

Stimulating energy sufficiency: barriers and opportunities



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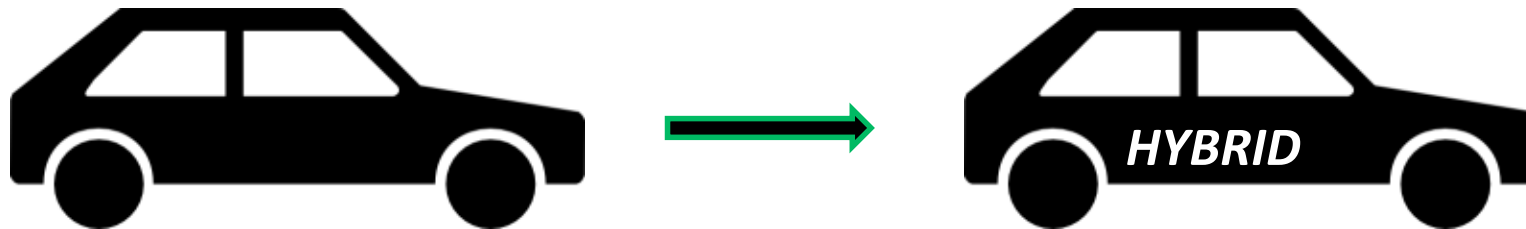


Luc Semal

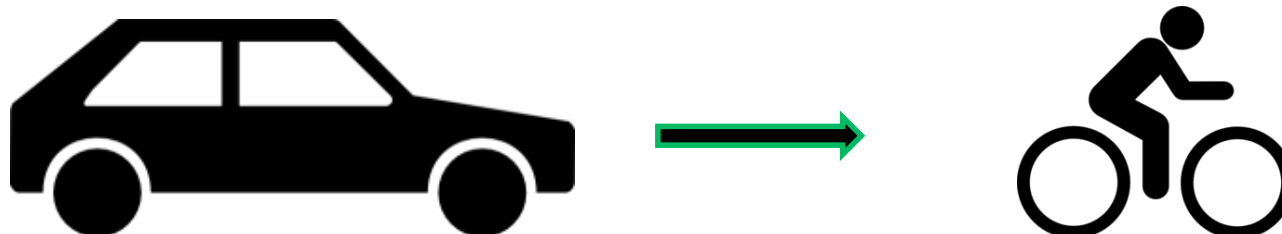


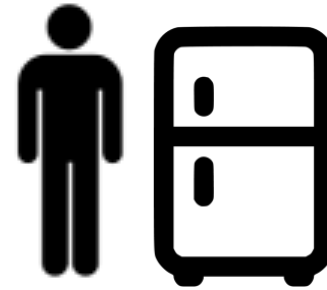
*... favouring behaviours and activities that are **intrinsically low on energy use**, at individual and collective level*

Efficiency



Sufficiency





Sufficiency



VEGAN





We're many to care about the planet, but not so many to consider sufficiency...

- General attitudes towards energy use (invisible, affordable, routinized)
- The '*dominant social paradigm*'
- Role models often do not help

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Kim Kardashian flying private.

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We're many to care about the planet, but not so many to consider sufficiency...

- General attitudes towards energy use (invisible, affordable, routinized)
- The '*dominant social paradigm*'
- Role models often do not help
- Self-limiting can be seen as *regressive*, *stigmatising* or *compromising* on a certain idea of comfort

What can we say about *sufficiency doers*?

Article

What Do We Really Need? Questioning Consumption Through Sufficiency

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Journal of Macromarketing
2015, Vol. 35(1) 11-22
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sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0276146714553935
jmk.sagepub.com



Abstract

This article introduces the concept of sufficiency, its specific dual nature (voluntary and obligatory), and its collective implications to the literature on sustainability. Sufficiency implies a reorganization of consumption priorities and is introduced by a discussion of consumerism and the dominant social paradigm. Long interviews with sufficient people show the complexity of the construct, which creates semantic oppositions around the notion of *having* (everything vs. nothing and not nothing vs. not everything). After a semiotic analysis of people's interpretation of sufficiency, we propose a reflection about the use of macromarketing tools to better enhance and enact sufficiency in a collective way.

Keywords

sufficiency, sustainability, dominant social paradigm, frugality, downshifting, needs, macromarketing

Introduction

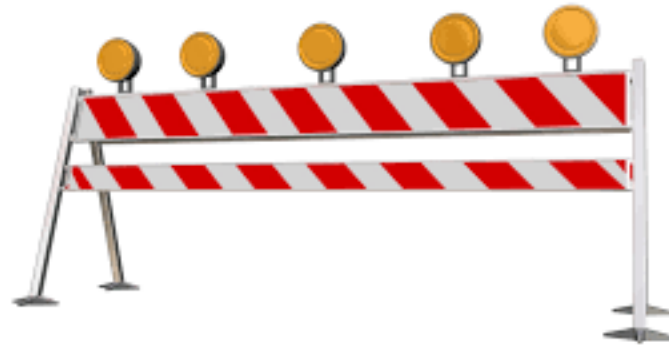
Our economic model in recent years has come to be challenged by the globalization of consumerist lifestyles and their increasing pressure on natural resources. In response, several studies have focused on improving consumption by reducing its negative consequences, such as through reuse, repair, or recycling initiatives (Dobscha, Prothero, and McDonagh 2012; Moisander and Pesonen 2002; Shaw and Newholm 2002). A more radical view recommends consumption limitations, and calls for coercive

optimal well-being, refraining from both under-consumption and overconsumption.

"It is the sense that, as one does more and more of an activity, there can be enough and then there can be too much. I eat because I'm hungry, but at some point I'm satiated. If I keep eating, I become bloated. I go for a walk because it feels good - because I enjoy the movement, the fresh air, and the scenery, but if my physical exertion begins to override my pleasure, I've had enough. If I keep walking to the point where all my attention is on my aching feet

What can we say about *sufficiency doers*?

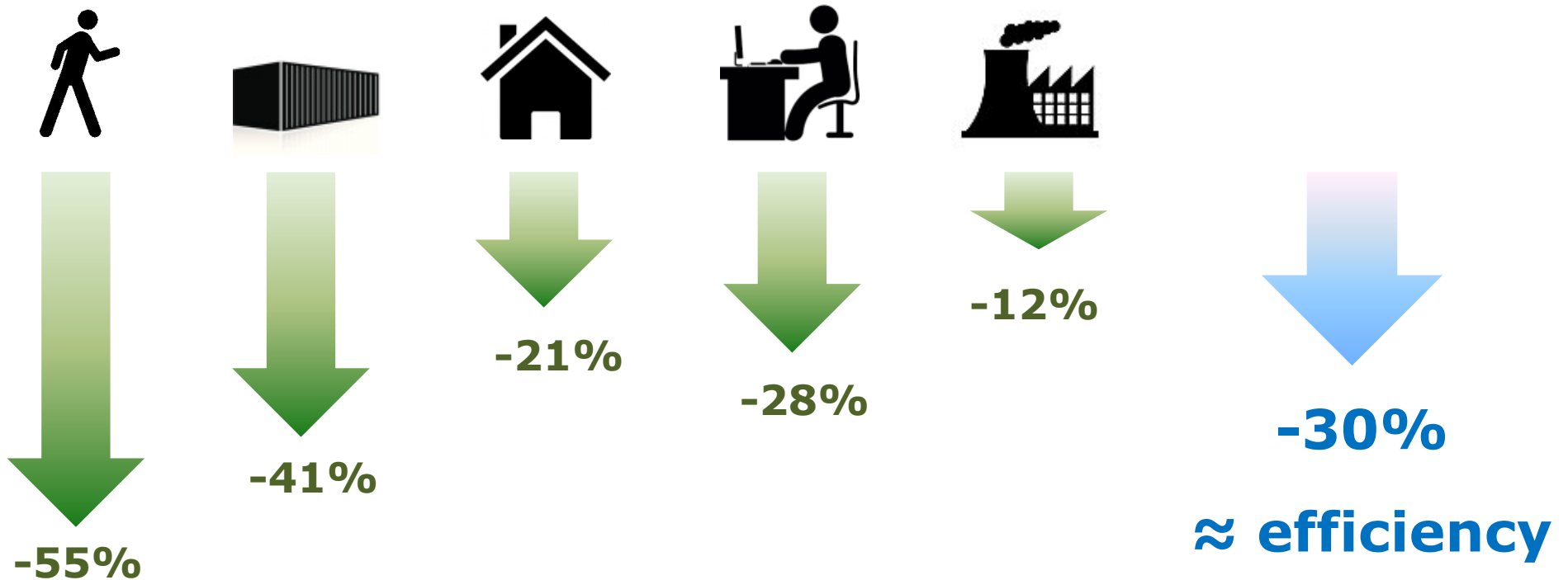
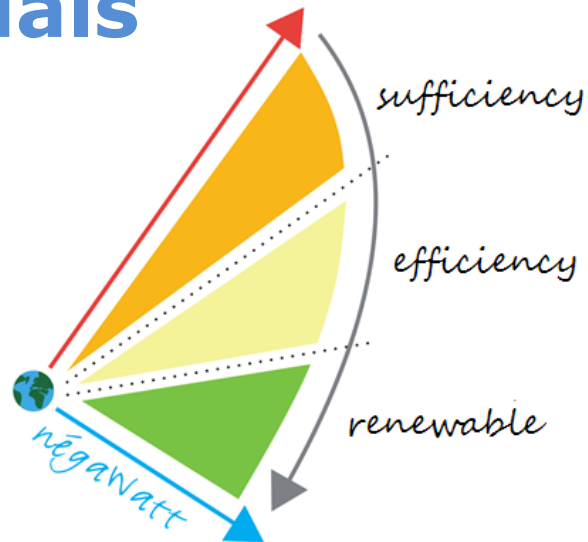
- Roots in a feeling of 'too-muchness'
- Relates to a life ideal, but not confused with frugality
- Not all radicals, and not instant systematic
- Non-linear (from 'better consumption' to reassessing needs)
- Sensitivity to the perception by others



Barriers to sufficiency

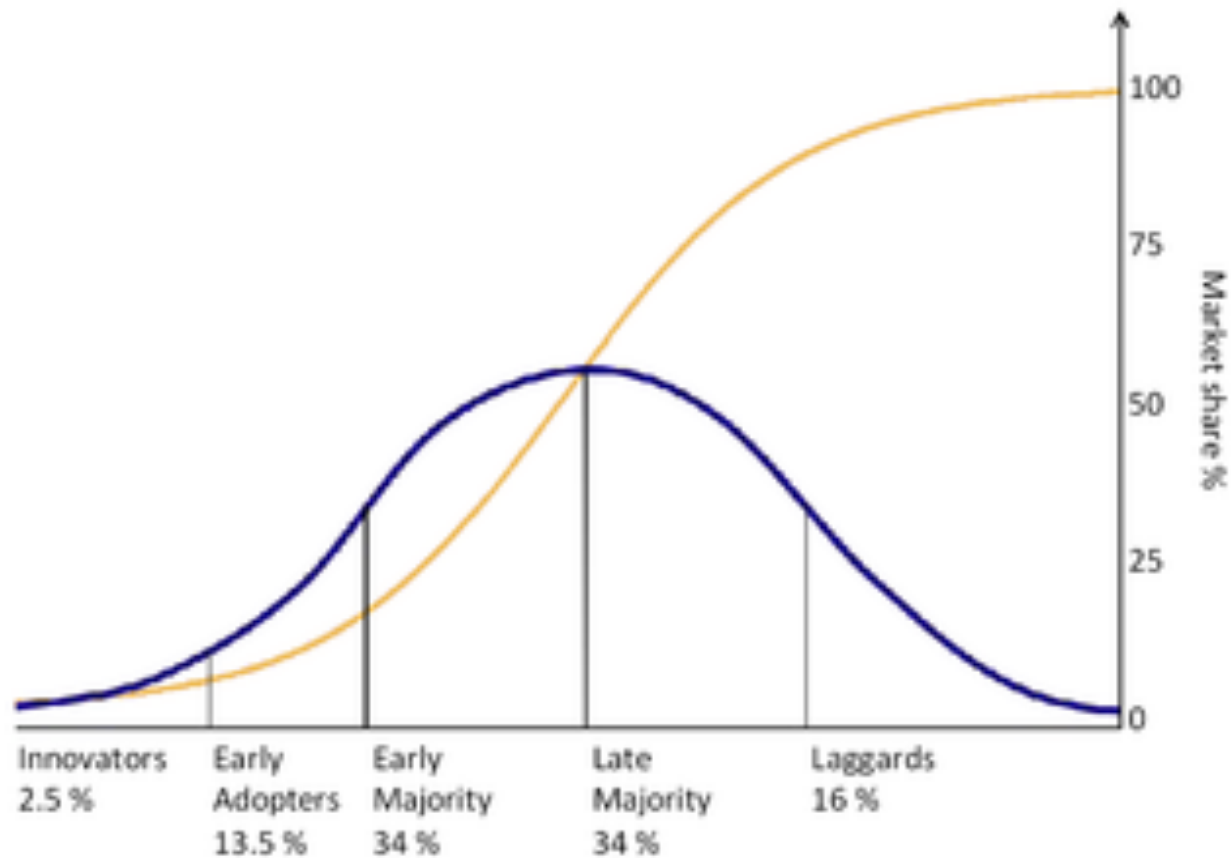
- 1. Perception of comfort and technical context**
- 2. Some of the dominant social norms**
- 3. Lack of support at high and individual levels**

Sufficiency potentials



Ways to stimulate sufficiency *directly*

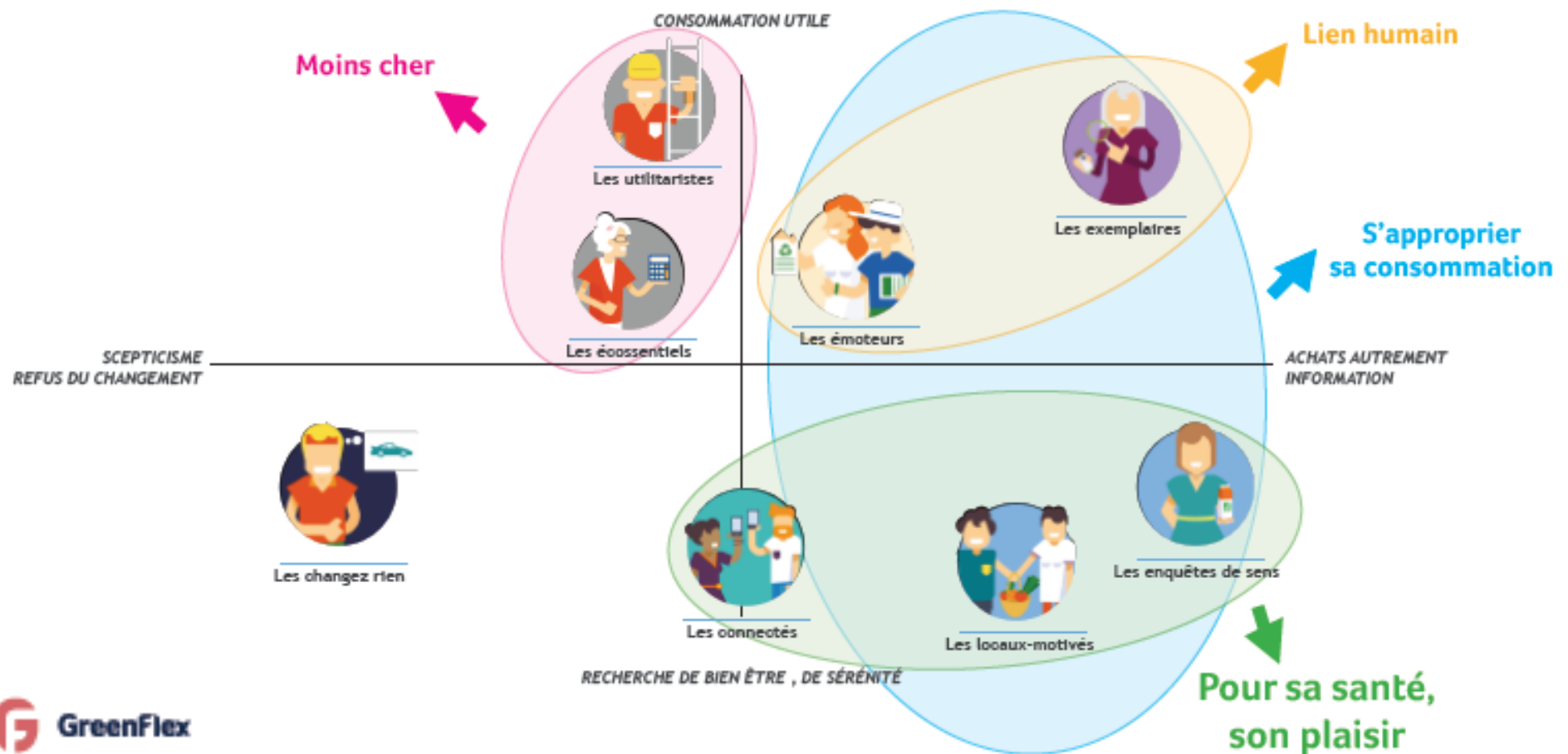
- Can it be a 'social innovation'?



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Ways to stimulate sufficiency *directly*

- Can it be a 'social innovation'?
- Social marketing techniques



Ways to stimulate sufficiency *directly*

- Can it be a 'social innovation'?
- Social marketing techniques
- Communication
 - ✓ **Making it exciting, starting reasonable**
 - ✓ **Not too prescriptive on moral norms and too normative on lifestyles**
 - ✓ **Changing the socio-cultural perception of energy-intensive activities**

Ways to stimulate sufficiency *directly*

- Can it be a 'social innovation'?
- Social marketing techniques
- 'Active communication'



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-12%

Ways to stimulate sufficiency *directly*

- Can it be a 'social innovation'?
- Social marketing techniques
- 'Active communication'
- Community-based initiatives



***'individuals who invent,
experiment, and cooperate...'
on 'joyful sufficiency'***



Indirect ways

- Changing socio-technical contexts
- 'Sufficiency nudges'?

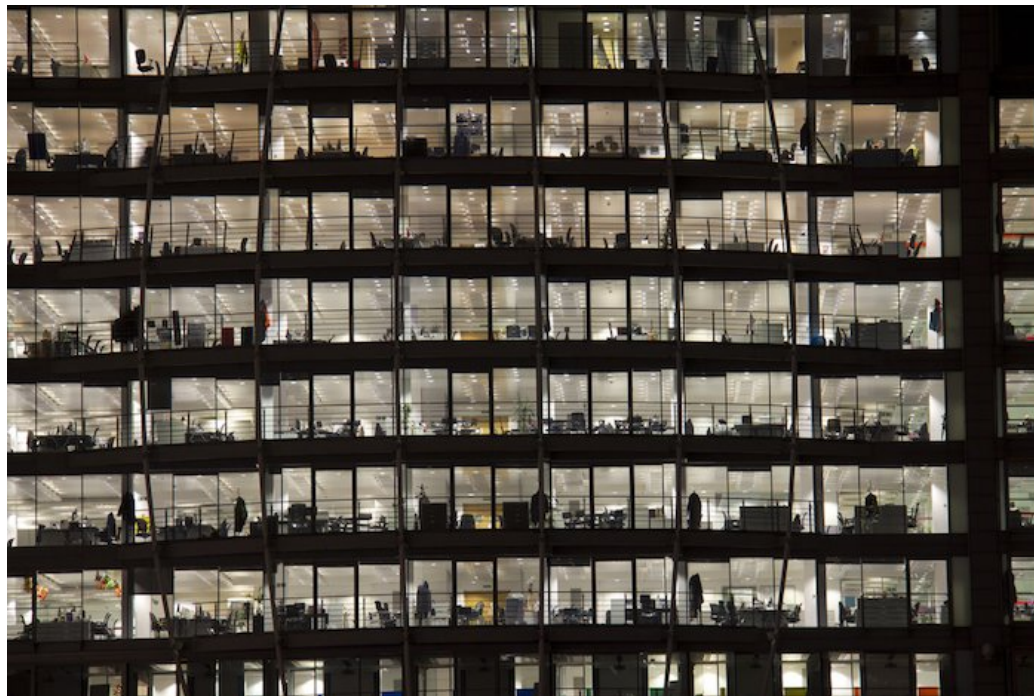


Indirect ways

- Changing socio-technical contexts
- 'Sufficiency nudges'?
- Building on non-energy motivations

Sufficiency *policies*

- Recognition
- Overarching policies
- Targeted regulatory and legal changes



Sufficiency *policies*

- Recognition
- Overarching policies
- Targeted regulatory and legal changes
- Direct support to sufficiency behaviours and innovations



Conclusions

- Sufficiency is a far-reaching concept...
- More research on the tools and approaches
- More international cooperation
- Need for policy awareness

