

Consumer Culture Theory Approaches to the Study of Older Consumers and their Well-being



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Consumer Culture Theory

- CCT is NOT a Theory
- It is a Way of Doing Research
 - It is Mostly Qualitative
 - It is Mostly in Natural Situations (e.g., Homes, Offices, Stores, Events)
 - It Usually involves Depth Interviews and Observation
 - It Usually involves Studying a Small Number of Consumers in Great Detail NOT a Large Number of Consumers more Superficially



Some CCT Characteristics

- **Experiential/Visual** (narrative, still photos, videos, visual elicitation, visual projectives)
- **Netnographic** (gathering, generating, & analyzing data from the Internet)
- **Sociological & Anthropological** (NOT psychological)
- **Words** (Usually NOT Numbers)
- **Understanding** (NOT Cause & prediction)
- **Contextual** (NOT context-free)
- **Rapport** (NOT anonymity)
- Meaning is **socially constructed** (NOT objective)



Arnould & Thompson* Categories of CCT Research Programs

- **Consumer Identity Projects**—self identity & marketplace meanings, myths, & symbols
- **Marketplace Cultures**—communities, subcultures, & microcultures of consumption
- **Sociohistoric Patterning of Consumption**—class, culture, gender, ethnicities, families
- **Mass-Mediated Marketplace Ideologies & Consumers' Interpretive Strategies**—globalization, servicescapes, popular culture, consumer protest, lifestyles, Christmas in Japan

*Arnould, Eric J. and Craig J. Thompson (2005), "Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (March), 868-882.



Example

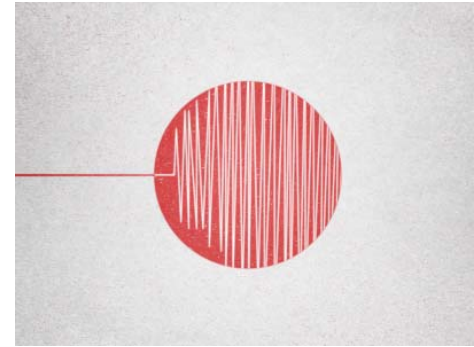
- Schau, Hope Jensen, Mary C. Gilly and Mary F. Wolfinbarger (2009), “Consumer Identity Renaissance: The Resurgence of Identity-inspired Consumption in Retirement,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (August), 255-276.

Example



- Bethel, Diana (1992), “Alienation and Reconnection in a Home for the Elderly,” in Joseph J. Tobin, ed., *Re-Made in Japan: Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 126-142.
- *Obasuteyama* mountain

Example



- Akiko Hashimoto (1996), *The Gift of Generations: Japanese and American Perspectives on Aging and the Social Contract*
 - *Do not go gentle into that good night...Rage, rage against the dying of the light (Dylan Thomas)*
 - *Learn to adore it in your heart; The silver hair on your head. Of all the riches that I can find in the world nothing can equal in price, no matter how dear, the silver hair on your head (Ryōkan)*

Example



- Joy, Annamma (2001), "Gift Giving in Hong Kong and the Continuum of Social Ties," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28 (September), 239-256.

Example



- Bonsu, Samuel and Russell Belk (2003), “Do Not Go Cheaply into That Good Night: Death Ritual Consumption in Asante Ghana,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30 (June), 41-55.

Examples



- Curasi, Carolyn, Linda Price, and Eric Arnould (2004), “How Individuals’ Cherished Possessions Become Families’ Inalienable Wealth,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (December), 609-622.
- Price, Linda, Eric Arnould, and Carolyn Curasi (2000), “Older Consumers’ Disposition of Valued Possessions,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27 (September), 179-201.
- McCracken, Grant (1988), “Lois Roget: Curatorial Consumer,” in *Culture and Consumption*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Example



- Holbrook, Morris (1993), “Nostalgia and Consumer Preferences: Some Emerging Patterns of Consumer Tastes,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20 (September), 245-256.

Example



- Daniels, Inge (2001), “The ‘Untidy’ Japanese House,” in Daniel Miller, ed., *Home Possessions*, Oxford: Berg, 201-229.

Example

- Yamaguchi, Yoshika and Satoko Tokumaru (2010), “A TAE-based Qualitative Study of Subjective Well-being for Aged Japanese Men,” *The Folio*, 165-177.
- **Summary of Findings**
- *Individualism* (the bond of an individual (man) and an individual (woman) based on love) → Nuclear Family
- *Feudalism* (The tie of a family and a family) → Community
- Challenge to the future of the Japanese society →
To find solutions to how the community should support the elderly and how the elderly should be supported by the community



Conclusions



- CCT research is a promising approach to better understanding relationships between consumption and well-being
- Not much has been done so far
- In an aging society, these issues are increasingly important
- Issues of identity, gender, community, gift-giving, inheritance, lifestyles, deathstyles, and housing are among the promising CCT topics that bear on well-being of older consumers