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Anti-consumption for Environmental Sustainability: Conceptualization, Review, and Multilevel Research Directions

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Abstract Given the potential that environmentally oriented anti-consumption (EOA) has in achieving environmental sustainability, the authors draw upon marketing, management, environmental, and psychology studies to conceptualize and delimit EOA, differentiating it from other (related but distinct) phenomena. In addition, the authors review the available literature at the individual (micro) level and summarize research on the antecedents and meanings of *broad* and specific/*strict* EOA practices with different targets. Furthermore, the authors propose an agenda for future research, which reflects on EOA not only at the individual (micro) level, but also lays out new opportunities for EOA work at organizational (meso), industry, and national (macro) levels. The work presented here hopes to spark multilevel research on EOA, its antecedents and consequences, and reactions to EOA phenomena.

Keywords Anti-consumption · Conceptualization · Environmental sustainability · Literature review · Multilevel · Research agenda

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Introduction

Since the rise of public environmental awareness in the 1960s, consumers' environmental concerns and eco-friendly behavior have become subjects of widespread interest and discussion. Academic research in marketing has greatly enhanced understanding of the traits and motivations of individuals who prefer to purchase and consume environmentally friendly products in an attempt to help preserve the environment (Black and Cherrier 2010; Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). Yet, shifting consumption to a marginally "greener" product or service may not be a sufficient path toward environmental sustainability in the face of today's significant environmental challenges, such as climate change (Howard-Grenville et al. 2014). Arguably, more effective solutions to environmental degradation in most industrialized nations lie in changing the dominant (unsustainable) lifestyles and consumption patterns (Jackson 2005; Peattie and Peattie 2009). Interestingly, there is growing evidence in the field of marketing (Black and Cherrier 2010; Cherrier et al. 2011), and recently also in management (Allen and Shonnard 2011; Flammer 2013), that—in scenarios of strongly heightened external pressures toward firms' environmental strategies—positive reactions to pro-environmental behaviors are being attenuated, whereas negative reactions to environmentally harmful behaviors are being exacerbated over time (Flammer 2013).

It is against this backdrop that environmentally oriented anti-consumption (EOA) emerges as an increasingly recognized means of inducing a transition toward more sustainable products and services, and as a possible solution to ever aggravating environmental problems (Dobscha and Ozanne 2001; Black and Cherrier 2010). Academic interest in investigating EOA can be exemplified by the publication of several special issues devoted to *sustainability* and *anti-*

consumption in leading business journals such as Journal of Business Research (2009), International Journal of Consumer Studies (2009), Journal of Consumer Behavior (2010), or Journal of Macromarketing (2010). The interest of analyzing EOA phenomena stems from the idea that the size, drivers/antecedents and meanings, and consequences of anti-consumption are different from those of consumption (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). That is, an individual who decides not to perform certain consumption actions—e.g., not to purchase an environmentally harmful product—not only may lack sufficient motivation to consume (*reasons for*), but may also hold additional and stronger motivations for not consuming (*reasons against*) (Richetin et al. 2012).

Despite its promise, EOA has not yet been fully developed as a field of research and a number of issues hinder progress. First, EOA has not been clearly conceptualized and, thus, there is still no settled idea of what EOA actually is. This is problematic because it makes difficult to develop reliable measures that adequately represent EOA. For example, the current state-of-the-art does not allow for easy identification of environmental *anti-consumers* in studies, or measurement of the degree of enacted EOA. In addition, it is difficult to elaborate compelling hypothesis about the relations between EOA and other constructs if the exact meaning of EOA is unclear. Therefore, a better conceptualization of EOA will also facilitate theoretical development.

Second, EOA stands for a wide range of behaviors that individuals can consciously undertake to reduce, avoid, or reject consumption. However, the existing literature about these behaviors is fragmented into several related concepts (e.g., green consumption, social consumption, consumer resistance, or alternative consumption). For example, boycotts have often been approached as ethical consumption (Hoffmann and Hutter 2012). The current fragmentation of knowledge adds confusion for authors and reviewers and makes dialogue between articles more difficult, which hampers theoretical progress.

Third, the vast majority of research to date is largely biased toward the analysis of individual (micro-level) antecedents of EOA practices, thus ignoring important multilevel issues. However, the broad range of potential EOA targets (i.e., products, brands, stores, product categories, companies, nations, or even overall consumption) is illustrative of the multi- and cross-level nature of EOA as regards its consequences. For example, environmental *anti-consumers* typically expect that individual (micro-level) actions cause (macro-level) improvements in the natural environment.

Consequently, the purpose of this review article is threefold: first, a primary aim is to clarify the conceptualization of EOA, and how it relates to other (related but distinct) phenomena. The second aim here is to synthesize what is known about EOA. More specifically, this article systematically reviews the main manifestations, targets, antecedents, meanings, and consequences of EOA actions. With this review, the authors seek to overcome the current fragmentation and integrate what is known (and what is not known) into a unified body of knowledge. Finally, a third aim of the review is to propose an agenda for future research, which reflects on EOA not only at the individual (micro) level, but also articulates new opportunities for EOA work at organizational (meso) and industry and national (macro) levels. In line with recent calls by Caruana and Chatzidakis (2014) for a multilevel consideration of consumer social responsibility, this study stresses the need for addressing the multilevel implications of EOA. Looking beyond the micro-level of consumers' individual decision-making is arguably the crucial step in advancing current understanding of EOA, its antecedents and meanings, consequences and reactions to EOA phenomena.

Conceptual Delimitation of Environmentally Oriented Anti-consumption (EOA)

Definition of EOA

While the development of the field offers considerable potential for environmental sustainability, a clear definition of what EOA is or what it entails has not emerged. Likewise, the conceptualization of anti-consumption in general is far from conclusive. There is agreement that anti-consumption means "against consumption," which denotes an opposition to consumption (e.g., Chatzidakis and Lee 2013; Cherrier et al. 2011; Lee et al. 2009a; Piacentini and Banister 2009). An anti-consumption attitude can manifest in a variety of forms and degrees, such as "resistance to, distaste of, or even resentment or rejection of" consumption (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013; Ozanne and Ballantine 2010; Sandıkcı and Ekici 2009; Zavestoski 2002a). Yet, anti-consumption should be understood not only as opposition to consumption in general, but also as comprising actions that are directed against more specific targets, such as products/brands, companies, or nations (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013; Iyer and Muncy 2009; Lee et al. 2009b).

Unfortunately, extant definitions are too broad and do not clarify whether the term "anti-consumption" refers to practices, attitudes, or both. Instead, the literature frequently uses the word "phenomena" to describe the scope of anti-consumption (Lee et al. 2011). Extant views of what anti-consumption comprises are too inclusive and range from acts, through discourses, to lifestyles (Kozinets et al. 2010). Since consumption is a behavior, anti-consumption as its counterpart can be best conceived as a behavior as well. Anti-consumption phenomena have recently been described as comprising acts of rejecting, reducing, and

reclaiming (Lee et al. 2011). Such anti-consumption acts—rather than attitudes or discourses—have been characterized in past work (Kozinets et al. 2010). However, practices identified as anti-consumption acts, such as reduction, avoidance, or rejection are difficult to "be seen"; thus, much focus has been paid to reasons, attitudes, intentions, and predispositions which underlie individual anti-consumption acts (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). Using these latter factors as variables of interest is particularly useful when considered as proxies for actual anti-consumption behavior. A close look at the concept and measurement of anti-consumption antecedents, such as intentions, reveals that these cover three important facets of anti-consumption behavior: an individual's affect and conation (i.e., volitional), expectation (i.e., estimated likelihood), and predisposition (i.e., emphasizing situational influences) (see Gibbons et al. 1998) toward the reduction, avoidance, and rejection of certain targets.

With regard to anti-consumers, such people can be considered as individuals performing anti-consumption acts (Iyer and Muncy 2009). Following Iyer and Muncy's classification (2009), when anti-consumption is developed at a general level, consumers can be considered as global impact consumers or voluntary simplifiers—depending on the prevalence of social versus personal reasons to act. It is tempting to state that individuals reducing, avoiding, or rejecting consumption at general levels are living anti-consumption lifestyles. However, the literature shows that anti-consumption lifestyles are not represented by practices, but by project identities, which in turn may lead to anti-consumption practices (Cherrier 2009). Consistent with this view, anti-consumption is not a lifestyle per se, but has to be associated with a life project or philosophy to be considered as such.

Two noteworthy characteristics of anti-consumption acts are worth highlighting. First, the *consciousness* of action; that is, the view of anti-consumption as intentional, volitional, mindful (i.e., non-incidental or unintended) behaviors against consumption (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013; Cromie and Ewing, 2009; Hogg et al. 2009; Kozinets et al. 2010; Lee et al. 2009b). This implies that the non-purchase of a product that is not part of the consumer's consideration set should not be regarded as anti-consumption. In a similar vein, refraining from consumption as a consequence of financial or legal constraints does not imply anti-consumption, as no voluntariness is involved in such cases, but rather, people's opportunities for consumption would be externally (objectively) restricted (Cherrier et al. 2011). Second, anti-consumption serves an important *self-expressive* function; it helps individuals to distance themselves from their undesired self and communicate the beliefs and values they actually hold (Black and Cherrier 2010; Cherrier 2009; Cherrier et al. 2011; Hogg et al.

2009). This characteristic is not unique to anti-consumption, but is rather common to most consumption manifestations (Baudrillard 1970). However, expressiveness helps establish the difference between anti-consumption and other ways of non-consumption identified in the literature, such as incidental non-consumption—as a consequence of the preference for other product—or non-consumption for ineligibility reasons—when some requirements of consumption are not met (Cherrier et al. 2011). Following the latter, not consuming a product as a consequence of non-consideration or personal constraints does not help individuals to consciously express anything about themselves.

Drawing upon the above major characteristics and conceptualizations of the general anti-consumption concept, and taking into account the specific field of interest of current work, *environmentally oriented anti-consumption (EOA)* is defined here as acts directed against any form of consumption, with the specific aim of protecting the environment. Hence, for considering a behavior as EOA, it has to be directed against consumption—such as consumption reduction, avoidance, or rejection—and needs to be driven by environmental motivations or concerns.

EOA can be easily confused with other consumer manifestations, particularly those that (as happens with EOA) are largely rooted in environmental concerns or other altruistic motivations. Past research has already identified some of those conflicting concepts and has attempted to separate them from anti-consumption in general (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013; Lee et al. 2011), but such an effort has not been made specifically for EOA. Hence, it is important to clearly delineate the boundaries of the EOA concept, articulating what it is and what it is not, in relation to potentially overlapping concepts.

EOA Scope and Overlaps

Figure 1 is an attempt to visually depict the scope of EOA and its overlaps with related concepts and phenomena. The format of this figure is based on that of Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) in that (1) it separates the consumption and anti-consumption perspectives or paths of action; (2) it represents distinct, but potentially overlapping, areas of concern which can be addressed via consumption and/or anti-consumption practices; and (3) pentagons are used to illustrate the areas of concern to show that consumption and anti-consumption are not opposites or mirror images of one another. Each pentagon can be subdivided into squares and triangles: above the curved line, squares denote areas of concern approached from an anti-consumption perspective; under the curved line, triangles represent areas of concern approached from a consumption perspective.

The area corresponding to EOA is identified with the number #1 under the anti-consumption perspective of the

Fig. 1 Scope of EOA behaviors

1. **EOA**
2. **Green consumption**
3. **Ethic, sustainable, conscious concerns**
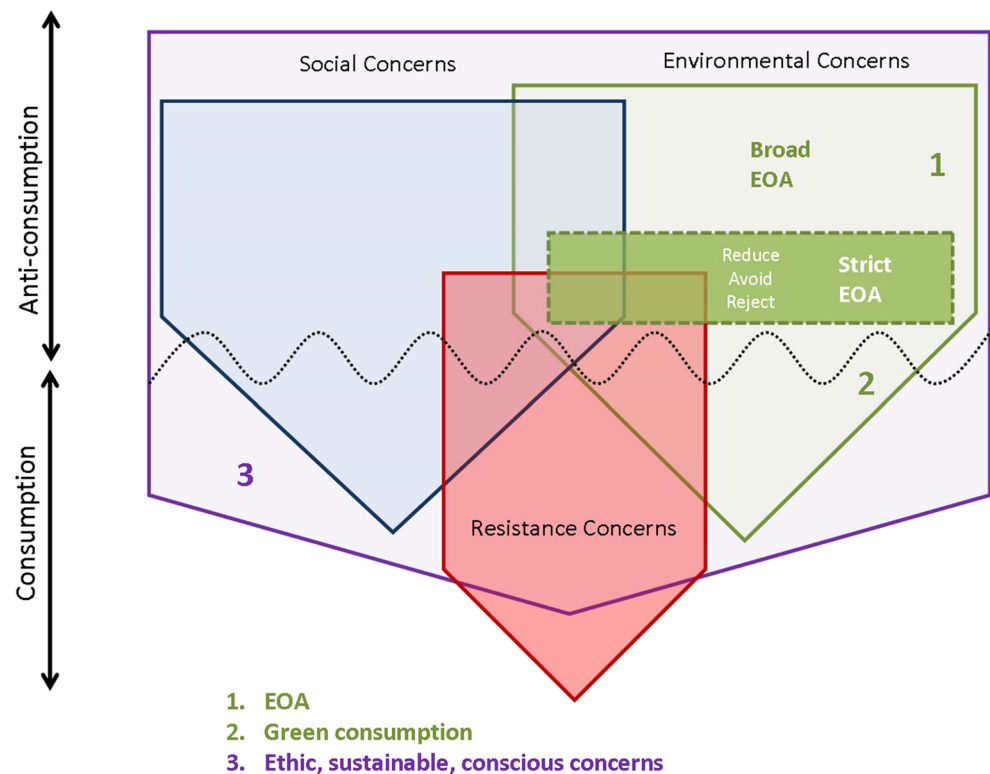
environmental area of concern. Two possible EOA approaches are represented within this area. The first is a broad, inclusive conceptualization of EOA that encompasses each type of action performed to avoid the purchase and consumption of a product perceived as environmentally harmful (Cherrier et al. 2011; Hogg et al. 2009). Car use is an illustrative example here: under the broad conceptualization, EOA not only comprises the reduction, avoidance, or rejection of car use because it harms the environment (i.e., an EOA practice), but also the acquisition of a bike as long as the primary reason for its purchase is to avoid using the car. Likewise, car sharing and obtaining a second-hand bike would fit into the broad conceptualization of EOA, insofar as such actions are performed with the explicit purpose of not using the car. Arguably, non-consumption through alternative purchase or consumption are not EOA (or anti-consumption) practices in a pure sense (i.e., purchasing/consuming is implied), but are instead means or consequences of an EOA decision. Broad EOA is based on the premise that all individuals consume—including those who engage in anti-consumption—thus emphasizing the need for broad and inclusive assessments of anti-consumption for environmental sustainability. Following with the previous car use example, an individual may have the need to consume in order to satisfy a mobility need. Reducing, avoiding, or rejecting car use does not make this mobility need disappear but, to a greater or lower extent, it will remain. Hence,

once the individual has discarded car use for environmental concerns (the EOA behavior), he or she may decide to share car or acquire a second-hand bike to satisfy the latent need of mobility.

A more strict delimitation of EOA includes only those behaviors that imply the reduction, avoidance, or rejection of consumption for environmental considerations (depicted by the green box located in the upper part of the environmental area of concern in Fig. 1). The interest of analyzing anti-consumption, in general, and EOA stems from the premise that the driving factors of strict EOA will be different from those leading to consumption. This also conveys the idea that a strict EOA practice will not have the same antecedents as any of the consumption practices which are either means or consequences of anti-consumption (i.e., broad EOA practices). For example, reducing car use—a strict EOA behavior—is not likely to have the same antecedents as using the bus, the bike, or walking, even when these actions relate to the decision to reduce car use (Noblet et al. 2014).

Figure 1 clarifies the boundaries between EOA and other concepts in the realm of individual altruistic consumption behavior. Such concepts share noteworthy characteristics with EOA, such as the consciousness of action and a self-expressive function (Carrington et al. 2010). However—drawing on the proposed definition of EOA behavior, two main features help delineate the similarities and differences of EOA and related altruistic consumer

behavior: the main area of concern motivating behavior and the anti-consumption/consumption path of action.

Regarding the potential areas of concern which may drive altruistic consumer behaviors, EOA by definition is restricted only to behaviors performed out of environmental concerns. Consumer research has frequently examined environmental considerations along with other important altruistic/ethical areas of concern. For example, Low and Davenport's study (2007) identifies three big areas of ethical concern which influence consumer behavior: human or social, animal, and environmental well-being. Such concerns are encompassed by representative terms of altruistic consumer behavior, such as ethical or conscious consumption (Papaoikonomou, 2013; Shaw and Riach, 2011). Elkington (1997) states that sustainability is rooted in social, environmental, and economic concerns. Recently, ethical and environmental concerns have been treated as separate and potentially overlapping areas (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). Regardless of the chosen classification of altruistic concerns, EOA can be easily allocated to an environmental, separate area; the same argument holds for green consumption. However, terms such as ethical, conscious, or sustainable consumer behavior refer to a broader set of concerns—i.e., not only environmental but also social ones—thus, these broader concepts are represented in Fig. 1 by a large pentagon denoted with the number #3. At times, a single action can embody different types of altruistic concerns; for example, avoiding a product manufactured by a company which exploits workers and pollutes the environment would allow acting in accordance with both social and environmental concerns. In such a case, EOA could be allocated to an overlapping area between environmental and social concerns. However, individuals tend to act out of a single area of concern and prioritize behaviors which embody their primary altruistic goal (Rindell et al. 2014). For example, consumers may avoid acquiring products from a specific company as a consequence of irregular labor practices, while not considering the company's environmental impact; this is an example of socially or ethically motivated anti-consumption (often referred to as ethical consumption), but not of EOA.

Consumer resistance is another important area of concern—represented as a separate area in Fig. 1—which may overlap with EOA (Lee et al. 2011). From the consumers' point of view, resistance to consumption entails resistance to the dominance of the market and mass consumption (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013; Cherrier et al. 2011; Peñaloza and Price 1993). Hence, for resistance to manifest an antagonist is necessary, be it a hegemonic company or the consumerist society as a whole (Cherrier et al. 2011). On the one hand, not all anti-consumption behaviors are motivated by a desire to resist the market (Hoffmann 2011; Iyer and Muncy 2009; Lee et al. 2009b) and EOA activities may not have a clear antagonist. For example, a person who reduces car use as a consequence of environmental concerns is not necessarily aiming to resist capitalism or the consumerist society. On the other hand, consumer resistance can also relate to environmental concerns when individuals perceive capitalism and mass consumerism as the cause of environmental degradation; in such a case, EOA would overlap with consumer resistance.

The second distinctive feature of EOA refers to the path of action being selected: consumption or anti-consumption. From a consumption perspective, individuals consider their purchases as votes or rewards for products manufactured by companies following responsible policies (e.g., Shaw et al. 2006; Shaw and Riach, 2011). The anti-consumption path implies reducing, avoiding, and/or rejecting consumption regarded as potentially dangerous to the environment (Bekin et al. 2007). For example, as previously mentioned, green consumption and EOA share an environmental focus, but these two concepts differ in the behavioral perspective or path toward addressing environmental problems (i.e., consumption vs. anti-consumption). Consequently, in Fig. 1, green consumption and EOA are represented in the same area of environmental concern; however, green consumption is placed under the consumption perspective and denoted with the number #2 under the curved line, whereas EOA—denoted with the number #1—is placed above the same curved line. People can combine the consumption and anti-consumption paths of action or choose only one of them. Some individuals might even decide to avoid green products a consequence of environmental concerns, which could be considered as EOA practice. This may occur when consumers perceive that ecological products are presented with excessive packaging (Shaw and Black 2010), or come from faraway places and their transport generates high levels of pollution (Shaw and Moraes 2009).

Literature focused on broader altruistic consumer behavior concepts—i.e., ethical, conscious, or sustainability concerns—has addressed the two possible paths of action (i.e., consumption and anti-consumption) without explicitly acknowledging their differences. Accordingly, the area in Fig. 1 representing such broad altruistic terms comprises both the consumption and anti-consumption perspectives. However, the number #3 is placed in the consumption area of the figure to represent that the majority of works have looked at ethical, conscious, or sustainability concerns exclusively through the consumption lens, while neglecting the anti-consumption perspective (Connolly and Prothero 2008; Chatzidakis and Lee, 2013).

The opposite is true for consumer resistance; most literature has explored consumer resistance through the anti-consumption lens, which adds to confusion to the differentiation between consumption resistance and anti-

consumption (Chatzidakis and Lee, 2013). However, consumers can manifest their resistance concerns in two different ways: opposition and support (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). Opposition often results in anti-consumption—e.g., against hegemonic brands, such as consumer rejection of Microsoft software products (see Cromie and Ewing 2009)—whereas support entails other forms of consumer behavior, such as creation of consumption cooperatives (Lee et al. 2011) or new business models—e.g., the case of Eataly, which supports the Slow Food movement against fast food (Sebastiani et al. 2013).

EOA can reveal some interesting potential overlaps beyond the micro/individual level—i.e., when considering the areas of concern and the consumption/anti-consumption perspectives. The purposes of EOA align with those of the broader macro-level concept of degrowth, which was developed as an alternative to the current capitalist paradigm (Latouche 2010). Its main objective is to improve the current social and environmental conditions through a global-scale reduction of consumption and production (Schneider et al. 2010). Likewise, EOA overlaps with the macro-level concept of sustainability which aims at achieving the "triple bottom line" of benefits—i.e., environmental, social, and economic ones. Although aligned, the scope and areas of concern of degrowth and sustainability are clearly broader than those of EOA.

In sum, it is by no means easy to delineate EOA from other related concepts, especially when a clear and unanimous delimitation of the concept is not yet available (i.e., in terms of areas of concern and/or paths of action). However, an action can be considered as fitting into the strict EOA conceptualization when it meets the following criteria: it is (1) an anti-consumption decision in a pure sense (2) driven by environmental concerns. Although other concepts can overlap with EOA, to the authors' knowledge no other concept sheds light on the environmental area of concern from an anti-consumption perspective.

Review of Studies

To ensure that all relevant articles were included in the review, two major databases (Scopus and Google Scholar) were consulted by searching for the term "anti-consumption." This search revealed 77 papers in Scopus and 2.050 results in Google Scholar, which shows substantial relevance of the anti-consumption field in the literature and supports the need for current review. These results were filtered by the relevant keywords: "environmental sustainability," "voluntary simplicity," "anti-materialism," and "consumption reduction." This allowed us to considerably narrow down the number of works. In addition, an issue by issue search was performed in especially relevant Journals

such as Journal of Marketing, European Journal of Marketing, Journal of Consumer Marketing, Marketing Science, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing Research, Psychology and Marketing, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of Macromarketing, Journal of Business Review, Journal of Business Ethics, Psychology and Marketing, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of Environmental Psychology, Journal of Economic Psychology, and Environment and Behavior. Next, the abstracts and the keywords of the papers were read in order to identify the potential link with EOA. In empirical works, attention was also paid to the dependent measures. Once a work was deemed appropriate for the review, and to ensure completeness of the literature search, the reference lists were reviewed to locate additional published material. To be eligible for review, studies had to meet the following criteria:

1. To have an EOA approach. That is, the study had to include pro-environmental behaviors which can be considered being "against consumption."
2. Studies with a focus on consumer lifestyles were included even if they had a broad approach to EOA. Yet, studies focusing on pro-environmental behavior were only included when the analyzed behavior could be regarded as a strict manifestation of EOA. For instance, studies examining behaviors that deviate from anti-consumption—e.g., recycling, activism, or green consumption items—were not considered for review. Most studies employ sets of aggregate behaviors; thus, it was necessary to look at the separate, specific behavioral items under analysis.
3. The papers had to be academic studies published in journals. Hence, book chapters, monographs, and conference papers were not included. The language of publication was restricted to English.

The search process resulted in a total of 66 relevant papers for EOA, dating from 1999 to 2015, which are detailed in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 summarizes 35 EOA studies (53 %) with a broad focus on consumption reduction and life simplification, classified by "result themes" (antecedents to EOA and EOA practices and meanings) and "method/s" (qualitative and quantitative). These "broadly focused" studies were evenly distributed between the antecedents to EOA (N = 15) and EOA practices and meanings (N = 19) result themes. The methods used are predominantly qualitative (N = 26; 74 %), particularly among studies on EOA practices and meanings. As shown in Table 1, quantitative methods (N = 9; 26 %) are mostly used to shed light on the antecedents (drivers, motivations) of broad EOA practices.

Table 2 summarizes 31 studies (48 %) with a more specific focus on outcomes that fit with the strict EOA

conceptualization, classified also by "result themes" (i.e., *antecedents to EOA + specific EOA practice*) and "method/s" (*qualitative* and *quantitative*). All the "more specific" EOA studies were classified under the *antecedents to EOA* result theme. As shown in Table 2, many of these studies (*N* = 15; 48 %) focus on energy consumption reduction, while the remaining 16 studies (52 %) cover a wider range of specific EOA practices in domestic and out-of-home settings (e.g., water consumption reduction, waste prevention, plastic bags anti-consumption, or brand and product avoidance). A predominance of quantitative methods (*N* = 29; 93 %) is observed among the "more specific" EOA studies detailed in Table 2, as a result of their focus on the antecedents to strict EOA practices.

Attention was paid to the field of study of the articles reviewed—i.e., journal subject category—to explore possible differences in the treatment of EOA among fields. The majority of studies could be classified under at least one of the following subject categories: business, which comprises management and marketing studies (*N* = 33), psychology (*N* = 13), and environmental studies (*N* = 21). Whereas in business more attention is paid to broad EOA practices (82 % of the papers) and qualitative methods (73 %), psychology and environmental studies show more interest in strict EOA manifestations (69 and 95 % of the works, respectively) and quantitative methods (85 % and 95 % of the works, respectively).

Individual (Micro-level) EOA: Antecedents and Meanings

Since anti-consumption is a relatively new field, extant literature has largely focused on disentangling its underlying motives, or reasons against consumption (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). General anti-consumption studies tend to classify environmental reasons together with other moral reasons against consumption, such as social and political ones (Iyer and Muncy 2009; Kim et al. 2013; Lee et al. 2009b). Such a general evidence shows that moral and environmental reasons can be salient and important to anti-consumption, but often less so than are different types of motives—e.g., past experiences or symbolic incongruence (Bogomolova and Millburn 2012; Kim et al. 2013; Lee et al. 2009b).

Studies with a Broad Focus on EOA

A branch of the anti-consumption literature takes a broad look at EOA that not only addresses pure acts of environmentally oriented reduction, avoidance, or rejection of consumption, but also alternative consumption and purchases that are either means or consequences of a strict EOA decision (see Fig. 1). Such a broad approach helps understand how individuals satisfy their needs under reduced-consumption conditions, and how they accommodate their actions to the constraints of current consumerist societies. The studies detailed in Table 1 focus on individuals (groups, communities) who are committed to reducing their overall consumption levels, particularly on people who minimize consumption for environmental reasons (e.g., Shaw and Newholm 2002; Shaw and Moraes 2009; Isenhour 2010; Cherrier et al. 2011).

Voluntary simplicity is one the lifestyles most closely associated with EOA practices (Shaw and Newholm 2002). The voluntary simplicity lifestyle seeks to minimize consumption levels, while maximizing positive lifestyle benefits (Black and Cherrier 2010; Huneke 2005; Zavestoski 2002b). Early studies pointed to environmental protection as a key concern of voluntary simplifiers (Leonard-Barton 1981). Yet, later research has shown that voluntary simplifiers are driven also by self-centered aims (Iyer and Muncy 2009). Different classifications of voluntary simplifiers have appeared in the published literature (Shaw and Newholm 2002); such studies show a combination of self-centered and altruistic motivations for reducing overall consumption levels (Alexander and Ussher 2012; Huneke 2005). The analysis of environmentally motivated voluntary simplifiers has much to offer to the understanding of EOA. Voluntary simplifiers can be important EOA agents, but voluntary simplicity should not be conflated with EOA. Frugality is another lifestyle associated with high levels of anti-consumption. People adopting a frugal lifestyle view consumption as "trivial, frivolous and having nothing to do with that which is virtuous" (Evans 2011). Frugality has been described as a "moral restraint on consumption" pursued for its intrinsic value (Evans 2011), but reasons range from practical necessity, to religious/spiritual virtue, to political views about an idealized way of life (Kozinets et al. 2010; Witkowski 2010). Such reasons are typically out of the environmental area of concern, thus helping to clearly differentiate frugality and EOA.

Psychographics are important and salient factors affecting broad EOA behaviors. Of particular interest are the motivations behind broad EOA manifestations. A mixture of motives underlies an individual's decision to live a more sustainable and/or simplified life (Huneke 2005). Environmental concern—along with environmental consciousness, environmental goals, and analogous factors—is indeed a primary reason for broad EOA practices such as living simply, as illustrated in Table 1 (Alexander and Ussher 2012; Craig-Lees and Hill 2002; Richetin et al. 2012). Further, altruistic motivations for broad EOA—not only environmental but also social or political ones—are also relatively salient among voluntary simplifiers (Alexander and Ussher 2012; Bekin et al. 2005). Altruistic

Table 1 EOA studies with a broad focus on consumption reduction and life simplification

Result themes	Method/s	Sample	Conclusions about EOA	Author/s (year)
Antecedents to EOA	Qualitative: Interviews	Ethical families with a child aged 3 or under ($N = 9$; 3 families, 3 per family)	Altruistic and self-centered reasons for pursuing an ethical lifestyle co-exist harmoniously. Birth of a child may trigger some EOA practices	Carey et al. (2008)
		Voluntary simplifiers ($N = 20$) and non-voluntary simplifiers ($N = 33$)	Environmentally motivated simplifiers consciously limit their consumption (in terms of volume and products purchased) in an effort to reduce their impact on the environment	Craig-Lees and Hill (2002)
		Rural voluntary simplifiers ($N = 28$)	Voluntary simplifiers engaged in a variety of anti-consumption, non-consumption, and alternative consumption practices. Concerns about environmental and social impacts of consumerist-oriented cultures are key antecedents of EOA. Importance of rural location to participants' voluntarily simplified lifestyles	Shaw and Moraes (2009)
		Ethical consumers ($N = 31$)	Ethical simplifiers reduce their consumption levels mostly out of (altruistic) environmental and other social considerations	Shaw and Newholm (2002)
	Qualitative: Interviews (+*introspection, netnography, and ethnographic work*)	Individuals who consciously aim at lowering their carbon footprint ($N = 18$)	Significant sociocultural standards/barriers (combined under the *glass floor* concept) constrain participants' EOA efforts aimed at lowering their carbon footprint emission	Cherrier et al. (2012)
	Qualitative: Interviews (+*participant observation*)	Individuals trying to reduce their environmental and social impacts ($N = 58$)	A variety of social, lifestyle, economic system/market, informational, and political barriers exist to committed citizen-consumers' EOA efforts	Isenhour (2010)
	Qualitative: Participant observation	Radical forms of voluntary simplifier groups (5 communities)	Environmental concern is an important motivation for the adoption of simplified lifestyles. Mobility is a major challenge to the attainment of radical simplifiers' environmental goals	Bekin et al. (2005)
Antecedents to EOA	Qualitative: Interviews ($N = 44$) Quantitative: Survey data: Freecycle ($N = 4400$) and Freegle ($N = 4608$) Descriptive analysis	Members of three reuse groups: Freecycle Freegle Abundance skippers	"Conserving the planet resources" is a primary reason (given by 84 % of survey respondents) for engaging in reuse activities	Foden (2012)
	Quantitative: Survey data Descriptive analysis	Voluntary simplifiers ($N = 1.615$)	Broad and strict EOA practices are representative of voluntary simplicity lifestyles. Environmental concern is the primary motivation for living simply. Simplifiers are motivated by a diversity of self-centered and altruistic issues. Suitable employment and suitable transport are the two greatest obstacles to living simply	Alexander and Ussher (2012)
		Voluntary simplifiers ($N = 113$)	Anti-consumption or anti-corporation sentiments were cited by 17 % of simplifiers. Nearly a quarter (23 %) of respondents adopted voluntary simplicity out of concern for the environment	Huneke (2005)
	Quantitative: Survey data Descriptive analysis Regression analysis	High-school students ($N = 409$) University students ($N = 104$)	Environmental goals linked to the protection of the planet (cited by approximately 60 % of participants) primarily underlie reducing resource consumption. Importance of TPB constructs as antecedents of reducing and not reducing resource consumption	Richetin et al. (2012)

Table 1 continued

Result themes	Method/s	Sample	Conclusions about EOA	Author/s (year)
	Quantitative: Survey data Regression analysis	Voluntary simplifiers and global impact consumers (N = 503)	Environmental consciousness is the strongest positive relationship with the anti-consumption identities of voluntary simplifiers and global impact consumers	Kaynak and Eksi (2011)
		Members of the "Freecycle.com" community (N = 183)	Environmental concern is a major motivation (cited by 27 % of participants) for downshifting—fairly balanced with self-oriented motivations	Nelson et al. (2007)
		Average citizens (N = 263)	Individuals with lower external locus of control (low reliance on chance or fate) tend to avoid more products as a consequence of different environmental consequences	Kalamas et al. 2006
	Quantitative: Survey data SEM analysis	Average citizen-consumers (N = 504)	The anti-consumption practices of "global impact consumers" and "market activists" are largely rooted in environmental and other social concerns. Self-consciousness and assertiveness identified as antecedents, respectively, of the global impact and voluntary simplicity lifestyles	Iyer and Muncy (2009)
EOA practices and meanings	Qualitative: Focus groups (N = 32) Interviews (N = 9) (+participant observation and document analysis)	Members of responsible consumption cooperatives (N = 41)	Ethical consumers engage in a variety of strict and broad EOA practices in striving for more sustainable lifestyles	Papaoikonomou (2013)
			EOA practices are used for construction and communication of ethical identities	Papaoikonomou et al. (2014)
			Ethical communities facilitate EOA practices by encouraging new learning as a result of the social interaction, and offer a greater sense of effectiveness and control when compared to individual actions. Ethical consumers engage in a wide range of strict and broad EOA practices	Papaoikonomou et al. (2012)
	Qualitative: Interviews	Voluntary simplifiers (N = 12)	A variety of broad and specific EOA practices that imply reduced consumption are carried out by simplifiers	Ballantine and Creery (2010)
		Women committed to living a sustainable lifestyle (N = 16)	EOA is prioritized over green consumption in pursuing a more sustainable lifestyle. Rejecting, reducing, and reusing consumption are identified as key EOA practices. EOA practices tend to be effortful and means of self-expression	Black and Cherrier (2010)
		Voluntary simplifiers (N = 6) and culture jammers (N = 5)	Environmental threats are prevalent (at global, local, and personal levels) within the anti-consumption narratives of voluntary simplicity and culture jamming	Cherrier (2009)
		Women who had changed their lifestyle to reflect their environmental awareness (N = 16)	Intentional non-consumption for environmental sustainability is understood as an act of consumer resistance against "them" (other careless consumers), as well as an act of anti-consumption motivated by the subjectivity of the consumer in ordinary practices	Cherrier et al. (2011)
		Active members of NGOs (N = 15)	Well-being of the environment is the primary reason for brand avoidance among active members of environmental organizations, but is also important for the brand avoidance of activists focused on animal and human/social well-being	Rindell et al. (2014)
		Ethical consumers (N = 10)	EOA and anti-consumption provide powerful means of consumer empowerment to influence the market system, producers and suppliers, and find ethical solutions	Shaw et al. (2006)

Table 1 continued

Result themes	Method/s	Sample	Conclusions about EOA	Author/s (year)
		Ethical consumers (N = 7)	Anti-consumption is constructed in relation to the subject position of the "ethical consumer" and their interactions with the dominant market of consumption	Shaw and Riach (2011)
		Voluntary simplifiers who are parents (N = 10)	Voluntary simplifiers engage in EOA activities and transmit these anti-consumption patterns to their own children. Social tensions emerge in embracing and raising children according to a lifestyle of simplicity	Walther and Sandlin (2013)
		Voluntary simplifiers (N = 35)	Strict and broad EOA practices are representative of the voluntary simplicity lifestyle, with consumption reduction being the most significant. The environmental discourse is recurrent as the main reason for the simple life	Zamwel et al. (2014)
EOA practices and meanings	Qualitative: Participant observation	Ethical voluntary simplifier communities (6)	Beyond recycling, a number of strict and broad EOA practices (e.g., reducing consumption and reusing products in unintended ways) play an important part in simplifiers' overall waste-reduction strategies	Bekin et al. (2007)
		New consumption communities (7)	As ethical spaces, the new consumption communities enable normative and habitual reframing which can act as a catalyst to embed EOA in everyday life	Moraes et al. (2010)
			As ethical spaces, the new consumption communities guide individual members toward broad and specific EOA practices	Moraes et al. (2012)
	Qualitative: Participant observation Interviews Autoelicitation using photographs	Ecofeminists (9)	Ecofeminists are engaged in conservation rather than environmental consumption activities. They do not consider themselves as consumers and do not follow traditional paths of consumption	Dobscha and Ozanne (2001)
	Qualitative: Written essays (51) Group discussions (7)	Upper secondary students aged 16–19 years	EOA is apparent in the "greener" consumer narrative: deep green	Autio and Heinonen (2004)
			EOA acts emerge from the so-called "anarchist" consumer narrative	Autio et al. (2009)
	Qualitative: Written essays Interviews	Attendants to a course on consumer behavior (84)	EOA acts emerge from the so-called "voluntary simple green" consumer narrative	Moisander and Pesonen (2002)
		Inhabitants of eco-communes (12)		
	Quantitative: Survey data (N = 1006) Descriptive analysis	Voluntary downshifters (N = 461) Involuntary downshifters (N = 280) Non-downshifters (N = 265)	No meaningful differences are identified in the alternative eco-friendly practices of downshifters and non-downshifters, despite the potential of downshifting for environmental sustainability	Schreurs et al. (2012)

motivations often co-exist with self-centered motivations, such as improving personal well-being, saving money, becoming part of a community, or creating a self-identity (Carey et al. 2008; Huneke 2005; Papaoikonomou et al. 2012). Another important antecedent to broad EOA practices is environmental knowledge. For EOA to manifest, basic understanding of the nature, courses of action, and

consequences of environmental problems is necessary (Isenhour 2010). Compared to the average citizen/consumer, people who engage in EOA practices tend to be more aware of the interconnectedness of consumption and environmental degradation (Bekin et al. 2005; Cherrier 2009), thus being able to link each anti-consumption act with its corresponding consequences (Dobscha and Ozanne

Table 2 Studies with a specific focus on strict EOA practices

Result themes	Method/s	Sample	Conclusions about EOA	Author/s (year)
Antecedents to EOA: *Apparel avoidance*	Qualitative: Content analysis	Blog entries from 140 participants of the "Great American Apparel Diet" ($N = 719$)	Among six motivational themes for apparel avoidance, the "environmental motivation" theme contained a moderate number of citations (10 %), compared to the "personal motivations" (44 %) and "social motivations" themes (3 %)	Wu et al. (2013)
Antecedents to EOA: *Boycott of Canadian seafood*	Quantitative: Netnography	Messages from boycott signatories ($N = 1200$)	Boycotters are driven by desire for the target to abolish its egregious behavior, anger about the behavior in question, desire for punitive actions, moral reasons, personal identification with the boycott cause, and beliefs that the boycott will impact and force the target to cease its egregious behavior. The costs of boycott participation are rarely mentioned by signatories	Braunsberger and Buckler (2011)
Antecedents to EOA: *Boycott of Iceland as a tourist destination*	Quantitative: Survey data Descriptive analysis	Whale-watching tourists ($N = 271$)	91.4 % of whale-watchers would not go (i.e., would boycott) whale-watching in a country that hunted whales, as a result of animal welfare concerns	Parsons and Rawles (2003)
Antecedents to EOA: *Brand avoidance (Victoria's Secret)*	Quantitative: Experiments ANOVA	Undergraduate and master feminine students ($N = 60$)	Eco-involvement and product involvement are important moderators of consumer response to non-for-profit campaigns targeted at companies that are deemed socially and environmentally irresponsible	Cervellon (2012)
Antecedents to EOA: *Car use reduction*	Quantitative: Survey data Regression analysis	Car owners ($N = 1832$)	Biospheric values, personal norms (positively), and habit strength (negatively) consistently affect willingness to curtail car use and willingness to adopt an environmentally friendly car. Adscription of responsibility, ownership of an alternative fuel vehicle, and demographics have varying influence on curtailment and eco-innovation adoption	Jansson et al. (2010)
		Average citizens ($N = 1.340$)	Attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm (positively), perceived control (negatively) had influence on reducing the amount of driving. Support to environmental groups and environmental concern showed no significant relationship. Demographics (age, education, and income) were not related to the behavior. Usual driving had a positive effect on reducing the amount of driving, but distance showed no impact	Noblet et al. (2014)
		Office workers ($N = 241$)	Personal norm, attitude toward the behavior, and perceived control showed a significant (positive) effect on intentions to reduce car use. On the other hand, subjective norm, awareness of consequences, and ascription of responsibility were found no significant	Abrahamse et al. (2009)
Antecedents to EOA: *Car use reduction*	Quantitative: Survey data SEM	Average consumers ($N = 341$)	Perceived ease of implementation is the only antecedent of car use reduction. On the other hand, environmental concern and attitude toward frugality had no effect on the behavior	Fujii (2006)
		Car owners ($N = 1.467$)	Personal norms are the direct antecedent of willingness to reduce the car use. In turn, perceived seriousness of the problem, perception of car as problem cause, self-transcendent, and altruistic values (positively) predicted the salience of personal norm. On the other hand, anthropocentric values had no significant relationship	Nordlund and Garvill (2003)

Table 2 continued

Result themes	Method/s	Sample	Conclusions about EOA	Author/s (year)
	Quantitative: Survey data (International Social Survey Programme) SEM	Average citizens ($N = 31.042$)	Intentions to refrain from driving were predicted by willingness to sacrifice, which in turn was predicted by environmental attitude and perceived behavioral control	Oreg and Katz-Gerro (2006)
Antecedents to EOA: *Domestic and "out-of-home" (purchasing) consumption reduction*	Quantitative: Survey data SEM analysis	Average citizens ($N = 17.000$)	Interrelated effects of environmental knowledge and ecological motivations (in both aggregated and disaggregated forms) on positive and negative environmental attitudes, which in turn influence environmentally motivated consumption reduction. Moderating influences of perceived environmental threat, gender, age, education, and country value orientation	Ortega-Egea and García-de-Frutos (2013)
Antecedents to EOA: *Electricity consumption reduction*	Quantitative: Survey data SEM	Average consumers ($N = 341$)	Attitude toward frugality and perceived ease of implementation were positively related to energy consumption reduction. On the other hand, environmental concern showed no effects	Fujii (2006)
Antecedents to EOA: *Energy consumption reduction*	Qualitative: Focus groups (7×9)	Average consumers ($N = 63$)	Cost of electricity is the primary reason for trying to save energy, followed by environmental sustainability reasons. A wide range of "material culture," "cognitive norms," and "energy practice" barriers exist to energy saving. Factors that support people in saving energy are identified at a micro-level (family, friends, and house-mates) and at a macro-level (policies, culture, society, the community)	Sweeney et al. (2013)
	Quantitative: Survey data ANOVA and MANOVA	Customers of environmentally-friendly firms ($N = 218$)	Energy-saving behaviors are strongly associated with attitudes toward environmental behaviors, but not with government policies or subsidies	Gadenne et al. (2011)
Antecedents to EOA: *Energy consumption reduction*	Quantitative: Survey data Cluster analysis	Average consumers ($N = 1265$)	Energy savers score high on environmental concern and show ecocentric/biospheric values. Home ownership, age, gender, household size, education, and political allegiance and activity are all demographics significantly related to energy-saving behavior	Barr et al. (2005)
		Average consumers ($N = 1292$)	Individuals showing the showing the most energy-saving efforts are comparatively more idealistic, aware, conscious, and concerned of energy issues and their consequences, likely to accept policy measures, believe in their ability to induce changes, and put effort into energy saving. In demographic terms, heavy energy savers are profiled as high-income, educated women	Sütterlin et al. (2011)
	Quantitative: Survey data Conjoint analysis (+ ANOVA)	Average consumers ($N = 455$)	High environmental concern, energy-saving strategy (i.e., technical improvements preferred over shifts in consumption), and domain of energy savings (i.e., home energy-saving measures more acceptable than transport energy-saving measures) associate with greater acceptability of energy-saving measures	Poortinga et al. (2003)
	Quantitative: Survey data Correlation analysis	Average consumers ($N = 540$)	Environmental motivation and environmental concern showed the highest correlations with energy curtailment behavior. Bill consciousness, home occupancy, and being non-white were also related to the behavior of interest. Gender, age, marital status, education, income, home ownership, financial motivation, social norms, and social motivation were not significantly related	Karlin et al. (2014)

Table 2 continued

Result themes	Method/s	Sample	Conclusions about EOA	Author/s (year)
	Quantitative: Survey data PLS	Office workers (N = 273)	Personal norm, moderated by organizational electricity-saving climate, positively influences employees' electricity-saving behavior. Awareness of consequences, ascription of responsibility, and organizational electricity-saving climate are important antecedents of personal norm	Zhang et al. (2013)
	Quantitative: Survey data Regression analysis	Households (N = 314)	Higher levels of perceived behavioral control (TPB variable), lower levels of adscription of responsibility (NAM variable), household size and age (socio-demographic variables) relate to energy-saving behavior, but differently for total, direct, and indirect energy savings	Abrahamse and Steg (2009)
		Households (N = 285)	Different energy reduction behaviors fitted into three different clusters. In addition, each separate reduction behavior was influenced by different predictors. Moral factors predicted 5/7 behaviors of interest, whereas environmental attitudes were not significantly related to any behavior	Botetzagias et al. (2014)
		Average consumers (N = 564)	Environmental concern, higher costs of electricity, social influences, and concrete/specific (rather than general) information are positively associated with electricity-saving activities within the household	Ek and Söderholm (2010)
Antecedents to EOA: *Energy consumption reduction*	Quantitative: Survey data Regression analysis	Average consumers (N = 4107)	Global warming consciousness, general environmental behavior, and social interaction significantly affect household energy-saving behavior, but differently for rural and urban Asian cities. Income and age related positively, but more weakly to energy-saving behaviors	Hori et al. (2013)
		Average consumers (N = 4000)	(Older) age, (non-detached) housing type, and (higher) income, are the most important socio-economic and structural factors for energy saving. The effects of environmental attitudes are contingent on housing type and income	Martinsson et al. (2011)
		Average consumers (N = 236)	Households respond significantly to financial incentives for energy saving, but less conclusively to non-financial incentives. Also, externalities and high scores on the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) associated positively with energy-saving behavior	Mizobuchi and Takeuchi (2013)
		Average consumers (N = 816)	Positive association between economic benefits, policy and social norms, knowledge, and age with broader electricity-saving behavior, and negative association of the discomfort caused by electricity-saving activities and size of housing area	Wang et al. (2011)
Antecedents to EOA: *Garbage reduction*	Quantitative: Survey data SEM	Average consumers (N = 341)	Environmental concern and perceived ease of implementation have a positive effect on garbage reduction. On the other hand, attitude toward frugality showed no effect on the behavior of interest	Fujii (2006)
Antecedents to EOA: *Gas consumption reduction*	Quantitative: Survey data SEM	Average consumers (N = 341)	Attitude toward frugality and perceived ease of implementation have a positive effect on garbage reduction. On the other hand, environmental concern showed no effect on the behavior of interest	Fujii (2006)
Antecedents to EOA: *Meat consumption reduction*	Quantitative: Survey data SEM	Participants in Eco-Team Program (N = 266)	Attitude toward the behavior and personal norm are direct (positive) antecedents of reducing meat consumption. On the other hand, neither subjective norm nor perceived control were linked to the behavior	Harland et al. (1999)
Antecedents to EOA: *Plastic bags anti-consumption*	Quantitative: Survey data Regression analysis	Average consumers (N = 1415)	Findings support the use of proscription to achieve anti-consumption behaviors. Proscription cannot be expected to engender full anti-consumption attitudes. Demographics are not useful in profiling voluntary anti-consumers	Sharp et al. (2010)

Table 2 continued

Result themes	Method/s	Sample	Conclusions about EOA	Author/s (year)
Antecedents to EOA: *Waste prevention behavior*	Quantitative: Interviews Descriptive (+ANOVA, cross tabulations and paired t-tests)	Average consumers (N = 158)	Personal norms and perceived behavioral control are the main predictors of waste prevention behavior. Attitude toward waste prevention behavior and general environmental attitudes are antecedents of personal norms and perceived behavioral control. Demographics are poor predictors of waste prevention behavior	Bortoleto et al. (2012)
Antecedents to EOA: *Water consumption reduction*	Quantitative: Survey data SEM analysis ANOVA	Average citizens (N = 3094)	Development of other pro-environmental behaviors, active involvement in search about water issues were the two main antecedents of water conservation. Other relevant factors included moral obligation, behavioral change due to water restrictions, influence of others, likelihood of relocation (positive), education level, previous use of desalinated water, and read local newspapers (negative)	Dolnicar et al. (2012)
	Quantitative: Survey data Regression analysis Decision tree	Average citizens (N = 759)	New Human Interdependence Paradigm was the only worldview directly related to water conservation. Two dimensions of the New Environmental Paradigm (balance and limits to growth) and the New Human Exception Paradigm were found no significant	Corral-Verdugo et al. (2008)
	Quantitative: Survey data SEM analysis	Average consumers (N = 637)	Personal involvement has the greatest positive association with reported water conservation behavior, followed by perceptions of the efficacy of water conservation (in personal uses and in infrastructures). Credibility of information on future risks has a moderate-to-large effect on personal involvement	Sarabia-Sánchez et al. (2014)

2001; Moisander and Pesonen 2002; Zamwel et al. 2014). In fact, individuals who engage broadly in EOA tend to believe that their EOA actions are an important source of influence on the marketplace with, at least, as much influence as voting (Zamwel et al. 2014). In addition, broad EOA agents tend to share a desire to emancipate themselves from the market, and to achieve greater control over their lives through controlling their consumption activities (Bekin et al. 2007; Carey et al. 2008; Cherrier 2009; Shaw et al. 2006). This emancipation is reflected in the practices—e.g., selection of rural living locations (Shaw et al. 2006)—and discourses that EOA practitioners use to distance themselves from other average mainstream consumers, which they consider unconscious and conformists (Dobscha and Ozanne 2001; Cherrier et al. 2011; Walther and Sandlin 2013).

A relevant research stream has investigated the barriers hindering a broad range of EOA practices. Following Isenhour's work (2010), the barriers to EOA actions can be classified into five categories: lifestyle (i.e., past routines and habits, lack of time), market conditions (i.e., availability of alternatives), lack of credible information, ascriptions of responsibility to others (e.g., governments), and social conventions. EOA in many cases implies a trade-off between environmental considerations and other values, priorities, and goals, such as avoiding social confrontation, personal well-being, saving money, among others (Carey et al. 2008;

Shaw and Riach 2011). EOA agents frequently struggle with the limit between not being "mainstream" and being marginal (Walther and Sandlin 2013). The term "glass floor" has been coined to describe the minimum amount of consumption required for social acceptance (Cherrier et al. 2012). In terms of self-expression, EOA practices must fit with the individual's desired self-concepts. Hence, if anti-consumers feel that EOA threatens their self-image, they might be reluctant to engage in such anti-consumption practices (Cherrier 2009; Cherrier et al. 2012). Another barrier to EOA can be the potential friction with family members or friends. In such cases, citizens/consumers may likely reconsider and lower their EOA goals (Cherrier et al. 2012).

Studies with a Strict Focus on EOA

Research has been also devoted to consumers' decision-making process for specific EOA behaviors (see Table 2 for a detailed list of studies). This branch of the literature represents the strict conceptualization of EOA depicted in Fig. 1, as attention is directed at identifying the most significant antecedents of reduction, avoidance, and rejection of consumption for environmental purposes. This approach to EOA has benefited from the application of socio-cognitive models and theories, most notably the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991)—see Gadenne et al. (2011)—the

norm activation model (Schwartz 1977)—see Zhang et al. (2013)—and the value-belief-norm (Stern et al. 1999)—see Jansson et al. (2010). Owing to the reliance on these theories—in a similar way to what has been found for broad EOA—psychographic factors such as environmental knowledge, awareness, attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and personal norms have been frequently tested as antecedents of specific EOA behaviors; fairly consistent findings support their positive influence for citizen/consumer development of strict EOA actions (Barr et al. 2005; Sütterlin et al. 2011). Personal norm/moral obligation stands out as a salient antecedent of many strict EOA practices (Harland et al. 1999; Nordlund and Garvill 2003; Abrahamse et al. 2009; Jansson et al. 2010; Bortoleto et al. 2012; Dolnicar et al. 2012; Zhang et al. 2013). These findings are largely in line with theory and the accumulated knowledge of pro-environmental behavior (see Bamberg and Möser 2007). The inclusion of situational constrains is also rather frequent, with evidence showing that social/informational cues and pressures toward anti-consumption tend to promote specific EOA behaviors (Dolnicar et al. 2012; Hori et al. 2013), whereas past routines tend to inhibit EOA (Jansson et al. 2010; Mizobuchi and Takeuchi 2013).

The effect of socio-demographic factors on specific EOA behaviors is much more controversial. Age appears to be the most significant socio-demographic antecedent of specific/strict EOA actions; the current evidence suggests that older persons are more likely to engage in EOA practices, especially in the field of energy consumption reduction (Hori et al. 2013; Martinsson et al. 2011; Wang et al. 2011). Household type, size, place, and occupancy may also influence EOA behaviors related to energy consumption (Martinsson et al. 2011; Wang et al. 2011; Mizobuchi and Takeuchi 2013; Karlin et al. 2014); such factors may condition the need for more (or less) energy to accomplish the same activity—for example, lighting requirements will be higher in larger houses and with more inhabitants. The evidence about gender is mixed, but suggestive of a greater role of women as EOA agents across different domains (Sarabia-Sánchez et al. 2014; Sharp et al. 2010). Surprisingly, income and education level have often been negatively related to individual EOA actions (Poortinga et al. 2003; Jansson et al. 2010; Martinsson et al. 2011; Dolnicar et al. 2012)—findings that contrast with those reported for many other forms of pro-environmental behavior. Hence, higher levels of education and income may be indicative of the preference for technological investment solutions (e.g., purchasing and installing energy-efficient bulbs), instead of strict EOA actions, as a means to address environmental problems (Jansson et al. 2010; Poortinga et al. 2003).

The Multilevel Implications of EOA: A Future Research Agenda

The previous review shows EOA as a burgeoning field of research that has predominantly focused on how and why individuals engage in (micro-level) EOA practices, with a marked emphasis on the antecedents and meanings of individual EOA behaviors. However, the study of the consequences of EOA has been mostly overlooked in previous literature. This is problematic because—although EOA holds considerable promise for fostering a more sustainable society and diminishing the environmental impact of human activities—there is still very little understanding of how this process will actually unfold. Moreover, although many individuals engaging in individual EOA practices seek to achieve substantial environmental changes in current society (at a macro-level) and corporations (at a meso-level), considerable uncertainty remains on the existence of societal or aggregated effects of EOA; thus, a significant research gap persists.

Considering the multilevel nature of the implications of EOA—mostly rooted in individual, micro-level practices aimed at motivating broader changes at meso- and macro-levels—in the following pages the authors call for multilevel theoretical and empirical approaches—which address not only the drivers/antecedents of but also the outcomes of EOA. Such research endeavors will require broadening the anti-consumption field to include scholars and methodologies from other disciplines. Figure 2 outlines future research opportunities for investigating EOA, its antecedents, and consequences at different levels; labels A to J are used to represent the various multilevel relationships being proposed.

Antecedents to EOA

Micro (individual)-Level (Path A)

As previously described, the antecedents to individual EOA practices have been widely researched. However, at the micro-level, more comprehensive and integrative models are needed that embrace the variety of antecedents—e.g., cognitive, affective, and conative—to individual EOA practices. Such integrative models can be drawn from the analysis of different specific EOA practices separately, or sets of EOA behaviors in aggregate; this latter approach would allow discovering universal antecedents of EOA practices. Each of these two options has advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, there is a wide array of EOA manifestations likely to be influenced by different antecedents, some of them context dependent.

Fig. 2 Proposed multilevel model of EOA
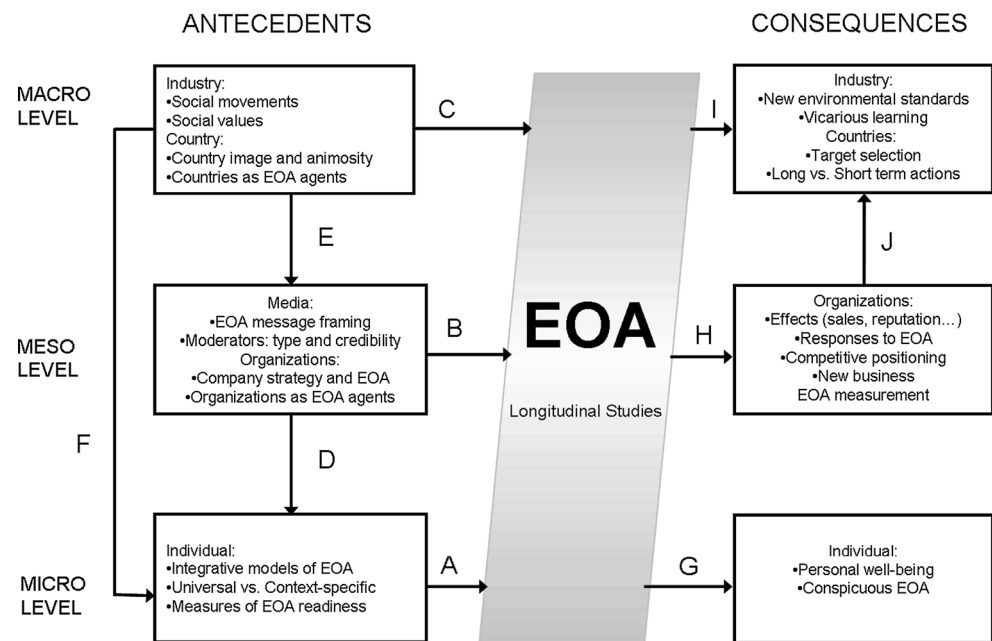
On the other hand, the identification of universal antecedents of EOA is a powerful route toward a possible EOA theory. If the latter is pursued, models applicable in a wider (e.g., international) context are called for; to date, most research in the EOA field has been carried out in single-country settings. Multi-country research will help assess the validity of antecedents and theoretical explanations of EOA across different cultural settings—for instance, by comparing Western/developed markets (e.g., Germany, the UK) and Eastern/developing ones (e.g., India, China). Analysis of the interactive effects of psychographic dimensions, moderating variables, and specific EOA behaviors—e.g., to increase understanding of the intention–behavior gap in EOA—is also called for.

As recognized in previous literature, measuring EOA phenomena is a challenging task (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013); consequently, the literature would benefit from the development and validation of new constructs such as individual readiness for EOA. There is also evidence that embracing EOA is at times preceded by a change in personal circumstances (Zavestoski 2002b); thus, longitudinal studies of EOA are needed to determine how the drivers and individual commitment to EOA behaviors evolve with time and personal circumstances. Such longitudinal EOA research would benefit greatly from panel data on the same individuals over time. Expectancy-value models, such as the theory of planned behavior, could be used to explain the evolution of individual attitudes and intentions to engage in EOA, as well as the influence of the evolving social norms through subjective norm. Perceived control can in turn account for people's perceived ability to commit to EOA practices over time. The behavioral reasoning

theory offers also great potential in assessing the evolving role of people's reasons for and against EOA. Existing theoretical frameworks coupled with novel methodological designs open room for much progress in longitudinal EOA research. The literature review calls for further qualitative research that integrates longitudinal discourse analysis, in-depth interviews, and participant observation in an effort to unearth the ultimate reasons for EOA, and to link EOA practices to their outcomes. In quantitative research, neuroimaging experiments and data hold the promise of more accurate predictions of EOA by clarifying the brain activity of people engaging in EOA behaviors. Neuroimaging methods allow evaluating the hidden neurological correlates of EOA, which are less prone to biases than the self-reported measures commonly used in survey research. In fact, wider adoption of neuroimaging methods has been advocated as a means to complement and overcome the limitations of traditional survey methods.

Meso-level Antecedents (Paths B, D)

Organizational Prevention to EOA (Path B)

Although EOA has mostly been considered an individual phenomenon, a number of novel and potentially valuable research avenues open up to organizational scholars. A first promising line of investigation concerns what firms can do to avoid or anticipate possible EOA phenomena. What are the processes through which stakeholders (e.g., NGOs, consumer groups, individuals) select companies as EOA targets? Under what conditions can anti-consumers be expected to target a particular company or product? What

influences a company's risk to "suffer" strict EOA phenomena? Research to date shows that highly visible organizations (Cervellon 2012), with positive reputations (King 2008), tend to be more frequently targeted as anti-consumption objects in general. Anti-consumers are also more likely to target firms that have previously been targets of anti-consumption acts—e.g., a boycott (King 2008). These findings may vary across the variety of issues motivating anti-consumption (e.g., environmental, social, price); hence, the existence of specific organizational criteria which can affect the selection of firms as targets of EOA (i.e., based on environmental considerations alone) should be further investigated.

A related but different approach to firms' EOA prevention is to identify which practices or resources confer companies enough legitimacy to mitigate the risk of EOA phenomena. Are companies with proactive strategic approaches to environmental problems less exposed to strict or broad EOA behaviors? Are EOA behaviors related to the actual environmental performance of companies? For example, it would be interesting to inquire into the effectiveness of symbolic corporate environmentalism (e.g., Bowen and Aragon-Correa 2014; Delmas and Cuerel Burbano 2011; Ramus and Montiel 2005) as a means of avoiding EOA. Arguably, companies engaged in symbolic environmental actions—dissociated or not from environmental performance—would obtain a legitimation that avoids possible EOA episodes. However, it could also be the case that symbolic actions are not enough, and that a more holistic firm approach to the natural environment is needed to prevent EOA.

Organizations as EOA Agents (Path B)

A challenging new frontier in research and practice is to analyze how EOA can be included not only in what corporations say, but also in what corporations do, and whether it constitutes (or not) a competitive advantage. Corporations can also be EOA agents having a more active role by addressing the environmental implications of their strategies and business models. Incorporating EOA discourses into corporate strategy implies conceptualizing the corporation not only as a mere passive actor suffering from consumers' avoidance or rejection, but as active players taking advantage of this change in the behavior of a significant amount of consumers. Following such an environmental proactive strategy may represent a challenge for companies' decision-making processes. For example, it could be expected that companies with a focus on having a pro-environmental strategy will be likely to avoid polluting suppliers. In addition, organizations can also be agents of EOA promotion, by fostering and facilitating the

incorporation of EOA practices for its consumers. For example, Patagonia Inc. incorporated EOA logic in its business model when the company launched its "Product Lifecycle Initiative." This initiative consists in Patagonia's commitment to lengthen the lifecycle of their products by facilitating repair, swapping, and re-selling services for their garments. Arguably, this initiative might diminish the amount of new products sold to each customer, but in exchange, this would bring new customers to the company or increase their willingness to pay for its products (Chouinard and Brown 1997; Casadesus-Masanell et al. 2009).

Media and EOA (Paths B, D)

Media has an important role to play in fostering or inhibiting different EOA manifestations. To date, discourses of individuals broadly engaged in EOA practices reflect their marginalization and separation from mainstream consumers or the desirable "green consumer" identity (Moisander and Pesonen 2002; Autio et al. 2009). The effect of media can be addressed from a cultural (i.e., McCracken 1986) or a discursive perspective. Cultural theory posits that objects can provide meaning to individuals, with meaning being transferred from cultural principles to objects through media and advertisement. Interesting research could be done to examine the role of media as a means for transferring cultural principles, such as caring for the environment, to reduction, avoidance, or rejection of EOA targets. Discourse analysis will help clarify which frames or ways of organizing ideas are being used in EOA campaigns. In addition, experimental designs are called to discover which message frames are more powerful in encouraging or triggering EOA behaviors across different segments of the population. For example, evidence suggests that using a success frame which focuses on the positive effects of EOA is more effective in encouraging engagement in such anti-consumption practices (Sen et al. 2001).

In addition, the impact of media coverage on the overall success of the EOA media campaign (path B) needs to be considered as well. The limited existing evidence is, at best, inconclusive on this issue. On the one hand, media coverage may raise public awareness and increase the perceived legitimacy of a specific EOA campaign among consumers, thus giving rise to "bandwagon" effects (Klein et al. 2004). On the other hand, the effect of media attention on EOA behaviors might be moderated by contextual attributes such as the type of media—i.e., television, radio, the Internet—and media credibility which may constitute an important barrier to engaging in EOA practices (Isenhour 2010).

Macro-level Antecedents

The Role of Institutions (Paths C, E, F)

Future studies approaching the macro-level antecedents of EOA should explore the contextual role of institutions in industry or country contexts (path C). It seems promising to explore whether and how the occurrence of EOA phenomena is affected by normative (e.g., environmental values in a country, industry standards), cognitive (e.g., level of education), and regulative (e.g., regulations) institutions.

In addition, there is potential to contribute to institutional theory by studying EOA as a theoretically unexplored means (i.e., mediator) through which different actors in the institutional framework (e.g., social movements, NGOs) exert pressures on corporate environmental strategies. This approach will enrich the growing body of research on environmental and social movements and their effects on firms, (the emergence of) industries, and society (e.g., Lounsbury et al. 2003; Sine and Lee 2009; York and Lenox 2013). This literature frequently draws on institutional theory to suggest that social movement organizations influence—through construction and propagation of cognitive frameworks, norms, values, and regulatory structures—the environmental practices of firms, the creation of new ventures, and the emergence of new sectors (e.g., Sine and Lee 2009). Scholars adopting a similar research approach can gainfully use EOA to shed additional light on social movement processes and their effects. Social movements may utilize EOA to exacerbate pressures on environmentally non-complying firms and industries and, as a consequence, green entrepreneurs and sectors may be favored. In other words, EOA arguably mediates the interplay between some institutional actors (e.g., social movements) and the environmental behaviors of firms and industries.

Finally, normative and cognitive institutions may also affect individual antecedents of EOA (path F). EOA poses an interesting and unexplored research opportunity of bridging institutional theory with psychology (e.g., theory of planned behavior). For example, it seems plausible that the normative and cognitive institutional framework affect individual subjective norms and behaviors driving individual decisions (Ajzen 1991).

Countries as Targets and Agents of EOA (Path C)

The country-of-origin literature provides some insights about the rationales behind country-based anti-consumption. There are three different mechanisms described as being responsible for country-of-origin effects on consumers' decision-making and, hence, anti-consumption: cognitive (e.g., country images), affective (e.g., consumer animosity toward foreign countries), and normative ones (e.g., consumer ethnocentrism) (see, e.g., Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999). Future work should clarify whether and how EOA derives from each of these country-of-origin mechanisms. Country image factors reflecting social, environmental, and political-economic country views can be considered potential factors indirectly influencing consumers' reluctance to buy foreign products—that is, through foreign product evaluations and consumer animosity (García-de-Frutos and Ortega-Egea 2015). Hence, people's beliefs regarding the level of environmental protection and the importance of environmental issues in a specific country may lead to the negative evaluation of products from that country. In a similar vein, anti-ethical political attitudes—comprising environmental and social policies—have been recognized as triggers of consumer (or country) animosity (Hoffmann et al. 2011). Consumer animosity—an affective phenomenon referring to consumers' negative feelings toward a specific foreign country—is considered an important antecedent of consumer anti-consumption of products from the target country of animosity (Nijssen and Douglas 2004). Unlike consumer boycotts, consumer animosity is a rather stable phenomenon (Ettenson and Klein 2005). There is much room for future research that extends current understanding of the macro-level (country) antecedents to EOA, by directing particular attention to environmental country factors. In addition, research has demonstrated that national culture directly influences boycotting behavior (Hoffmann 2014). Albeit Hoffmann's (2014) study does not make the difference among boycott motivations—i.e., environmental, social, price—it is reasonable to expect that national culture may contribute to explain EOA development across countries.

Countries may directly act as environmental anti-consumers (i.e., EOA agents) as well. Unmet technical requirements and health concerns have been argued in the past by countries as reasons for rejecting foreign products. Hence, it would be interesting to assess the extent to which environmental reasons can be suggested by nations against certain foreign brands, products, or nations. Countries may also play an important role as EOA promoters with the design and development of campaigns in favor of consumption reduction and/or forcing EOA by the implementation of laws against the use or acquisition of certain goods (i.e., Sharp et al. 2010).

Consequences of EOA

Micro-level EOA Consequences (Path G)

As for its consequences on individuals, EOA arguably can improve personal well-being, as individuals engaged in

EOA practices commonly act in accordance with their principles (Szmigin et al. 2009). Although a simplified life for its own sake is enough for some people to achieve higher levels of happiness (Alexander and Ussher 2012), it would be interesting to determine whether this holds true when EOA has a more specific target, such as changing the environmentally harmful practice of a company. It is clear from extant research that, for some individuals, EOA serves an important symbolic role in self-creation (Cherrier 2009); such individuals may engage in conspicuous EOA practices—i.e., activism, WOM, etc. (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). However, how and which conspicuous anti-consumption practices may be relevant for anti-consumption in general, and more specifically for EOA, is still a much unexplored area.

Meso-level Consequences

EOA Effects on Organizations (Path H)

Perhaps, the biggest gap in current literature on EOA is to address its effect on firms. There is a paucity of papers empirically addressing whether and how EOA has any consequence for organizations. It is very likely that, if a sufficient number of consumers avoid or reject the brands/products of a company perceived as environmentally egregious, sales and reputation will be damaged. However, a major difficulty confronted by anti-consumption research—and thus by EOA studies—lies in measuring anti-consumption (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). Developing and validating reliable measures of EOA is currently one of the most urgent challenges for the field and remains a necessary step to establishing conversations in the literature.

The effect of EOA on companies will probably be affected by contextual factors. A second step in this research line would consist in identifying contingencies affecting the effect of EOA phenomena and measuring how these contingencies moderate the effect of EOA. Extant research in similar fields—CSR or boycotts for a cause—yields interesting evidence which could be tested in an EOA context. For example, Caruana and Chatzidakis (2014) suggest that organizations will be more willing to change their practices when consumers' demands fit the company's culture, interests, and aspirations, whereas King (2008) argues that media attention increases the likelihood of organizational compliance to anti-consumers' demands. An EOA campaign receiving media coverage will be noticed earlier by the targeted firm, which will more probably adopt early-time responses to limit the consequences of the campaign. In addition, Yuksel and Mryteza (2009) identify strategies that companies can implement to mitigate anti-consumption campaigns such as providing positive information about the company or displaying negative information about main competitors. However, there is room to confirm findings from extant research in the EOA field and compare other potential strategies and solutions. To sum up, little is known about the extent to which EOA affect companies, whether or not the resultant damages vary depending on company strategy, and when and how organizations respond to EOA.

EOA Effects on Competitive Positioning (Paths H, J)

As previously mentioned, social movements can have a crucial role on new sectors emergence (Sine and Lee 2009). Besides that, the relationship between the social movement and the supply side may go a step further and new business models can surface from the cooperation between both parts. Sebastiani et al. (2013) offer an example of such cooperation in their work about Eataly, which was created in collaboration with the Slow Food movement and—in opposition to fast food chains—integrates their claims into the business model. It can be expected that, in a similar fashion, EOA movements can join forces with entrepreneurs.

EOA may also entail significant implications for strategy formulation and competitive positioning literature (e.g., Hooley et al. 1998; McNamara et al. 2003). Studying the effects of EOA not only on the directly targeted companies, but also on their competitors and other institutional players, would be of substantial interest. As previously explained, companies perceiving EOA in competitors might decide altering their environmental strategy and emphasize the environmental features of their products. This approach would benefit from longitudinal studies addressing dynamic effects and changes in the relative competitive formulation of industry rivals over time.

This can be illustrated by looking at the role of EOA in the competitive repositioning of BP after the massive 2010 offshore oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. A part of BP's regular customer base shifted their consumption away from the company—reportedly, the sales and stock value of BP dropped drastically after the accident—resulting in important consequences for BP, its competitors, and related industries. Arguably, some customers switched to BP's competitors in their subsequent oil purchases. Some of BP's competitors might have a positive environmental reputation, while the environmental reputation of other competitors (e.g., Shell) might only be "neutral"; hence, some BP's competitors were favored by the oil spill accident and acquired a competitive advantage (over BP), at least in the short term. Instead, other BP customers may have reacted to the oil spill by minimizing their overall oil consumption—e.g., by favoring alternative, energy-efficient transport technologies such as electric or hybrid cars in later purchasing decisions. Thus, environmental players

in related industries (e.g., Toyota or Tesla) might enjoy additional advantages, paradoxically resulting in competitive disadvantages for BP's direct competitors (e.g., Shell) in the long term.

Macro-level Consequences

EOA Effects on the Institutional Framework (Path I)

In addition to being affected by the institutional framework (path C), it remains to be studied whether and how EOA exerts normative and cognitive pressures toward conforming to environmental standards (path I). EOA could be approached as a part of the institutional framework in which companies seek legitimacy. Institutional theory suggests that the decisions of firms and individuals are shaped by an "iron cage" composed by regulative, normative, and cognitive frameworks (e.g., DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Suchman 1995). When environmental responsiveness is legitimized as a norm, environmentally damaging organizational behaviors have a negative effect on perceptions of the firm (Flammer 2013). Anti-consumerism may constitute a significant part of the normative framework of environmental issues in that such phenomena create strong pressures for companies to go green.

Moreover, EOA may also affect cognitive perceptions about environmental responsiveness, for example via vicarious learning. Constituents observing EOA episodes in a field–e.g., a boycott organized by activist organizations as a consequence of a firm's environmental misconduct—may perceive as cognitively plausible that environmental responsiveness constitutes a "best practice" that avoids EOA and eases access to markets (e.g., Jaffee and Newman 2013). Once this cognitive script or paradigm is established, it can disseminate through social networks, media, professional associations, and business schools. NGOs and consumers tend to strategically target representative and visible companies as a means to obtain a broader change in industry policies. Once the desired change occurs in the targeted company, it serves as the example to follow by other companies in the industry. Subsequently, a new target company is selected and the cycle starts again. Greenpeace's Detox campaign is illustrative of such an EOA strategy. The objective of this campaign was to reduce water pollution with toxic chemicals stemming from the global textiles industry by targeting and securing commitment from major clothing brands. First, Nike and Adidas were targeted and committed to eliminate discharges of all hazardous chemicals across their entire supply chains; then, companies like H&M became targets of the Detox boycotting. In view of the campaign that Greenpeace was developing against its competitors, Puma voluntarily committed to comply with the NGO requirements—which

can be considered a consequence of vicarious learning—and that saved the company from being further targeted. Moreover, this company was set as an example for the rest of the industry.

EOA Effects on Nations (Path I)

At a national level, literature about the effects of EOA practices is scant to date and calls for further attention. However, extant research points to a variety of negative consequences for the countries targeted by individuals engaged in EOA practices. As previously mentioned, public visibility of environmentally—and socially—"irresponsible" environmental policies put forward by governments may drive consumer boycott of foreign products (Lee et al. 2009b). In case of EOA, consumers may choose to avoid all products from the offending country—as happened in the Australian boycott of French products as a consequence of nuclear testing on the Pacific Ocean (Ettenson and Klein 2005)—or target their EOA on a single product category, which usually is the most representative one from the targeted country. The American boycott of Canadian seafood linked to the killing of seals in Canada exemplifies this kind of EOA (Braunsberger and Buckler 2011). In addition to the previous macro-level EOA practices, consumers may not only avoid or be reluctant to buy products from a specific nation, but may also refrain from visiting a country with environmentally harming policies— for example, refusing to visit Iceland as a consequence of whale killing (Parsons and Rawles 2003). Yet, it is not clear how individuals select the range of products to be targeted during an EOA campaign against a country. On the other hand, an irresponsible or inadequate environmental policy may imply not only direct and transitory EOA effects, but more stable and indirect outcomes may emerge as well, such as those anchored in consumers' animosity toward foreign countries (García-de-Frutos and Ortega-Egea 2015). Future studies should address also the evolution of EOA over time and account for the effect of different changing circumstances.

Discussion: Can EOA Have a Real Impact on the Environment?

Some research has been devoted to the analysis of potential anti-consumption as a means to develop a more sustainable society (Black 2010). The rationale underlying this assumption lies in the view that, through small individual actions, a change in society is possible. More specifically, it is possible to claim that EOA is anchored in macro-, meso-, and micro-level factors that, through its effects on products/brands and companies, is likely to exert influence

and bring about change in broader macro-systems (e.g., countries, society, and the environment). Importantly, EOA shifts the focus from individual to societal well-being, by pressuring business and governments toward more environmentally sustainable practices and policies. On the one side, EOA practices are likely to bring desirable societal effects such as greater personal well-being of individuals practicing it (micro-level), benefits for companies which comply with EOA requirements and/or competitors of the targeted company (meso-level), and improved environmental industry standards (macro-level), which will possibly translate into the improved environmental conditions of society (macro-levels). On the other negative side, EOA practices would harm the producers and sellers of targeted products—plus the associated employment—(meso-level) and, more indirectly, could undermine the country's economy (macro-level). However, in the long run, the desirable effects of EOA can be expected to offset some of its undesirable impacts.

However, these assumptions have been challenged by some authors who state they over-emphasize the power of individuals as effective agents of change for several reasons (Shaw and Black 2010). First, current consumption patterns are largely based on social norms and conventions—the "glass floor" (Cherrier et al. 2012). Second, it cannot be assumed that market conditions contain sufficient alternatives for consumers to choose (Shaw and Black 2010). There are works addressing the question of whether consumers should leave the market (Kozinets 2002; Arnould 2007). Following Baudrillard's logic, consumers are not able to achieve substantial social changes since they have no chance to escape from the market; all actions are subordinated to the logic of signs of consumption (Arnould 2007). Consumption of a good is not performed for obtaining its objective benefits, but for achieving the sign meaning associated to that good. Thus, without consumption, individuals are not able to transfer meaning. From this point of view, anti-consumption could be considered as a "no-sign system" and hence provide no means of individual signification. However, some authors have proposed that anti-consumption could be best viewed as representing a different system of sign value and a way to transfer meaning as well (Lee et al. 2011). It is said that the existence of a market constrains expression possibilities (Shaw and Black 2010). Yet, the practice of anti-consumption may broaden the range of possibilities for individual expression (Dobscha and Ozanne 2001; Kozinets 2002); then, both consumption and anti-consumption would complement each other in profiling the individual's self-identity. Finally, the efficiency of EOA practices targeted against different actors is also questioned as a consequence of the heterogeneous claims manifested by different groups of individuals (Shaw and Black 2010). Due to the complexity of environmental problems, and the possible

confrontation with other areas of concern—i.e., social—people may be forced to give priority to some issues over others (Rindell et al. 2014). For example, individuals may be more likely to engage in EOA behaviors as a consequence of local environmental issues, than of wider-scale environmental problems suffered primarily in faraway places (Eckhardt et al. 2010). The coexistence of groups of individuals aimed at changing different policies—i.e., environmental versus social—may send contradictory messages to companies.

Conclusion

The present work highlights the importance of EOA as a distinct perspective and worthy field of investigation that first, pertains to a particular set of reasons against consumption, and second, can be approached at differing levels of aggregation—both in scope and targets of anti-consumption practices (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). This article seeks to clarify the conceptualization of EOA, and how it relates to other (related but distinct) phenomena, facilitating empirical and theoretical progress of the field. In addition, a review of the available literature on EOA is provided, overcoming previous fragmentation of studies into different (but similar) concepts, and synthesizing what is known from dispersed research into an integrated and unified field. Finally, considerable gaps remain to the authors' knowledge regarding the effectiveness of EOA as a source of significant influence on the behavior of corporations, institutions, and societies, and how such an effect can be maximized. To address this gap, a research agenda is outlined that helps the EOA field move forward and emphasizes the need to broaden current research streams with additional meso- and macro-level approaches.

The EOA literature is relevant because it provides knowledge about how the addition of many small steps and decisions can make a difference toward environmental sustainability. Oftentimes, it has been implicitly assumed that customers' possible reactions to firms' environmental reputation are restricted to paying or not a premium price for green products. EOA studies show that consumers have a much wider variety of options that strongly affect companies' economic profit. In this sense, EOA gives power to the individuals who are willing to express their environmental concerns in a way corporations will listen. However, considerable challenges remain as to the understanding of EOA processes, and whether and how these can actually ameliorate significant environmental problems. With this review, the authors hope to have contributed to overcome some of the current obstacles, identify next steps forward, and reinvigorate scholarly research on EOA.

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