

## Conceptualizing and Investigating the Undesired Self and Distastes in (Anti-) Consumption

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Negation ~ represented in this paper by the relationship between distastes and the undesired self, and articulated via negative aspects of consumption ~ is at the heart of anti-consumption. When Bourdieu's (1984:56) observation about the central role of distastes in our understanding of tastes: "*tastes (i.e. manifested preferences) are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference. It is no accident that when they have to be justified, they are asserted purely negatively, by the refusal of other tastes*" is joined with Ogilvie's (1987:380) argument that "*without a tangible, undesired self, the real self would lose its navigational cues*", then the gap in our understanding of anti-consumption within consumer behaviour research is thrown into sharp relief. The relationship between the undesired self (Ogilvie 1987) and distastes (Bourdieu 1984) promises to offer a significant contribution to our understanding of (anti-)consumption. And yet this relationship remains one of the most neglected and under-theorized areas in consumer behaviour research; although it is at the heart of understanding the basis for the rejection of many products and services (Wilk 1994, 1995, 1996) including anti-choice (Hogg 1998). In this paper we report an empirical study, and propose a refinement of our initial conceptualization (Banister and Hogg 2004) of the relationship between distastes and the undesired self. Our initial modelling of these relationships drew on Grubb and Grathwohl (1967). We incorporate into this re-conceptualization (Stephenson 2005): the consumption situation (Lee 1990:391); the threshold between avoidance and approach; and the social, individual and marketing environments and how they contribute to negotiated brand meaning (Ligas and Cotte 1999:611). In this way we attempt to model the range of relationships between rejected and accepted selves (i.e. possible selves, Cross and Markus 1991). We argue that the relationship between distastes and the undesired self (and thus anti-consumption) needs to be understood within the broader framework of consumption, most notably because the dialectic relationship between distastes and tastes (Bourdieu 1984:56) represents the essential context for (negative) symbolic consumption.

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