TCR 2027 TRACK PROPOSAL: OPTION-TRACK 1

Enough is Enough! Reclaiming Sufficiency and Limits in Consumer Culture

Short Track Description:

More stuff, better life. Consumer culture's oldest promise is colliding ever harder with a planet in overshoot. This track asks the question markets rarely pose: What if the good life begins not with more, but with enough? We invite scholars and practitioners to reclaim sufficiency and limits as cultural foundations of flourishing and consumer well-being rather than as deprivation or deviance. How can markets and provisioning systems make living well with enough desirable and fair, across the Global North and Global South? Join us to reimagine the good life within limits.

Extended Track Description:

Track theme: Consumer research largely rests on an expansionary premise in which ever more choice and acquisition define consumer welfare. Sufficiency and limits remain undertheorized, framed either as deprivation and deviance (Cherrier, 2009; Gorge et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2009) or as thresholds to be measured in ecological economics and macromarketing (Gossen et al., 2019; Hernández & Chávez-Bustamante, 2024; Spengler, 2016). As ecological overshoot deepens, we relocate this problem into TCR (Mick et al., 2012), reframing sufficiency and limits as a generative organizing principle for consumer well-being and a culturally instituted condition of flourishing. Three moves develop this account:

1. **From sufficiency as deprivation to sufficiency as flourishing:** Sufficiency has mostly been framed as absolute reduction and avoidance of excess (Rudolf & Schmidt, 2025). We invert this valence, understanding flourishing as a development of capabilities and relationships. Drawing on Max-Neef's (1991) distinction between needs and satisfiers and on alternative hedonism (Soper, 2020), we theorize sufficiency as a positive account of the good life: needs are finite while satisfiers vary in material intensity, opening space for consuming less while living better. Sufficiency practices such as repair and swapping are sustained by competences, shared spaces, and meanings ranging from environmental concern to conviviality and pleasure (Kropfeld, 2023).

2. **Just limits as enablers:** Building on Kallis's (2019) distinction between autonomous self-limitation and imposed scarcity, and on consumption corridors bounded by social floors and ecological ceilings (Fuchs et al., 2021), we theorize a culture of limits in which limits are collectively chosen. Recent operationalizations of enoughness within fair social and ecological limits (Koskimäki et al., 2026; Spengler, 2016) make the ceiling specifiable. We explore the cultural and political conditions under which a ceiling becomes livable, even desirable, and self-limitation is experienced as collective freedom while the floor protects the deprived.

3. **Sufficiency as counter-logic:** We examine how marketing systems and provisioning infrastructures reproduce the growth imperative, and how sufficiency might operate as a counter-logic that resists offloading responsibility onto individual consumers (Giesler & Veresiu, 2014; Princen, 2005). Unlike efficiency and consistency strategies, sufficiency addresses absolute consumption volumes (Rudolf & Schmidt, 2025), and is produced structurally and relationally (Hernández & Chávez-Bustamante, 2024). This confronts the dominant social paradigm of marketing (Kilbourne et al., 1997) and the

ideology of consumer sovereignty that renders limits illegitimate (Schwarzkopf, 2011), and asks what marketing for sufficient consumption would entail (Gossen et al., 2019).

Positioning within TCR: Recent TCR agendas on climate equity, just transition, and subsistence marketplaces presuppose the question our track addresses: a fair share of consumption cannot be specified without a cultural account of how much is enough. A recent review identifies sufficiency-oriented policy and the culture of limits as key research areas for degrowth in marketing (Lloveras & Pansera, 2025). Treating the limit as a culturally instituted condition that markets can render desirable, we shift analytical weight from individual consumer virtue to the conditions that make sufficiency livable and just.

Guiding questions: How do consumers negotiate enough across consumption domains, and which satisfiers meet needs at low resource throughput? What pleasures, competences, and relationships make a life with less feel abundant? Whose needs count when enough is defined? Through which discourses and practices does a culture of limits become desirable, and how do marketing systems render limits illegitimate? Which business models and provisioning infrastructures remain viable under a sufficiency logic? How are ceilings instituted through consumption caps, advertising restrictions, and other regulatory moves, and when do these cultivate self-limitation instead of felt scarcity? Who sets limits, through which procedures, and who bears their costs? How can floors and ceilings be specified without regressive distributional effects across the Global North and South?

Track Goal: We aim to theorize sufficiency and limits as culturally instituted conditions of flourishing and to build a shared research agenda that informs marketing practice and sufficiency-oriented policy. Through dialogue between scholars and practitioners, we seek to orient TCR toward the collective arrangements that make living with enough desirable and fair.

Track format and participants: Following the open call, we will convene 5 to 7 participants, including the co-chairs: consumer, macromarketing, and sustainability researchers alongside non-academic contributors from sufficiency-oriented communities, organizations, and policy bodies. We will also reserve space for one advanced doctoral candidate and actively seek Global South participation. We will circulate readings in advance and work toward a shared agenda. Applicants should submit a statement of research interest and vision on the topic, outlining their expertise, theoretical and methodological lenses, relevant work, and future research plans.

Post-conference plans: The track will first develop a conceptual paper for the secured TCR special issue in the Journal of the Association for Consumer Research, followed by an agenda-setting article for Marketing Theory. We will also establish a durable network within TCR, seeding empirical projects and sustained policy and practitioner engagement.

Track Chair Biographies:



Handan Vicdan is an Associate Professor of Marketing at Emlyon Business School. Her research focuses on the ideological, technological, and sociocultural issues surrounding consumption, with particular interest in degrowth/postgrowth consumer/business culture, sustainable living, and alternative forms of consumption and production. She engages in critical research that puts consumer well-being and sustainability at the heart of marketing practices. Her research has been published in Marketing Theory, Journal of Macromarketing, Journal of Business Research, M@n@gement, Consumption, Markets & Culture, Journal of Marketing Management, and Journal of Consumer Culture, and in books such as The Routledge Handbook of Digital Consumption and Digital Virtual Consumption.



Meltem Türe is an Assistant Professor of Marketing and vice dean of School of Economics and Administrative Sciences at TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Türkiye. She worked at Skema Business School in France and Royal Holloway, University of London in the UK. Dr. Türe uses qualitative research methods to conduct research on waste and sustainability, value, ethics and ideology in consumption. Her work has been published in journals such as Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Business Research, Marketing Theory, Journal of Public Policy and Marketing, and Consumption Markets & Culture. Dr. Türe also published chapters in edited books.



Hélène Cherrier is Full Professor of Marketing at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada. Her research examines interconnections between market systems, materiality, and identity, focusing on sustainability, anti-consumption, consumer responsibilization, waste, and social exclusion. Using critical and qualitative approaches, she studies how consumers engage with disposal, repair, reuse, and alternative consumption, and how marginalized groups navigate market systems. Her work appears in *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, and *Journal of Marketing Management*. An award-winning Consumer Culture Theory scholar, she has held appointments across North America, Europe, Australia, and the Middle East.

Track Point of Contact: Handan Vicdan will serve as the track's point of contact. She can be reached at vicdan@em-lyon.com for any questions and submission of your interest for this track.