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# Food Waste Sorting : Exploring the Role of Collective Housing and Place Attachment

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## **Academy of Marketing Conference 2023, Birmingham**

Il s'agit du texte qui a été envoyé aux Editeurs de la conférence et qui a été accepté. Ce texte présente les idées qui ont été développées librement à l'oral lors de la conférence.

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### Food Waste Sorting : Exploring the Role of Collective Housing and Place Attachment Summary Statement

Food revolution starts in our bins. In order to explain food waste sorting, this study aims to elucidate the role of place attachment and collective housing within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior. 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted with people living in collective housing in Paris and surroundings. A qualitative analysis showed the relevance of these two variables as well as those of social trust, habits and general attitude towards nature.

Food revolution starts in our bins! In France about one third of household waste is food waste (Ademe, 2021). This waste, mainly made up of water, is incinerated whereas it could be transformed. In this context, this research deeper investigate psychological determinants that explain sorting in order to encourage citizens' cooperation. More generally, this research is part of the field of social marketing for action aimed at changing behaviours.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour, or TPB (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) is often used to explain sorting. It has recently been extended to include place attachment (Wan et al, 2021; Wan et al, 2022). The more attached I am to where I live, the more likely I am to sort (Pei, 2019). However, these studies were mainly conducted in China. According to a meta-analysis (Daryanto & Song, 2021), the cultural context moderates the effect of place attachment. A first challenge is to explore this model in the French context. Moreover, these studies do not take into account the type of housing (collective or individual) while it can influence food waste sorting (Knickmeyer, 2019) and interactions between neighbours (Gifford, 2007). A second issue is therefore to explore the role of housing.

In order to explore sorting and, more generally, all the variables that affect it, this research is based on 24 semi-structured interviews (in collective housing in Paris or surroundings). These interviews were conducted using an interview guide that included the main themes highlighted in the literature (e.g. subjective norms, attachment to place) in addition to the cultural dimension and the type of housing. The content analysis was carried out using Nvivo software.

The results confirm the relevance of the variables already studied. For example, a family living in a flat stated that they did not sort their waste because "nobody does it here" (subjective norms), or because "we would need bins inside" (perceived behavioural control), or because "we don't really know what it's for" (attitudes). The results also confirm the role of place attachment ("I am a tenant, I am subject to decisions"), cultural influence ("in my country of origin, we give food to others, we don't throw it away") and

type of housing ("in a flat, it is easier to see whether the neighbours sort or not"). Finally, other relevant variables could be identified: the general attitude towards nature, social trust towards different social groups and habit formation.

This research thus complements the work on understanding individual sorting. In addition to the sufficient variables (attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control), a parsimonious model should also incorporate place attachment, housing type, and other additional variables (e.g. habit, social trust). These results, from an exploratory study, are the first step in a research programme aimed at modelling food waste sorting. We already identify more appropriate operational actions (in relation to nature, identifying trusted people, etc.) while taking into account cultural specificities and the type of habitat in order to change bad habits.

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