlight guilt « *is it*

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<sup>23</sup> Self-transcendant + oughts Gillette ad : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPPf3sZIo-Q>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0>

*the best a man can get ? »* as the one appearing to emphasise generativity in the message *«the action we take today will be seen by the men of tommorow »* will be also modified in order to focus on our variables and not on external ones.

We reimagined the context as Gillette would committ itself to make people consuming less. In the « Ideals » crossed with « Self-enhancement » condition our message would be: «We though that each of our desires could be fulfilled by buying new products. Each man has his own ambitions. Which ones of yours have you thought fulfilling? We would like to make change to make each man life better. It's by taking more time for ourselves by reducing our consumption that we can get closer to our best. The best a man can get. ».

The « Oughts » crossed with « Self-enhancement » condition would be: «We though that each of our imperatives could be met by buying new products. Each man does what is right to respond to them. What's yours? We do whatever it takes to make each man life better. It's only by reducing our consumption to take more times for ourselves that we can get closer to our best. The best a man can get. ».

The « Ideals » crossed with « Self-transcendence » condition would be: «We though that each of our desires could be fulfilled by buying new products. Each man has ambitions he thinks greater than himself. Which ones of yours have you thought fulfilling? We would like to make change to make sure each man action makes our lifes better. By challenging ourselves to do more for reducing our consumption, we can get closer to our best. The best a man can get for each others dreams».

The « Oughts » crossed with « Self-transcendence » would be: « We though that each of our responsibilities could be met by buying new products. Each man has a to play his part. What's yours? We do whatever it takes to make change to make sure each man action makes our lifes better. It's only by challenging ourselves to do more for reducing our consumption that we can get closer to our best. The best a man can get for each others promises».

The qualitative study we will conduct will help us to make these messages more accurate ones. We thought of making them more centered around a character.

The questionnaire for the experiment will be administrated with Survey Monkey (if access) or another tool of survey creation (Google form may be enough too). The main questions will be about what we study (questions stemming from the measurement scales), questions to check if they well read/watch the communication message (it would be preferably presented as a video or as a social media post maybe on Facebook or Instagram).

We will carry out this study on an homogeneous population. For instance, in the example we gave with a Gillette-inspired storytelling the population would be exclusively men but we could do it

with a message that targets only women or only a specific population of the same generation for instance. The participants will be randomly assigned equitably to each condition.

### *B. Study 3*

*Study 3 : Understanding the impact of individuals Choice and Personal Role Perception (Cf. Figure 13p.85)*

The same type of study than study 2 will be realised but with the Choice (vs. Non-Choice) that will be manipulated instead of the motivations and will be crossed with the two kinds of goals (ideals/oughts). The mediating variable «Perception of the Personal Role » will be examined in place of the « Perceived Situational Control ». That will be once again a full factorial design in 2 x 2. It will use the storytelling in the messages to cross « Ideals » with the « Non-Choice », the « Ideals » with the « Choice », the « Oughts » with the « Non-Choice » and the « Oughts » with the « Choice ».

As in the first study, we can get inspired from an existing advertisement to make a message adapted to our conditions. We will use the ad that was referred on one of the interviews of our preliminary study (cf. Chapter 4 and Appendix 2), the ad « Fly responsibly » by KLM<sup>25</sup>. In this message they use storytelling and they mix oughts, choice and a bit of generativity (that we will not use here) when they talk about letting the children know our world. As an illustration of our experimental conditions we will make a version of our message inspired by the KLM ad but in a shorter version.

In the « Ideals » crossed with « Choice » condition our storytelling message would be: « Do you remember your first flight? We do. Even though it was a hundred years ago. Going everywhere. It changed our world forever. A hundred years of aviation come with a lot of dreams and we work hard to improve flying. That's why we believe in your ambitions to make fly more sustainable. We think it is possible. Having the liberty to take the train instead to have more time to think about our next project. Today we invite our customers to join our forces in making the world aware of our shared-dream. We all have to fly every now and then but next time think if there are better possibilities for your objectives in order to fly more sustainably.».

In the « Oughts » crossed with « Choice » condition our message would be: « Do you remember your first flight? We do. Even though it was a hundred years ago. Going everywhere. It changed our world forever. But a hundred years of aviation come with a lot of responsibilities and we work hard to improve flying. That's why we want to ask you something. To fly more responsibly. Could you take the train instead? Today we invite our customers to join our forces in making the world aware of our

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<sup>25</sup> <https://youtu.be/L4htp2xxhto>

shared-reponsibility. We all have to fly every now and then but next time think about flying responsibly. »

In the « Ideals » crossed with « Non-Choice » condition « Do you remember your first flight? We do. Even though it was a hundred years ago. Going everywhere. It changed our world forever. A hundred years of aviation come with a lot of dreams and we work hard to improve flying. That's why we believe in your ambitions. We have hopes that flying sustainably is possible. Today we invite our customers to join our forces in making the world aware of our shared-dream. We all have to fly every now but we all wish to reduce our flights to fly more sustainably.»

In the « Oughts » crossed with « Non-Choice » condition our message would be: « Do you remember your first flight? We do. Even though it was a hundred years ago. Going everywhere. It changed our world forever. But a hundred years of aviation come with a lot of responsibilities and we work hard to improve flying. That's why we want to ask you something. To fly more responsibly. Today we invite our customers to join our forces in making the world aware of our shared-reponsibility. We all have to fly every now and then but next time think about flying responsibly. ».

As in the study 2, the questionnaire will be administrated with Survey Monkey (if access) or another tool of survey creation (Google form may be enough too). The main questions will also be about the variables we study (cf. Figure 13), possibly questions to check if they well read/watch the communication message (it would also be preferably presented as a video or as a social media post maybe on Facebook or Instagram).

We will also carry out this study on an homogeneous population. The participants will be randomly assigned equitably to each condition.

### *C. Study 4*

*Study 4: Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z: same effects? (cf. Figure 14p.87)*

This study is about seeing the observed effect (increase of the perceived spiritual value) of the highlighting of the ideals goals in the previous studies if they would have the impact depending on the generation. This study is focused only on the goals but by shedding light their effect taking in account generations likely to react very differently to this goals question. The considered generations will be: Baby-boomers (people that were born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (people that were born between 1965 and 1980), Millennials (Generation Y, people that were born between 1981 and 1999), Generation Z/Post-Millennials (People that were born from 2000). Then the sample will be larger and constituted of people from different generations. We will use similar messages than

our previous examples but this time only ideals-oriented vs. only oughts-oriented (cf. Figure 14, Chapter 5). The participants will be randomly assigned equitably to each condition. Insofar as possible, we will try to have respondents that are real consumers and not students.

The questionnaire for the experiment will be also administrated with Survey Monkey (if access) or another tool of survey creation. The main questions will be about what we study (eg. measurement scales), questions to check if they well read/watch the communication message.

Depending on the qualitative study results but also the results of the first experiments, other Persuasive Communication characteristics (and then other variables) could be used, as the nudges. However, its theoretical integration is quite weak and this very trendy technique is giving rise to a large number of current researches. That is why, we did not place it at the centre of our selections.

However, if possible we will consider to conduct additional experimental studies. One where we would manipulate the diffusion media (eg. on Youtube vs. on Instagram or through influencers if there are possibilities or one offline media vs. one online) of the message. Following the preliminary study (cf. Chapter 4), another possible experiment interested us, where we would manipulate the source of the communication (eg. association vs. brand) to test which one would have the most positive impact on the deconsumption intention potentially mediated by the source credibility, the spiritual value and well-being. In addition, we thought about testing the effect of the repetition (that was a variable mentioned a lot of time in our preliminary study) as a longitudinal study of a communication message sent by a brand vs. an association but this last one depends of our future partnerships and if they agree.

Then, we discussed about how we will collect the data for each of our studies. Now, we will explain how we intend to measure our variables.



## CHAPTER 7 – MEASUREMENTS

In this chapter we will have a look at the scales we will use to measure our variables and also we will present our manipulation checks.

### I. SCALES

We will present the measurement scales when it is possible for each variable and we will propose what we intend to do when there is no existing scale neither adaptable ones to our context.

#### A. *Deconsumption intention*

We thought about building a scale. However, Dugar (2018) proposed a scale for voluntary deconsumption that he reduced to 39 items but it seems that it does not measure only the voluntary deconsumption or at least not exactly as we perceive it. He also precised that each subscale of his scale can be separated scales in themselves because they have high reliabilities (the figures were not given in his paper but they were requested).

In consequence, we will use only his Subscale 3 Non-materialism (VD\_03\_NMT) and see later if we will modify it to fit it better to what we want to measure (the deconsumption intention) and how or if we need to build another one. He described it as « *An ability for discretionary and rational decision-making, and an unattached attitude toward shopping or acquisition of possessions* » and he said that his subscale include « *categories such as shopping discretion, control, awareness of need vis-à-vis want, shopping as a means to an end, nonpossession, and ability to give up consumption and tune out promotions* » (Dugar, 2018, p. A-32). It will be measured with a 5-point scale from 1= Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree.

#### B. *Perceived Spiritual Value and other Mediators*

There is to our knowledge no measurement scale for the Perceived Spiritual Value. However, Schwartz (2006 ; 1992) presents items related to spirituality that he reaped from diverse research works. These items are the following ones : « *a spiritual life, the meaning of life, inner harmony, detachment as well as [unity with nature, accepting my part in life, religious]* » (p.22). These elements were originally mentioned in his work in 1992 (Schwartz, 1992, pp.60-61). These items appear to correspond to how we want to measure the spiritual value then we will build a measurement scale for it based on Schwartz (1992 ; 2006) spirituality items. Thus, we will check the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach alpha) of the scale.

In the way of Atienza, Collins and King (2001), we will measure the Perceived Situational Control with one item as « *I feel having control over the situation* » with a 10-point Likert scale (1=Low ; 10=High).

We will adapt the scale used by Robinson et al. (2012) to measure the Perception of the Personal Role (that was used as a mediator too in the article by Robinson et al.). They asked three questions with a high reliability, Cronbach alpha = 0.95, measured from 1 = « not at all », to 7 = « very much », we will adapt their scale later because it does not fit with our context of deconsumption at the moment.

We will use a well-being scale from « Using the 1–7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by indicating that response for each statement. 7. Strongly agree 6. Agree 5. Slightly agree 4. Mixed or neither agree nor disagree 3. Slightly disagree 2. Disagree 1. Strongly disagree » (Diener et al., 2010,). Their scale has a high reliability (Cronbach alpha = 0.87).

#### *Flourish scale/Perceived Well-being*

1. I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.
2. My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.
3. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities
4. I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.
5. I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.
6. I am a good person and live a good life.
7. I am optimistic about my future.
8. People respect me.

« Scoring: Add the responses, varying from 1 to 7, for all eight items. The possible range of scores is from 8 (lowest possible) to 56 (highest PWB possible) . A high score represents a person with many psychological resources and strengths» (Diener et al., 2010). Another possibility would have been measuring the PERMA elements of Well-being : Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement (Seligman, 2012) that are elements that contribute to well-being but it might have contributed too much items which would lead to a long questionnaire with the other measurement and then decrease the chances of having serious answers.

#### *C. Self-Control and other Moderators*

The moderator Self-Control will be measured with the Brief Self-Control (as a trait) scale by Tangney, J. P., Baumeister, R. F., & Boone, A. L. (2004). (Appendix 1) with 13 Items. The reliability of

this scale varied from 0.83 to 0.87. This scale use a 5-point Likert scale from « Not at all » to « Very much ». (R) corresponds to the reversed items. We will translate this scale in French because no equivalent exists in this language.

*Self-Control measurement scale (Brief version)*

1. I am good at resisting temptations.
2. I have a hard time breaking bad habits. (R)
3. I am lazy. (R)
4. I say inappropriate things. (R)
5. I do certain things that are bad for me, if they are fun. (R)
6. I refuse things that are bad for me.
7. I wish I had more self-discipline. (R)
8. People would say I have iron self-discipline.
9. Pleasure and fun sometimes keep me from getting work done (R)
10. I have trouble concentrating. (R)
11. I am able to work effectively toward long-term goals.
12. Sometimes I can't stop myself from doing something, even if I know it is wrong. (R)
13. I often act without thinking through all the alternatives. (R)

We will measure the Anticipated Happiness by being inspired by Kong, Tuncel and McLean (2011) work about Anticipated Happiness in negotiation. Then we will measure it with a 7-point Likert scale from 1=Not at all to 7=Extremely.

1. I will feel happy if I manage reducing my consumption

To have a a little more precised measure we do not exclude the possibility of building a scale by adding an item by being inspired by Seligman (2012) work, for instance, that related Happiness with the level of excitement that we could ask with a question such as « I feel excited to the idea of practising deconsumption ».

The Generation as a moderator will just be measured by a question related to their age group.

## II. MANIPULATION CHECKS

We will test participants' understanding of our manipulations to be sure there is no difference between what we declare manipulating (the independent variables hereinbelow) and the manipulations we are really doing according to the participants' perceptions. Our manipulation checks will be scaled from « Not at all » to « Very much » (7-point Likert scale).

### *A. Ideals and Oughts*

For the Ideals and Oughts one we will be inspired by the definitions of Higgins et al. (1994) and Pham and Avnet (2004) work. Our manipulation check for Ideals and Oughts will be:

In my opinion this message referred to:

1. Aspirations
2. Hopes
3. Responsibilities
4. Obligations
5. Dreams
6. Wishes
7. Duties
8. Promises

Higher global score in 1., 2., 5., 6. = Message perceived as an Ideals one (that means that the score in 1., 2., 5., 6. > score in 3., 4., 7., 8. significantly to confirm that the message was perceived as an Ideals one).

Higher global score in 3., 4., 7., 8. = Message perceived as an Oughts one

### *B. Self-Enhancement and Self-Transcendence*

I perceive this message as referring to:

1. Self-enhancement
2. Self-transcendence

### *C. Choice and Non-Choice*

This message proposed you :

1. A Choice
2. No choice

So we presented our measurement scales and manipulation checks. Now we will describe our data analysis.

## CHAPTER 8 – DATA ANALYSIS

In this last Chapter, we explain how we will analyse the data. First, for our qualitative study that aims to explore deconsumption. Then, for our experimentations that aim to test communication messages on deconsumption intention.

### I. EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY ANALYSIS METHODS

We will illustrate our qualitative analysis with verbatims. The data will be the object of a vertical analysis (analysing by interview) and an horizontal one (comparing the themes). Depending on the results of this exploratory study, the envisioned models and variables for the experimentations could be modified. Indeed, if we discover these variables that stand out and after this study seem to be more relevant or more accurate, we will improve the already present variables or we will modify consequently the model by adding the new discovered variables. Then, in this section, we will focus on the analysis of our qualitative study.

#### A. *Pre-analysis and Coding*

After the retranscription, we will do a first pre-analysis in order to look globally at the information we have and starting ascertain how to shape the body of the text. During this pre-analysis we will start structuring and identifying general categories that will get preciser and preciser and more accurate and relevant through the whole analysis. Also, we will try to determine subcategories, counting the data that can be counted, looking at frequencies, etc. In order to code the data we will already make general categories but these one can be either divided or gathered depending on what the interviews bring out. The fact we will us an interview guide for the semistructured interviews means that we will may have some themes and categories in mind that will also help to code the data. We can also starts to do some annotations to read into the data in an easier way or starting interpreting it. For instance, frequency calculation can be done if this is relevant (eg. if 12 interviewees on 14 think that deconsumption is consuming less that means about 87% of them think that, etc.). Also, group of words can be used to define a part of the body of the text.

#### B. *Content Analysis*

We will do a qualitative content analysis. The « *qualitative content analysis reduces data, it is systematic, and it is flexible.* » (Schreier, 2012, p.170). This type of analysis enables to look vertically through the data. Indeed, the definition of general themes will be done by looking individually at each interview. We will use this type of analysis as a tool enabling us to build an analysis grid for our thematic analysis.

### *C. Thematic Analysis*

This type of analysis will enable us to compare the data, what is in common and what is different between the different interviews. Each interview corpus will be placed into a analysis grid with all the themes and subthemes we observed in the content analysis and some precisions in front of each line. For instance, it will be precised if the following data will be sociodemographics, if these are opinions, if this is a frequency, etc. Then horizontally, we will find the categories and vertically the name (anonymised or changed) of each interviewee.

## II. EXPERIMENTAL QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS METHODS

As we explained previously, Ideals vs. Oughts (goals) and Spiritual Value will be used in each quantitative study. They will be analysed through regression analyses and Analyses of Variances (ANOVA). And, if there are controlled variables that have an effect, we will use the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). We could also use the Hayes PROCESS macro to examine the mediations in our model. It will be conceivable to evaluate the model globally through structural equations (PLS-SEM). These three experimental quantitative studies considered to understand in detail the different interaction between explicative variables, the different relations between the variable through mediators and the possible influences the moderators indicated below.

### *A. Serial Mediations*

Our serial mediations will be analysed through the macro PROCESS with the Model 6. We will also use the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) if this is about analysing the relation between a qualitative variable (nominal or ordinal) and a quantitative one (discrete or continuous). For instance for the mediation effect of the Spiritual Value on the Deconsumption intention. We will use Regression analyses for the relations between two quantitative variables. For example, for the mediation effect of Perception of the Personal Role on the Spiritual Value.

### *B. Moderation and Direct Effects*

To analyse our moderators we will use Regression analyses and ANOVA too. Idem for the direct effects we will use ANOVA or Regression depending on the nature of the variables. For instance for the direct effect of Ideals vs. Oughts goals on the deconsumption intention we will use an ANOVA.

### *C. Interaction Effects*

To analyse our interaction effects we will use Multivariate Analysis of Variance. For instance, the interaction between Ideals vs. Oughts goals and Self-transcendence vs. Self-enhancement motivations on the Perceived Situational Control.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude this original research work, we will first present the theoretical, methodological and practical research contributions. Then, the limitations and the directions for future research. And, finally the general conclusion of this work.

### I. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

#### *A. Theoretical Implications*

This thesis provides several theoretical contributions. First of all, this is, to our knowledge, the first research working on Persuasive Communication messages made to foster deconsumption strictly speaking. For that matter, we studied ideals, oughts, self-transcendence, self-enhancement and choice concepts.

The originality of our research lies in associating deconsumption to a stimulating value: the spiritual one. Indeed, we put at the centre of this work the spiritual value that was set aside by the literature. Giving meaning to deconsumption in the way of Kotler (2010) in the Marketing 3.0 seems essential in the development of new communication messages adapted to this context. The goal of our research is to show that through the activation of ideals goals in communication message, the increase of the spiritual value will be the necessary key to increase the deconsumption intention. Indeed, the search for meaning by the individuals in their life and in their consumption would trigger and explain their shift from consumption behaviours to deconsumption ones.

Also, we contribute in making clearer distinctions between the different notions that can refer to deconsumption as the sustainable consumption, the responsible one, the voluntary simplicity, the anticonsumption, the minimalism, etc. In order to clarify the definition of deconsumption.

Then, we contribute in studying the involved psychological mechanisms when communication on deconsumption as the perception of the personal role, the perceived situational control, and the perceived well-being by emphasising the effects serial mediations. As well as potential moderating effects. Anticipated happiness, the generation or the self control.

This research, in addition to enhance the Deconsumption literature, will then participate to enrich the Social Marketing literature but also the Persuasive Communication one.

#### *B. Methodological Implications*

Our work will have some methodological contributions. Firstly by the construction of the perceived spiritual value measurement scale by being based on spirituality items gathered by Schwartz (2006 ; 1992). A new scale that we will employ in our own studies. Then, the adaptation

and adjustment of existing scales to the context of our study. Especially the perception of the personal role or the anticipated happiness (of the action of deconsuming).

About the deconsumption intention measurement we will either, if necessary, adapt the Dugar (2018) subscale related to non-materialism or we will create a new one.

### *C. Practical Implications*

The practical contributions are multiple. Indeed, this research will provide effective means to marketers to insure transitions to a deconsumption society or at least to a more sustainable one. Indeed, by making deconsumption more attractive with the use of storytelling to activate ideals goals in advertisement, the communicators intending to make people decrease their consumption, will be able to trigger a rise of the spiritual value to increase the intention of people to consume less. Also, that will enable to more communicators to bet on the utility and the societal benefit of their products as well as their quality instead of valorising the fact of possessing and buying more products. In addition, showing that it is possible to promote environmentally-friendly behaviours not only through environmental communication or through « traditional » arguments of this communication. With the new practices of consumption that are growing, it is important to make Persuasive Communication tools to be sure communicators will have something to base on. These implications can be for sheer Social Marketing or Sustainable Communication or NGO purposes but also for Business and Brand Communication.

This study may have direct implications for the consumers themselves. Indeed, if brands and organisations start to communicate to trigger more spiritual value and then deconsumption, we think that consumers may develop another relation with objects. Long persuaded to consume a lot, new visions and practices of consumption may grow and are already growing. For instance, looking for more quality to their life, improving their health and well-being. Also, as Toffler (1980) planned, even if it was moderated by Kotler (1986), the number of prosumers could increase within the next years and the global pandemics and pollution adverse effects contexts may accelerate these behaviours.

Another implication is for the Society in general. Indeed, an overall deconsumption will enable to respond through the reduction of the consumption to the environmental issues as the global warming, pollution and may have a global positive effect on health (including the mental one) but also on interpersonal relationships (eg. by giving more importance to the meaning of what we buy and by consuming less we may become less materialistic and avoid situations as a friends reunion all looking at their smartphone for instance).

This communication may be effective on other transition contexts. In addition to an environmental one, it could help for economic transition, digital one or an industrial one.



## II. LIMITATIONS AND NEED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

### *A. Limitations*

This work presents several limitations. Firstly, about the theoretical ones, we studied how to make an effective message mainly focused on ideals vs. oughts goals and we did two experiments blending it with other concepts: one with self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement motivations and another with choice vs. non-choice but it exists probably other combinations or other variables that can be effective as a main one. Also, we did not study the effect it has in the brand image but we make the assumption the effect would be positive. Then, there will be probably some methodological limitations others than the one referred in the preliminary study of this current work such as limitations related to the choice of the stimuli or the choice of our measures.

Secondly, about the practical limitations, we suggest to practioners to take care about the way the message is presented because the risk by communicating on ideals and oughts goals is to be perceived as a « know-it-all » by the audience and then having a negative effect. Also, using people's goals and values in an advertisement can have an adverse effect.

### *B. Directions for Future Research*

The needs for future research in the Communication field for deconsumption are numerous. Firstly, this research can be extended to other countries than France and adapted to each of them. For instance, in some countries more advanced in terms of environmental actions, it would be preferable to avoid environmental arguments and focusing on other ones to persuade people to deconsume. Then there is a need to extend this research to these countries (eg. Sweden).

Secondly, as aforementioned, we may study the credibility of the source if it is either a brand or an association. However, the impact of this type of communication (in this context) on brand image need to be studied too. Also, there is a need for research on the benefits for companies (not only on brand image) of the adoption these types of deconsumption communication.

Thirdly, other variables can be taken in account in the deconsumption communication as the music, rythm, sounds or dynamism used in the advertisements as referred in our preliminary study.

Fourthly, when it is relevant, there is a need to study which communication is the best for each concept dealing with the practice of deconsumption: voluntary simplicity, frugality, anticonsumption, minimalism, mindful consumption, etc.

Fifthly, we studied here the impact of the increase of the spiritual value. There is a need for research in the communication triggering other values in the deconsumption communication. In addition to other values, there would be a need to study even more different deconsumption

behaviours of different contexts and situations as taking the deconsumption for a therapy for instance. This would be linked to the previous point (adapting communication to these situations).

Then, the antecedents and consequences of deconsumption communication needs to keep being studied by the consumer sciences to understand better the impact on the society. For instance, extending this topic to the digital pollution context. However, it needs to be studied by other fields too as finance, to find the financial impact in the long run on the companies or other fields such as biology, psychology and health in general to do research on the impacts on people's health, physical and mental one, of the increase of deconsumption.

Finally, the communication messages triggering the increase of the spiritual value can be studied in other transition contexts such as an economical transition or an industrial one towards more local products or towards more and more health concerns.

### III. GENERAL CONCLUSION

This work is incorporated in a metamorphosing societal context where the individuals, more and more marketing-averse, aspire to change their consumption behaviours with a very possible need to confer more meaning to their life along with their actions. First and foremost, this research took the perceived spiritual value on board to enrich the understanding of the deconsumers and, more generally, of the deconsumption with the aim to identify levers able to motivate the individuals to adopt it. Following from this whole picture, the general research issue is the following one: how to identify persuasive communication characteristics likely to encourage deconsumption through an increase of its perceived spiritual value and to understand its action mechanisms?

From this general issue follow on different research objectives. A first objective of this current research work is having a better understanding of the deconsumption concept. Its specific features in comparison to other forms of consumer resistance, differentiating it to close concepts, what are the motivations and intentions of the individuals to deconsumption and how is built up a deconsumption decision. A second research objective is the identification of motivational mechanisms likely to favourably influence individual decision to deconsume by studying the decision-making processes and what are the mechanisms explaining it the most as well as the links between these motivations and the value search in the deconsumption. A third objective is imagining persuasive communication characteristics likely to stimulate these motivational mechanisms and to try them out in a scientific way. Testing the effectiveness of activating « Ideals » goals compared to « Oughts » ones and the fact of having the choice of a deconsumption behaviour or to not having it. A fourth objective is the precision of psychological processes (cognitive and affective ones), mediating effects that would explain some communication characteristics on the intentions of deconsumption by the examination

of the mediating role of the perceived situational control but also the one of the perception of the personal role and the one of the well-being in front of different deconsumption promotion messages. A last objective is the detection of individual or situational moderating variables that can fluctuate the effects as the generation, the anticipated happiness and the individual's tendency for control (self-control). To respond to these objectives, this current thesis was divided in three parts.

The first part of this thesis, divided in three chapters, dealt with exploring and reviewing the concepts we previously mentioned. The first chapter dealt with the understanding of this term of « Deconsumption » and its practices. By comparing the notions, the visions of the authors, the individuals motivations we found out that consuming less to define what is a deconsumption is admitted by the literature and the main difference between deconsumption and its close concepts seem to be found in the motivation behind it. In the second chapter, we were focused on the value especially the spiritual one. A principle guideline was determined by defining a value as a perception the individual accepting to follow with different motivations and objectives that can be changed or be perceived differently depending on the situation. The spiritual value, notion left by the literature, is one of the perceived benefits of consumption and could be the main one in deconsumption. Then, the criteria for spirituality seems to be the self-transcendence, the well-being, the experiences and looking for more inner connections and external ones. Finally, in the third chapter we discussed about the goals (ideals and oughts) and motivations (self-enhancement and self-transcendence) of the individuals and their search for happiness and well-being that are all notions that could explain individuals' behaviours. Then, we talked about the control seeking part of individuals and that these parts were studied negatively by the literature and not that much from the positive side of it. We also discussed about how having an effect on individual behaviour through Persuasive Communication techniques as the activation through the use of stories. However, by looking at the literature, we noticed that there is no communications articles about deconsumption strictly speaking.

The second part of this current work was about making links between the concepts we studied. In the chapter four, a preliminary study was conducted about deconsumption (during the particular context of covid-19 quarantine) on Millennials in order to have a wider view of deconsumption but especially the communication about it, to confirm the literature and to help illustrating the potential links between the variables studied in the literature. Among all the variables referred in this study, four of them were emphasised by the study: the perceived credibility of the brand/organisation making the advertisement ; the perceived similarity with deconsumers, if they fit enough with the reality of the non-deconsumers or the similarity with the values promoted by the brand or of the brand itself ; the source of the advertisement, if this is a brand or an association (or NGO)

communicating it may have different impacts ; and the importance of the repetition of the communication message. In the chapter five, we detailed our research issue and research objectives along with the presentation of the variables we decided to study: deconsumption intention (dependent value), the perceived spiritual value (as a central mediating effect), ideals goals (vs. oughts) ; self-transcendence motivations (vs. self-enhancement) ; choice (vs. non-choice) ; our mediators with the perceived spiritual value, the perceived situational control, the perception of the personal role and the perceived well-being ; and then the moderating effects with the self-control (as a trait), the generation effect and the anticipated happiness (of the action of deconsuming). With the help of three different models, we presented our hypotheses dealing all around serial mediations and the relation of ideals (vs. oughts) on the deconsumption intention mainly mediated by the spiritual value but also by all the other mediators.

In the last part we discussed about our research methodology. In this work, we planned to conduct four different studies. First, a qualitative one to explore deconsumption. Then, three quantitative ones with experimental aims to test communication messages aiming to encourage deconsumption intention. In the chapter six, we explained how we will collect the data. The qualitative study, that will take place in a French context, will enable to grasp well the deconsumption concept and how to improve communication messages encouraging deconsumption. We explained that we will collect the data through semistructured interviews. About the quantitative studies, the data will be collected through questionnaires within our experimentations. Their common characteristic is the use of storytelling to activate effectively ideals (vs. oughts) goals in the messages and the mediating effect of the spiritual value that will be integrated on each study. In the first quantitative study in addition to the goals, we will test the impact of self-transcendence (vs. self-enhancement) on the perceived situational control. In the second one, with the goals, we will test the impact of the choice (vs. non-choice) on the perception of the personal role. In the third one, we will study the direct impact of the goals on the spiritual value with taking in account the moderating effect of the generation (age groups). In the chapter seven, we presented the measurement scales for each variable and we proposed manipulation checks. In the last chapter, we discussed about the analysis of our studies. The qualitative one will be analysed through vertical and horizontal analyses. In the quantitative ones, our variables will be analysed mainly through ANOVA and regression analyses and the model will be globally tested through structural equations.

To conclude, updating persuasive communication messages by orienting the individuals towards ideals able to raise the perceived spiritual value of the deconsumption could thereby foster the individuals to consume less, to deconsume. However, there are several future research to consider in order to complete this current work that we hope will open a lot of possibilities in this field.

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## APPENDIX 1: PROFILES OF THE MILLENNIALS INTERVIEWED ON WHATSAPP VIDEO FOR THE PRELIMINARY QUALITATIVE STUDY

First Name*	Sex	Age	Occupation	Time information	City, Country	Nationality/ies	<i>Language of the Interview</i>
Lucas	Male	22 (1998)	Economics Student	1 hour, 5 minutes April 21st at 16:30	Nantes, France	French	<i>French</i>
Veronica	Female	24 (1996)	Supply Chain Manager	57 minutes April 22nd at 10:00 (11:00 for her)	Riga, Latvia	Russian-Latvian	<i>English</i>
Ben	Male	28 (1992)	Technical Engineer	35 minutes April 22nd at 14:15	The Hague, the Netherlands	Dutch	<i>English</i>
Klara	Female	23 (1997)	Brand Management Student	53 minutes April 23rd at 11:00	Malmö, Sweden	Swedish-Polish	<i>English</i>
Anna	Female	24 (1996)	Business Administration Student	42 minutes April 24th at 14:00	Bremen, Germany	German	<i>English</i>
Ginetto	Male	25 (1995)	Commercial Engineer as Account Auditor	32 minutes April 24th at 16:30	Rome, Italy	Italian	<i>Italian</i>
Carolina	Female	32 (1988)	Teacher	40 minutes April 25th at 18:45 (12:45 for her)	Temuco, Chile	Chilean	<i>Spanish</i>

\*All their First names were changed to keep them anonymous. They all chose it after the interview with the condition their name has to fit with their nationality or country of origin

## APPENDIX 2: ANALYSIS OF THE PRELIMINARY STUDY ON MILLENNIALS ABOUT DECONSUMPTION AND COMMUNICATION DURING COVID-19 QUARANTINE PERIOD

The corpus was written based on the presentation of the interviewees' perceptions classified by category subsequently to the analysis. So when a remark, note, assumption or else was made based on something else, it is precised clearly.

- **A positive opinion of their own consumption**

Most of them have a positive perception of their consumption. Indeed, the majority highlighted the improvements they made in their ways of consuming. First, they consume in a better way by focusing on quality products for their durability as Veronica said « *I'm trying to buy good quality products maybe to pay a high price for them but then I want that thing to last for a longer period of time* » or Ben « *I try to buy good quality maybe some more expansive stuff just to make sure that I don't have to buy the same article in six months from now, stuff that lasts* ». Also, some of them buy less than before as Anna « *now I'm trying to think about what I'm buying if I really needed, not to buy too many things* » and Carolina that explained she really decreased her consumption in particular when she used to live in Europe but even now by living again to her country of origin (Chile). Then, they can see their consumption as balanced because they buy what they need as Anna and Klara said « *I'm actually trying to buy things that I really need and that I really want and not just buying something just because 'oh this is pretty !'* » (Klara) even if she admitted later that the way it looks count but that it is not the main criterion. Ginetto stated: « *I try to always balance that is to say buying or consuming the least possible* »<sup>26</sup>. Lucas is the only mentioning that he is aware of consuming too much and Carolina revealed she was used to consume way too much in particular when she used to live there, first in Minneapolis (in the state of Minnesota) and then in Raleigh (in the state of North Carolina) to the USA. The fact that the others probably already adopted a more sustainable consumption comparing to before is probably related to the fact that now people are already aware of their overconsumption as Lucas said.

- **A global awareness of the Consumer Society vices**

First of all, the common point between all the interviewees is that all of them mentioned the word Overconsumption or at least referred to it additionally to talk negatively about it without I even pronounced this word in all interviews taken together. Carolina said that overconsumption is

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<sup>26</sup> Original verbatim in Italian: « provo a bilanciare sempre cioè a spendere o consumare il meno possibile »

normalised because it is associated to life quality, to efforts at work, at social classes in particular in Chile and even more to the USA.

Then, I could make two nay three different groups here. The first group would be with Lucas dealing with Irresponsibility « *In France we consume 3,5 Earths so we consume too much, we know it very well* », Habits « *it's what we have always known* » or Elite Interests « *it suits rich people, powerful people in the world* »<sup>27</sup>.

The second group dealing with Unsustainability Awareness with Ben « *you can see now with the corona crisis, the international Supply Chains are disrupted everywhere, and I think, it quite shows the unsustainable way that we are running our business now* », Anna « *I think the consumer behaviour of the society has developed in a way that is not sustainable way anymore because people has increased their consumption in high speed [...] that's actually harmful to the planet* » and Veronica. When Veronica mentioned the fact that the advantage of Consumer Society is that you can easily buy everything you want at low prices, it was to verbalise it as a « *problem* » especially for environment. She also talked about the problem of wastes « *and then you get those items for quite short amount of time, for a short period of time and then you simply throw it out* ».

And the last group was with Klara, Ginetto and Carolina, all dealing with the fact that "*too much is too much*" as a common sense.

The few positives comments I heard from them about Consumer Society were about Social Values as Anna declared: « *in our society it's valued to buy stuff, it's good for economy [...] people are triggered by adverts* ». And the fact some of them have their favourite Brand as Veronica said with Tommy Hilfiger because she likes « *their style, I like the quality of their products and I don't think it something that, you know, is 'screaming' it's a very small logo, brand so this is the sort of things I will go for* », or Klara with Apple because they are products that last in the time according to her but also to do not feel socially excluded « *all Swedish have Iphones, so I would be outsider if I wouldn't have an Apple* ». And, Klara added « *brands make me feel more 'wow!'* ». Carolina relates Consumer Society « *a bit with different cultures, I think in Chile we live in a way, in the USA in another one* ».<sup>28</sup>

Some of the participants proposed a criticism of materialism. It could sounds as clichés but most of the interviewed women thoughts were focused on the fashion industry. For instance, when I myself mentioned this word in only one interview [Klara's one] as a follow-up question. She declared « *I don't like the way influencers for instance, they have a lot of things. A LOT [accentuating] of*

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<sup>27</sup> Original verbatims in French : « en France on consomme 3,5 terres donc on consomme trop on le sait très bien » « c'est ce qu'on a toujours connu, ça arrange les riches, les puissants du monde »

<sup>28</sup> Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) : « lo relaciono un poco también con diferentes culturales, creo que en Chile se vive de una forma, en los Estados Unidos de una otra »

things, and I see so many like recording their wardrobes, etc. and it's like filled and they never use that 'shit' they are just promoting it, and that's nothing I would ever like encourage ». Veronica criticised a kind of narcissism flaw related to this consumption by giving the example of a low-quality food restaurant in Thailand but it looks good so that people can « *show off in particular in social media* » for instance with great pictures on Instagram. Ben mentioned that he found « *useless* » the fact some people change their phone every year or every two years because this is « *wasteful* ». The built-in obsolescence was referred and Ben suggested his smartphone does not work anymore after some years and that it lost abilities within the years even if he keeps it as long as possible. Carolina thinks that this way of consuming, that materialism is affecting too much people feelings, behaviours, thoughts, the human spirit by saying « *I feel that consumerism affect directly to your Self, to how you see yourself, to how you want expressing yourself or how the other see yourself, in the luxurious car with the perfect clothes* ». <sup>29</sup> Klara criticised the fact the society encourages egoism « *I think that something that the society created, that we have our rights, think about yourself, you are important, don't care about others, you only live once, do ever feel you want to do in your life, so we have motivated people to become egoistic. And now we need to change that, start thinking about each other and maybe the corona thing will change that. I don't know* ». She told me that there is a need to be more altruistic in the society.

- **Values in their consumption**

Almost all of them verbalised the importance of the utility of what they possess ! For instance, Lucas said « *I'm not really materialist, the objects I possess are useful* » <sup>30</sup>. Ginetto referred to the fact he has two kinds of consumptions the one that is useful and the other one that is to entertain himself, to give a pace to his life. Klara mentioned sustainability because she buys useful products that last. All of them mentioned the Utilitarian Value somewhere except Veronica that gave more importance to the Social one, the Self-Expression, the Quality, Sustainability, the Experiential and Spiritual one through Altruistic behaviours that were also mentioned by Lucas « *before when I was growing up I gave my clothes to my cousins but now I give it to Popular Relief* ». However, he added: « *there are some things that I would not give, if it was related to a childhood memory for example* ». <sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) : « siento que el consumismo afecta directamente a tu persona a como tu te ves, a como tu te quieres expresar o que el resto te vea, en el auto lujoroso con la ropa perfecta »

<sup>30</sup> Original verbatim in French « je suis pas très matérialiste, les objets que j'ai sont utiles »

<sup>31</sup> Original verbatims in French « avant mes vêtements quand je grandissais je les donnais à mes cousins mais maintenant je les donne au secours populaire ». « il y a des trucs que je donnerais pas si c'était un souvenir d'enfance par exemple »

Consumption can give a short-term pleasure. However it seems here that these kinds of Hedonic values are only slightly mentioned. For Ben it was said with a bit of sarcasm: « *it seems people get very happy of consuming* ». However, for Carolina it was more about having a good moment when she goes shopping, good moment that Klara also referred to « *I've always loved shopping* ». Except that no one is mentioning the Hedonic Value here. It is important to remind that these interviews were conducted between 1 and 2 months (depending on the country) after the beginning of the quarantine due to covid19 crisis then their last 'pleasurable' consumption might be 'old' already! Otherwise this sample seems to confirm that the promised happiness by the advertising is just an illusion according to them.

In contrast, Social Value is associated to Consumption for everyone ! This value is more or less directly linked to Self-Expression and Self-Enhancement values like Lucas saying he likes that his objects look good, Veronica mentioned more kind of memories and habits « *I was sort of growing up with this brand* » and Klara said « *it feels more luxuriose* » when she wears clothes with brand or when she possesses a product with a brand like Apple. Anna summarizes well the global thoughts we can sort out among all the interviewees by saying « *I think a lot of products that we buy are status symbols*» and then she added « *the materialism is like a kind of validation to feel accepted, to be part of the society*».

The monetary aspect is mentioned here only by Ginetto in the way that because he paid a product, he would not damage it.

- **Favourite Communication Channels of the Millennials**

A common point to most of the Millennials is that they do not watch TV (or very rarely) anymore. They were used to watch it when they were younger but for years they « migrated » to the internet world! Ginetto and Lucas watch it but very occasionally. Millennials developed a wariness of TV and what media say. Also, through the conversations I had previously with some friends, I noticed that the that for instance some of them use their televisions only for playing videogames but they don't use them often to watch TV programmes except for specific ones. Now Streaming platforms as Netflix, OCS, HBO, Disney +, Prime videos, Mubi, Huli, Youtube (Premium), etc. are preferred nowadays. In the interviews, most of them explained not watching TV.

From this observation, it may be more appropriate to communicate through online channels to reach Millennials. Indeed, with the exception of Ben, everyone mentioned Social Media as an influencing channel even Ginetto talked about it despite he never was on Facebook, Instagram and all the main social networks but Whatsapp with the one we made possible his interview. Then, I also



understood that their favourite media depends of their habits. Indeed, Website ads were mentioned by Lucas because he goes often on different websites and two other channels were referred by Ben with Dailypapers ads because he is a subscriber of several of them and by Ginetto with the ads in the streets because he does not use main social media. And Veronica has a specific preference too due to the fact that she is working a lot on her computer. Indeed, Emailing was only mentioned by Veronica « *I would say these kinds of subscription letters that you have in your inbox that is the one that works the most for me* » and then explained that she uses exclusively her PC and she said « *because I'm constantly checking my inbox* ».

Three of them, Lucas, Veronica and Klara referred to Brands when dealing with ads. Klara and Anna said that Influencers are their privileged communication message senders because seeing what they wear and their lifestyle influence them. Klara and Anna, even if they both agree about the influence of Influencers on them, this is according to them not for the same reason. For Anna, it is mostly for monetary reasons and for utilitarian ones because they propose discounts whereas for Klara it is because it is inspiring and also for Hedonic Reasons « *it's inspiring me a lot because when I see what they wear and what they like to promote and what they like, that makes me feel good* ». Klara adds that Influencers have more impact on her than TV ads.

Except the two of them (Klara and Anna) saying that they are aware Influencers influence her, all the others deal with other different elements of influence. Ben mentioned Journalists in an indirect way by saying he is aware being influenced by the dailypapers but he doesn't like watching ads. Klara showed me an example of a Volkswagen advert<sup>32</sup> she likes. Indeed, she describes it as « dynamic », it has « cool music » according to her and saying that even for a product she does not care (and she precised that she does not care of cars), a dynamic ad draws her attention. Lucas refers to the repetition of an add and that this will make him think first to this product name that was repeated in the ad when he will need it. Veronica mentioned also the repetition but through Social Media and Emailing channels. Ginetto is the only one to refer directly to the importance of the topic of the advert as the most influencing part of it according to him. Indeed, he said « *In an advertisement, what is important is the concern of it. That is to say that maybe the advertisement is not well made but if it deals with something that interest me then for me it is made very well* ».<sup>33</sup> For instance, he loves Football and Sport ads then he is attracted by ads referring to that. The topic was indirectly mentioned by Lucas by talking about cars ad and Veronica about a gift she was looking for. The topics they dealt with are very diversified which show how the Consumer Society made us used to Choice.

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydzHiVOUf5k>

<sup>33</sup> Original verbatim in Italian « « In una pubblicità lo importante è cosa tocca. Cioè magari la pubblicità è fatta male però parla di una cosa che a me mi interessa quindi per me è fatta benissimo » »

- **Advertisement influencing variables and Values**

In addition to the importance of the topic or theme, Repetition seem important too. For instance, Lucas said *«for example, you will choose a One Million [perfume] because you saw this ad One Million a lot of times»* and he added *«I think that they [the ads] influence me more by the repetition»*.<sup>34</sup> Repetition that was referred by Veronica too but she also talked about the fact she can compare through the internet *«once you get an idea of what you want these ads can help you in the way that different competing companies are appearing in front of you so you can check their prices, you can compare the products they offer and then select the product »*.

Once again the Social Value seems the most influent here. For Klara and Anna it is more through the uniqueness and Self-enhancement values that are important in the adverts they like. At this level of the interview, Ben was in the end the only one to indirectly refer to Awareness and Knowledge *« I try to be conscious of how I'm being influenced to buy stuff, I'm not the kind of people that buy a product just because I saw it on the television I'm trying to limit that »*.

For most of them the ads they like fit with their values which is a consistent fact because Ben that does not like watching ads and he is also the only one that didn't mention this fit. The others mentioned the fact adverts are congruent with their values for instance : Anna *« I try to not follow people that don't share my values »* even is she admits being sometimes *« driven by the benefit »* they bring to her (as discounts). Carolina referred to women empowerment values that really speak to her when they are in the ads which is a kind of ideal for her. For Klara it depends and for Lucas it influences him in a social way. Absolutely none had a positive opinion of these ads. Lucas mentioned the fact that ads are everywhere now, social media, tv, he talked about Youtube, Twitch (a live streaming platform originally used by gamers but for some months this one is more and more spread among Millennials). Also he said that ads show things you cannot test. Klara said that in general she skips the ads because she knows it is about selling since she studies marketing. And Carolina mentioned the fact that these ads incite people to opt for consumer credits which is dangerous (she referred to American society).

To summary we can observe that several values are mentioned by them : the social one, awareness, the importance of knowledge and the monetary issues Consumer society can creates. They have some consumer resistance thoughts related to awareness which was expressed by Lucas and Ben. Lucas by the fact he is aware that for instance there is a link between the electric car bonus, Total and the French government. And Ben tries to ignore ads except to understand *« how they are set up to trick people to make them buy »*. Also there is a kind of Optimism bias from Lucas *« I think*

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<sup>34</sup> Original verbatims in French *« « par exemple tu vas choisir un One Million [parfum] parce que t'as vu la pub One Million plein de fois » « je pense qu'elles [les pubs] m'influencent plus par répétition »*

*advertisement influence my values [...] but that maybe work less on me than on others*». <sup>35</sup> And Klara referred to that too because she said that studying Marketing which makes her more aware.

- **Deconsumption Definition**

First of all, only 3 interviewees heard slightly about Deconsumption before I programmed the interview with them! However, for most of the interviewees there's seem to be a consensus about the fact Deconsumption relates to a decrease of something and for most of them about the decrease of consumption or buying and consuming less. Ben and Carolina do not mentioned directly the reduction of the consumption but they suggest it in their definitions. For instance, Carolina's one « *Probably Deconsumption can be to do not buy what I don't need and come back to the essential* » <sup>36</sup> which is a point Lucas agrees with, when Ben deals with « *trying to break with the idea of consumerism* ». Ben and Anna agreed in their definitions by saying it's about focusing on quality and not on quantity. Anna defined it this way: « *I think Deconsumption would be if you really shift your focus on quality and not on quantity so you don't buy that much products or things but instead on the quality that they last longer so for you to buy less, I think that's the concept of Deconsumption* ». Klara and Ginetto mentioned directly the reduction.

- **Perception of Deconsumers**

Except Ben and Ginetto, they all know someone deconsuming. For instance, Veronica and Anna define them as minimalist, Carolina as people loving simple things and Lucas as people that are careful or people that are rather into ecology. Veronica gave the example of one of her friends that is adopting a Minimalistic lifestyle. She concludes about that it has personal advantages « *when you stop buying so many things then you can turn around and see you don't have that much of garbage in your apartment or in your house you get way more space which is great in my opinion* » (Veronica). They globally all perceive deconsumers well and even feel admiring to them. Actually, they underline the fact they are exceptional people by precisating that we should all have their practices. However, four of them have different negative comments about deconsumers. Lucas talked about the fact that when these people are too extreme he feels they are too far from his reality then this has a repulsive effect on him. He needs them to be more similar to him. Klara refers that deconsumption is not easy to practice in some situations, she wants to own her clothes for instance. Anna mentioned the difficulties due to the social norms and habits « *yeah I think it is not that easy to achieve because we are so used to consumption [...] we grew up with it, we never knew anything else* ».

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<sup>35</sup> Original verbatim in French « je pense que les publicités influent sur mes valeurs [...] mais ça marche peut-être moins sur moi que sur les autres »

<sup>36</sup> Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) « probablemente el desconsumo puede ser no comprar lo que no necesito y volver al esencial »

so I think it's really hard to get rid of this pattern and this behaviour ». Ginetto referred to the fact that people will claim they are deconsumers and will reduce their consumption on one side but then will catch it with another side of their consumption.

- **Deconsumption practices**

There are diverse propositions of Deconsumption actions (that could for instance be promoted in an advertisement which is the reasons why I asked in addition to think to solutions). Most of them mentioned the 3 R by Lee (2011) Reject, Restrict, Reclaim. However, the most referred was the Reclaim one (even if the Reject and Restrict ones go along with it). For instance Klara with Second Hand shops in Sweden but also with the Second-Hand section inside the « traditional » shops or «H&M that asks you to bring back your clothes so they can do new clothes out of it and then you will get a discount if you do that». Anna mentioned these 3 R in one sentence : «*recycle some clothes [Restrict]; just use old clothes and make new out of them [Reclaim] ; not buying new stuff [Reject]*», she also referred to buy sustainable products as sustainable clothes and Lucas talked about environmentally-friendly products too. Carolina took the example of reusing the clothes and she also mentioned the necessity to reject credit cards that are not adapted for a change in Society according to her. Several of them suggests solutions using the circular and sharing economy (Veronica, Ben, Carolina). For instance Veronica gave an the example of a neighbourhood where each of the households has to mow the lawn and instead of each buying one mowlawnner each she suggests to « *buy just one and share it with one another* » or to encourage renting (eg. she referred to the compagny Hilti that enable to rent construction tools and equipments). Ben verbalised the same kind of examples « *to have more sharing economy so instead of owning a car owning all kinds of tools to fix things around the house, you would have a pool of resources where you pay a low prices to have high-quality tools and only have when you only need them* ». Then, some of them deal with buying only what we really need and give what we don't need (Lucas, Ginetto). For instance Ginetto said « *for example if you tell me that eating at Mc Donald is necessary, it is not necessary eating at Mc Donalds, it is necessary to feed yourself* ». <sup>37</sup> Carolina summaries the thoughts of everyone by enumerating deconsumption actions « *taking care, preserving, conserving, recycling, reusing things* ». <sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Original verbatim in Italian : « per esempio se mi dici che consumare Mc Donalds è necessario, non è necessario consumare Mc Donalds, è necessario nutrirsi »

<sup>38</sup> Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) : « cuidar, presevar, en conservar, en reciclar, en reutilizar las cosas. »

Among the Deconsumption practices some of them are more mental, thoughts, etc. For instance, Anna, Lucas, Veronica, Ben and Carolina mentioned Awareness, Consciousness as important to encourage Deconsumption. As Ben said « *make people aware* ». Veronica and Carolina referred to questioning yourself, to do self-examination or self-assessment. Veronica referred to the importance of frequency and declared « *just think about 'how many of them you actually were on regular bases ? ' it might be just two sweaters and a pair of jeans [...] and then the question is 'do you really needed to buy them or then can you borrow it to friend ?* ». Carolina shared a similar thought « *doing the typical question : 'How do I need it ? I need it because it will bring me something ? Or because I get bored and I need to buy because I have nothing else to do ?* ». <sup>39</sup> Ben and Anna agreed about the fact each action count and that we have to think as a society not as an individual. Ginetto is the only one to mention the need to save money could be a good argument or just the need for change. Some of them naturally gave concrete examples of Deconsumption or Sustainable consumption practices. For instance, Lucas mentioned me Sport brands I asked him what brands as Nike should do to be in phase with Deconsumption practices. And he said that Nike product are durable in some ways but that if they wanted to they could make very sustainable products but that is not enough profitable for them. Also he joked about it by saying « *they just need to make hogs if they want make them sustainable* ». <sup>40</sup> About country experience, I mentioned to Ben the environmentally-friendly image that his country has outside and he strongly disapproved (he was shaking « no » with his head) that the Netherlands is an environmentally-friendly country. However, Klara said that consuming less « is totally a thing in Sweden » ! Indeed, she added « *here it's very popular to buy at second-hand shops !* » and « *They made these second-hand shops very fancy !* » (eg. of Swedish second-hand shops she referred to me: Arkivet ; Myrorna<sup>41</sup>).

- **Personal experiences**

About personal experience with Deconsumption, Lucas mentioned the inconsistency of Second-Hand websites (eg. Vinted) « *You buy the object of someone but ecologically there is a transportation and so on* ». <sup>42</sup> That is the reason why he prefers giving to the Secours Populaire (Popular relief in France). Klara shared about her Erasmus semester as the « *biggest consumption time* » of her life. Then knowing all the participants, I remembered that Klara used to talk about a time when she consumes very few things then I asked her about that and she said « *during Lent period* » and added « *morally and ethically we should not consume, you know living in so much... we should help people* ».

<sup>39</sup> Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) : « hacer la típica pregunta : ¿Cómo lo necesito ? ¿Lo quiero porque me va a traer algo ? ¿O porque estoy aburrida y necesito comprarlo porque no tengo nada mas que hacer? »

<sup>40</sup> Original verbatim in French : « ils ont qu'à faire des sabots s'ils veulent que ça soit durable »

<sup>41</sup> <https://arkivetsthlm.se/> ; <https://www.myrorna.se/>

<sup>42</sup> Original verbatim in French : « tu rachètes l'objet de quelqu'un mais écologiquement doit y'avoir un transport et tout »

She then referred to her Religious values and for her Lent is a time when she does not « *eat so much fancy stuff anymore, I don't... because you know you live in luxury, and during this time I don't want these things to disturb my relation with God* ». She also talked about the importance of knowing herself to reinforce her altruistic values « *That is the time when I'm fully focused on how I can be a better person, how i could help other people, in different ways* » and that is what gives sense to her life. She also added « *that is a time to actually find yourself and stop focusing on these material things* ». Finally, Anna mentioned the fact she backpacked during one year and she learnt to live with few things during this period! « *I experienced it [Deconsumption] a little bit I think when I was backpacking because I just live with my backpack for one year. And I did not have yeah the choice of other clothes, I just had what was in my backpack and yeah I was happy with it so it was a proof that you don't need that many things to be happy* ». Carolina explained the fact she was used to consume a lot to the USA and that she started to deconsume. Indeed, she explained « *deconsuming made me much happier than consuming and I also helped others and it enabled me to save money too, I'm more conscious in taking care [...] and prioritise the consumption maybe of the things because we are always going to consume but it depends what is important too*».<sup>43</sup>

We can observe that the common value (between all the ones that shared personal examples) is the Spiritual one through the common sense for Lucas, the religious, altruistic, ethical and moral vision for Klara, by the way of the experience for Anna and through the consumption fatigue. According to her, the increase of her happiness in this period was directly related to this deconsumption practice with more altruistic values and positive individual consequences as saving money. Also we can infer here that the prior experiences may explain a shift in the reduction of their consumption.

They are globally all trying to reduce their consumption. They all said that they will deconsume in the future in some ways but not for everything. For example, Veronica said she would adopt deconsumption or at least a minimalistic lifestyle and that « *it makes absolute sense* » to her. However, in addition to enjoy travelling she needs to travel for work reasons too because her family lives in Latvia but she works in Denmark. Ben is trying to cope with a travel issue too since he never thought of stopping travelling before the covid-19 period and for him travelling gives values to his life. Indeed, he said : « *that's difficult because in the meantime I did fly a lot in my life and I did not necessarily planned to not fly again there's like a cognitive dissonance, I know that I shouldn't do it but*

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<sup>43</sup> Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) : « *« desconsumir me hizo mucho mas feliz que consumir y tambien he ayudado a otros y tambien me ha permitido como el ahorro, estoy mas consciente en cuidar [...] y priorizar el consumo quizas de las cosas porque siempre vamos a estar consumiendo pero depende que es importante tambien* »

*I do it anyway because it gives value to my life I think. So that's really difficult, it's difficult to make what you claim fitting with your acts in that case ».* All the others said they will deconsume then I tried to understand what are their motives to do it.

- **Values and Motivations to Deconsumption**

I noted that for most of the interviewees Deconsumption or the reduction of the consumption is associated principally with Environment. Then, one of their main motivations are environmental (Lucas, Ben, Anna, Veronica) as Ben said « *to limit environmental impact* ». These are the motives everyone are talking about sustainable consumption. However, a lot of other different reasons were mentioned by the interviewees. There were their personal interests (Veronica, Klara, Ginetto, Carolina). For instance, Veronica for ergonomic motives mentioning again her travelling by saying « *the less things you own the easier it is just to pack your one piece of luggage and fly* ». What she said raises the question of the necessity once again, if she travels only when this is necessary but the necessity has a different meaning for each person. However, if she does not increase her usual frequency of travelling and buy less that is a form of deconsumption that has a positive impact on environment. Nevertheless, the Monetary motive (Veronica, Klara, Ginetto) is for several of them the first reason they referred to. Indeed, Millennials still a young generation, some of them still students and others are just young workers that are saving money to build for example a family or reach some of their life objectives or projects. Veronica mentioned that « *cost-saving* » reasons are more important than the user-friendly ones. This is also the first deconsumption motive Klara referred to : « *one thing: to save more money [laugh]* » and same for Ginetto « *I would do it to save money. If I understand that recently, consuming something made me spend too much money then I may reduce* ». <sup>44</sup> Some would deconsume also for Self-Enhancement motives (Klara, Carolina). For instance, Klara said « *I would feel like a better person not consuming too much, I think is the morally and ethically right thing to do* » so that means her self-esteem would increase. Carolina explained that the reason why she did reducing her consumption was very personal: « *I did it as something more personal as self-help when I was to the United States, I felt as an empty consumer, it was a very personal process* ». <sup>45</sup> The self-transcendence values were also referred by Carolina because she described her need to reduce her consumption as something she could not really explain, something that she felt necessary. The Self-Transcendences motives were also referred indirectly by several interviewees (Lucas, Ben, Klara and Ginetto). For instance, Ginetto said : « *I would do it*

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<sup>44</sup> Original verbatim in Italian : «lo farei per risparmiare soldi. Se capisco che nei ultimi tempi consumare una cosa mi ha fatto spendere troppi soldi magari diminuisco »

<sup>45</sup> Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile): « lo hice con algo más personal como de auto ayuda cuando estuve a los estados unidos mi senti consumidora vacía »

*[deconsuming] if I would get by consuming less in a certain way would help the world somehow then for these reasons »<sup>46</sup>. Then these are altruistic reasons but that he would not explain. They also referred to Social values (Lucas, Ginetto, Carolina). For Lucas, the Social Value is the most important one. Then, Spiritual and Moral reasons (Klara, Ginetto, Carolina, Ben) as Happiness/Hedonic reasons (Lucas, Anna, Carolina) were also mentioned. For Ben, « *what counts in life is experiencing other places, other people, other areas, nature, rather important* ». When I asked to Anna why deconsumers do consuming less she replied « *I think they do that to feel happy or to get other satisfaction in life than materialism* ». She then added that Compassion and Empathy are the most important values in deconsumption and she said : « *empathy because I think if you don't have this mindset you won't see the need of changing something and yeah if you just focus on yourself you then you will always prioritise your needs and don't care about anything else then I think that's important* ».*

As Anna, Lucas thinks altruistic values are more important in Deconsumption because « *in the end ecology is made to live well with people* ». According to him Social Values in Deconsumption would be more altruistic and the Happiness would be more egoistic. By precisising he has no precise beliefs, he referred to Spiritual Values: « *there are a lot of things in beliefs that are good, as in the Karma, it is good to think things this way to do good things* ».<sup>47</sup> Klara added « *I think it would gives more sense to the society* » to deconsume. So, in their opinion the ethical aspect has also its importance (Lucas, Klara and Carolina). They opined, for instance, about child labour. However, in order to avoid the same mistakes that were done in the current Environmental Communication, we can note that some interviewees as Ginetto and Klara would not appreciate being said that they must do something by an advertisement. Indeed, they think it would be like infantilising instead of making them more responsible so that would be a backfire effect of the "classic" environmental communication focused on duties for instance. This is consistent with the assumptions that we made when we started this work about Deconsumption.

Veronica and Carolina agree on the point that they think people realise they prefer moments than the consumption in itself and that the experience has its importance and Anna mentioned that too. For example, Veronica said « *I think that now people realise that they should start collecting moments and not collecting things* ». Other variables were verbalised as Consciousness from Ben that thinks « *consciousness is quite rather important, because people know about their choices, consciouness leads to action* » or Klara that said : « *I feel like a deconsumption is good because people*

<sup>46</sup> Original verbatim in Italian : « lo farei se capissi se consumando meno di una certa cosa aiuterebbe il mondo in qualche modo quindi per questi motivi»

<sup>47</sup> Original verbatims in French: « au final si on fait de l'écologie c'est pour bien vivre avec les gens » « y'a beaucoup de choses dans les croyances telles que le Karma qui sont biens, c'est bien de penser comme ça pour faire des bonnes choses »



*need to wake up and understand that they can't just stay in a such materialistic world »*. Also quality was mentioned by almost all the interviewees.

- **Generations and Deconsumption**

This study is about the perception of one Generation : the Millennials. Then this part was not a direct question I asked them but it only gathers generation perceptions or roles mentioned by some interviewees. A lot of Millennials perceive their lifestyle as healthy and environmentally-friendly or at least they perceive as tending to that. For instance, Klara said *« I think my lifestyle in such is pretty environmental friendly already, because since I'm religious, it's already a thing that I shouldn't overconsume ! You know ? »* and she added a concrete example *«we use our own bags when we go to shop »*. She also said that she cares about Health.

Lucas and Veronica both of them mentioned the baby boomers generation ! And depending on the place their grandparents (from the baby boomers generation) used to live, their experience with consumption is completely different. Then this is the reason why History is a variable that is necessarily needed to be taken in consideration while interviewing different generations from different countries! Indeed to simplify, between the end of the Second World War and the end of the URSS (until 1991), the world was « splited » in two, two different paradigms. Then Lucas mentioned his grandmother that was born in the beginning of the 30-year post war boom! By being French she was in the western side of the world, in the liberal one and she lives an important part of her life when Consumer Society was to its peak! Then he described her as an over consumer and thinks that she would take a dim view of deconsumption. Lucas thinks that money was more important before than now : *« Monetary was matter because it was strict, you find a job, you're 20, etc. »* and he added *« more the generations go by, more we are trying to refocus on human rather than money »*.<sup>48</sup> Adding my personal opinion about it, I would said that we are indeed trying to refocus on human but we have failed so far with social networks for instance that could be isolating. His opinion is interesting because I can do the assumption that the previous generations think the exact opposite about Millennials. The point about overconsumption starting from the baby boomer period is indeed an historical fact in the western society. However in the other part of this "splited" world, Veronica mentioned that her grandparents lived during Soviet Union! So they are used to consume few ! She told me : *« so therefore people were not so much attached to material products even buying a sofa it was... it was a big occasion so therefore people were taking care of it and those things they lasted for a long period a long long period of time and this is also the mentality they still live with »* which

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<sup>48</sup> Original verbatims in French : «ma grand-mère c'était une grande consommatrice» « le monétaire était important parce que voilà c'était carré, tu trouves un boulot, t'as 20 ans, etc. »

shows the role of habits. According to Veronica there would be no problem for her grandparents to consume less since they have already this mindset « *They don't like to buy things, they don't like to throw out things they prefer just to keep what they have* ».

Veronica thinks that Millennials is a « *spoiled* » generation ! Indeed, she stated « *we've got such a variety of products you can find, it doesn't matter what type you're talking about but you can now find it in so many different sizes, in so many different shapes, in so many different colors, materials, etc. so we are spoiled in this way sort that we can buy whatever we imagine*», that shows once again that Consumer Society made us used to Choice. She however thinks that things start to change in Millennials generation « *at least in some countries and for some people we start to see the drawbacks of that* ». Carolina mentioned the impact of advertising on new generations as Millennials and Generation Z « *Advertising are the strongerst elements of the consumerism. It has a power on the new generations.* »<sup>49</sup> that is why we are interesting to the Advertisements that could be used for Sustainable Consumption.

- **Sustainable consumption and Advertisements**

All made positive comments about environmental ads! They all thing it is a good thing that they exist! For instance, Ginetto said « *I think that the environmental consumption would be a powerful argument and should take the next step for all consumers* ».<sup>50</sup> However, Greenwashing was referred by 4 of them! Indeed, Klara, Anna, Ginetto and Lucas all mentioned the exact same thing : some companies claim being environmentally-friendly in their advertisements but behind there is no concrete actions which create a distrust of these kinds of ads. For instance, Klara said : « *a part of me is skeptical when it comes to commercial or advertisement that is related to environmentally-friendly theme because I know that in the end it's all about selling so if I don't see like clear actions...* » and Ginetto and Anna deal with checking the information as she said « *you have to do your research to inform yourself if the company is really sustainable and practice it or if it's just more an advertisement and they actually don't stand behind it* ». Lucas referred to the fact they always get around the norms by taking the example of when plastic bags were forbidden they invented « *pseudo plastic bags* ». Ginetto summarised that by mentioning the importance of Knowledge, of studying what is behind and he added that he does not really trust neither ads nor what the media said, he trusts way more his friends that study in particular these kinds of things. Veronica, Anna and Klara feel a kind of "Environmentally-friendly arguments" fatigue, they are « *over-the-top* » with this topic. Veronica thoughts summary well what the three of them think about these environmental

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<sup>49</sup> Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) : « las propagandas, son el elemento mas fuerte del consumismo. Tiene un poder sobre las nuevas generaciones fuerte »

<sup>50</sup> Original verbatim in Italian : « penso che l'eco-consumo sarebbe un argomento potente e dovrebbe proseguire tutti i consumatori »

arguments : «2 months ago we were all talking about environmental sustainability everywhere, Greta, here and there...it's already so so so tiring ! Now we have another topic of discussion which is corona...». She added « maybe it gets too much attention to the media...we should stop talking about it we should start acting !». Ben thinks this kind of arguments are presented in a too « *simplistic way* » and this undermines the effectiveness of the message. Oppositely, Lucas thinks that media doest not talk enough about this or when they do it, he thinks it is presented as an incredible achievement at each time. We can deduce that globally the interviewees seem to need for more credibility in the advertisements.

From what comes, Lucas proposed to forbid ads promoting products bad for environments. Klara said more softly to do not supporting brands that are bad for environment. Veronica mentioned the importance of shocking people and showing facts. She took the example of sea turtles dying because of wastes and that showing those shocking images would motive people to stop. However, following to that I asked her « *There are shocking images on cigarettes packs but people still smoking, what do you think about that ?* » and she replied that people always find a way to be in the denial by saying « *some of them just take a piece a paper to hide that picture [laugh]* ». However, she added she has never seen a TV ad about stopping smoking but for instance herself what persuaded her to do not smoke was education. At school they taught her what poisons there are inside a cigarette.

To come back to the topic, about Sustainable ads, Klara and Ginetto agree about showing facts by precisising they need to be able to witness the concrete actions of the companies. Ginetto added that the ads should be more educative and pedagogic and they should give the proof that they are really taking responsible actions. Or at least enable him to check. As Veronica, Carolina referred to showing images but she added that ads should be more focused on the value part.

Four of them saw an Ad incitating to consume less according to them. Ben mentioned a KLM campaign incitating to fly less, Veronica thinks she saw an ad about sustainable menstrual cups, Klara saw these kinds of ads with H&M giving discounts when they bring back their all H&M clothes to recycle them or sell them as second-hand products and Carolina mentioned a Chilean shop called « Paris »<sup>51</sup> that deal with advert to collect clothes and reuse them. Anna thinks that «it would be really bad avertissement if they would encourage you to not buy because the companies need to be profitable and sell their products so I think the avertissement always encourage you to buy something » but Klara contrasts that with talking about the brand image.

- **Ought vs. Ideals messages : reactions**

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<sup>51</sup> <https://ayuda.paris.cl/>

These messages were made based on the literature.

The Ought message was: «*Each human has to play its part. It is your duty to act for a sustainable future, it is then your role to reduce your consumption that will enable you to meet your responsibility*». I invented this message but it was inspired by what Pham and Avnet (2004) said about Oughts. Six of them had a positive reaction about the Oughts message! But what is noticeable is they had this positive reaction because they all agreed with the message! That means it might be persuasive only to people already convinced by this message! Four of them expressed a negative reaction. Veronica was the only one to do not feel positive at all about it because she felt fatigue of this topic and had the feeling that the message was too «*enforcing* ». And this fatigue is shared by Klara that despite her previous positive reaction to it because she said that is good that they are trying to change our behaviours but she added «*honestly, I don't care about talks like that, because I know what they are trying... it's Marketing* ». Lucas and Ginetto both agreed about the fact some people will not care at all of messages like these ! For instance, Ginetto thinks some people would be tired of sentences that just aims to make a good impression. For five of them this message was convincing but not with a big impact and mostly convincing on people already convinced as Ginetto and Lucas said. Ben also agreed with that by opining that it will not convince everyone such as people that emphasise more self-centered desires that are according to him «*hard to get* ». Klara and Veronica agreed to say it was not convincing enough. Lucas thinks that this message was good but that some people has to change first before being ready to hear that.

I made the Ideals message based on the article of Özçağlar-Toulouse (2009) by taking 3 of the most important Ideals by «*responsible consumers* » according to their study. Also I did the assumption that making a message this way will change the routine of the most common messages which would have the effect to positively surprise them (or blow their minds). However, I also did the assumption that the lenght of this message could be problematic for some people. This Ideals message is the following one: «*Whether your ideals are moral: to do not hurt others. Political, so that each of your purchasing choice can be perceived as "votes" toward a better society. Or for other reasons as liberating yourself from the "good consumer" label to be seen as a human-being. Consuming less or deconsuming will enable you to do that.*»

All of them had positive reactions about the Ideals message! First of all, Ginetto said that once again this one is convincing for people already convinced. Lucas found the message really deep but he confirmed what Ginetto stated by saying the effect was pretty similar on him and he is a person that is already convinced about that. Carolina agreed with the sense of it. She also felt really

impressed by the message and she thinks this kind of messages would be exactly what she want. For example the fact it was more involving as Anna said *« I think that's involving the audience more, addressing the audience more. I think you feel more addressed »*. She repeated several time that she felt this message was talking to her directly: *« I think it uses direct questions, [...] they just directly use good questions and other stuff, they address you »*. She also added it makes people think and question themselves which is confirmed by Klara that precise this one had a moral aspect *« that would be better for people when it comes to environmental friendly things »* and said *« It was philosophical »*. And Ben complete this information by saying he thought this good to take in consideration the ethical aspect. Veronica agreed with the message and she said : *« I think in this way you are giving the choice »*.

Despite provoking more positive reactions it also created more negative ones! The first thing is that several of them found this message too complicated for an advertisement (Veronica, Ben, Klara). For instance, Veronica and Klara did not get the message directly when I read them and they got it only when I made them read it. Veronica said *« I'm afraid it would be hard for people to get it »*. Also, some of the interviewees found this ad might be too provocative or even hurtful for some people that are not as the ad describes (Klara, Lucas, Ginetto). For instance, Klara said *« they can motivate or demotivate you because people can become depressed when they feel they are guilty to something but you have some people that can be motivated about it »* and she added *« it makes me think too much... in the end we are not less human because we are consumers »*. Lucas totally agreed about that. Ginetto explained the same thing in more explicit way *« I think that a person that consume a lot could feel attacked by this advertisement because it would be saying that people that consume less are better than you. Then, in this case, that maybe would attack people values »*.<sup>52</sup> And he added that then this person would not feel convinced at all or would feel repelled by it.

So, some people might takes this message as an opportunity but other could see this as an attack. Indeed, it was suggested by Carolina that presenting the message as an opportunity would be more effective. In the end as much as people (five) felt convinced by this message than the Oughts one. Obviously the goal of this study was not experiential so it did not conforms with all the experimental rules as for instance switching the messages for half of the interviewees to limit biases due to the position! But it still gives a glimpse of it that and making sure the next time to do not make the messages too complicated for instance and also caring of the way of conveying it and presenting it! Also it shows that Ideals are indeed convincing but they are hard to present in an

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<sup>52</sup> Original verbatim in Italian *« penso che una persona che consuma tanto potrebbe sentirsi attaccata di questa pubblicità perché sarebbe come dire quelle persone consumano meno sono migliori di te. Quindi questo caso magari attacca gli valori della gente. »*

advert without having negative impacts on people on one hand even if the goal of this message was positive.

- **Deconsumption Communication Messages : Improvements and Impressions**

The improvements they proposed were interesting because all were different. First of all several of them mentioned Facts (Veronica, Klara and Ginetto) and whether the message was Oughts-oriented or Ideals-oriented Facts was most mentioned variable. And most of them it was about making the message and the brand broadcasting these messages more credible. This is interesting because it was an element did not really think about! This variable can help improving the making of these messages. An interesting thing is when I asked Ginetto how to improve the Oughts message, he gave me an Ideal example that would make people more responsible according to him: *«For example, showing how much we consume/buy extra in comparison to what is necessary. OK ? It is about making understand how much in addition could be useful for instance to the poor populations, that is to say population that we disregard. They would be satisfied, they would be rescued»*<sup>53</sup>. For the Ideals message Veronica suggested presenting Facts this way *« This is how this beach looked fifty years ago, this how it looks now »*.

Then, Visuals was the second most mentioned variable. It was referred mainly by Veronica and Anna. In particular for the Ideals message they express the need to see pictures or videos. All the others agree that would make it more convincing.

Also, Ginetto and Veronica referred to experiences. Whereas Veronica thought the Politics topic not really relevant, Carolina found that this message needed to deal more with that because it gives the opportunity to people to take like a citizen power and she said *« Politics Ideals play an important role »*.<sup>54</sup> Ginetto referred to orient it to who we send this message by using cookies for instance to do not send it to people who feel annoyed with it. Even if tracking can be too intrusive.

The way of conveying the message was also mentioned some times and they related it with the Generation role. Anna and Carolina completed each other by saying that this message could be transmitted on social media as an ad on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. Carolina also explained that some people of some generations still watch TV so ads on TV are also necessary. Ginetto mentioned this generation role by saying it would work maybe better on young people or children.

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<sup>53</sup>Original verbatim in Italian «ad esempio, mostrare quanto consumiamo in più rispetto al necessario. OK ? E far capire quanto di più potrebbe essere utile alle popolazioni povere cioè popolazioni che noi spregiamo. Sarebbero soddisfatte, sarebbero salavate »

<sup>54</sup>Original verbatim in Spanish (Chile) : « « los ideales politicos hacen un juego importante »

Then, to improve the message, Carolina, Klara and Ben said that the Ideals message needs to be simpler and clearer. Ben proposed to separate the Ideals and relating them to a concrete action and Klara goes along by saying to be less general to be more specific. Carolina proposed examples of specific ideals as Politics, Unity, Family, etc. About making it more simple to understand. Indeed, after reading them both of the message and after acknowledging their reactions, I let them know what was the goal intended behind the message: one more oriented Duty and the other one Ideals, they understood the interest of them. Then being more pedagogic on the role played by these message could be an idea to make them more persuasive.

Finally, I asked them which message gives them the best impression. Five on seven interviewees preferred the first one then the Oughts one! This could be explained by the fact the first one was maybe clearer or by the fact they were themselves more « Oughts-orientes » people. Their explanations were that the ones Preferring the Ideals one said it was more positive because it gives the choice (Veronica), and Anna thinks it is more positive and more convincing that the Oughts one. About the ones preferring the Oughts-oriented one, there are two groups. One group that thinks we need to use both of the message because both are effective and will not work on same people (Lucas, Carolina) and the others that didn't feel convinced (Ben) that suggest to don't use the Ideals one this way (Klara) or to do not use it at all (Ginetto) because it deals too much with personal values.

To limit bad reactions to the ad, Carolina advised to adapt the ad to the generation, Ginetto suggested to adapt to the profile and Klara suggested to don't use values at all because it can creates « *double-standard* » or « *cognitive dissonance* » (as Ben said) on people consuming less or on people seeing them consuming a product from a Brand that has different values! They referred to the congruence between the values of the brand, the ad and the person.

- **Deconsumption and Covid-19 crisis quarantine**

What is happening now<sup>55</sup> in the world simply cannot be ignored when you deal with consumption and even less neglected when you deal with Deconsumption. This is a moment where changing our way of consumption is at the heart of the conversations.

First of all, About their Mindset before quarantine, when I was asking this question to the first people I interviewed, either there were dealing directly with Changes or they were saying this mindset was what they said about consumer society. Then in the end I finished by asking both questions. Ben and Lucas said their mindset fits with what they said before which mean they thought

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<sup>55</sup>Written in May 2020 during Covid-19 pandemics

already we were consuming too much and that they were already trying to do effort to make their consumption more sustainable. Veronica and Klara think there is not that big change. Veronica said that yes she is « *consuming less of transportation* » and « *we can't fly and travel nowadays* ». Klara reminded that she does not have many restrictions in Sweden related to Covid-19 even if she quarantined herself. She said that the difference is her way of buying « *I'm like 'oh nice i'm waiting for my package to come' but normally I don't buy clothes online it's such an issue for me, I like to try it on, to go to the shop. I don't like to buy online but now I've been forced to* ». Then, she found a way to buy clothes anyway by changing her purchasing habits when she felt the need to buy them. So there is no « quantitative » change (eg. increasing or reducing consumption) in her consumption since the quarantine.

Anna, Ginetto and Carolina agreed that there is a change in their consumption. According to Anna people support more locals products and producers comparing to before the crisis. She thinks that people reduced their consumption (and herself too) during the quarantine. She also said : « *also people are consuming in general less [...] they don't know how economy will develop [...] if an economic crisis follow I think they are more cautious and they don't want to spend that much because they don't know would happen* » then that would mean people mistrust the future at least economically. However, it is important to remind that here we are interested to a Deconsumption that is not endured ! She also mentioned « *improvements have been seen in term of pollution, the air is clearer, there are a lot of benefits that have been noticed just after few weeks of this lockdown* ». Ginetto said that yes there is a change because all the things he was used to consume when he was hanging out with his closes, he stopped consuming that. Carolina, as Klara previously, she mentioned the online purchases but she said that since there is only to take care of her home and she is not seen in public then she consumes less, showing that the social value is definitely one of the main ones in the « classic » consumption.

I asked them about their mindset related to their consumption « now », at the end of April 2020. Veronica, Ben, Klara, Lucas and Ginetto all mentioned that this quarantine shows we don't need much to be fine. Also, they all verbalised a decrease in their consumption. Ben referred to an example of reflection he had about Fashion industry. Indeed to share his thoughts he explained « *I read today a short article about fashion currently that fashion industry produced clothes for the summer season but nobody is buying them so what would happen with those, would you postpone your fashion sense to next year ?* ». Since Fashion has always been renewed he added « *would means that all things produced for the last 3-4-5 months would be destroyed because it does not fit with our fashion sense in 5 months from that ? That's an interesting thought.*».



I asked them all if they were missing their former consumption during the quarantine. First of all, Lucas and Ginetto mentioned the exact same example about beers and friends ! They both of them referred to the fact they miss going out with their friends and that the beer is just an excuse to go out with them. Indeed, they both said that they don't need the beer, they just miss to have social interactions. They both miss the experience brought by consumption. Ben also mentioned it but he didn't precise if it was the fact of going to the bar with friends, to drink the beer or the whole thing that he was missing (I assumpt it was about the whole experience). Carolina added that she misses the moments too. Only 3 of them (Lucas, Veronica and Ben) admitted missing their former consumptions for different reasons. For instance, Lucas said that just going to Mc Donalds is something he misses even if he is aware that politically, ethically and for other reasons it is not that good but he wants to go there anyway. Veronica mentioned her need for travelling and Ben referred to going out to have a drink as previously mentioned.

Interviewees that do not miss their consumption highlighted different reasons. The common reasons of missing it is consuming services and the ones that state not missing it are in the end mentioning moments more than the service in itself. Carolina for example, by saying she does not miss her consumption but she mentioned also the need to go out to a bar or a pub for communicating with others.

Four of them (Lucas, Veronica, Ben and Anna) said that people (including themselves) will catch up their consumption after the quarantine due to the deprivation. For instance, Lucas said « *I think that [consumption] will strongly start again!* »<sup>56</sup>. Veronica stated « *I will definitely try to catch up with things I missed as going to the cinema, it will be consumption of services primarily not physical things you buy* ». Ben said « *maybe in food and drinks outside of my house yes, otherwise no* » and Anna explained that consumption will indeed increase again.

Several of them think that either they were already trying deconsuming or they were already not consuming much as Veronica, Ben, Klara, Ginetto and Carolina. Some of them explained that because they buy already only the necessary according to them (Veronica, Klara, Ginetto). For instance, Klara said that she already had the realisation that she needed to consume less after her Erasmus semester two years ago because she consumed way too much according to her. Only Lucas and Anna said that deconsumption or consuming less is a goal because they know consumption is harmful for the environment. Also Lucas mentioned the alienating side of the society, he mentinned a duality that was mentioned, as I explained earlier, by Klara as "*double-standard*" or "*cognitive dissonance*" by Ben.

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<sup>56</sup> Original verbatim in French : « je pense que ça va repartir en balle ! »

All expressed their interest for the topic or mentioned the importance of it! Some of them appreciated the fact we had this conversation in a more formal way. However, it is not because I formalised the frame of doing these interviews comparing to our usual conversations that they didn't use their usual language. I noticed for most of them only minimal changes in their way of speaking in particular at the beginning because they knew they were recorded but then these changes disappeared through the interview. Knowing their background enabled me to bring them deeper than I had planned on the topic and Lucas even noticed that. For instance, I asked follow-up questions related to what I knew about them.

Carolina really loves the word « Deconsumption », it is something new for her, she had never heard it before I mentioned it. As acquaintances that participated to it, they all wish to reach the thesis afterwards. Lucas, Ginetto and Carolina summarised the interview in the end and Ginetto took this time to remind what is the most important thing in his opinion about this topic. He said that the « *media aspect and advertising are really important. And how to interact with the consumer?* ». Ginetto referred to the need to study more psychology of consumers and that it is « *useless to do beautiful advertisements* » if it's to convince people that are already convinced. He also said that there is a need to study more their behaviours, the psychology, precisely « *to convince people that are not convinced!* »<sup>57</sup> which is one of the reasons why I am doing this work.

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<sup>57</sup> Original verbatims in Italian : « è molto importante l'aspetto dei media, della pubblicità ! E anche come interfacciarsi con il consumatore ? » « i media devono convincere chi non è convinto, non devono convincere chi è già convinto e quindi non bisogna fare delle pubblicità belle ma bisogna studiare meglio la psicologia, i comportamenti »

## APPENDIX 3: VARIABLES THAT WERE BROUGHT OUT BY THE STUDY

Here the complete list of variables the preliminary study emphasised.

### *New variables*

- Credibility : the need for facts were mentioned a lot of times to improve the communication. It seems that this credibility plays a moderating role somewhere between the communication and their intention to deconsume ! And about Facts, they could be simply use in the messages to improve their persuasiveness.
- Similarity : the need to see deconsumption practices as not too far from their reality was referred too. Also not being too far from their habits was alluded. In addition, the « double-standard » when buying a brand that promotes values do not really fit with their own values was mentioned some times in the interviews.
- Repetition (of the ad/message): this is the second most referred variable during the interviews. They described this one as the most influencing element in the classic ads because according to them it helps to remember the brand name, the product or service, etc. And in the end, they will choose this brand due to the familiarity.
- Prior Experiences: it was referred several times during the interview as a turning point to go from consuming to deconsuming (eg. the swedish interviewee said that after her Erasmus semester she questioned herself and realised she was consuming way too much and then she decided to reduce it). It could induce a moderator « Prior Experience » that could be measured with Likert scale. The fact to have already experienced a deconsumption can make people wake up according to the interviewees. Also this shows that the situation influences their perception and their behaviours. That means that the messages used could trigger this realisation.
- Utilitarian Value : according to them, the products they buy are all useful for something
- Monetary/Cost-saving : It was mentioned by everyone at different moments of the interview and this is actually for some of them the main reason why they would deconsume
- Consciousness/Awareness : define as being aware our consumption has to reduce but they all agree to say most of people know now that we have to do it
- Knowledge/Education : it was mentioned several times for different reasons. First, educating children about consumption practices. Then, informing people that do not know about the need to reduce the consumption. And also making knowledge accessible to check if the companies really aim to encourage environmentally-friendly practices or not. The last reason was the most referred to.
- Region/Country History : it is a variable need to be taken in account when studying people from different place of the world. For instance, two of them took the example of their grandparents consumption. For one their grandparents knew the Sovietic Union period then

did never get used to consume a lot and for the other their grandparents knew the 30 years of Post-War economic growth (Les Trentes Glorieuses) then got used to consume a lot.

- Guilt (or negative emotions) : they said to make people guilty can enable them to make them realised what is going on with the environmental issues
- Trust (to the one seeing the message) : the one mentioned this one suggested using sentences as « I trust you » or « I give you the power to do this » etc.
- Visuals (video, pictures, etc.) : mentioned by several interviewees, would make the message more persuasive according to them. One of them said it is not always useful.
- Way of convey/Way of presenting the message : has to be adapted depending on the generation. Variables as Dynamism and Uniqueness were referred to, for instance.
- Source (Brand vs. Organisation) : deduce with what they said.
- Hedonic Value : They precise that is not consumption brings them happiness but the moments they spend thanks to it. Also among the ones that experienced Deconsumption during a period (eg. the one backpacked during a year), one said that her family and herself were happy at this moment.
- Social Value : In the deconsumption part it was referred as something to be more connected to others, a need to be more connected, internal connection as external ones. In the Consumer society part it was referred as to be accepted or to show off. Definitely Deconsumption seems to be associated to more Social mixed to Spiritual values when Consumption is more about being Conspicuous even if a kind of Conspicuous Deconsumption might exists in the future maybe to fill some narcissist needs or even flaws as having a better image in society or putting themselves in a position where they would feel superior to the others and then think they cannot be criticised anymore.
- Environmental Value : It was associated directly with deconsumption and as the main reason why they would do it. As we discussed in the literature, this one can be integrated in the spiritual value.
- Ethical value : it was associated with Duties/Oughts and according to some of them it goes along with the Environmental value and with Altruism. Idem, this one can be included in the spiritual value.
- Cognitive Dissonance : Term that was directly used twice by one of the participant but was referred several times associated with hypocrisy. Or as a double-standard.
- Quality Products : mentioned by 3 of the interviewees as something necessary
- Habits : even if this one was not often directly mentioned, it was referred several times mainly in the Consumer Society part by sentences such as « we are used to it » «it's what we've always known ».

Other notions as Responsibility vs. Irresponsibility were referred and mentioned several times, Elite interests that was mainly referred by one interviewee but several of them talked about « the usefulness » of acting if rich people do not care. Also, Brands role was explained by two of the participants to make them feel good, more socially accepted or more discreet.

#### *Previously planned variables*

- ➔ Spiritual value : The few participants when I mentioned this value by its name, they had kind of « defensive » reactions because they directly associated it to religious values (only one interviewee was openly religious). However, most of them mentioned the need to give a sense to their life, the need for experience, the need to feel useful for causes, the need to feel they are better people, to deal more with moments than with things, etc. Also « valorising the humans » was referred a lot of times then the Spiritual value seems to be definitely relevant.
- ➔ Ideals : It was mentioned as important in deconsumption but being careful in the way of presenting it to not « hurt » people. Some Ideals were mentioned during the interviews.
- ➔ Oughts : it works mostly on people already convinced, the results suggested that presenting it as an Opportunity could be a clue to make it more persuasive
- ➔ Self-Enhancement : this variable appears to be confirmed by the study, personal interests are some motivations to deconsume
- ➔ Self-Transcendence : idem, the one did deconsume explained some reasons but they also said there were some things they could not explain. And Altruism vs. Egoitism were referred a lot of times. Compassion and Empathy too.
- ➔ Generation role : from all the ones mentioned it they all agree to say that the way of conveying the message as to vary depending on the generation !
- ➔ Communication Channels : Social media is the most referred one (it was an expected results when interviewing Millennials). However, some of them got Social Media fatigue and prefer dailypapers, website or billboard ads on the street (the one mentioned that has never been on the mainstream social media as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc. except Whatsapp)
- ➔ Choice : the study shows it is an habit that the Consumer Society created and that it enables them to feel free. The interviewees felt they have more the choice with the Ideals message
- ➔ Perception of the Personal Role : Some of them feel they did enough, some others think that we have to act as a society. About that 2 profiles of sustainable consumers seem to appear :

the Self-proclaimed Responsible Consumers (they perceive themselves as buying already only the necessary and they don't really believe they need to do more) ; the Aim-to-be Deconsumers (they are already doing efforts and they really want to keep reducing their consumption)

- ➔ Anticipation of the experienced Happiness of the action + Perceived Well-Being: the study showed that the majority of them think that deconsuming will make them Happier and make them feel better. They think they could anticipate it but they also said being aware Happiness does not come that easily. Some said it depends of the person. They actually did anticipate it when I asked if they would deconsume in the future and why, most of them anticipated this Happiness.
- ➔ Perceived Situational Control: it was referred more as a need to stop being defined by their consumption (one of them talked about « double-standard » when the values of the company does not fit with the value of the company by the product they bought) and also in the way of being tired having to conform themselves to the society, to the others. Also their need to have facts in the advertisements and to check if what the companies say in the ad is true. The variable was alluded more or less directly by everyone.
- ➔ Self-Control: words as « I'm trying to be careful with that » or « I consume only the necessary » show that the Self-control may need to be measured in a certain way. Also several all them said that they « try to balance » their consumption.

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