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# **The Era of Anti-Consumption in New Zealand: An Investigation of Anti-Consumer Motivations, Attitudes and Behaviours**

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A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Commerce and Management  
at  
Lincoln University  
by  
Eduardo C. Sampaio

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Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Commerce and Management.

The Era of Anti-Consumption in New Zealand: An Investigation of Anti-Consumer Motivations, Attitudes and Behaviours

by

Eduardo C. Sampaio

In recent times, consumer engagement in anti-consumption movements is on the rise, while unsustainable levels of consumption have become a concerning problem in society. Literature divides *anti-consumption* practices into two meta-groups: *Pro-social*, encompassing conscientious, green and sustainable consumption, where consumer behaviour does not necessarily translate into a reduction of consumption; and *reasons against consumption* (RAC) meta-group, where individuals have a noticeable aim to reduce or restrict their consumption. By using a mixed-method approach for data collection, the current study investigates the RAC and its intersections with motivations, attitudes and behaviours (MAB) of anti-consumers that are consciously reducing, restricting, rejecting or refusing consumption, labelled as the 4R's. When analysing these practices from 281 anti-consumers in New Zealand, results show convincing connections between demographics and anti-consumption, most noticeably regarding age, level of education and income. It also demonstrates anti-consumers' complexity, with their MAB presenting a variety of levels of strength, breadth and durability. Most importantly, the research proposes and implements important steps towards the measurement of tangible aspects of *anti-consumption*, which might assist in future investigations of the phenomena.

**Keywords:** Anti-consumption, anti-consumerism, anti-consumer, anti-consumerist, pro-social, voluntary simplicity, ethical consumption, sustainable consumption, consumption resistance, reasons against.

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“The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.” Socrates.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The world's raw material demand is expected to nearly double by 2060, as the global economy grows and living standards increase, placing twice as much pressure on the planet as we see today (OECD, 2019). In a 2017 Brookings Institution study, projections show that by 2030 the middle class (with per capita incomes between \$11 and \$110 per person per day) is expected to reach 5.6 billion people worldwide, compared to 3.6 billion in 2017. This means an additional 2 billion people with (presumably) more purchasing power. The high level of consumption has taken a considerable toll on the environment. In the name of consumption, the earth's natural resources are being rapidly depleted which are adding a considerable volume of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere and generating substantial amounts of waste (Lorek and Fuchs, 2013; Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Mueller & Frith, 2010; Wackernagel, 2002). In addition to that, Jackson et al. (2011) stated that continuous global growth consumption is incompatible with sustainable development and shifts in values and priorities are necessary to overcome the long-term challenges facing society. As consumption plays an increasingly important role in modern society, concerns have been growing over the negative impact of consumerism (Alcott, 2008; Cherrier & Murray, 2002; Kasser, 2002). Zavestoski (2002) adds a complementary view on the subject by suggesting that one reason for the recent surge of interest in anti-consumption ideas is that unhappy or dissatisfied people attach these feelings to media and culture-driven messages, which pressures consumers to purchase growing quantities of products. The pressure-building situation, with increasing levels of consumption leading to harmful environmental impact and widespread feeling of stress among individuals, helped to create the anti-consumption movement. The growth of consumption has given rise to trends that stand as a counterpoint to consumption (Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Henderson, 1978; Shaw & Newholm, 2002), and there are clear signs that a radical shift is taking place toward a less consumerist and more balanced way of life (Gandolfi & Cherrier, 2008; Ray & Anderson, 2000). As suggested by Borgmann (2000), mental pressure and frustration of the consumerist lifestyle are key motivations for anti-consumption practices. By reducing unneeded consumption, anti-consumers are pursuing a more meaningful life by spending more time and energy on satisfying focal activities (Alexander et al., 2009).

Anti-consumption is a complex and broad area of study, where plenty of paths can be chosen. Basci (2016), for instance, brings a fresh definition of anti-consumption, providing new theoretical boundaries to the term, and applies in-depth interviews with a small group of people to gather information about motivations, attitudes and behaviours. Zavestoski (2002), on the other hand,

explores the social-psychological aspects of anti-consumption attitudes by using questionnaires with 179 respondents. Black and Cherrier (2010), such as Basci (2016), examine anti-consumption practices utilising in-depth interviews with only 16 participants, but the research was mainly related to sustainability practices. Contrastingly, Nassén (2017) investigates attitudes and beliefs of anti-consumers applying quantitative research with a large sample of 1742 respondents. A theoretical approach was used by Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) to analyse the reasons against consumption shown by anti-consumers. This research follows a similar path to Chatzidakis and Lee (2013), focusing on the reasons individuals demonstrate against consumption. It also draws from Basci (2016) and tries to narrow the boundaries of anti-consumption. More specifically, this study will focus on those reasons directly associated with the 4R's; reducing, restricting, rejecting or refusing consumption, including investigations on motivations, attitudes and behaviours (MAB) of anti-consumers. The current study will not target pro-social responsibility movements, comprising alternative, green, conscious and sustainable consumption (Shaw, Newholm, & Dickinson, 2006; Murphy & Cohen, 2001; Lee et al. 2009). The main reason to not put emphasis on the pro-social movements is that they are not a clear signal of anti-consumption behaviours as individuals in this group are not necessarily reducing their consumption of goods (Connolly & Prothero, 2010; ICAR, 2020; Makri et al., 2020).

Due to the importance of consumerism and its undeniable implications for economies, businesses, societies, and individuals, it has been an object of study and interest for more than a hundred years. It goes as far back as the end of the nineteenth century, when economist and sociologist Thorstein (1899) wrote "the Theory of the Leisure Class", a social critique of consumerism and conspicuous consumption. Since then, many researchers and theorists have attempted to analyse this powerful global social force (Aaker, 1982; Cohen, 2004; De Graf et al., 2001; Featherstone, 2007; Firat, 1995; Greer, 1944; Lindhoff, 1975; Miller, 1995; Murray, 1973; Olander & Stearns, 2001; Solomon, 2016; The Worldwatch Institute, 2010). Thus, it can be stated that consumerism has been well defined theoretically and investigated empirically. In contrast, the formal study of the rejection of consumption had its beginnings around forty years ago, and remains an area that demands more investigation when compared to its better examined counterpart "consumption" (Lee et al., 2009; Makri et al., 2020). One of the first studies to emerge on anti-consumption was accomplished by Elgin and Mitchell (1977) writing about a cluster of individuals that they labelled "voluntary simplifiers" - individuals who for various reasons choose to live with less. Henderson (1978), from the Centre for Alternative Futures, described a phenomenon taking root in developed nations, which was labelled the "counter-economy". People in this economy were more interested in psychic than material income, essentially rejecting high-consumption lifestyles. Not long after Henderson (1978) labelled the "counter-economy", Mitchell (1983) wrote about a "societally conscious" cluster of individuals, who showed a high sense of social responsibility, supported causes such as conservation,

and sought a lifestyle that intended to conserve and improve the physical and social environment. In a similar manner, Iyer and Muncy (2009) mentioned that since the very beginning of mass-consumption societies, a countermovement of anti-consumption also started. The counter-economy gave birth to a variety of different terms that defined those different consumer behaviours and the individuals in this new economic and social scenario. They have slowly become more widespread in society and have been assigned various descriptive labels that served to uniquely group them. The most relevant denomination, which contains the two meta-groups and all the other sub-divisions have been labelled as anti-consumerism or anti-consumption. Leipamaa-Leskinen (2014) argues that anti-consumption can be regarded as an umbrella term for many types of market-resistance activities. It not only encompasses individuals that are adopting the 4R's, but also the ones that are not necessarily buying less but are engaged in buying more environmentally friendly products, second-hand goods or locally produced ones, known as the pro-social individuals (Lee et al., 2009). Going deeper under the anti-consumption umbrella, one can find terms such as "voluntary simplicity" (Grigsby, 2012; Gopaldas, 2007; Zavestoski, 2002), "simple living" (Gandolfi & Cherrier, 2008), "down-shifting" (Etzioni, 2003; Schor, 1999), "minimalist consumption" (Dopierala, 2017), "green consumption" (Gilg et al. 2005; Green & Vergragt, 2002), "ethical consumption" (Cherrier, 2005; Clavin, 2008), "boycotting" (Hoffmann & Mueller, 2009; Smith, 2016), and many other labels that describe sub-divisions within the two meta-groups. Zavestoski (2002) affirms that attitudes toward anti-consumption take several forms and a popular one is the practice of "voluntary simplicity".

As a result of the new economic and social trends, these distinctive denominations have collectively become a field of academic interest (Makri et al., 2020). In the last decades, numerous academic papers have appeared in international scientific journals, describing investigations of these trends and exploring their ramifications (Black & Cherrier, 2010; Elgin, 1981; Etzioni, 1999; Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Leonard-Barton, 1981; Mazza, 1997). The figures below are a visual representation of the meta-groups and their intersections. Figure 1 captures the boundaries of anti-consumption, with the two meta-groups and their components. It also captures the boundaries of consumerism, which is on the opposite spectrum. Figure 2 concentrates on the 4R's, which are the shared characteristics of minimalism, voluntary simplicity, down-shifting and strong-simplifying. Figures 1 and 2 will be detailed on chapter 2.

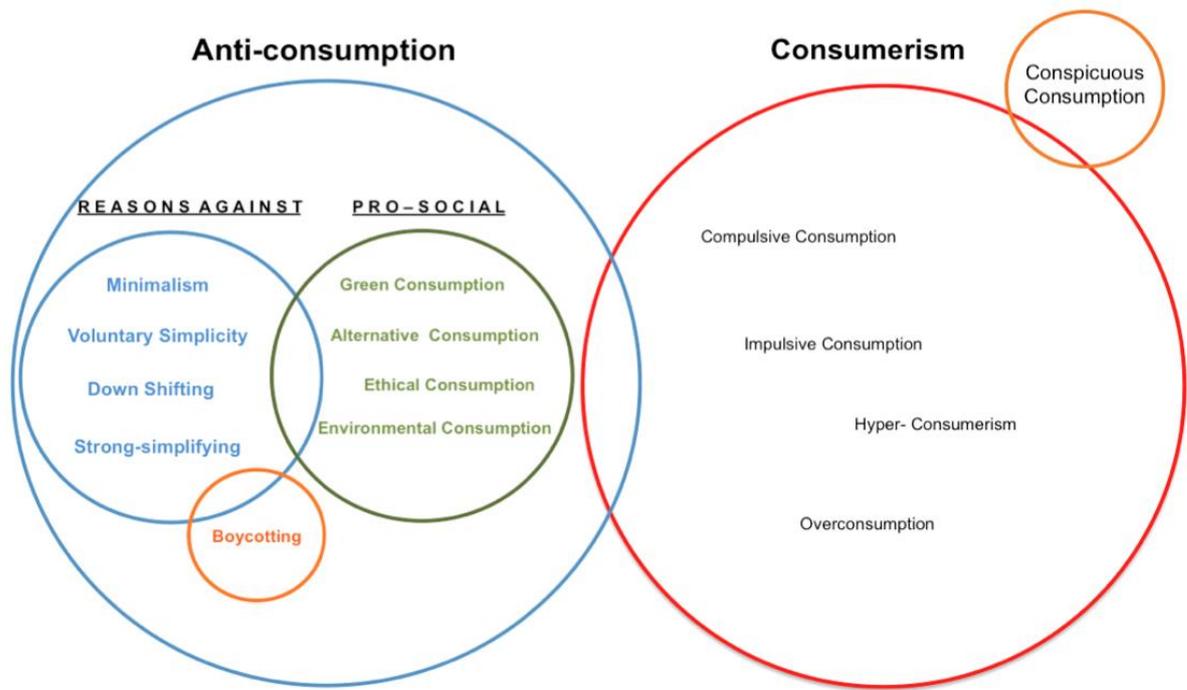


Figure 1. Meta-groups and intersections

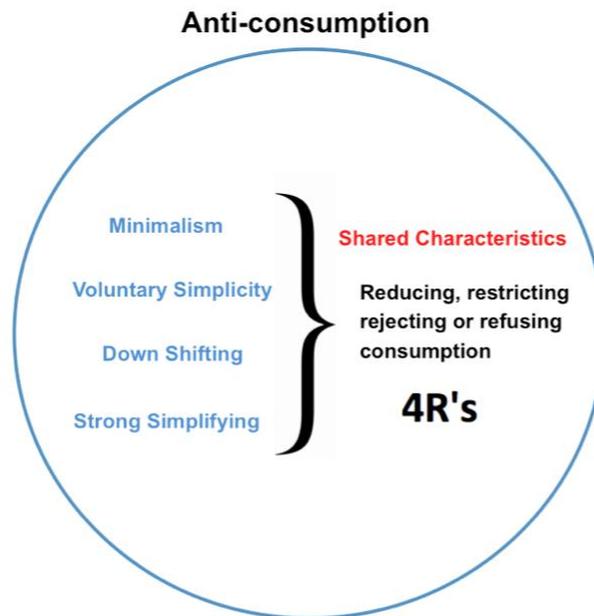


Figure 2. Shared characteristics of anti-consumption

With a variety of distinctions and stratifications, understanding the attitudes contrary to consumerism became very complex and at times conflicting (Basci, 2014). Like every novelty, it did not have sufficient time to mature and become fully built, established and organised. There is much we do not understand about anti-consumption, necessitating research and further development of the theory to explain the nature of this movement (Makri et al., 2020; Wilk, 1997). The phenomenon of anti-consumption has impacts on everyday life and needs to be better understood. As has been

widely publicised, consumption has a significant impact on economies, societies and individuals (Economic Policy Institute, 2002; World Economic Forum, 2019; Kim, 2017; Worldwatch Institute, 2004). However, the anti-consumption attitude may be as relevant as consumption itself (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013), as the widespread anti-consumption sentiment may have the potential to shape a new kind of economy. It appears to have the capacity to change the way companies operate, redefine economic standards and have a significant impact on the environment in which we live. This investigation is not designed to determine which impacts anti-consumption behaviours will have. Neither is it a purpose of this research to identify if those impacts could be beneficial. The purpose is to understand the characteristics in individuals' buying behaviours and identify the motivations and attitudes triggering those behaviours. Additionally, an important objective of this research is to bring simplicity to the studies that have already been done. Instead of further explaining the differences between "voluntary simplicity", "simple living", "down-shifting" and "minimalist consumption", or detailing the specificities of each one, this research will centre on the 4R's - reduction, restriction, rejection and refusal of consumption. They are common points between all of them and their inherent relation with the tangible aspects of motivations, attitudes and behaviours. The investigation will purposefully keep aside the pro-social movements, which are not part of the backbone of anti-consumption behaviours (ICAR, 2020). By doing so, it will help fill a place in the anti-consumption literature by bringing some light to aspects intrinsically related to the reduction, restriction, rejection or refusal of consumption.

The research questions were developed after thorough analysis of relevant existing articles. Gaps among the studies became obvious, which clearly pointed to the reasons against consumption (RAC) meta-group, along with the resolution to dive deeper into the motivations, attitudes and behaviours (MAB) of anti-consumers to reduce, restrict, reject and refuse consumption. The gaps and reasons are:

1. It was identified that the domain of anti-consumption was still lacking clarity.
2. Within the anti-consumption studies, pro-social movements have had a lot of attention, with research done by numerous authors. *Reasons against consumption*, on the other side, lacks more investigation.
3. Most of the research done on anti-consumption is theoretical, lacking practical components, or use qualitative methods and in-depth interviews with very small samples. Quantitative methods for gathering data are not common and can offer a different view on anti-consumption.

4. Reduction, restriction, refusal and rejection of consumption are the core characteristics of anti-consumption and the only characteristics that are shared among some of the concepts part of RAC (minimalism, voluntary simplicity, down-shifting, strong-simplifying, etc.).

5. It was recognised that none of the studies had a holistic view of all aspects related to reduction, restriction, rejection and refusal of consumption, specially their intersection with motivations, attitudes and behaviours.

Thus, the current research aims to answer the following questions:

- a) What are the tangible aspects of anti-consumption that can be measured at a research level?
- b) What is the relationship between these tangible aspects and choosing to consume less?
- c) Are there any differences in these tangible aspects that can be associated with demographics?
- d) What is the current the state of motivations, attitudes and behaviours of anti-consumers in New Zealand?

The following chapters of this research will examine in more detail all aspects related to anti-consumption. Chapter 2 will unveil the “theoretical underpinnings of anti-consumption” and starts with a brief characterisation of consumerism which paved the way for the emergence of anti-consumption movements (Henderson, 1978). Subsequently, anti-consumption definitions and boundaries are detailed showing how broad the scope of anti-consumption studies can reach. The distinct manifestations of anti-consumption behaviours will also be examined, such as voluntary simplicity, downshifting, strong-simplifying and minimalism. This close examination leads to the core characteristics and common behaviours derived from the manifestations, which are the reduction, restriction, rejection and refusal of consumption (Basci, 2014), labelled as the 4R’s in this research. In chapter 3, anti-consumption will be reconceptualised based on tangible aspects, which initiates with close examination of core characteristics derived from voluntary simplicity, downshifting, strong simplifying and minimalism. The research then explores intersection of the 4R’s with motivations, attitudes and behaviours, henceforth referred to as MAB, with definitions of each of the three aspects drawn from the literature, with the justification of the reasons for utilising them as the central survey components. Chapter 4 highlights the theoretical framework, showing the three main objects of investigation in the present research. The first are the motivations, attitudes and behaviours (MAB) of anti-consumers to engage in anti-consumption practices. The second are the reasons against consumption (RAC), or the reasons anti-consumers mention associated with avoiding consumption (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013). The third is the analysis of the most visible tangible aspects of anti-consumption behaviour, referred to as the 4R's: reduction, restriction, rejection and refusal of

consumption. The fifth chapter examines the methods used to gather the data in this research. It explains how the screening questions were developed and the way the two-stage questionnaire was divided. It also describes the methods used by different authors to capture information from anti-consumers and to measure motivations, attitudes and behaviours. chapter 6 discusses the results, starting with the sample description and then moving to the data analysis, where the five demographic questions are examined along with eleven questions investigating motivations, attitudes, behaviour and their intersections with RAC. In chapter 7 the four research questions and their outcomes are discussed. It addresses each of the intersections between 4R's, MAB, its attributes and components and how they were categorised, with the aim to offer tangible and measurable instruments for future studies. Finally, chapter 8 draws the conclusions and direction for future research.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical Underpinnings of Anti-Consumption

#### 2.1 Consumerism

To fully understand *anti-consumption*, it is necessary to visit what is its contrast i.e. *consumerism*. Campbell (1987) discusses that substantial number of people have raised consumption to one of their life goals and turning pure consumption to consumerism. Lawlor (1988, p.9) states that consumerism is “the frivolous accumulation of goods for their own sake”. Swagler (1994), in an objective approach, defines consumerism as excess materialism, and claims that numerous social critics have adopted the definition, so such usage appears to be very common. Bocoock (1993) defines consumerism as “the active ideology that the meaning of life is to be found in buying things and pre-packaged experiences” (Bocoock, 1993, p.50). Bocoock (1993) further states that the consumerism ideology serves to legitimise capitalism in the daily lives and everyday practices of many people worldwide in order to motivate them to become consumers in fantasy as well as. The examination of the different faces of consumerism (Fiedler, 2019; Grace & Griffin, 2009; Kazim, 2018; O’Guinn & Faber, 1989; Swagler, 1994) demonstrates that it emerges in the form of compulsive consumption, impulsive consumption, hyper-consumerism, over-consumption and conspicuous consumption. A review of the literature revealed Fiedler’s (2019) suggestion that compulsive-consumption is an extreme case of consumption. Furthermore, Kazim (2018) mentioned how a few countries are transforming their consumption patterns from conventional consumption to hyper-consumption and compulsive-consumption has been described by O’Guinn and Faber (1989, p. 148) as “the response to an uncontrollable drive or desire to obtain, use, or experience a feeling, substance, or activity that leads the individual to repetitively engage in behaviour that will ultimately cause harm to the individual or others”. It can be noted that excess consumption is visibly different from what, a little more recently, became a field of great interest, known as anti-consumption, which is the focus of the present research.

#### 2.2 Anti-Consumption

To appropriately orient this research on different anti-consumption definitions, different authors and articles were examined. The examination revealed that most concepts that reflect the opposite of consumerism can be collapsed into one meta-group, which some authors label it as *anti-consumerism* and others as *anti-consumption*. The choice of which term to use varies from one author to another, and one can find anti-consumerism and anti-consumption presented in several empirical research in recent decades, with anti-consumption appearing to be more widely used and

with more visibility. However, Binkley and Littler (2014) and Gilbert (2008) claim anti-consumerism is associated to a deep activist and political discourse. Anti-consumption is a broad area of study, therefore, to be comprehensive, there was an effort to understand the realm of anti-consumption, its characteristics, components and most importantly, its boundaries.

### **2.3 Anti-Consumption boundaries**

Anti-consumption provides an unmistakable contrast to materialism. It is a flourishing field of research that studies the phenomena and *reasons against consumption* (Black & Cherrier 2010; Lee et al., 2009). Penaloza and Price (1993, p. 128) define anti-consumption as a “resistance against a culture of consumption and marketing of mass-produced meanings”. It is important to note that the resistance against consumption should be a voluntary act in which the individual needs to be aware of the reasons to engage in such behaviour, and it cannot be related exclusively to lack of financial resources (Basci, 2014; Lee, Motion & Conroy, 2009). Based on that assumption, Leipamaa-Leskinen et al. (2014) coined the term “non-voluntary anti-consumption” to label individuals forced by impoverished circumstances to engage in anti-consumption practises. Overall, anti-consumption is an intentional and conscious choice based on decisions consistent with one's values (Kozinets, Handelman, & Lee 2010). The reasons individuals cite against consumption can be very different to reasons they cite for consumption; hence, providing a new status to anti-consumption studies when we compare it to consumerism studies. Iyer and Muncy (2009) mention that this avoidance must be voluntary and deliberate and should occur either in a general or limited manner. This implies that it can be broad, embracing a wide range of products and services, or narrow, with specific products that individuals choose to limit their consumption. From different authors it can be inferred that in general, anti-consumers agree to reject, restrict or reclaim some products, services or brands (Lee et al. 2011). The International Centre of Anti-consumption Research - ICAR (2020) states that anti-consumption means against consumption, but that the word is not synonymous with alternative, conscientious or green consumption. Environmentally aware consumers usually engage in sustainable consumption and are called “environmentally conscious consumers” (Ottman, 1993; Tanner & Wölfling Kast, 2003). Although anti-consumption also comprises the study of ethics and sustainability, ICAR (2020) claims that anti-consumption research focuses on the reasons against consumption rather than pro-social movements. Alternatively, conscientious, green, and sustainable consumption, simply describe various forms of pro-social consumption (Lee, Fernandez & Hyman, 2009). Deriving out of ICAR (2020), it is clear that within the anti-consumption meta-group, there are two sub-groups: one that investigates the reasons people claim for not buying, and the other sub-group being pro-social, which concerns the behaviour of individuals who buy environmentally friendly products, second-hand and green products. Lee et al. (2009) also suggest that some consumers affirm their anti-consumption attitudes appear through non-standard consumption and

lifestyle preferences – for instance, buying environmentally friendly brands when possible. However, Lee et al. (2009), Iyer and Muncy (2009), Basci (2014), also profess that anti-consumption studies focus on reasons against consumption rather than pro-social movements. Individuals that engage in anti-consumption behaviours related to RAC can be categorised mostly as voluntary simplifiers, strong-simplifiers, down-shifters or minimalists. They display common manifestations and a few unique ones depending on their lifestyle and motivations, which are described in the following sections

## **2.4 Anti-Consumption – RAC manifestations**

The literature documents few anti-consumption manifestations related to RAC and these are explored in the discussion that follows:

### **2.4.1 Voluntary simplicity**

Elgin (1981) describes voluntary simplicity as a way of living in which a deliberate choice is made to live with less. Leonard-Barton (1981) also notes that in voluntary simplicity material consumption is reduced or restricted. It is stated that living with less and reducing consumption are also part of the attributes of down-shifters and voluntary simplifiers, which creates an overlap of definitions showing similar characteristics (Shaw & Newholm, 2002). Black and Cherrier (2010) follow the footsteps of Leonard-Barton (1981) saying that one of the motivations for anti-consumption is the pursuit of a simpler lifestyle, best represented in the practice of voluntary simplicity, which suggests a purposeful rejection or reduction of overall consumption to achieve a simpler lifestyle. Zavetoski (2002) also shares the claims of Elgin (1981) and Leonard-Barton (1981), observing that voluntary simplifiers have consciously shifted their lifestyle away from mainstream consumption patterns. Voluntary simplifiers believe over-consumption and excessive desire for material possessions negatively impact the environment and personal wellbeing. Therefore, they engage in anti-consumption behaviours to pursue a simple and stress-free lifestyle (Etzioni, 1999; Iyer & Muncy, 2009; Shama, 1981).

### **2.4.2 Down-shifters and strong simplifiers**

When it comes to down-shifters and strong simplifiers, Etzioni (2003) argued they seem to have all the characteristics of voluntary simplifiers, with the main difference being that they usually reduce and reject consumption more radically. Downshifters work fewer hours, earn less money, and buy fewer things, but on the other hand invest more time going after their personal goals, such as spending more time with their family and friends or chasing personal mastery (Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002). Mazza (1997) notes that beyond the United States of America, voluntary simplicity is a movement that cuts across most classes and cultures to include simple living, frugality, downshifting, and a sustainable lifestyle. The concern for the environment, having time for oneself, improved

health, and having more time for relationships and community are among some motivations listed by respondents to a multi-national online survey of simplifiers done by The Simplicity Institute (Alexander & Ussher, 2012).

### **2.4.3 Minimalism**

Rodriguez (2017, p. 2) declares that minimalism "represents an increasingly popular critical reflection on the ills of consumerism and an effort to forge new ways of resisting and living amidst capitalism". Kasperek (2014) sees minimalism as a continuation of voluntary simplicity and argues that it is difficult to indicate a boundary between voluntary simplicity and minimalism. While some authors use these terms interchangeably, others place them in a relational perspective, with voluntary simplicity having a broader scope of meaning. McDonald et al. (2006) cites the minimalism consumption trend as a form of anti-consumption in which individuals voluntarily simplify their lifestyle and consumption practices with personal and social motivations.

According to different authors, although voluntary simplifiers, downshifter, strong simplifiers and minimalists might have a few unique characteristics, it can also be stated that they share all four attributes of reducing, restricting, rejecting or refusing consumption. After reviewing existing research on anti-consumption and its boundaries, its definition and interpretations, a pattern has appeared. The characteristics mentioned and repeated by being cited along the broad scope of literature are the 4R's - which are the reduction, restriction, rejection or refusal of consumption. As they are at the core of all RAC manifestations, it makes them a valuable segment to further explore.

## Chapter 3

### Anti-consumption Reconceptualised

#### 3.1 Anti-consumption and the 4R's (reducing, restricting, rejecting and refusing)

Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) did an informative investigation that attempted to clarify the domain of anti-consumption. By analysing available pieces of literature on anti-consumption the article identified clear boundaries, as well as convergences and divergences from different authors regarding the phenomenon. Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) conclude that anti-consumption is a distinct area of research interested in the reasons individuals mention for not consuming. When closely observed, it is conceivable that those reasons are intrinsically related to reducing, restricting, rejecting or refusing consumption (4R's). Basci (2016), who dedicated different articles to anti-consumption studies, noted that individuals displayed various levels of anti-consumption behaviours in various degrees of intensity, with some individuals reducing and restricting consumption more than others. After examining the reasons for anti-consumption, Basci (2016) divided them into personal, social, and societal. Furthermore, Basci (2014) describes anti-consumption as the non-consumption, reduction of consumption, or selective-consumption act that has a rational and ethical link to a societal and systemic problem on the local and or global scene. It was noted that one of the most common behaviours of anti-consumers is the effort to eliminate or reduce consumption. Zavestoski (2002, p. 121) defines anti-consumption as "resistance to, distaste of, or even resentment or rejection of consumption." "In the processes of rejecting, individuals intentionally exclude particular goods from their consumption" (Makri et al., 2020, p. 2). Additionally, Lee and Ahn (2016) propose that anti-consumption behaviours incorporate voluntary rejection or restriction of consumption that is not driven by factors such as financial difficulties or lack of resources. Lee et al. (2011) suggest that "rejecting" means completely avoiding consumption while "restricting" means limiting consumption when rejection might not be possible. Hogg et al. (2009) also attempted to define rejection and concluded it involves products that are not purchased, services that are not accessed, and brands that are not chosen. Drawing from Chatzidakis and Lee (2013), ICAR (2020), Basci (2016), Lee and Ahn (2016) and other scholars, this research highlights a specific type of anti-consumer- individuals that are reducing, restricting, rejecting or refusing (4R's) consumption. Therefore, the intent is to establish a narrower domain of anti-consumption by engaging in an exploratory study using the concept of *reasons against* (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013). By adopting this approach, the research's focus will be to identify and amplify the features of the characteristics held by anti-consumers relevant to the 4R's. The decision to follow a similar approach as utilised by other researchers' specified previously derives from the rational aspects indicating that the core

characteristics of anti-consumption are related to the 4R's. However, if the 4Rs - reducing, restricting, rejecting and refusing consumption - are the core characteristics of anti-consumers a series of questions could be posed such as what are the motivations for them to act that way? What are their attitudes on anti-consumption, and what are the behaviours that can be detected? These questions can only be answered if motivations, attitudes and behaviours of individuals that engage in such domain are investigated in an integrated and comprehensive way.

### **3.2 Intersection of 4R's with motivations, attitudes and behaviours**

By aiming at the core characteristics of anti-consumption, the 4R's will give a narrow scope to the investigations and provide relevant information to further studies. In order to fully understand what lies behind the 4R's, it is necessary to explore the tangible aspects that lead anti-consumers to start reducing, restricting, rejecting and refusing consumption. Therefore, the scope of the 4R's had to consider anti-consumers' motivations, attitudes and behaviours (MAB). The research begins with defining MAB to clearly indicate how it is being examined in this research.

Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 1) state that "to be motivated means to be moved to do something". Therefore, motivation (M) is defined as "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things to achieve something" (Harmer, 2007, p. 51). Porter et al. (2003) suggest three aspects to be considered while examining motivation, (i) what energises human behaviour, (ii) what directs or channels such behaviour, and (iii) how this behaviour is maintained or sustained. So, it is clear that motivation is a driving force for behaviours.

Thus, a question to explore is what drives individuals to pursue the 4R's? What are their reasons against consumption (RAC)? Why are they choosing to reduce, restrict, reject and refuse consumption? In regard to attitudes, much of research related to it concerns the relationships between thoughts and feelings (Millar & Tesser, 1990), between thoughts and behaviour (Wilson & Dunn, 1989), and between feelings and behaviour (Isen, 1987). Zanna and Rempel (2008) suggest that attitudes are evaluations based on beliefs, feelings, and or past behaviour, which is the definition used in the current research. So that leaves us with the B of MAB, which is behaviour. Back and Egloff (2008) suggest that only direct observations of behaviour measure actual behaviour, so behaviour is something that can be seen. Ajzen (2005) recognises that behaviours are largely guided by a reasoned action approach, which assumes that people's behaviour follows reasonably from their beliefs, attitudes, and intentions. Shuman and Johnson (1976), almost three decades before Ajzen (2005), had described the relation between behaviour and concrete actions, indicating that behaviour is any act, verbal or nonverbal, that individuals generally assume to involve real commitment. Although not always clearly recognised, every behaviour involves a choice, even if the

alternative is taking no action and thus maintaining the status quo (Ajzen, 1996; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

From the various descriptions and definitions based on the work of different authors all three - motivations, attitudes and behaviours are essentially related and can enhance our understanding of anti-consumption. But it is also important to note that motivations or attitudes do not always lead to behaviours and actions (Black, 2010; Kim et al., 1997). For example, as highlighted by Prothero et al. (2011), there is a major difference between people's sustainability perceptions and their activities, which are often less conducive to sustainability. Supporting the assumption of Prothero et al. (2011), surveys indicate that most Americans believe that we consume too much and should reduce it. Yet that understanding hardly translates into private behaviours (Bowerman, 2014).

The same could be said about anti-consumption motivations, behaviours, or attitudes. An individual might agree that consumerism is bad for the environment, but that does not necessarily mean that the same individual will reduce or restrict consumption. In his research on anti-consumption, Basci (2014) mentions a study from OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), stating that three-quarters of people polled in OECD countries consider themselves environmentalists but in reality, only 10 to 12 per cent of consumers actually purchase green products. As mentioned in this study, anti-consumers have different ways to express anti-consumption behaviours, different motivations to do it and different attitudes towards anti-consumption. A few anti-consumers might engage in anti-consumption behaviours for environmental reasons (Richetin et al., 2012), some as a political stance (Basci, 2016), others to improve their wellbeing (Brown & Vergragt, 2016), or even all of that together. Other anti-consumers might focus on reducing their consumption on specific products, and others try to reduce their overall consumption across all products (Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002). Part of anti-consumers can display a strong commitment to anti-consumption while certain anti-consumers might demonstrate weak commitment (Basci, 2016). With so many justifications/rationalisations in mind, understanding motivations, attitudes and behaviours would not be enough to fully comprehend all aspects, expressions and features related to anti-consumers. There is also a need to investigate the *strength*, *breadth* and *durability* of all the MAB components. Strength will measure the intensity of anti-consumption. Breadth will measure variety and diversity of anti-consumption and finally, durability will measure the endurance and persistence of anti-consumption.

Different authors have addressed a few of the aspects mentioned in previous paragraphs, using distinct methods for collecting data and information. Several studies utilise a more theoretical approach, especially the ones that aim at establishing definitions and boundaries of anti-consumption. They draw upon authors that were pioneers in this field of study to propose different

approaches or new ways of looking at the same subject. Others rely on quantitative and qualitative methods to further explain motivations, behaviours or attitudes and their connection with the different components such as strength, breadth and durability. Chapter 4 will discuss the theoretical framework, starting with the theoretical model.

# Chapter 4

## Theoretical Framework

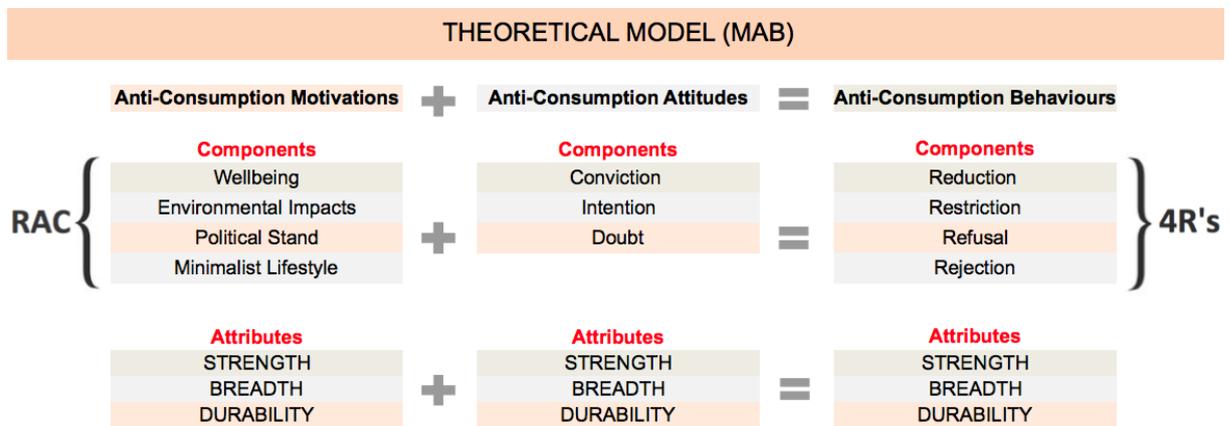


Figure 3. Theoretical Model: MAB, RAC and 4R's

A theoretical model is not something that can be developed overnight or in isolation. It represents the whole research framework and develops into a shape where it can clearly communicate the proposed messages and relationships. It is based on a foundation analysis of extant scientific papers from various authors and research streams and draws from what is available from a wide body of research. The present theoretical model shows the three main objects of investigation in the present research. The first, and the core scope of this investigation, are the motivations, attitudes and behaviours (MAB) of anti-consumers to engage in anti-consumption practices. As mentioned in the literature review, motivation is defined as "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things to achieve something" (Harmer, 2007, p. 51), and it is what energises human behaviour (Porter et al., 2003). Attitudes are the relationships between thoughts and behaviour (Wilson & Dunn, 1989), and behaviour is any act, verbal or nonverbal, that individuals generally assume to involve real commitment (Shuman & Johnson, 1976). The second core objective of this research is the consolidation of the various reasons against consumption (RAC), or the reasons anti-consumers mention associated with avoiding consumption (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013). The RACs are the driving forces that motivate and lead individuals to act and engage in different behaviours. From the theoretical model, it is evident RACs are directly related to the components of motivations. While some models would simply subsume RACs as subdimensions of motivations, in the case of anti-consumption, it is separate not only due to its importance as a driving force that triggers anti-consumption actions and behaviours, it has also attracted a significant number of well-known researchers, who have published numerous papers on the concept, including Chatzidakis and Lee (2013); Handelman and Lee (2010); Iyer and Muncy (2009); Kozinets, Lee, Motion and Conroy (2009);

Odou and de Pechpeyrou (2011); Sandikci and Ekici (2009). The third direction of this research is the analysis of the most visible and tangible aspects of anti-consumption behaviour, referred to as the 4R's: reduction, restriction, rejection and refusal of consumption and. The 4R's are conceptually distinct from the behavioural components, as they are combinations of motivations and attitudes. The theoretical model shows a clear and integrated connection between RAC, MAB and the 4R's, with notable intersections. By understanding the definitions, it shows the intrinsic association among motivations, attitudes and behaviours, which is defined in this research as MAB. There are several motivations and attitudes that can drive anti-consumption behaviours core components of reducing, restricting, rejecting and refusing consumption. While stress and fatigue of the consumerist lifestyle might be some of the motivations for reducing consumption, they are not the only ones. By reducing unnecessary consumption, anti-consumers pursue a more meaningful life by shifting their concerns and spending more time and effort on intrinsically satisfying focal activities and wellbeing (Borgmann, 2000; Zavestoski, 2002). Relatably, self-actualisation is a common motivation for anti-consumption behaviours, which are associated with fulfilling intrinsic goals (Zavestoski 2002). The pursuit of intrinsic goals implies that anti-consumers seek happiness from internal factors, such as personal growth, rather than from external factors such as financial success or social status. It is also important to note that these motivations are not mutually exclusive, and some anti-consumption behaviours may be explained by multiple motivations. Below is the reasoning behind the Theoretical Model, leading to a couple hypothesis and explorations of the components and attributes of MAB. Also, the paths to some of the quantitative survey questions are throughout detailed.

#### **4.1 Anti-consumption and demographics**

Black and Cherrier (2010) describes that anti-consumers offers a variety of anti-consumption behaviours shaped by demographics. Nassén (2017), in a quantitative analysis of a sample of 1,742 respondents aged 16-85, found that some socio-demographics are correlated to anti-consumption attitudes. The survey showed, for example, that the value of anti-consumption beliefs was considerably higher for women. The study also indicated that people with higher education had stronger anti-consumption attitudes than those with lower levels of education. Brown and Vergragt (2016) hypothesised, based on demographic and economic trends that educated millennials could lead the way to a less consumerist society. Carr et al. (2012), using a DDB Needham LifeStyle Study, discovered that individuals aged between 40 and 55 exhibited the lowest rates of conscious consumption. Craig-Lees and Hill (2002) mention The Harwood Survey of Americans, which found that more women adopt anti-consumption behaviours than men and majority of people who adopt this lifestyle are baby boomers. Basci (2016) found in his research that anti-consumers appear to be highly cultured individuals along with other demographic characteristics such as age and economic

background. Black & Cherrier (2010) also found that anti-consumer practices were shaped by demographics. Thus, it is hypothesised:

H1. Demographic characteristics are linked with anti-consumption motivations, attitudes and behaviours. The research would also like to determine:

Q.1. What are the aspects of anti-consumption that can be associated with demographics?

## **4.2 Anti-consumption and income**

Through economic data, it is clear that the most important component that affects consumer spending is disposable income (Diacon & Maha, 2015). Basci (2016) also describes financial aspects as being a motivating factor for anti-consumption behaviours. Respondents from his qualitative survey mention that if you keep your levels of consumption low, you don't have to focus on earning more, so it is important to consume less than your level of income. Thus, an important question is:

Q2. Is there a relationship between anti-consumption and income level?

## **4.3 Strength of anti-consumption motivations**

Some of the authors claiming that individuals can have different motivations for joining anti-consumption habits also claim that these motivations might vary in intensity and strength. For example, people might demonstrate a low interest in buying less for political reasons, and a high interest in buying less for environmental reasons. Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) describe that some activist groups share anti-consumption practices based on a strong anti-capitalist ethos, where part of their motivations are driven from their vision against market capitalism. Hence, it is important to investigate:

Q.3. How strong are anti-consumers' motivations to engage in anti-consumption practices?

## **4.4 Breadth of anti-consumption motivations**

Richetin et al. (2012) found that intentions to reduce consumption were driven by reasons such as "saving the planet". Likewise, qualitative research (Basci, 2016) suggests that consumers have different motivations for being anti-consumers, frequently mentioning environmental reasons. Basci (2016) also details how motivating factors such as improving wellbeing or political views can trigger individuals to engage in a lifestyle of anti-consumption. Guillard (2018) argues, in his study on anti-consumption consciousness, that one of the motivations for many people to engage in anti-consumption is waste aversion. Brown and Vergragt (2014) aimed to identify the reasons for a change in society's consumerist status quo, and it was considered that the shift towards a less

consumerist lifestyle would be motivated by the pursuit of wellbeing. Craig-Lees and Hill (2002) mention that marketers, since the 1970s, have been aware of clusters of consumers who restrict their consumption and make market decisions based on lifestyle, ethical or ecological reasons. Black and Cherrier (2010) have applied a qualitative survey with sixteen women and from their responses, it could be identified that motivations for being an anti-consumer incorporate various needs and values. Some of the respondents mentioned that they avoid purchasing new products because of the impacts of consumption on global warming, or to bring a better quality of life while minimising the use of natural resources and toxic materials. Black and Cherrier (2010) also refer to results shown by some studies, which indicate that most practices of anti-consumption are likely to be associated with environmental concerns, but there are also other motivations for engaging in anti-consumption habits, which can be derived from individuals prioritising their self-interests and wellbeing. Thus, it is hypothesised:

H2. Anti-consumers have more than one motivation for buying less. This study would also like to determine:

Q4. What are the most common motivations for anti-consumption?

#### **4.5 Durability of anti-consumption motivations**

Basci (2016) indicates that individuals become anti-consumers due to many factors. For some individuals, the transformation seems to step into a unique life where there is no going back. Guillard (2018) describes the expression "becoming aware", that is a result of the combination of different reasons and motivations: It is no longer a state but a process. Consumers become aware of their consumption practices and start transitioning to an anti-consumption state. Thus, a relevant question is:

Q5. How long will individuals be motivated to remain anti-consumers?

#### **4.6 Strength of anti-consumption attitudes**

Nassén (2017) reported methodologies in his quantitative survey that could help to capture contemporary attitudes towards anti-consumption. In his work, he applied a scale of the strength of those attitudes, showing different levels of strength of commitment to certain anti-consumption values and assumptions. Lee, Motion and Coroy (2009) and Rumbo (2002), in their investigation on anti-consumption and consumer resistance, showed that individuals with anti-consumption attitudes examine their consumption levels more critically and consciously. Guillard (2018) argues that consumers may manifest different levels of anti-consumption consciousness. Thus, it is important to ask:

Q6. Would anti-consumers increase their levels of consumption if they had a higher income?

#### **4.7 Breadth of anti-consumption attitudes**

Attitudes refer to predispositions of the mind, and when it comes to future behaviour, the breadth of such predispositions can differ. Zavetovski (2002) defines anti-consumption as “a resistance to, distaste of, or even resentment of consumption.” These attitudes can have an impact on future buying behaviour and intentions to reduce the purchase of certain products. Penalzoa and Price (1993) agree and suggest that some attitudes towards consumption come from resistance against a culture of consumption and mass-production. Therefore, it leads to a valuable question:

Q7. What type of products do they intend to buy less in the future?

#### **4.8 Durability of anti-consumption attitudes**

Nassén (2017) investigated the predominance of anti-consumption attitudes amidst individuals in the United States, where the statement “our country would be better off if we all consumed less” was a response for many of the respondents. The statement received a lot of support, as high as 79 per cent in a national survey. From these results, the general public is considering the idea that consuming less should be adopted, and it would be interesting to know how many of those people are turning attitudes into actions and behaviours. Thus, it is important to ask:

Q.8. Do anti-consumers believe their overall level of consumption will be lower in the future?

#### **4.9 Strength of anti-consumption behaviours**

Anti-consumers can have different levels of resistance to buying new products, leading to superficial or strong reductions. Comparably, Etzioni (2003) noted specific types of anti-consumers that tended to reduce and reject consumption more radically. Furthermore, Basci (2016) found that the decision-making process for the anti-consumer is particularly slow and the decision to purchase an item may take a very long time to make. Further, respondents from his survey also did not demonstrate an interest in products that were fashionable or trendy. Instead they were drawn to products that met their personal aesthetic judgment. Basci (2016) also explains that anti-consumers seem to be cultured individuals with individual aesthetic preferences. It was also observed that the participants in Basci (2016) study did not believe anti-consumption was a practice to increase social status. In fact, quite the opposite was the case as they reported the need to be careful about publicising their choice to avoid social reactions. This was based on the notion that anti-consumers might be seen as strange, weird or activists by their social circle and choose not to publicise their anti-consumption behaviours. Guillard (2018) showed in his findings that anti-consumers subscribe to various degrees of anti-consumption. In a similar fashion, Basci (2016) found that individuals had different intensities

of anti-consumption behaviour and that some anti-consumers keep the things they purchase for a very long time. He also noted that anti-consumers treat their possessions with great care in order to make them last and try to get their money's worth out of them; using them until the product stops doing its job. From these findings, it became important to ask the following questions:

Q.9. How long do anti-consumers tend to keep the products they buy?

Q.10 Do anti-consumers try to convince others to consume less?

Q.11 Do anti-consumers replace things because they are out of fashion? How strong is their commitment to not making new purchases?

Q.12 Do anti-consumers impulse buys? How strong is their behaviour against it?

Q.13 Do anti-consumers try to delay their purchases? How committed are they to delay purchases?

#### **4.10 Breadth of anti-consumption behaviours**

Craig Lees and Hill (2002) describe the recent rise of anti-consumption, where clusters of individuals have begun to engage in a range of anti-consumption activities. These activities range from specific product selection based on ethical or ecological considerations to overall reduced consumption or the boycott of specific product categories. Guillard (2018) found relevant information when surveying individuals with low levels of anti-consumption, and some respondents mentioned buying things they already owned or didn't need. In contrast, Iyer and Muncy (2009) claim that this avoidance can be wide-ranging, embracing a vast range of products and services, or narrow, with specific products that individuals choose to restrict their use. Based on these findings, it was important to determine:

Q.14. How broad is the reduction and restriction of consumption from anti-consumers?

Q.15. How many anti-consumption activities do anti-consumers engage with?

Q.16. Do anti-consumers have multiple items that do the same job when only one of them would do?

#### **4.11 Durability of anti-consumption behaviours**

In section 4.5, which described the "durability of anti-consumption motivations, it was mentioned that Basci (2016) claimed that once individuals step into the anti-consumption way of life there is no going back. Guillard (2018) described the transformation that consumers go through when they become aware of their consumption patterns and start transitioning to an anti-consumption state.

Based on the same claims from Basci (2016) and Guillard (2018), in order to investigate the durability of anti-consumer behaviour it is important to determine:

Q.17. How long have people been anti-consumers?

## Chapter 5

### Method

Given the characteristics and complexity of the proposed theme, a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative styles, was used. Qualitative research is flexible and enables a quick first-hand interaction. For this phase, instead of adopting traditional focus groups, which is limited to a few hours with participants to gather all the required information (Acocella, 2012), a private Facebook group named *The Non-Consumer Advocate*, with more than 80,000 active members was utilised. Individuals in this group consider themselves anti-consumers and were a source of meaningful and continuous information. Potential survey questions were pre-tested, and more in-depth information was gathered before the quantitative phase, thus helping to minimise semantic and linguistic errors or confusing statements related to the questionnaire. Because the group members identified themselves as belonging to the same social group assisted in making the environment more spontaneous and supported participation (Merton & Kendall, 1946; Munday, 2006). It is not the first time that an anti-consumer Facebook group has been employed to assist research. Basci (2016) used a group named *I Shall not Consume* to find respondents for his anti-consumption survey. It is important to note that the survey questions from the quantitative stage originated from the available literature on anti-consumption. The use of the anti-consumption Facebook group acted as a practical way to communicate with anti-consumers and evaluate their understanding of some of the survey questions, assisting in improving the clarity and comprehension of the device, but not the core aspects of it. It also helped to reflect upon aspects of anti-consumers practical behaviours that are often taken for granted (Morisson, 1998). In the qualitative stage, a semi-structured format of the online conversations prevailed, with the application of a similar structure used in the quantitative phase but also allowing comments from group members. For the quantitative stage, a 2-stage online survey gathered information from respondents. The sample was derived by Qualtrics, a reputable research company that provides panels of respondents from their worldwide database. Qualtrics made the online questionnaire available to their New Zealand panel using quotas so that a representative sample of the country's demographics would answer the screening questions, which meant a sample of individuals that were representative in terms of gender, income levels, education and age (+18) was collected in the first stage of the data collection. The questionnaire for the first stage had five demographic questions, gathering information about gender, age, income, financial circumstances and level of education. After the demographic section, respondents answered a set of screening questions, designed to identify anti-consumers in the sample for the second stage questionnaire. Individuals who were not identified as anti-consumers only completed the first stage. The respondents were identified as anti-consumers continued to the

second stage questionnaire. The screening consisted of six statements, that were all socially acceptable, but only three were related to anti-consumption motivations, attitudes or behaviours. Respondents had to choose one of the three statements to move to the second stage. In the *soft launch* of the online questionnaire, 10% of the target sample was gathered and reviewed before continuing the main data collection, and this sub-sample was examined to identify inconsistencies or errors before resuming. After reviewing the *soft launch*, it was determined from responses in the second stage questions, that a number of non-anti-consumers were being classified as anti-consumers, so the data collected from *soft launch* was not used. The screening method was subsequently adjusted to strengthen the potential for misclassification. To achieve this, respondents were asked to choose two affirmations instead of one. Both these affirmations needed to be consistent with anti-consumption to allow continuing to the second stage of the questionnaire. The suitable affirmations were: I don't buy things because it is good for the planet; I only upgrade my things when they don't do what I need them to do, and I think a lot about whether I need something before I buy it. The full set of screening questions and the way they appeared on the questionnaire is detailed below:

Choose the 2 (two) statements that best describe you:

I buy things because it is good for the economy

I don't buy things because it is good for the planet

I like to upgrade my things, to have the latest model

I only upgrade my things when they don't do what I need them to do

I don't really think about my purchases and consumption

I think a lot about whether I need something before I buy it

The thought process behind the development of the screening section statements was as follows: Firstly, it was essential to provide pairs of divergent affirmations that were both viable and socially acceptable. The pairs included a consumer and an anti-consumer statement. One pair represented motivations, another pair for attitudes and the final pair for behaviours. The anti-consumption statements related to reduction, restriction, refusal or rejection of consumption, the core characteristics of RAC, and its intersections with MAB. Concern for the planet has been mentioned as a motivation by researchers as being relevant for anti-consumers. In their anti-consumption research, Iyer and Muncy (2009) reported that a few anti-consumers reasons to reduce their general level of consumption developed by the assumption that it would favor society or the planet. Anti-

consumers do not think the current level of consumption is ideal for the whole of society. To have financial means to buy or upgrade something, but intentionally decide not to, is also related to anti-consumption behaviour. Anti-consumption is considered by Kropfeld, Nepomuceno & Dantas (2018) to be intentional non-consumption behaviour; thus, anti-consumers can consume but, for one cause or another, choose intentionally not to consume. To take a long time to consider buying a new product or to resist consumption as much as possible is also behaviour shown by anti-consumers, as displayed in a few studies. Basci (2016) found that sometimes the decision-making process for the anti-consumer is particularly slow going, and the decision to purchase an item may take a very long time to make. By demanding respondents to choose two options, the screening section reinforced some of the desirable aspects of anti-consumers and avoided the risk of non-anti-consumers to be erroneously included. Transitioning to phase 2 of data collection, the following sections will describe how motivations, attitudes and behaviours were measured by different authors and how they were measure in this research.

## **5.1 Methods for measuring motivations, attitudes and behaviours**

The body of literature shows a variety of methods used by different authors to capture information from anti-consumers or to explain the phenomena. Each has been carefully examined for the purpose of choosing methods that best fit the goals of the present research.

## **5.2 Measurement of motivations**

Previous research on anti-consumption has focused on the causes and motivations of consumer behaviours (Black & Cherrier, 2010; Seegebarth et al., 2015). Brown and Vergragt (2016) explored what could trigger individuals to a cultural shift to less consumerist lifestyle choices and described that it would be motivated not by moral imperatives or environmental agendas but by the central pursuit of human well-being. Their paper was based on deeply theoretical research from consumer society history and a wide range of studies on happiness and wellbeing. Basci (2016) investigated motivations for anti-consumption behaviours through face-to-face and online interviews with fourteen anti-consumers. Living spaces of some of the participants were photographed, personal blogs from respondents were also examined, as well as texts on Facebook. Black and Cherrier (2010) used qualitative research and in-depth interviews with sixteen women. Their research was more focused on analysing motivations related to environmental and sustainable aspects. All the interviews were conducted at the respondents' houses and lasted between 1.5 and 3 hours. After potential anti-consumers qualified through the screening questions, there was a set of eleven questions to be answered. Two of the questions were related to motivations, four to attitudes and five to behaviours. They were also constructed to measure strength, breadth and durability of MAB. Six of the eleven questions used Likert scales, as it was deemed appropriate to measure the

attributes of MAB, especially due to the nature of anti-consumers as pointed out by various authors represented different levels of anti-consumers practices (Etzioni, 2003; Basci (2016); Guillard (2018). In the current study, it was decided to measure anti-consumption motivations by using quantitative method, with two questions that investigated the strength, breadth and durability of the motivations. The use of Likert scale provided the most efficient format to obtain the data.

### **5.3 Measurement of attitudes**

Nassén (2017) did a survey regarding the general agreement with anti-consumption beliefs among a large representative sample of 1,742 Swedish adults. The author did a quantitative analysis which compared socio-demographic and political groups and whether their beliefs were relatively weak and strong, and how they correlated with attitudes to sustainability policies. Five questions were incorporated into the Swedish national SOM-survey (Society, Opinion, Media) and the questions were formulated to capture contemporary attitudes about anti-consumption. Iyer and Muncy (2015) tried to capture anti-consumption attitudes applying quantitative research method with a sample of 871 respondents. They used well-established scales to measure micro and macro anti-consumption attitudes. The research was undertaken to determine whether attitudes toward consumption and anti-consumption were related to both the cognitive and affective elements of subjective wellbeing. To measure anti-consumption attitudes, this research applied the same approach as Nassén (2017), with a quantitative method with four different questions. A Likert scale seemed the adequate option to gather data regarding strength and durability of anti-consumption, while one of the survey questions offered a list of different options to measure the breadth of attitudes.

### **5.4 Measurement of behaviours**

Scott and Weaver (2018) demonstrated that consumers practice various forms of anti-consumption, like rejecting, restricting, and reclaiming, which reinforces the tangible aspects of anti-consumption. To fully investigate anti-consumption practices, they conducted in-depth interviews that lasted thirty minutes to one hour with seventeen participants. By having a diverse population of respondents, it provided multiple perspectives and enabled to fully understand their behaviours. Schreurs et al. (2012) presented findings of a detailed socio-economic quantitative and qualitative analysis of Dutch voluntary and involuntary anti-consumers. The sample had a total of 1006 respondents and measured not only behaviour but also attitudes. In the present research, five questions assisted in examining the strength, breadth and durability of anti-consumption behaviours. Again, Likert scale was chosen as the most efficient method to gather data for behaviours' attributes.

# Chapter 6

## Results

### 6.1 Sample description

The online questionnaire results were obtained after 38 days of data collection. The reason for the extended time was due to the implementation of demographic quotas. The goal was to achieve a representative sample of New Zealanders to answer phase 1 of the survey, which included demographic and screening questions. Only anti-consumers, filtered by the screening questions, were eligible to respond to the phase 2 survey questions. A total of 570 individuals completed the phase 1 questions, and 281 completed the phase 2 questionnaire. This suggests that 49.3% of respondents presented some level of anti-consumption motivations, attitudes or behaviours, which is detailed further throughout the results section. Below is Table 1, a broad sample description, followed by Table 2, a more detailed description of the sample.

Table 1 Broad sample description

		Sample before screening		Sample after screening	
<b>General</b>	Consumers	289	50.7%	0	0.0%
<b>Public</b>	Anti-Consumers	281	49.3%	281	49.3%
	<b>Total</b>	570	100.0%	281	100.0%

Table 2 Detailed sample description		Sample before screening Consumers + Anti-consumers	Census 2013*	Sample after screening Anti-consumers		
<b>Age range</b>	18 - 24	100	17.5%	12.7%	29	29.0%
	25 - 34	92	16.1%	16.7%	40	43.4%
	35 - 44	94	16.5%	17.6%	41	44.6%
	45 - 54	99	17.4%	18.6%	54	54.5%
	55 - 64	77	13.5%	15.4%	49	63.6%
	65 - 74	77	13.5%	11.1%	51	62.2%
	75 +	31	5.4%	7.9%	17	54.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>281</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	239	41.9%	51.3%	102	42.6%
	Male	331	58.1%	48.7%	179	54.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>281</b>	
<b>Financial dependents</b>	None	197	34.6%	–	62	31.4%
	1	153	26.8%	–	101	66.0%
	2	95	16.7%	–	33	34.7%
	3	43	7.5%	–	14	32.5%
	More than 3	82	14.4%	–	71	86.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>281</b>	
<b>Education</b>	Primary or secondary school	133	23.3%	21.0%	38	28.5%
	Tertiary diplomas/certificates (level 1-6)	201	35.3%	52.0%	113	56.2%
	Bachelors degree or higher (level 7-10)	236	41.4%	20.0%	130	55.0%
	Other	0	0.0%	7.0%	0	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>281</b>	
<b>Income per year (NZD)</b>	20,000.00 or less	158	27.7%	36.5%	90	56.9%
	20,000.01 - 40,000.00	150	26.3%	26.5%	76	50.6%
	40,000.01 - 70,000.00	124	21.8%	22.0%	66	53.2%
	70,000.01 - 100,000.00	70	12.3%	7.8%	31	44.2%
	100,000.01 - 130,000.00	37	6.5%	3.6%	12	32.4%
	130,000.01 - 160,000.00	11	1.9%	1.6%	1	0.9%
	Above 160,000.00	17	3.0%	2.0%	3	1.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>281</b>	

## Age

The proportion of age groups from the phase 1 survey closely corresponded to the 2013 New Zealand census. The 18 to 24 age group was the only discrepancy from the census, with 4.8% variation. Despite that, 100 respondents from between those ages answered Section 1, and 29 of them qualified to continue the survey. Respondents from 55 to 64 years of age had the highest percentage representation after the screening, with 54 individuals, equivalent to 63.6% of the original sample.

## **Gender**

Females were 239 from 570 respondents in phase 1, corresponding 41.9% of the original sample. The percentage is below the 51.3% by the census, but presumably sufficient to avoid result distortions. From the 239 female respondents, 102 qualified to answer section 2 of the survey. Males were 331 before screening, and 179 males subsequently, reaching 54% of the final sample.

## **Financial dependents**

The questionnaire gathered information regarding financial dependents of the respondents. Information provided by the census is not clear regarding this data. However, with most of the other demographics consistent with the census, it is assumed that financial dependent information is also representative. The highest rate is 34.6%, with no financial dependents and the lowest being 7.5%, with three dependents.

## **Education**

There were differences from the education rates in the survey compared to the 2013 census. Qualtrics claimed to have had difficulties meeting the quotas for this demographic. The percentage from primary and secondary school were representative of the New Zealand census, but the others were considerably different. Despite the differences, the number of respondents for every education level was high enough for further study. The primary and secondary level had 133 respondents, tertiary diplomas and certificates had 201, and bachelor's degree and higher had 236. Respectively, they accounted for 38, 113 and 130 respondents of the final sample.

## **Income**

The most relevant difference between the phase 1 sample and the census was among individuals with income below \$20,000.00 per year. There was an 11.5% divergence, with census reporting 36.5% for this level of income and the survey showing 27.7%. Qualtrics also reported complications in meeting this quota. The 27.7% represented 158 respondents in section 1, with 90 qualifying for Section 2.

## **6.2 Data analysis**

The first part of the results reports analyses related to demographics. Five questions were raised concerning age, gender, financial dependents, level of education and income. From the identification of anti-consumers through the screening questions, it was possible to determine their percentage relative to the general population, by matching the numbers of the respondents who did not qualify

as anti-consumers with the those who did. The demographic analysis finishes with the discussion of Hypothesis 1. Following the demographic examinations, the focus moves to hypotheses and questions derived from the theoretical model. Results are generally organised into anti-consumer motivations, attitudes, then behaviours, then within each of these sections, hypotheses and exploratory questions related to their strength, breadth and durability are presented.

### 6.3 Anti-consumption demographics

#### Anti-consumption and age

Figure 4 displays the age distribution amidst anti-consumers. The age groups with the largest concentrations of anti-consumers were among 65 to 74, followed closely by respondents between 55 and 64. The figure shows a consistent and noticeable trend, where along with the rise in age, the percentage of anti-consumers get higher. the percentage of anti-consumers gets higher along with the increase in age. The pattern interruption only occurs when it reaches respondents 75 years of age or above. The anti-consumer percentage related to the 18 – 24 age bracket was the lowest of all recorded. Exactly 100 respondents from 18 – 24 answered the screening questions, and only 29 identified as anti-consumers. The modest rate is possibly due to a lack of self-awareness of their consumption patterns, which generally develops with age.

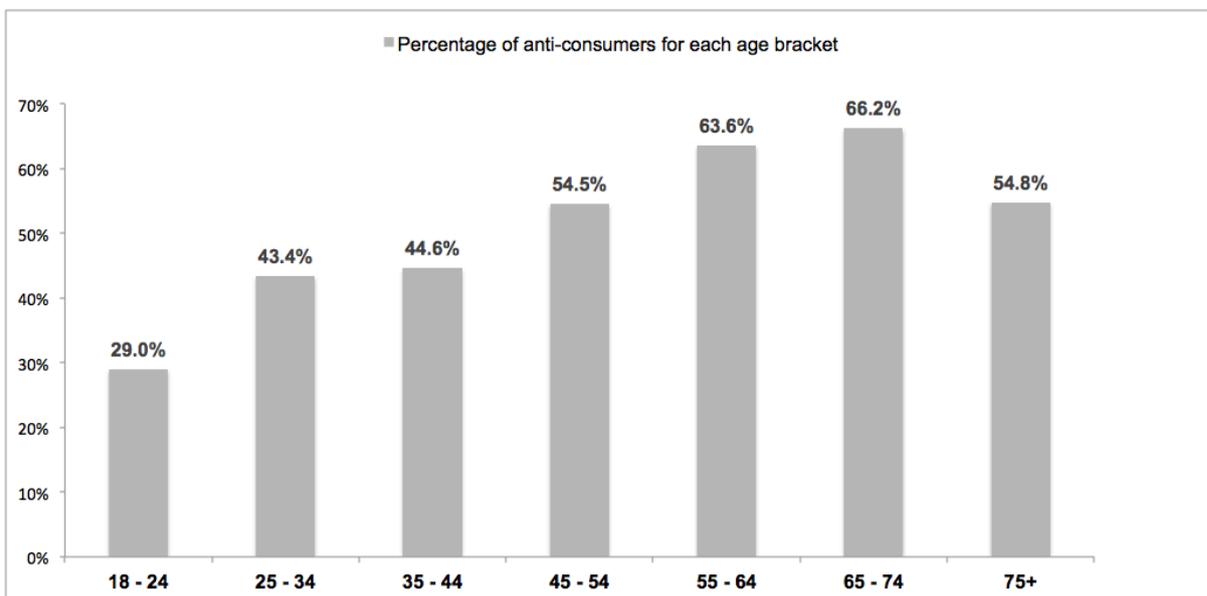


Figure 4. What is your age?

#### Anti-consumption and gender

As for gender distribution, Figure 5 shows the following results. In Section 1 of the survey, 239 females and 331 males answered the screening questions, resulting in 102 and 179 respondents in the final sample, respectively. There was an 11.4% disparity between the genres, with males reaching

54% of the initial sample and females 42.6%. This study was unable to determine the causes for a higher percentage of male anti-consumers compared to female anti-consumers in New Zealand, as it was not part of survey's objectives.

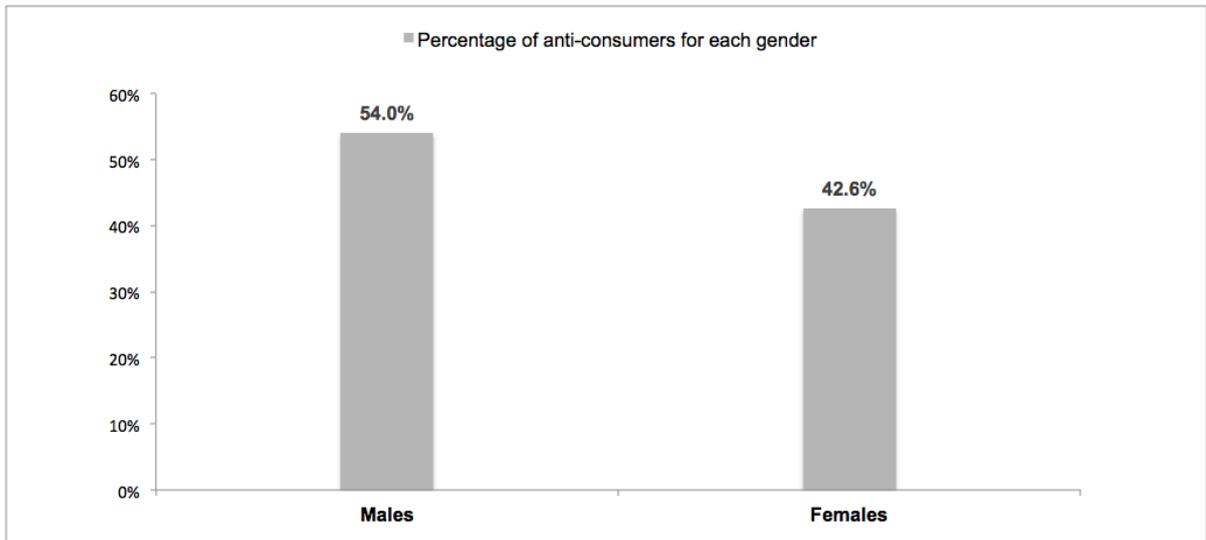


Figure 5. What is your gender?

### Anti-consumption and financial dependents

The following findings indicate no definite trend, but the largest number of anti-consumers is clearly within the category of respondents who have more than three financial dependents. There were 82 respondents in that group on Section 1, and 71 eligible to complete the survey, reaching 86.5%.

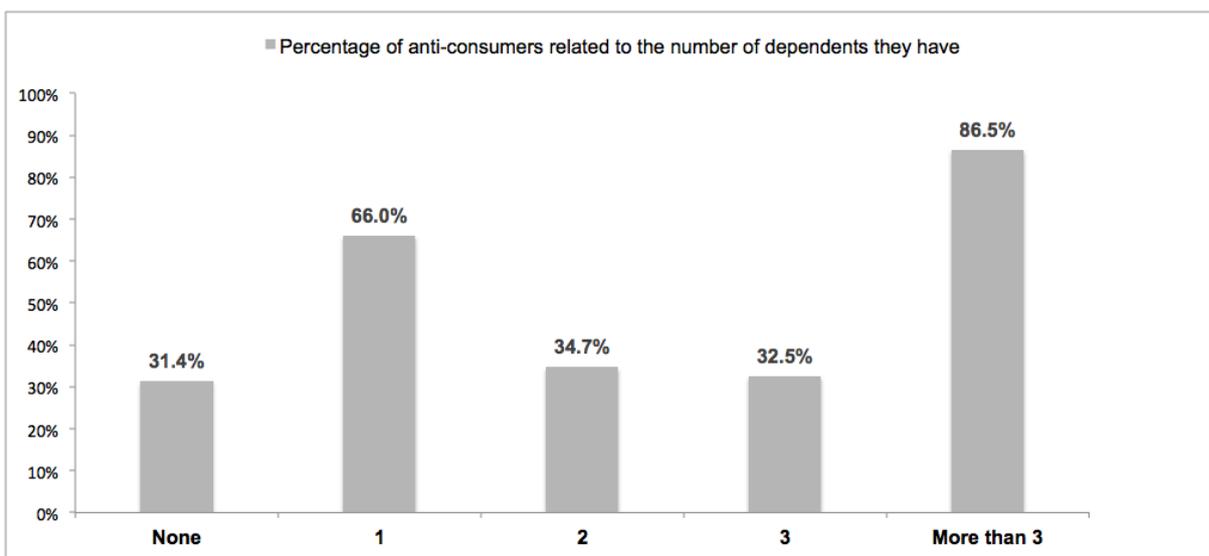


Figure 6. How many people financially depend on you?

## Anti-consumption and education level

Figure 7 has details on anti-consumption related education levels. Respondents that have achieved higher education standards are identified in much greater percentages than those with lower education levels. Just 28.5% of the 133 survey respondents who attended primary or secondary school were listed as anti-consumers and entitled to respond the entire survey.

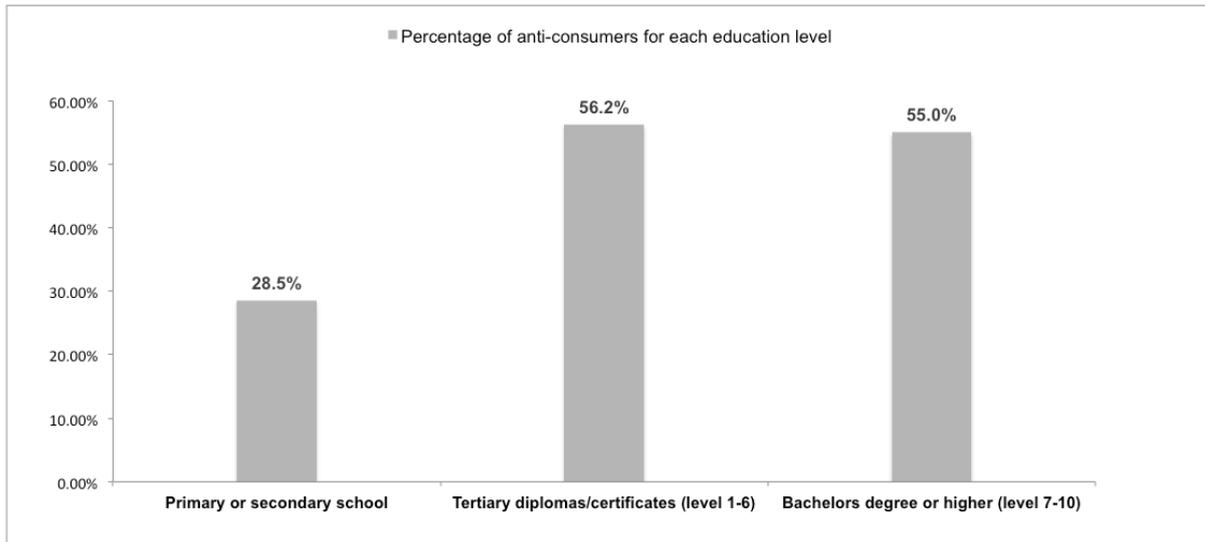


Figure 7. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?

## Anti-consumption and income

Below is the data on the income of respondents in 2019 (NZD) related to anti-consumption, described in Figure 8. Income levels seem to have a substantial effect on anti-consumption, with higher percentages of anti-consumers within the lower-income and low percentages among higher-income respondents. It is important to note that the number of respondents in the \$130,000.00 – \$160,000.00 bracket was only 11 during the screening stage, with only 1 of them qualifying as anti-consumer. The same happened with respondents in the \$160,000.00 plus range, with only 17 answering the screening questions and 3 qualifying. Albeit representative of the New Zealand 2013 Census, the low numbers might have impacted result consistency. In contrast, during the screening stage, 158 respondents represented the lowest- income range, and 58.9% qualified as anti-consumers.

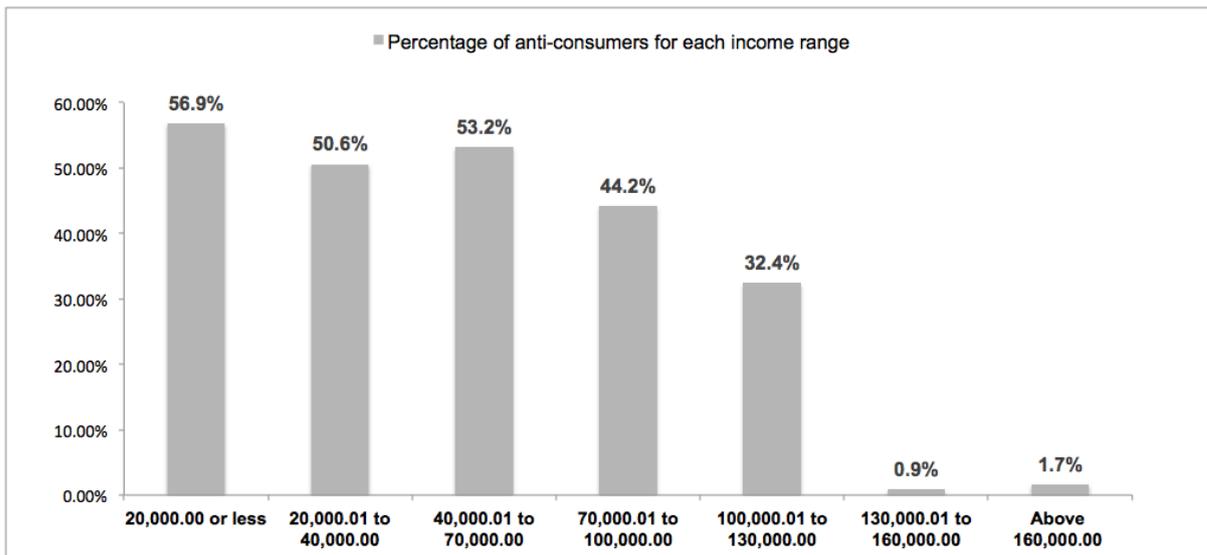


Figure 8. Which best describes your personal income in 2019?

### Hypothesis for demographics and its connection with anti-consumption motivations, attitudes and behaviours.

It was hypothesised, based on Black and Cherrier (2010), Brown and Vergragt (2016); Carr et al. (2012), Craig-Less and Hill (2002), Basci (2016), Nassén (2017), that demographics and its specificities have a connection with anti-consumption motivations, attitudes and behaviours. The data gathered from all but one of the demographic questions suggest that there is a connection between demographics and MAB. When age distribution is analysed, it showed a steady and visible trend where the percentage of anti-consumers gets higher along with the rise in age. As far as gender is concerned, there was an 11.4% difference between them, with males reaching 54% and females 42.6%, suggesting that there are more male anti-consumers than female anti-consumers within the general public. When examining education levels, respondents who have achieved higher education standards are identified in much higher percentages than those with lower levels of education, with twice their magnitude. The investigation of income distribution shows that income levels tend to have a significant impact on anti-consumption, with higher percentages of anti-consumers within the lower-income range and low percentages amongst respondents with higher income. Although no statistical tests were performed, there is anecdotal evidence to support Hypothesis 1.

## **6.4 Anti-consumption motivations**

### **Strength of anti-consumption motivations**

To examine the strength of anti-consumers motivations, Figure 9 illustrates the research question applied in the survey for that purpose. The answers included nine different motivation factors, and

for each of the motivations, respondents chose an option on a scale of *not important* to *very important*.

How important are the following statements in your decision for buying fewer products?

	Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important
To improve my wellbeing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To reduce environmental impacts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To live in a sustainable way	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To make a political stand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am frugal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have financial limitation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not like clutter and excess	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not like shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For a minimalist lifestyle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 9. Strength and breadth of anti-consumption motivations

Figure 10 displays the mean importance for each of the motivation factors. Most of the motivation factors have been derived from other research as driving forces for engaging in anti-consumption practices. The present survey identifies differences in importance among these driving forces.

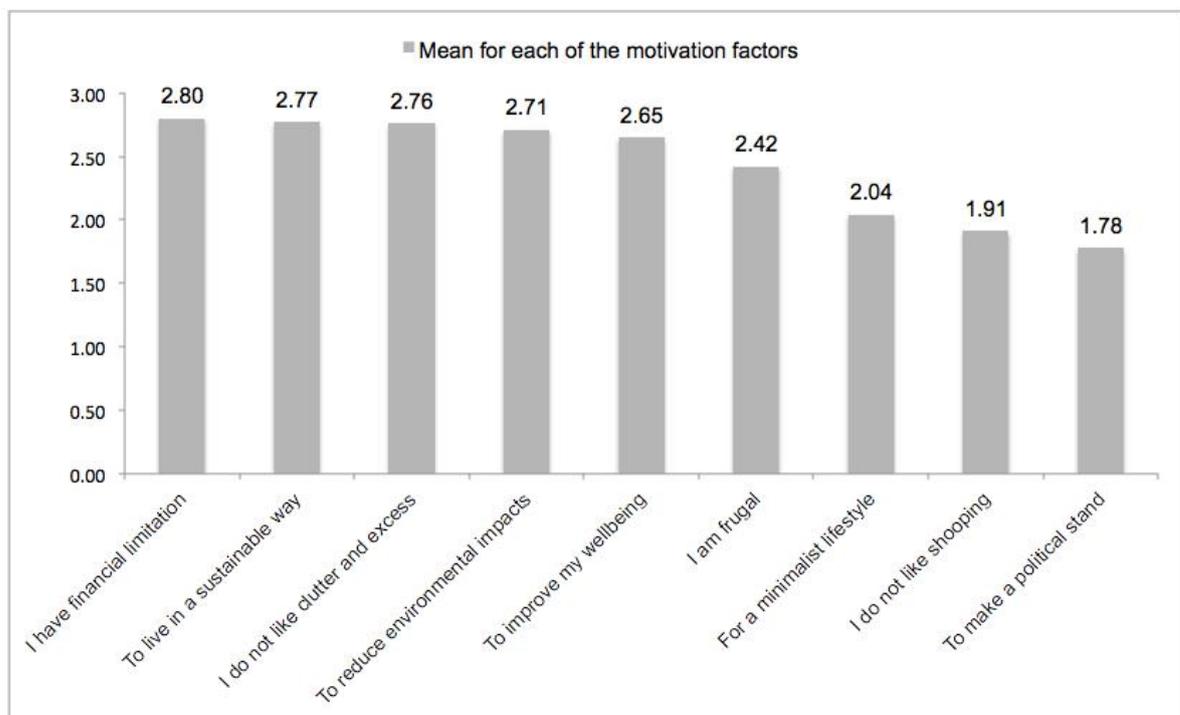


Figure 10. How important are the following motivations in your decision for buying fewer products?

Financial limitation is the most important motivation factor against consumption, with the second strongest being related to maintaining a sustainable lifestyle, followed but anti-consumers that are motivated for engaging in anti-consumption practices because they do not like clutter and excess. To make a political stand was the least important reason. None of the respondents chose financial limitation as the only reason for being an anti-consumer.

### Breadth of anti-consumption motivations

Further analysis of the same questions was applied to investigate the breadth of anti-consumption motivations. Rating the importance of all the potential drivers was compulsory, allowing the count of drivers rated as important to measure the breadth anti-consumers motivations to engage in anti-consumption practices. The method of classifying a driver as important, respondents had to rate it higher than *not important*. The distribution of the mean number of drivers respondents rated as important can be seen in Figure 11.

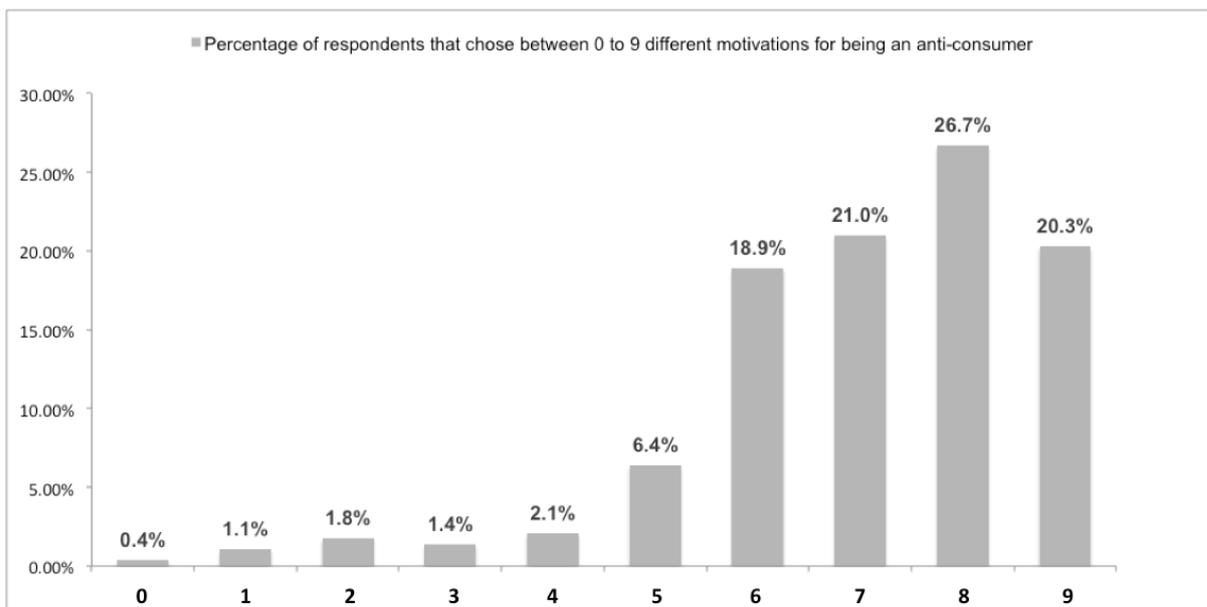


Figure 11. Breadth of anti-consumption motivations

The most common breadth was 8, and this occurred in 26.7% of all responses. Only 1.1% of respondents pointed just 1 motivation for being an anti-consumer. The majority of respondents selected between 6 and 9 different motivations, reaching a total of 86.9%, which corresponds to 262 individuals. It implies that most of the respondents had a wide breadth of motivating forces.

### Hypothesis for breadth of anti-consumption motivations

It was hypothesised, based on Basci (2016), Black and Cherrier (2010), Brown and Vergragt (2016), Craig-Less and Hill (2002), Guillard (2018), that anti-consumers have more than one motivation for

buying less. The results from this survey, showed on Figure 11 support the hypothesis, with clear indication of respondents that a variety of reasons motivate them to engage in anti-consumption practices. From 281 respondents, 98.6% elected more than one motivation for being an anti-consumer.

### Durability of anti-consumption motivations

The durability of anti-consumption motivations was also examined and the results are presented in Figure 12. Durability was measured by the question: For how long is your motivation to reduce or restrict consumption going to last?

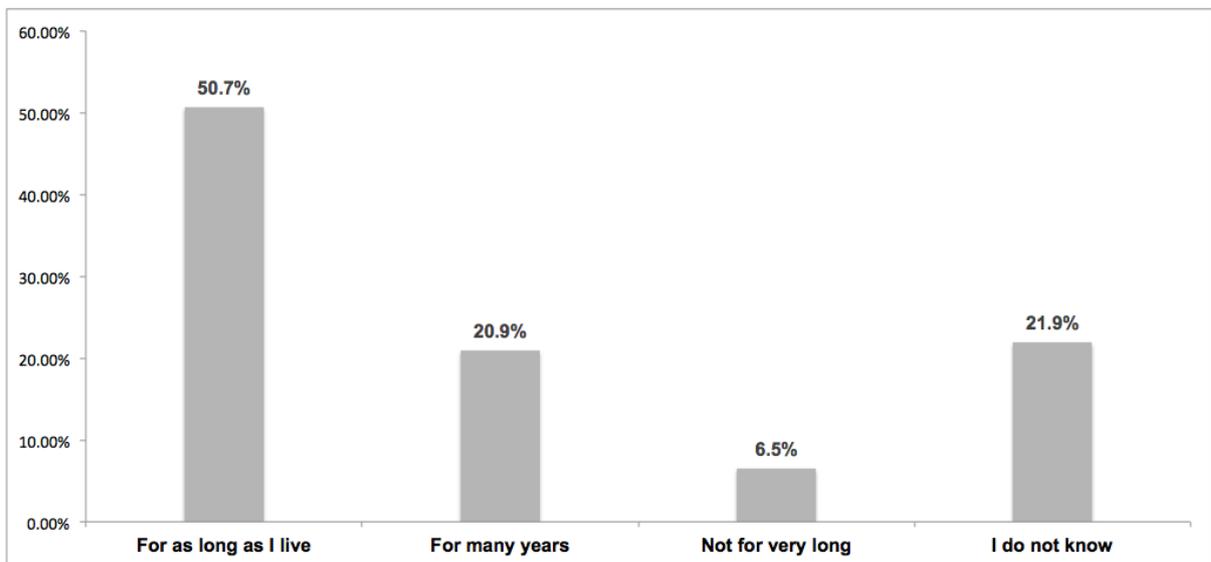


Figure 12. For how long is your motivation to reduce and restrict consumption is going to last?

Amidst all anti-consumers, 50.7% reported they would continue to be motivated *for as long as they lived*. Additionally, 20.9% answered *for many years*. Only 6.5% of respondents mentioned that it would not last long. Such figures are consistent with other research, noting that once a person is conscious of their consumption patterns or becomes conscious of them, they typically do not return to their old habits.

## 6.5 Anti-consumption attitudes

### Strength of anti-consumption attitudes

To examine the strength of anti-consumption attitudes, a single question was asked: Would you buy more products if you had a higher income? Below are the findings.

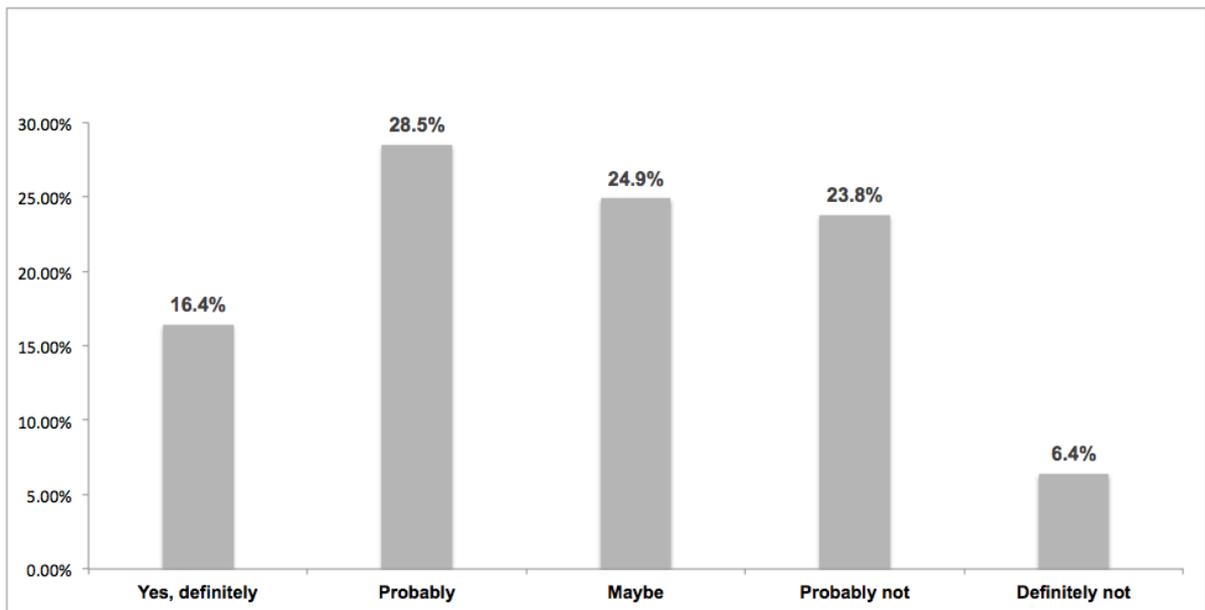


Figure 13. Would you buy more products if you had a higher income?

*Yes, definitely* and *Probably* account for 44.9% of the answers, while *Maybe, Probably not* and *Definitely not* accounts for 55.1%. The high rates for the two first options demonstrate that financial situation plays a significant part in the decision to reduce or restrict consumption. The income-related responses on the first segment of this survey confirm the findings on Figure 13, where it is clear that there is a tendency for respondents to participate less in anti-consumption practices when the annual earnings are higher.

### **Breadth of anti-consumption attitudes**

The following research question, with results shown on Figure 14, was asked to assess the breadth of anti-consumption attitudes. It aimed to investigate whether anti-consumers believed they would reduce consumption across a diverse product range in the future. The answers also included a statement for respondents that expected to keep their overall standard of consumption low.

Compared to recent years, which of the following products do you intend to buy less in the future? Please tick all that apply.

- My overall level of consumption of these items will remain low
- Toys and entertainment products
- Clothing
- Shoes and other accessories
- Takeaway and dining out food/drinks
- Household appliances
- Presents for other people
- Furniture
- Electronic products
- Personal care items (shampoo, conditioner, make up, razors, moisturiser)

Figure 14. Which of the following products do intend to buy less in the future?

From the 281 respondents, 140 believed that their overall level of consumption would remain low in the future (The first option in Figure 14), which corresponds to 49.8% of the total sample. The breadth of anti-consumption attitudes of the 141 remaining respondents (51.2% of the sample) was measured as the number of specific products that they intended to buy less in the future and the distribution is illustrated in Figure 15.

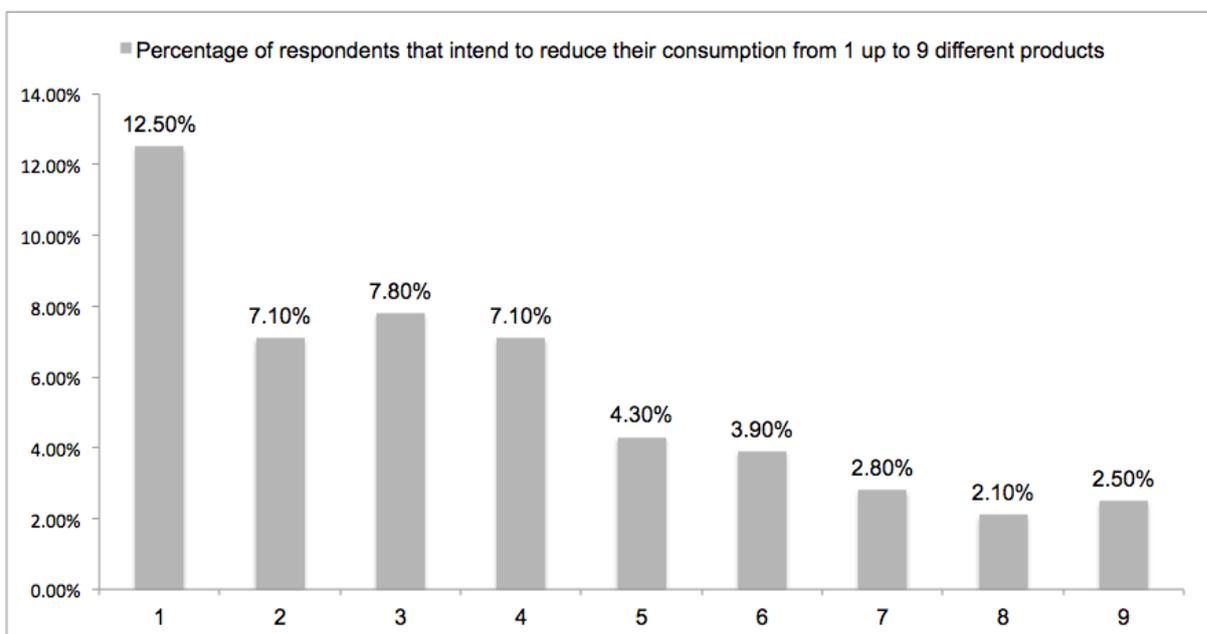


Figure 15. Which of the following products do you intend to buy less in the future?

After the 49.2% that intended to remain low for all the items, the most common breadth of product reduction was 1, which occurred in 12.5% of the responses, resulting in 35 respondents intending to reduce their consumption of one particular item. Only 2.5% of respondents said their consumption

will be reduced across all products. A number of respondents expected to reduce their consumption on 2 to 4 different items, reaching a total of 22%, or 62 individuals.

### Durability of anti-consumption attitudes

To determine the durability of anti-consumption attitudes, participants were asked: Do you intend to buy fewer clothes for yourself over the next 10 years? Figure 16 shows the percentages.

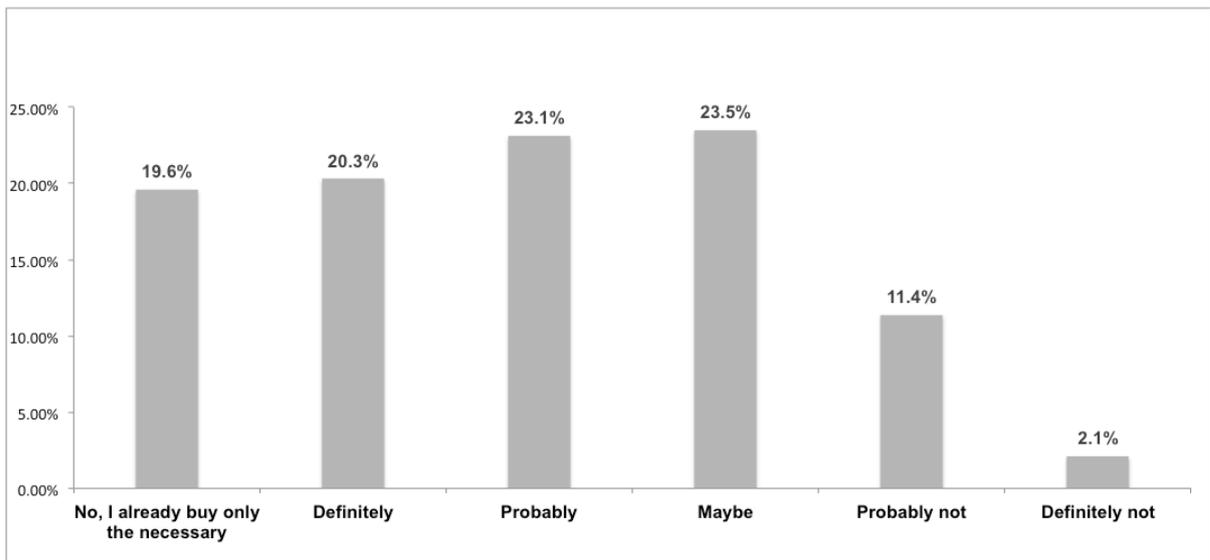


Figure 16. Do you intend to buy fewer clothes for your self over the next 10 years?

For 20.3% of anti-consumers, (57 respondents), there was a conviction that they will definitely buy fewer clothes. Additionally, 23.3%, 65 respondents, indicated they will probably by fewer clothes, and only 2.1% have a strong conviction that they will not buy fewer clothes. An additional research question was asked to measure the durability of anti-consumer attitudes: Compared to recent years, how will your overall level of consumption be in the future? Figure 17 exhibits the results.

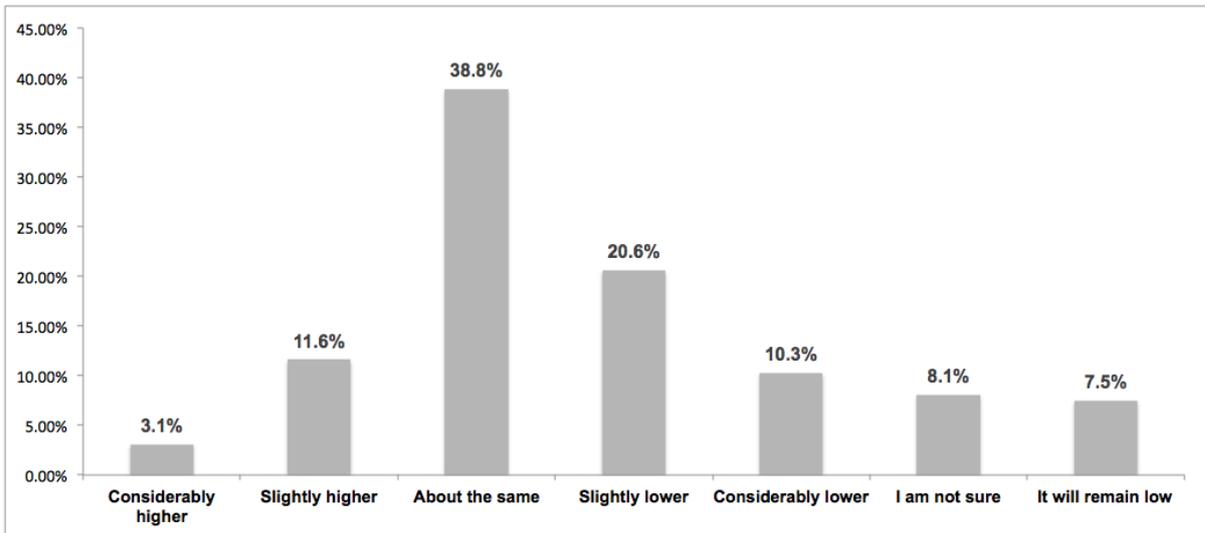


Figure 17. Compared to recent years, how will your overall level of consumption be in the future?

Only 3.1% of respondents reported that their overall consumption would be *considerably higher*. A total of 38.4% of the sample, 123 respondents, mentioned that it would be *slightly lower*, *considerably lower* or that it *will remain low*.

## 6.6 Anti-consumption behaviours

### Strength of anti-consumption behaviours

To examine the strength of anti-consumption behaviours, the survey asked the following question: How often do you try to convince other people to consume less? Figure 18 displays the results.

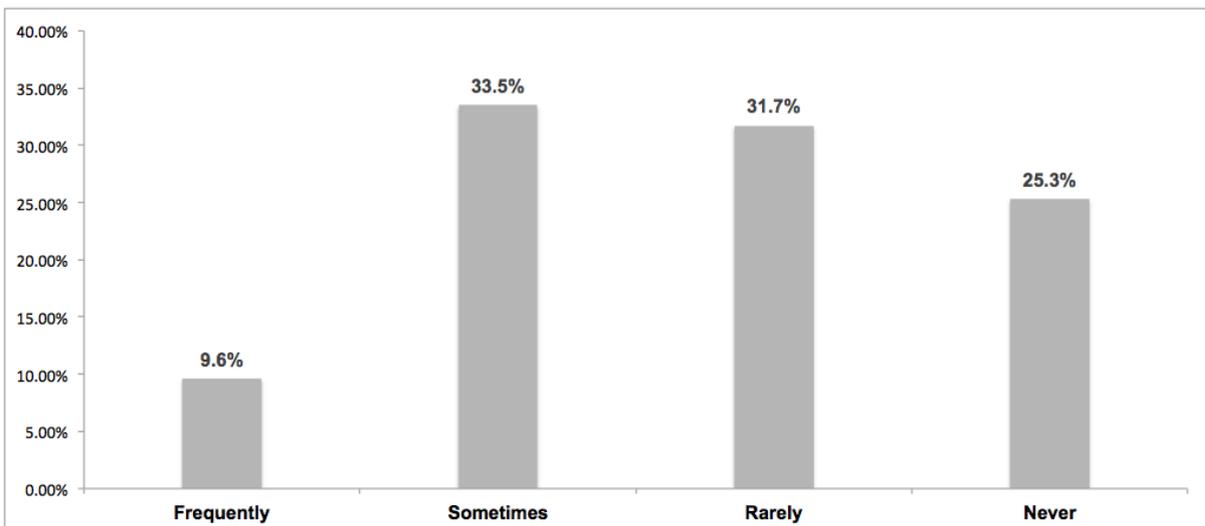


Figure 18. How often do you try to convince other people to consume less?

For the anti-consumers, 57% rarely or have never tried to convince other people to consume less. The high number is probably due to the stigma faced by some anti-consumers for being against

consumption, preferring not to advocate their practices to others. Only 9.6% of respondents frequently try to convince other people to consumer less. This is possibly the case of anti-consumer activists, the ones that usually show more radical levels of anti-consumption behaviours and actively support the cause. An additional question was asked to measure the strength of anti-consumption behaviours, (Figure 19): When do you usually decide to replace those items? The answers offered a scale with a wide range of options and aimed to capture how strongly or not anti-consumers delay purchases regarding their cell phone, computer or notebook, car and television, as shown below.

When do you usually decide to replace those items?

	I do not own one	Every year	More than 1 year and less than 3 years	More than 3 years and less than 5 years	More than 5 years and less than 10 years	More than 10 years	I keep it until it is unusable
Cellphone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer / Notebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Car	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 19. When do you usually decide to replace those items?

The results for all four items are displayed side by side in Figure 20. There are some visual similarities, but also some variations.

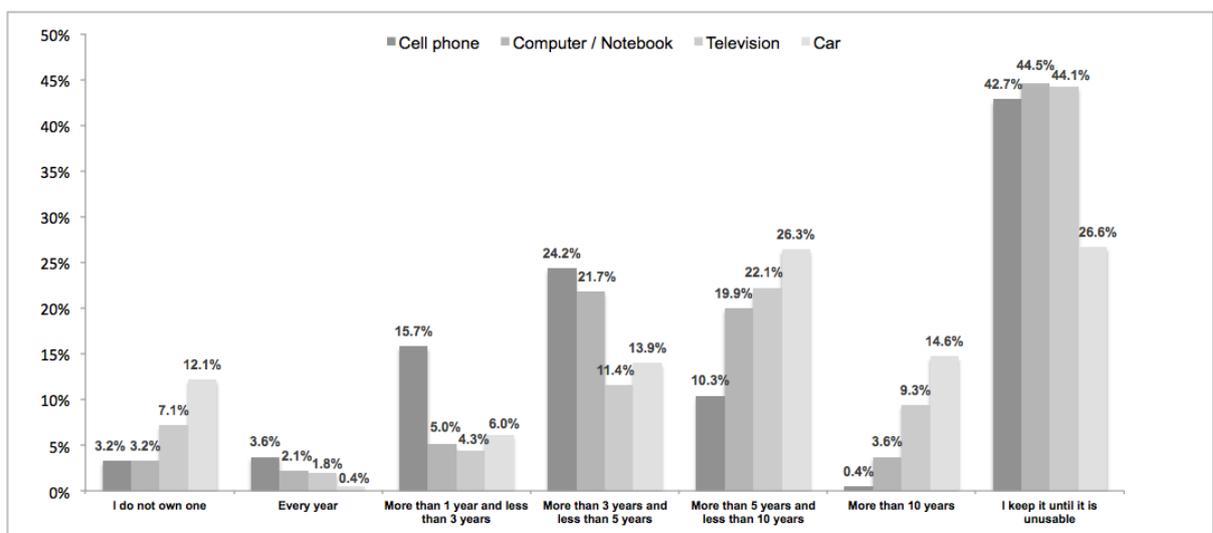


Figure 20. When do you usually decide to replace those items?

The option *I keep it until it is unusable* had very similar percentages for cell phones, computer/notebook and television, with 42.7%, 44.5% and 44.1% respectively. The high ratio suggests that anti-consumers try to delay the purchase of such items as much as possible. As for car purchases, only 26.6% of respondents chose this option, a much lower percentage compared to the other products, perhaps due to safety concerns or a viable second-hand market. The option *more than 1 year and less than 3 years* had similar numbers for computer/notebook, television and car, with 5.0%, 4.3% and 6.0% respectively, but a higher percentage for cell phones (15.7%). Worth mentioning is the very high percentage of all anti-consumers that keep their items for more than 5 years (including *I keep it until it is unusable*), which totals 53% for cell phones, 68% for computer/notebooks, 67% for cars and 75.5% for televisions.

### **Breadth of anti-consumption behaviours**

To examine the breadth of anti-consumption behaviours, Figure 21 below illustrates the question posed to respondents where they reported the spread of products they had actively reduced in the last year.

Which of the following products have you bought less of this year compared to years past in a purposeful effort to consume less? **Please tick all the apply.**

- My overall level of consumption of these items is already low
- Toys and entertainment products
- Clothing
- Shoes and other accessories
- Takeaway and dining out food/drinks
- Household appliances
- Presents for other people
- Furniture
- Electronic products
- Personal care items (shampoo, conditioner, make up, razors, moisturiser)

Figure 21. Which of the following products have you bought less of this year?

From the 281 respondents, 120 of them claimed that their overall level of consumption is already low, which corresponds to 42.7% of the total sample. The breadth of anti-consumption behaviours of the 161 (57.3%) remaining respondents are illustrated in Figure 22.

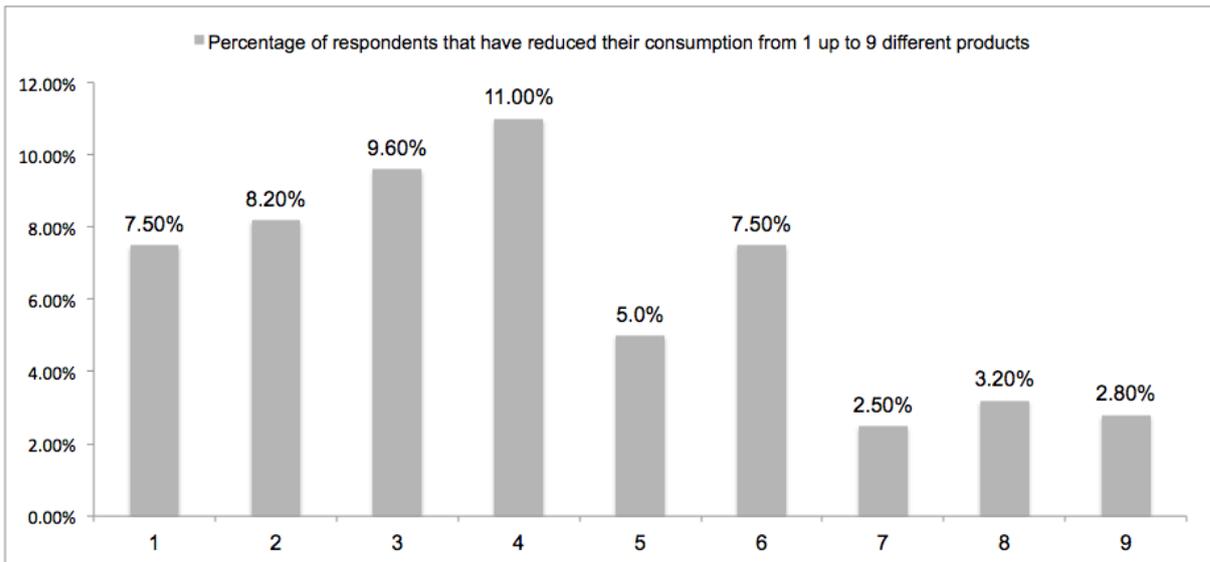


Figure 22. Breadth of anti-consumption behaviours

The most common breadth of behaviour was reported reduction in 4 types of products, which occurred in 11% of the responses (31 respondents). Only 2.8% of respondents had reduced their consumption for all the products. A number of respondents (28.8%) had reduced consumption in 2 and 4 different items, which corresponds to 81 individuals.

An additional question was applied to gather information regarding the breadth of anti-consumption behaviour practices that were not linked to particular product groups (Figure 23).

How strongly do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Undecided	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I never replace items because they are out of fashion	<input type="radio"/>				
I always try to repair items before replacing them with new	<input type="radio"/>				
I do not have multiple items that do the same thing when only one of them would do	<input type="radio"/>				
I do not frequently impulse buy	<input type="radio"/>				
I grow part of the food I eat	<input type="radio"/>				
I delay purchases as long as possible	<input type="radio"/>				
When I need a tool infrequently, I usually borrow it instead of purchasing	<input type="radio"/>				

Figure 23. Breadth of anti-consumption behaviours

Rating all the statements was mandatory, allowing results to exhibit the breadth and strength of the anti-consumption practices. In order to be judged as an anti-consumption behaviour, respondents had to choose either *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree*. The outcomes can be seen in Figure 22. The most common breadth was 6 practices, and this occurred in 28.8% of all responses (81 respondents). Only one respondent claimed to engage in just one anti-consumption practice. The majority of

respondents undertake five to seven different anti-consumption behaviours, reaching 76.2% of the sample, which corresponds to 214 individuals.

### Durability of anti-consumption behaviours

The following research question was tested to measure the durability of anti-consumption behaviours: When did you start reducing your overall level of consumption? The question's aim was to determine whether anti-consumption is a recent or long-established practice for the respondents.

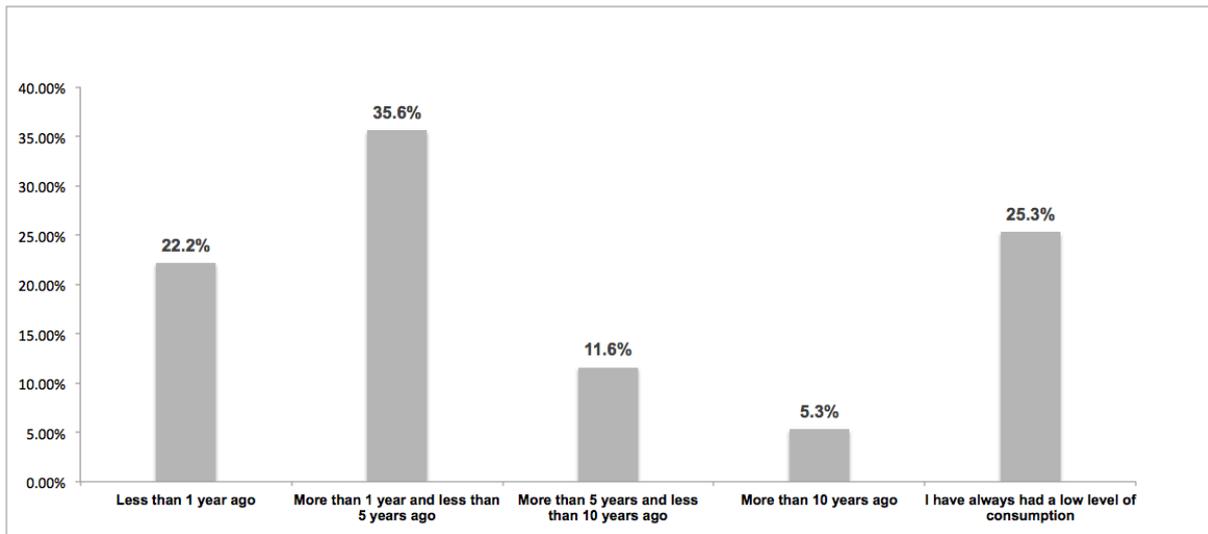


Figure 24. When did you start reducing your overall level of consumption?

For 25.3% of the sample, anti-consumption practices have always been part of their lives.

Nonetheless, anti-consumption practices for 57.8% of respondents had begun less than 5 years ago.

## Chapter 7

### Discussion

This chapter discusses the research questions and their outcomes. It starts with the tangible aspects of anti-consumption that can be measured, followed by the description of the relationship between these tangible aspects and choosing to consume. Then it details the differences in these tangible aspects that can be associated with demographics and finishes with the explanation of the state of motivations, attitudes and behaviours of anti-consumers in New Zealand.

#### **7.1 First research question: What are the tangible aspects of anti-consumption that can be measured at a research level?**

As discussed in the literature review, several labels and descriptions were used to define anti-consumption practices and boundaries, with none of them providing concrete ways of evaluating the constructs in an integrated approach. Thus, the first effort of this research was to simplify the broad set of definitions into aspects that were tangible and measurable. The core aspects of anti-consumption were recognised as being the reduction, restriction, rejection and refusal of consumption, labelled as the 4R's. Other measurable aspects related to the 4R's were the motivations, attitudes and behaviours of anti-consumers, labelled as MAB. Motivations are the driving forces and reasons for engaging in the 4R's, attitudes are the mind's predisposition in relation to the 4R's and behaviours are the 4R's expressions and actions. To fully measure the extent of anti-consumers' MAB, three common attributes were purposefully assigned, which are the strength, breadth and durability. Strength measures the intensity of anti-consumption. Breadth measures variety and diversity of anti-consumption and finally, durability measures the endurance and persistence of anti-consumption. MAB also has intrinsic measurable components. For motivations, some of the components are wellbeing, environmental aspects, political stand or minimalist lifestyle. For attitudes, the measurable components are conviction, intent and doubt. For behaviours, the measurable components are reduction, restriction, rejection and refusal of consumption. In the following subsections, the research will address each of the intersections between 4R's, MAB, its attributes and components and how they were categorised. It intends to offer tangible and measurable instruments for future studies.

#### **Motivations**

Survey question one aimed to measure the strength and breadth of anti-consumption motivations. It had nine components, which assisted in identifying respondents' motivations to engage in reduction, restriction, rejection and refusal of consumption (4R's). Previous anti-consumption studies provided

all components for the present study, such as wellbeing, environmental impacts, political stand or minimalist lifestyle. A Likert scale determined the strength of motivations and proved to be effective. The nine components provided sufficient variety to determine the breadth of motivations. Question one proved to be successful in measuring two of the motivations' attributes and the assigned components. To measure the durability of anti-consumption motivations and its intersections with some of the aspects related to the 4R's, survey question three also proved to be efficient. Results showed motivations' endurance from respondents to reduce and restrict consumption.

### **Attitudes**

Survey question seven aimed to determine the strength of anti-consumption attitudes related to income. By using a Likert scale, answers accurately measured attitudes' components, which are conviction, intention and doubt. Survey question six intended to measure the breadth of attitudes. By providing nine product options to be chosen, including toys, household appliances, electronics and furniture, it successfully proved to be effective in its purpose. Survey questions four and nine focused on measuring the durability of attitudes. By using Likert scales in both, they were able to examine attitudes' components related to future consumption. The three questions had clear intersections with the 4R's and were able to generate measurable data.

### **Behaviours**

Survey questions eight and ten focused on measuring the strength of behaviours. Question eight applied a scale based on years, aiming to provide the strength in which anti-consumers resist replacing their cell phone, computer, television and car. It had intersections with the 4R's, specifically regarding the restriction of consumption. Question ten applied a Likert scale to establish anti-consumers' level of activism. Both questions succeeded in measuring not only the components but also its attributes. Survey questions five and eleven assisted in measuring the breadth of behaviours, with enough diversity to enable efficient measurement of its breadth and intersections with the 4R's. Survey question three supported assessing the durability of behaviour. It aimed to investigate how recent or long-established anti-consumers started engaging in anti-consumption practices, with a clear link with components. The data generated from the question clearly determined the durability of behaviours.

## **7.2 Second research question: What is the relationship between these tangible aspects and choosing to consume less?**

Literature has highlighted how disconnected individuals' attitudes and motivations can be from actions. Prothero et al. (2011) emphasised out the disparity between people's views on sustainability

and their behaviours, which are often less conducive to sustainability. Surveys also indicate that most Americans believe they consume in excess and should reduce it. Yet that understanding hardly translates into behaviours (Bowerman, 2014). Based on these assumptions, it was relevant to examine if respondents motivations and attitudes had the potential to convert into anti-consumption behaviours. The research survey was constructed to identify these intersections. There were three questions investigating motivations, four questions exploring attitudes while five explored behaviours. As mentioned in the previous research question, the tangible aspects of anti-consumption are the MAB, attributes, components and the 4R's. Behaviours are the ultimate expression of anti-consumption engagement, as they reflect respondents actions. Motivations and attitudes relate to driving forces and minds' predisposition to consume less, but only behaviours reflect concrete outcomes.

### **Motivations**

The three questions on motivations showed a clear connection with consuming less. Respondents mentioned a diverse range of reasons for consuming less, with some of the reasons being very important. Most of them stated that their motivation to reduce consumption would continue for a very long time or for as long as they lived. Motivations attributes and components were essential to establish the connection with consuming less. Strength, breadth and durability showed the intensity, diversity and persistence of motivations to consume less.

### **Attitudes**

All four questions on attitudes reinforce the relationship with consuming less. Respondents have the conviction that their consumption will remain low or that it will be reduced and intend to reduce their purchases across different products in the future. The strength, breadth of the durability of attitudes had a clear relation with reduction and restriction of consumption

### **Behaviours**

The five survey questions related to behaviours showed different levels in which individuals participate in anti-consumption practices. Reduction, restriction, rejection and refusal of consumption was apparent. A substantial part of the respondents is reducing consumption across different products, taking a long time to replace the items they own, not impulse buying, delaying purchases and repairing items instead of buying new ones. Their behaviours are strong and broad.

### **7.3 Third research question: Are there any differences in these tangible aspects that can be associated with demographics?**

Black and Cherrier (2010), Nassén (2017), Brown and Vergragt (2016), Carr et al. (2012), Craig-Less and Hill (2002), Basci (2016), and other scholars have argued that demographics and their unique characteristics have an impact on anti-consumption engagement. The conclusion from four demographic aspects data examination in New Zealand is that there is a strong correlation between anti-consumption and income, age, educational level and possibly gender. The age group with the highest anti-consumer concentration was within 65 to 74. Anti-consumers were 66.2% from that age bracket. They were closely followed by respondents between 55 and 64, corresponding to 63.6%. However, there was a substantial difference when compared to respondents between 18 to 24 years old, where only 29% were anti-consumers, the lowest percentage of all age groups, indicating a convincing connection between anti-consumption practices and age. As regards to gender, there was an 11.4% difference between them, with males reaching 54% and females 42.6%, which suggests that there are more male anti-consumers than female anti-consumers within the general population. Results contradict the study done by Nassén (2017), who analysed socio-demographic correlated to anti-consumption attitudes and found that the value of anti-consumption beliefs was considerably higher for women. When considering education levels, respondents who had attained higher education standards appear in much higher percentages than those with lower levels of education, with almost twice their magnitude. Only 28.5% of primary or secondary school respondents were classified as anti-consumers, while 55% were anti-consumers from those who had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Results support Nassén (2017) study, which also indicated that people with higher education have stronger anti-consumption attitudes than those with lower levels of education. Evidence on income levels indicates that they tend to have a significant impact on anti-consumption, with much higher percentages of anti-consumers within the lower-income range when compared to respondents with higher-income. From respondents on the lowest-income spectrum, with annual earnings below \$20,000, a total of 58.9% qualified as anti-consumers. In contrast, from respondents with yearly income between \$100,000.01 and \$130,000.00, just 32.4% of them were identified as anti-consumers. A study by Assadourian (2010) had already cited that the probability of consuming more increases when in possession of more income, especially where consumerism is a cultural standard.

### **7.4 Fourth research question: What is the state of motivations, attitudes and behaviours of anti-consumers in New Zealand?**

With the constant changings in consumer motivations, attitudes and behaviours throughout the centuries, and anti-consumption practices gaining popularity as a counterpoint to high consumption

levels, the present research focused on gathering information on the current state of MAB of New Zealanders and contribute to the body of anti-consumption studies.

### **Motivations**

The study suggests anti-consumers from New Zealand present not only one, but a number of motivations for engaging in anti-consumption practices, with a significant percentage presenting 6, 7, 8 or even 9 different motivations for being anti-consumers. They are hybrid individuals, with the main reasons for choosing to consume less associated with the concern for the environment, pursue of wellbeing, financial aspects, to live in a sustainable way or because they do not like clutter and excess. However, some motivations are not so relevant for them, such as political views, to maintain a minimalist lifestyle or because they do not like shopping. They have a strong commitment to anti-consumption, with 49.1% of them claiming that they will remain anti-consumers for the rest of their lives and 22.5% saying that they will continue to be anti-consumers for many years. Basci (2016) had already pointed out that once individuals transitioned to the anti-consumption lifestyle, there was usually no return to the previous consumption habits.

### **Attitudes**

New Zealand's anti-consumer attitudes showed some appealing results. The financial constraint seems to have a significant impact on their attitudes, with 44.5% of them saying that if they had a higher income they would definitely or probably buy more goods. However, 23.8% probably would not buy more, while 6.4% definitely would not, even if they had a higher income. Their attitudes make sense when compared to their motivations for engaging in anti-consumption practices, found in the present research, since financial limitation is one of the most mentioned reasons. Important to mention is the fact that reasons to engage in anti-consumption behaviours cannot be related exclusively to lack of financial resources (Basci, 2014). That is the case with New Zealand respondents, with all of them mentioning more than one motivation. Regarding their beliefs for the future, 10.3% are confident that their overall level of consumption is going to be much lower, while 20.6% claim it will be slightly inferior and 38.8% that it will remain the same. It was relevant to have their opinions about the purchase of clothing, a popular product among consumerists. They showed commitment towards buying fewer clothing for themselves in the next ten years, with 43.4% saying that they will definitely or probably buy fewer clothes, and only 2.1% claiming that they will not buy fewer clothes.

## Behaviours

New Zealand anti-consumers do not frequently try to convince other people to consume less. Only 9.6% claim to do it frequently while 57% rarely or never do it. Anti-consumers who sometimes try to convince others to consume less where 33.5%. The 9.6% who often seek to convince others to reduce consumption may be those identified by Portwood-Stacer (2012) with activist motivations. Individuals who aim to raise the collective consciousness of consumers and, through it, alter consumer culture and ideology, with actions capable of persuading and motivating others. Anti-consumers in New Zealand are trying hard to reduce or restrict consumption. There is a large percentage of respondents utilising products until they are unusable, reaching 42.7% for cell phone, 44.5% for computer or notebook and 44.1% for television. As for car, 67.2% of respondents own it for more than five years. Basci (2016) had already pointed out that anti-consumers keep the things they purchase for a very long time and try to use them with great care to make them last. When exposed to a list with nine different products, including clothing, toys, furniture, household appliances and others, 42% of anti-consumers claimed that their overall consumption of the nine items was already low, and 28% have reduced their consumption in at least 2 to 4 different ones. New Zealand respondents engage in a variety of anti-consumption behaviours. From the seven different anti-consumption practices available on one of the research questions, 76.2% of respondents claimed to undertake five to seven different practices, such as delaying purchases as long as possible, not replacing items because just because they are out of fashion, borrowing tools instead of buying if they do not use them frequently, among other behaviours. Most respondents started to reduce consumption less than five years ago, totalizing 57.8% of them. For 25.3% of the sample, anti-consumption practices have always been part of their lives.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion and direction for future research

The outcomes from the data gathering brought a few thought-provoking results. After an extensive literature review, it is comprehensible to have assumptions and predictions, along with hypothesis, based on what was previously researched. After finishing the data collection, part of the assumptions and predictions are somewhat confirmed. Nevertheless, some of the outcomes contradict and brings interesting discoveries. One of the most surprising conclusions was to observe the high percentage of anti-consumers in New Zealand, with 49.3% of them being filtered in through the screening questions, meaning that all of them showed some level of anti-consumption motivations, attitudes or behaviours. Another intriguing result was the low percentage of anti-consumers with ages 24 and under compared to the high percentage of anti-consumers with ages 45 and over. Anti-consumption lifestyle seems to evolve with age when individuals become more conscious about their consumption patterns. The higher number of anti-consumers among well-educated respondents was somewhat expected when compared to the low number of anti-consumers among the less-educated respondents. When questioned about respondents' motivations for engaging in anti-consumption practices, the breadth of motivations was quite impressive. It shows that anti-consumers are hybrid and complex individuals and that it is not easy to cluster them using common characteristics. The fact that most of them believe they will remain anti-consumers for the rest of their lives reinforces the assumption that they are satisfied with the lifestyle they have chosen to assume. Also surprising was the strength of financial limitation as being the most important motivating factor for engaging in anti-consumption behaviours. The commitment of respondents to resist consumption is also worth mentioning. Almost 50% of them state they keep their cell phone, computer and television until it is unusable. It reinforces what other surveys had already pointed out, that anti-consumers keep the things they purchase for a very long time (Basci, 2016), but the present research results measured it quantitatively. On the other side, but also surprising, is the lack of activism of anti-consumers. Almost 60% of them cite they rarely or never try to convince others to consume less.

From all of the data analysis outcomes and the path taken by the present investigation, a few directions can be taken from other scholars. This research was able to provide a comprehensive view of anti-consumers, with measurable and tangible methodology. Despite that, it remains unclear the differences between anti-consumers motivations, attitudes and behaviours from consumerists motivations, attitudes and behaviours. What are their motivations for buying? Which is their mind-predispositions for buying? What kind of behaviours do they express? If a similar methodology was used to measure consumerists, it would give a critical way to compare individuals from different

spectrums. The present research was also not able to identify or categorise the different types of anti-consumers. Who are the light anti-consumers? Who are the radical ones? What are their characteristics? How would they classify themselves? The answers to these questions would contribute to the anti-consumption body of literature in a relevant way. Something that the present research was also not able to determine regards the levels of anti-consumption. It would be fascinating to come up with a scale that could measure the different levels of anti-consumption motivations, attitudes and behaviours. The present research aimed to contribute to the body of research on anti-consumption and broaden the knowledge of scholars in this intricate but stimulating field. Hopefully, it reached its goals.

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