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PIRJO LAAKSONEN
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(Eds)

The Roots and Fruits of the Nordic Consumer Research

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Tiivistelmä

Käsillä olevaan julkaisuun on koottu ensimmäisen pohjoismaisen kuluttajakonferenssin (The First Nordic Conference on Consumer Research) pääpuhujien esitykset (juuret) sekä yhdentoista osallistujan konferenssipaperit (hedelmät). Konferenssi pidettiin Vaasassa, 10.–11.6.2010.

Julkaisu alkaa pääpuhujien esityksillä. Näissä luodaan kuva neljän Pohjoismaan kuluttajatutkimuksen kehityskaarista. Kjell Grønhaug kertoo norjalaisista tieteenalamme juurista, Klaus Grunert käsittelee tanskalaista kehitystä, Liisa Uusitalo luo katsauksen suomalaisen kuluttajatutkimuksen rakentumiseen ja Solveig Wikström kuvailee ruotsalaista kuluttajatutkimuksen historiaa.

Pohjoismaisen kuluttajatutkimuksen hedelmät tuodaan esiin yhteensä yhdentoista konferenssissa esitetyn paperin avulla. Nämä paperit käsittelevät moninaisia aiheita, mukaan lukien kestävää kehitystä, puutarhanhoitoa, hyvinvointipalveluita, designia ja tuotekehitystä, televisio-ohjelmia ja lemmikkejä. Metodologiat vaihtelevat aina rakenneyhtälömallinnuksesta lyhytelokuviin tutkimusaineistona ja lapsiin osallistuvina tutkijoina. Niinpä, tällä julkaisulla kerrotaan varsin monipuolista ja -tahoista tarinaa niin historiallisesta kuin nykyisestä pohjoismaisesta kuluttajatutkimuksesta.

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Abstract

The publication gathers together key note speeches (roots) and full papers (fruits) presented in The First Nordic Conference on Consumer Research. The conference was held in Vaasa, 10-11 June, 2010.

The publication starts with key note speeches that represent four perspectives on development of consumer research in Nordic countries; Kjell Grønhaug telling about Norwegian roots, Klaus Grunert approaching Danish development, Liisa Uusitalo giving a flash to the early and present years of Finnish consumer studies, and Solveig Wikström describing Swedish progress.

The fruits of the Nordic consumer research are brought out by eleven papers in total. The papers address various topics including sustainability, gardening, lifecare services, design and product development, television programs and companion animals. The methodologies vary from structural equation modeling to short films as data and children as co-researchers. Thus, through this publication it is told a story of a versatile and multifaceted consumer research in Nordic countries both historically and contemporarily.

Keywords
Consumer research, Nordic perspective, development of research

FOREWORD

Pirjo Laaksonen, Henna Jyrinki
University of Vaasa

On 9-11 June 2010, we organized the first Nordic Conference on Consumer Research in Vaasa, Finland. These proceedings combine together the four keynote speeches and eleven of the full papers presented in that conference. This publication begins as the conference itself by this foreword.

We researchers always look into the future, we strive to create something new, to innovate and to contribute. We are eager to keep track of the winds of change and often reluctant to turn back to look from where we came from. This might raise the question, why then to organize a conference focusing on the Nordic roots (and fruits) of consumer behavior research? Why should we look backward and why should we even attempt to limit our perspective to the boundaries of the Nordic countries?

Consumption is embedded in culture and it is well recognized that we need to focus on the cultural influences and singularities. The Nordic countries have a lot in common within the context of consumption. Similarities can be found for example in the basis of the welfare society, legislation, distribution channels, values and life-styles. These similarities have been strengthened through the mobility within Nordic countries. Do these similarities give us a reason or at least a possibility to investigate closer the Nordic consumer? Are we as Nordic consumers different from those in other cultures: do we consume differently, do we value, prefer and enjoy different aspects in consumption? We need that knowledge not only to be able to justify the transference of research results from other cultures into the Nordic context, but also in order to be able to view developments in consumer research in a relativistic manner. So, one aim of this conference is to ask whether there is something in common in the consumers and consumption in the Nordic countries that we should be aware of. I am not so optimistic that I expect these two days to give a complete answer to the question. However, if the question is raised there will probably be those who attempt to answer it in the future.

Another important reason for organizing this conference is an attempt to place us Nordic researchers into socio-cultural context. By this I do not mean only the fact that in this way we meet each other, which of course is of utmost importance - even in these days of ubiquitous attendance of social media. The socio-cultural context is created by its history. I agree that we Nordic researchers have not been exceptionally keen to refer to each others' publications and it may be that we are not at all well aware of what the neighbors are doing. However, there may be something that the citation indexes do not reveal. Maybe there is something stemming from the historical links where professors have received chairs in the neighboring countries and where visiting researchers and lectures have neighbored for a while. There have been contact points across the Nordic countries in the past which I'm sure the presentations of today and tomorrow will reveal. But besides these concrete contact points between the researchers there is a more mental connection. Namely, if we as consumers are modified by the socio-cultural context we live in, are we not that as researchers as well? If so, there should be something in common between us. Do we share something in our ways to position our research, in the presumptions we do, in our mindsets, in preferences or values for example? Is there some kind of tacit knowledge that we transfer without explicitly knowing it in our research and into the new generations of Nordic consumer researchers? Again, I do not think these questions are to be answered within these few days and through the research presented in this conference. However, the social interaction provided in this conference can assist each and every one of us to reflect these issues.

The third reason for looking at the roots of the Nordic consumer behavior research is to honor all those who have been pioneers in this challenging area of research. It is them we are to thank for much. In academic research we strive to ride on the crest of wave and seek novelty, we grab into trendy issues, we try to find virgin ways and arenas that no-one has ever touched before. This is of course a driving force behind the development of a science. It has led to a situation where we have multiple paradigms, research orientations, theories and methodologies. Also it has led to the investigation of novel subject areas and deviant and special groups of consumers. This kind of pluralism and versatility in research is welcomed. However, this leads to a situation where the field of research and researchers is fragmented and where we may have limited contacts across the scholars of different camps. Does this also limit our view of consumers and consumption as well? On the other hand, one can ask if it is possible to achieve a comprehensive understanding of consumers and their behavior?

In the late 1960's and early 1970's there were attempts to develop a holistic models of consumer (choice) behavior, Flemming Hansen from Denmark being among the earliest developers of these models. The conclusion was drawn that consumer behavior is too complex to be captured into a single theory or model. Rather than to attempt to find a single, overall theory and a single framework that ties consumer behavior together it is preferred to proceed with a repertoire of paradigms, theories and methodologies.

Anyway, the impossibility to frame consumer behavior in a unified theory and model should not be interpreted to mean that we should not strive to develop a comprehensive understanding on consumers and their behavior. However, it may be that this can be gained only through experience. It is the years of thinking and investigating, it is the myriad of mistakes and the often sparse but luscious moments of success in the research processes that open our eyes and broaden our consciousness to comprehend consumers and consumption in a more holistic way. Although each innovation in research approaches, methodologies and instruments is argued for its ability to offer a more profound tool to understand consumers, I dare to suggest that it is only the years and years of research that assist us to view both deeper and wider and train us to understand also by heart. Maybe true understanding can be gained only by studying consumers and consumption through different viewpoints, theories, methodologies, and across different substance areas. This is something that can be gained only with years of practice. And this is why I am delighted to have here among us the distinguished keynote speakers, professors Kjell Grønhaug, Klaus Grunert, Liisa Uusitalo and Solveig Wikström, who have promised to share their experience on consumer behavior research with us.

Our conference is not only about the roots, but the fruits as well. The fruits are the studies and research papers to be presented during this conference. Even the first look at the topics, research methods and substance areas indicate that the research on consumers is versatile and varied also in here in the North. Whether we find common Nordic denominators behind these studies is something each of us can consider when reading up on the papers presented at the first Nordic Conference on Consumer Research.

Contents

Foreword VII

Kjell Grønhaug
Consumer research in Norway: Past and present 1

Klaus G. Grunert
Consumer research: Glimpses from Denmark 17

Liisa Uusitalo
Good bad consumption: Reflections on the development of consumer research in Finland 31

Solveig R. Wikström
The roots of consumer research in Sweden 57

Helene Brembeck, Barbro Johansson
Kerstin Bergström, Sandra Hillén, Lena Jonsson, Eva Ossiansson & Helena Shanahan
Emancipatory consumer research – Working with children as co-researchers 65

Jenniina Halkoaho
Self-identification in consumer-program relationships – A structural equation modeling approach 83

Niklas Hansson & Ulrika Holmberg
Understandings of sustainability among young professionals in Sweden 101

Henna Jyrinki
The attitude-behavior relations in pet-related consumption – Consumer-pet relationships as indicators of pet food consumption 119

Tanja Kotro, Petteri Repo, Hans Olav Bråtå, Svein Erik Hagen & Atle Hauge
Consumer contribution to product development in the Nordic sports industry – Passionate consumers pose benefits for and challenges to companies 137

Minna Lammi & Mika Pantzar
Feelings of trust – How educational short films turned suspicion into feelings of trust in industry in the 1920s and 1930s 153

Minna Lammi & Päivi Timonen
From production to consumption – The reshaping of gardening ideals in the modern consumer societies of Finland and Great Britain 173

Jacob Mickelsson
Using activityscapes to illustrate perceived value in systems of consumer practices 189

Aurelio G. Mauri & Ivar Soone
Influence of revenue management outcomes on perceived fairness and acceptability of price discrimination initiatives by customers – Evidence from hospitality sector 207

Toni Ryynänen
Industrial design in the context of consumption – Interpretations of the meanings represented by the economic press 223

Johanna Varjonen
Consumption of life care services and the roles of household, market and public sectors in their provision 241

CONSUMER RESEARCH IN NORWAY: PAST AND PRESENT

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to give an overview over consumer research in Norway, how it has developed. We also point at some characteristics of this research as well as identify factors and persons who have influenced the development. Consumer research is frequently perceived as an American "innovation", heavily influenced by efforts to improve business and marketing. However, insights into consumers and their behaviors may as well be important for purposes such as improving living conditions of people and public policies (cf. Ekstrøm 2010).

The remaining part of this paper is organized as follows: We start by addressing the central word or concept "consumer research". Then we introduce our perspective emphasizing the actual context, including factors such as economic conditions, values etc., the research society and users of research which have - among other things influenced resource allocation and research problems addressed. Then we describe how the research has developed. Central persons and interest groups are pointed at. At last we draw conclusions and try to emphasize characteristics of the research conducted.

2. Consumer research

Consumption has been an integral part of human life as long as man has been on earth. Research on behavior associated with consumption is, however, often considered to be of rather new origin. Nicosia & Mayer (1976), for example, claim that consumer research "as we know it today" - was born in the mid-fifties (p. 65). As will be evident from the following, choice of definition – either implicit or explicit, purpose, disciplinary perspective, research activities emphasized and so on also impact the time-span of what will be subsumed under consumer research. The term "consumer behavior" has been defined in multiple ways. Marketing – inspired definitions often emphasize activities related to buying, e.g. need (problem) recognition, information search, attitudes towards and evaluations and choice among alternatives (brands). Definitions guide and direct. Over the years newer and wider definitions of consumer behavior have emerged which have implications for what is included. For example, some definitions include own production and disposition of products and services as elements of consumer behavior (cf. Arndt 1986). Antonides & van Raaij (1988) also include motives for and causes of consumption, satisfaction and well-being of consumers, and consequences for individuals and society as parts of the term "consumer behavior/research". The central point is not whether definitions are right or wrong, which they are not. They are only more or less useful for the actual purpose whatever it might be. In the present case we use the term consumer research in a rather broad way to encompass aspects that are important and influence a great variety of aspects of consumers and behaviors - including their well-being.

3. The research context

Research is not conducted in a vacuum. To capture the actual context the following perspective is developed.

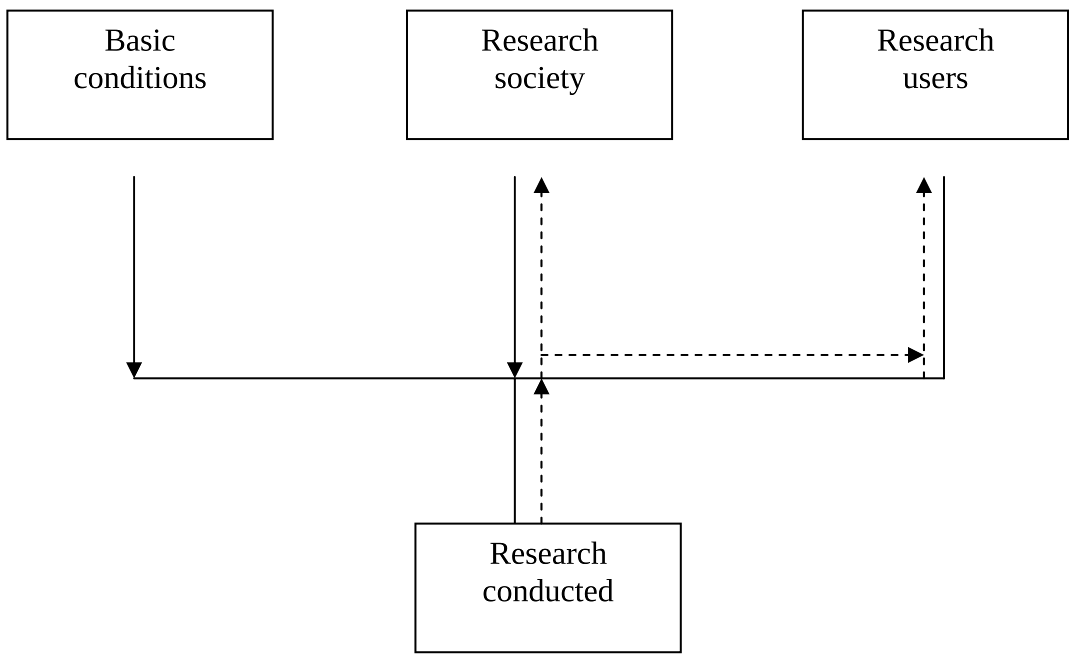

Figure 1. The perspective.

Figure 1 is to be read in the following way:

Basic conditions include a variety of factors such as economic conditions, political system, interest groups and predominant values, which may impact resources allocated to research as well as research problems addressed.

The research society includes the researchers – who in this case are/have been addressing research problems related to consumer research. They are influenced by factors such as basic training, values and perspectives subscribing to institutional arrangements and so forth.

Research is produced to be used. Users may impact the research conducted by funding projects according to their interests. From American consumer research it is known that marketing interests have been predominant heavily influencing problems addressed and perspectives chosen. As will be seen from the following, marketing and business interests have been less dominant in the Norwegian context, even though the impact of business/marketing interests has been increasing at an escalating rate – in particular the last decades.

3.1. Basic conditions

It is not our intention to give a detailed description of conditions which have influenced consumer research conducted in Norway till now. However, the following will hopefully be useful to understand some of the specifics of the research conducted.

Norway located at the outskirt of Europe with less than five million inhabitants scattered over a relatively area is a small country. For centuries farming and fishing were the dominant ways of living. The living conditions were very modest – also reflected in the streams of emigrants to the US, the land of hope and opportunities. During the second World War (1940-45) the country was occupied. During that period and also several years later scarcity of consumer products prevailed. In the first decade or so after the war great efforts were made to transform the nation into at – that time – a modern industrialized society.

After the discovery of the oil in the late sixties the country has changed from a poor to one of the most affluent countries in Europe. Norway was for long media poor. TV was introduced more than a decade after second World War and for long only one - state owned channel existed. Norway is a highly regulated welfare society. For long it was very ethnically and culturally homogenous, which has changed dramatically in particular during the last decades. Compared to the US, the government plays a much more predominant role in economic life. The fraction of governmental owned/run companies is higher, as is the fraction of governmental initiated and funded research.

3.2. Academia

The relative level of education used to be rather low. For example, prior to 1950 less than five percent received their “examen artium” (a more demanding high-school diploma). Number of educational institutions were modest compared to other Nordic and North-European countries. The capacity of university was limited. For example, for quite long more Norwegian students in subjects like medecin, engineering, dentistery and business got their degrees from abroad. Establishment of higher educational institutions has escalated the last 40 years or so, and the educational system have changed dramatically – as in many other European countries.

Before World War II the main intellectual influences came from Central Europe - in particular from Germany, Great Britain and France, but also the US. During the war these connections were more or less terminate. The five years war was a dark period for Norwegian academic life, with reduced activities and partly closed educational institutions. After the war the American influences became predominant. This specific impact may to a substantial degree be associated with the Marshall aid program – which besides money and grants included extended visits from some of the leading American social scientists. Over the years many Norwegians researchers in the social sciences and other disciplines earned their PhDs at leading universities in the US. First after expanded educational capacity - and the establishment of more formalized PhD programs in the 80ties the production of PhDs started taking off in this country.

A key characteristic in Norwegian social science research used to be a separation between disciplines where economics and statistics played the lead role. Business administration was for very long considered an academic step child, and an anti-business attitude among several academicisions and academic institutions, in particular among psychologists and sociologists was for long prevailment. Only a few with such an educational background went to business.

3.3. Interests and users

Traditionally marketers and other business representatives are thought of as the prime interest groups and users of consumer research. As will be evident later prime interest groups were for long – governmental agencies and politicians, where consumer research has been considered an important political topic.

4. The beginning

Consumer research in Norway may be traced back to the 1850's, to the pioneering studies performed by Eilert Sundt (1817-1875). Although educated as a theologian, Sundt developed a great interest in empirical studies of everyday life, living conditions and the state of morality among various groups in Norway. In general, the studies were based on combinations of informal interviewing, observation and gathering and handling of statistical data. Most of the data were collected by Sundt himself, who traveled around in the country for several years, mainly on foot (Vogt, 1968).

Sundt's writing on consumer behavior is found especially in his reports from three community studies. The field work of these studies was carried out in 1851, 1855 and 1856, and the reports were published 1858 and 1859. The major purpose of all three studies was to examine the daily life and the living conditions of the working class. One of these community studies was performed in a working class area in the capital of Norway (Sundt, 1858) where interview data were collected from families with children of school age.

The parents in these 294 families were interviewed by a student according to a questionnaire constructed by Sundt. The study covered a number of consumer behavior aspects, particularly concerning housing conditions, such as type, standard and cost of the dwelling, number of rooms, number of persons per room, and availability of kitchen. In the other two community studies data were collected by Sundt himself. He carried out field research during a period of 1-2 months in each community. In addition to informal interviews and observation he made use of data based on various kinds of registers, archives, documents and statistical sources.

In this period also research conducted by historians were directed towards people's living conditions as well as certain aspects of their consumption activities (cf. Broch 1876). Other research activities from this period that should be noted are a variety of statistical analyses emphasizing living conditions and consumption patterns. The Central Bureau of Statistics of Norway, established in 1876 has played a very important role in gathering data about living conditions including specific aspects of consumption patterns. [Systematic statistical registration were also conducted several decades before the establishment of this institution.] A couple of things are noteworthy in this context. First, researchers associated with this institution have contributed to considerable insights as well as to methodological progresses – also noticed abroad. For example, the early contribution of Kiær (1876) – its first director has contributed to the development of representative sampling methods is one example (Statistisk Sentralbyrå 1976). Based on the "new" methodology a variety of studies conducted by political economists and statisticians were directed towards consumption activities such as eating habits (Helland 1896), housing (Holst 1895), and consumption of alcoholic beverages (Statistisk Sentralbyrå 1976). Studies based on household diaries were conducted as early as in 1912/13 (Kristiania communes statistiske kontor 1915).

Political economists and statisticians contributed the most to consumer research, at least until the 1960's. Solely the outcomes of consumer decisions were emphasized in this research. This was related, however, to various socio-demographic variables. The research was used as input to improve the living conditions for the inhabitants.

Consumer research with a home economic perspective also has long traditions in this country. The main institute of such research, SIFO (the Governmental institute of consumer research), was established in 1939.

In the early fifties – after the recovery of the second World War, consumers' interests got renewed attention. Forbrukerrådet (the Consumer agency) was established in this period (1953), mainly with the purpose to protect and to increase consumers' influence in the marketplace.

The first marketing research agency, Fakta was established in 1944. In the late forties and early fifties marketing research focusing on the behavior of consumers was conducted, not least due to the pioneering contributions of Holbæk-Hanssen (1949) (Gronhaug 1982). It should be noted, however, that governmental agencies were the prime customers of such research.

At the Norwegian Fund for Market and Distribution Research, established in 1971, certain aspects of consumer behavior such as consumer problems, consumer participation in the market system, complaint behavior, and impact of consumer policy, were subject to a considerable amount of research (see Grønmo 1983, 1984 for overview). Since the late sixties a considerable amount of consumer research has also been conducted at the Norwegian School of

Economics and Business Administration, and later on at other institutions such as Norwegian School of Management.

A closer look at the research conducted reveals, however, that it varies considerably across institutions. For example, the research conducted at SIFO to a substantial degree has focused on home economics. In much of this research the housewife has been considered as the consumer – in particular in the earlier research. Great emphasis has been put on product testing and safety. Central perspectives have been that consumer needs information to make "rational choices" – and that they need protection (for insightful overview, see Hegnes 2006).

This is in sharp contrast to the research conducted at business schools, heavily influenced by the American research tradition emphasizing consumer decision making, information search, evoked set and so on of importance for designing marketing strategies.

5. Towards social science consumer research

Social science based consumer research started late in this country. The establishment of a committee for consumer research in 1961 may be seen at a starting point. An article by Holter (1963), "Sosiologisk og psykologisk forbruksforskning" (Sociological and psychological consumer research) was one of the first outputs, and became a turning point. The following quote characterizes the situation at that time: "The problems, methods and results sociological and psychological consumer research today work with are mainly unknown the Norwegian audience…. Except for the data gathering conducted by advertising - and sales interest – and which is not made available – we find little. We can recognize that advertising and sales shows a certain interest to engage social researchers. But we lack a more academic and longitudinal research within this field" (p. 73).

Holter's article is a broad literature review. An interesting observation was that the libraries did not have the sources needed, so she had to turn to her Swedish colleague Carin Boalt at the Institute of Sociology at University of Stockholm. Berit Ås was engaged by the committee to prepare a report. This literature-based report was later published as a book, *Forbrukeren i det moderne samfunn* (The consumer in the modern society) (1966). During her work with the report/book Ås was in contact with professor Karl-Erik Wärneryd from Stockholm School of Economics. She was as well influenced by Solveig Wickstrom, Olov Henell, Gøsta Mickwitz, Max Kjær-Hansen and Leif Holbæk-Hanssen. The contributions by Holter and Ås helped bringing consumer research on the agenda. The above description reveals, however, that Norway – in particular when it comes to social science-based consumer research was a real late-comer.

6. Some central persons

Below we point at some persons who have contributed to consumer research in Norway.

Holbæk-Hanssen (1917-1991) became the first marketing professor in Norway. He was graduated from Copenhagen School of Business where he was heavily influenced by at that time the leading marketing scholar in the Nordic countries, professor Max Kjær-Hanssen. The central role of Kjær-Hanssen and his associates was also reflected in the recognition of "The Copenhagen School" of marketing. Holbæk-Hanssen had wide interest and was familiar with multiple research methods, and disciplines – including sociological and psychological research among many other subjects. Holbæk-Hanssen in particular has influenced consumer research in Norway through his involvement in multiple public committees. For a description of his activities and involvement, see Grønhaug (1982).

The person who probably the most has influenced consumer research (and marketing) in Norway is Johan Arndt (1937-1986). Arndt graduated from Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration in 1962. After graduation he went to University of Minnesota where he earned a Master of Science degree in social psychology. After graduation he went to Harvard University where he earned his DBA (Doctor of Business Administration). His thesis "Word of Mouth Advertising: The Role of Product-Related Conversations in the Diffusion of Product-Related Conversations of New Product-Multiple Spin Offs" got recognition. The literature-part of the thesis also resulted in a best-selling monograph, *Word of Mouth Advertising*, published by Advertising Research Foundation.

Based on this thesis he published several articles in leading journals. Over the years Arndt continued to publish on a variety of topics, but his interest in and focus on consumer research continued throughout his life-time. After graduation from Harvard Arndt became associate professor at Columbia University where he worked under the recognized marketing scholar John Harvard. After some years at Columbia University he returned to Norway. For some years as worked consultant and research director before he returned to Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, where he was appointed professor in 1974, the second marketing professor in the country. Over the years Arndt played an important role and influence Norwegian consumer research through his writings, supervision of students, member of multiple committees and boards.

Kjell Grønhaug submitted his thesis Consumers' choices of information sources (Kjøpers valg av informasjonskilder) in 1970 (defended in 1971), the first dissertation related to consumer research conducted in Norway. The theoretical point of departure was the idea of "perceived risk". Apparently this was the/one of the first research contributions in Europe applying this perspective. The thesis resulted in several articles including one of the first contributions regarding "evoked set". Over the years Grønhaug has published widely in leading European and American journals as well as books and book chapters covering a great variety of topics. His interest in consumer research has, however, remained throughout. He (Grønhaug) has been heavily involved in supervision of doctorial students both at his own school as well as other institutions. He has also participated in multiple committees and acted as opponent at multiple institutions in the Nordic countries and other places. Grønhaug was appointed professor in 1980 at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration. He has received the prize for excellence in research awarded every fifth year at his institution and is honorary doctor at Turku School of Economics and Business Administration (2000) and Gothenburg University (2010).

Considerable time went before the next thesis in consumer research emerged. In 1983 Sigurd Troye received his PhD from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with the thesis "Evoked set formation from the perspective of decision making as an instance of categorization". Troye has continued his research in consumer behavior. The last few years he has focused on and made contribution to the literature including research related to "prosumption".

Fred Selnes (now professor at the Norwegian School of Management) received his doctorial degree based on the thesis "Effekten av produktkunnskap på informasjonssøking ved forbrukerkjøp" (The effect of product knowledge on information search in consumer purchase) from Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration in 1986. The thesis is based on an experimental study including observations and verbal protocols and has resulted in articles in refereed journals.

Over the years several doctorial students have received their doctorial degree from Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration with a thesis in consumer behavior.

Ingeborg Astrid Kleppe defended her thesis "Teoretisk versus subjektiv beslutningsinnflytelse. En eksperimentell studie" (Theoretical vrs. subjective decision influence. An experimental study) in 1990. Kleppe (now associate professor at Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration) has continued her research in consumer behavior. She was just awarded for best article related to family decision making. At present she is – among other subjects – focusing on online-consumers.

Morten Heide in his thesis from 1990 focused on effects of words and information content product evaluation. This research also spurred off several journal articles.

Alhassan G. Abduhl-Mumin focused on multiple item purchase decisions in a process study using computerized information board as data collection method (1994).

Herbjørn Nysveen studied the importance of advertising for the importance of attitudes towards the product. Nysveen (now professor) has continued interest in and focus on consumer research – in particular related to online services.

Ellen Katrine Nyhus thesis "Husholdningenes sparing og gjeld" (The household's saving and debt) (2002) relates to consumer psychology and is based on Dutch panel data. Nyhus has continued her research related to this topic, and published several articles.

Chunyan Xie's thesis "Trying to presume: Toward a perspective on presumption" was defended in 2005. Based on her thesis she and her supervisors also published an article in a top journal. Xie has still interest in consumer research, and contributes regularly to the research literature.

A variety of other related topics has been addressed, such as building brand relations online (Thorbjørnsen 2003). Brand extensions have been addressed in several doctorial theses and articles, so has brand personality. The last decade or so much of the research in consumer behavior at the institution has been directed towards branding and related topics.

Also at other institutions consumer research is conducted. At the Norwegian School of Management doctorial theses and journal articles have in particular focused on satisfaction and loyalty, branding and psychology of food (with focus on emotions).

At SIFO researchers have published reports and books related to eating and clothing habits, consumer socialization and responsibility; how people cope with debt, advertising pressure, mis- and abuse, eterical consumption and more.

7. Conclusions

When looking back we find that most of the early Norwegian consumer research has been directed towards the outcomes of consumer decision processes. Moreover, the final choices have been related to various sociodemographics. In other words, consumer choices have been regarded as “determined” by various antecedents, such as economic resources and education, clearly influenced by underlying political motives to increase consumer welfare and reduce inequalities among consumers.

In most of the previous research, the focus was on the group or specific social classes contrary to the focus on the individual consumer as reflected in American research. In addition, consumption has been viewed as an integral part of life in much of the research conducted, requiring resources, skills - and sometimes governmental interventions to be performed in a satisfactory way (FAD 1981).

The predominant unit of observation and analysis in contemporary American consumer research is the individual. In most previous research conducted in Norway the prime unit of observation has been the household or nuclear family. The focus has often been the social class or a specific consumer segment. In addition various types of institutions, such as hospitals, schools, ships and prisons have been investigated with emphasis on specific aspects of consumption, such as nutrition have been subject for research.

A large fraction of American consumer research has been directed towards choice of brands from private suppliers (producers). The focus for most of the early Norwegian consumer research has been on the product group and basic budget allocations. Public products and services increasingly have got more attention, not least with the purpose to make public bureaucracies more responsive to consumers’ needs and wants.

The impact of psychologists or consumer psychologists is and has been predominant in contemporary American consumer research. The situation has been quite different in this country. The impact of political economists on previous research has been noted above. From 1960 several contributions has been delivered from other social scientists in particular sociologists and partly from researchers with a public administration background (cf. Holter 1963; Ås 1966). The fraction of researchers with a psychology background involved in consumer research used to be very low compared with the situation in the US (cf. Grønhaug 1985). Researchers with a business administration background and a more American like research profile, have, however, to an increasing extent become actively involved in consumer research during the last two decades.

As noted at the outset of this paper, Norway is a small country as measured in population size. Moreover, it has an open country, and is very dependent on exchanges and interactions with other countries. Before the second World War the main intellectual influences came from Central Europe. The American influence has increased dramatically. However, this influence is not equally distributed across disciplines and research institutions. Very much of previous consumer research is definitely influenced by European traditions and perspectives. The Scandinavian/European tradition reflected in present research conducted by sociologists could furthermore be explained by the neglect of sociological perspectives in most of the contemporary American consumer research (cf. Zaltman & Wallendorf 1977). For research with a business administration background, the American influence however, is notable.

When looking at the research conducted at the various institutions an interesting observation is the variation in focus, perspectives and research methodologies applied. In some way one may talk about a divided research community where SIFO and related institutions address consumer problems and constraints with the purpose of understand, assist and help the consumers. Very much of this research also address consumer policy and policy implications. This research has also to a great extent been “qualitative”. The educational background of these researchers is to a large extent sociology, anthropology, but also include economists and historians.

Consumer research conducted at business schools primarily addresses topics of interest to business, but also for politicians and other constituencies. Very much of this research has so far been “quantitative”, even though the fraction of “qualitative” research is increasing. The educational background of the research is to a substantial degree business administration disciplines with emphasis on psychology, research methods etc.

With regard to research methods personal interviews and surveys for long prevailed. The use of experiments has now become common. More recently net based data collection and experiments are becoming increasingly more popular. More “advanced” data analyses has for long been embraced in Norwegian consumer research. The emphasis on measurement problems is notable.

To sum up:

A considerable amount of consumer research has been conducted in Norway. A large fraction of this research has been conducted from other disciplines than business administration/ marketing in contrast to what is the case in American consumer research.

Much of this research has been macro-oriented focus on designing and implementing consumer policies.

In the present paper we have applied a rather broad definition of consumer research encompassing aspects such as consumer welfare and well-being. In spite of the fact that “traditional” consumer research departuring primarily from business interests emerged late in Norway, this paper clearly demonstrates that the consumers for long have been addressed in Norwegian research.

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CONSUMER RESEARCH: GLIMPSES FROM DENMARK

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Abstract. The paper highlights selected aspects of consumer research in Denmark during the past 50 years and attempts not only to give examples of research topics that have been prominent in the history of consumer research in Denmark, but also show how the evolvement of research is linked to people, societal interests, funding opportunities and international networks. The topics selected are consumer policy, lifestyle and culture, attitude formation, cognitive structure, attention/perception/inferences, and retailing.

Keywords: Consumer research, Denmark, history

1. More than 50 years of consumer research

Consumer research appears in many guises in a range of different disciplines, and it is therefore difficult to trace its history to any particular origin. But as regards consumer research from a marketing perspective, it is probably fair to say that its Danish history started in the fifties in the marketing department of what is now the Copenhagen Business School. There, the insight that consumer behaviour is determined by more factors than price, income and a given set of preferences was made the basis for the development of a theory of marketing parameters, i.e., a theory on the factors that sellers have at their disposal to influence consumer buying behaviour. Arne Rasmussen's book *Pristeori eller parameterteori* (1955) was probably the first thorough theoretical treatment of the marketing parameter concept not only in Denmark, but in the world; unfortunately, the fact that the book is in Danish was a barrier to its recognition beyond Denmark. Although it has been mentioned in a number of economics publications (see especially the review by Schneider, 1956), the marketing parameter concept is now usually credited to the American McCarthy (1960).

Figure 1 is an attempt to depict the development of Danish consumer research since then. This is my subjective view of the development and has an emphasis on the time after the mid-eighties, when I joined the marketing department in Aarhus (for an overview of earlier research, see Hansen 1981), and is also somewhat Aarhus-centric. It shows major research topics that have been dealt with in Denmark and that I am aware of, and tries to place them on a timeline. It also shows main actors in the field, and it attempts to show how interest in consumer research from an applications perspective has changed over the years. People with their individual interests and societal interest in research results are two drivers of the research process and contribute to shaping the history of research in a particular field in a particular country. Other drivers are funding opportunities, developments in methodology, research results (especially unexpected ones), and the reception of research results in the research community. I will give examples of all of these when I will discuss the 'glimpses' below.

In the period discussed, there were three major groups active in doing consumer behaviour research in Denmark. The first one, already mentioned, was at the marketing department of what is now the Copenhagen Business School. It is very much linked to the name of Flemming Hansen, who returned to Denmark with an American PhD and introduced in Denmark the psychologically and especially cognitively oriented consumer research that has dominated the field ever since (see, e.g., Hansen 1969, 1976). A second actor with considerable influence was Hanne Hartvig Larsen, who among many other things had a strong focus on retailing research and especially consumer store choice. Flemming and Hanne have passed away, and among the younger professors in Copenhagen especially Suzanne Beckmann and Torben Hansen are renowned for their consumer research. The second group is at the marketing department of the University of Southern Denmark in Odense (earlier the University of Odense), and the consumer research there is strongly linked to the names of Dominique Bouchet, originally French, and his former student and later colleague Søren Askegaard. They have built up a strong reputation for qualitative, interpretivistic consumer research, combining their French heritage with the US research stream that led to the *consumer culture theory* group. The third group is at the marketing department of what for many years was the Aarhus School of Business (now merged with Aarhus University). The Swede Folke Ölander has been the mentor of consumer research there, and is widely known for his work on consumer behaviour from a consumer policy (rather than a business) perspective. Later I joined the department and, in 1991, formed the MAPP centre, which does research on consumer behaviour in the food area, drawing mainly on more basic work from cognitive and social psychology. MAPP bred three more professors in the consumer behaviour area later, Karen Brunsø, Liisa Lähteenmäki and Joachim Scholderer, and the department is also known for the research done on sustainability-oriented consumer behaviour led by John Thøgersen. In addition to these three major research groups, there are smaller groups at the University of Aalborg and at the Esbjerg, Kolding and Sønderborg branches of the University of Southern Denmark. You may have noticed that consumer research in Denmark has been an international affair, with 'imports' from Germany, France, Sweden and Finland playing a role.

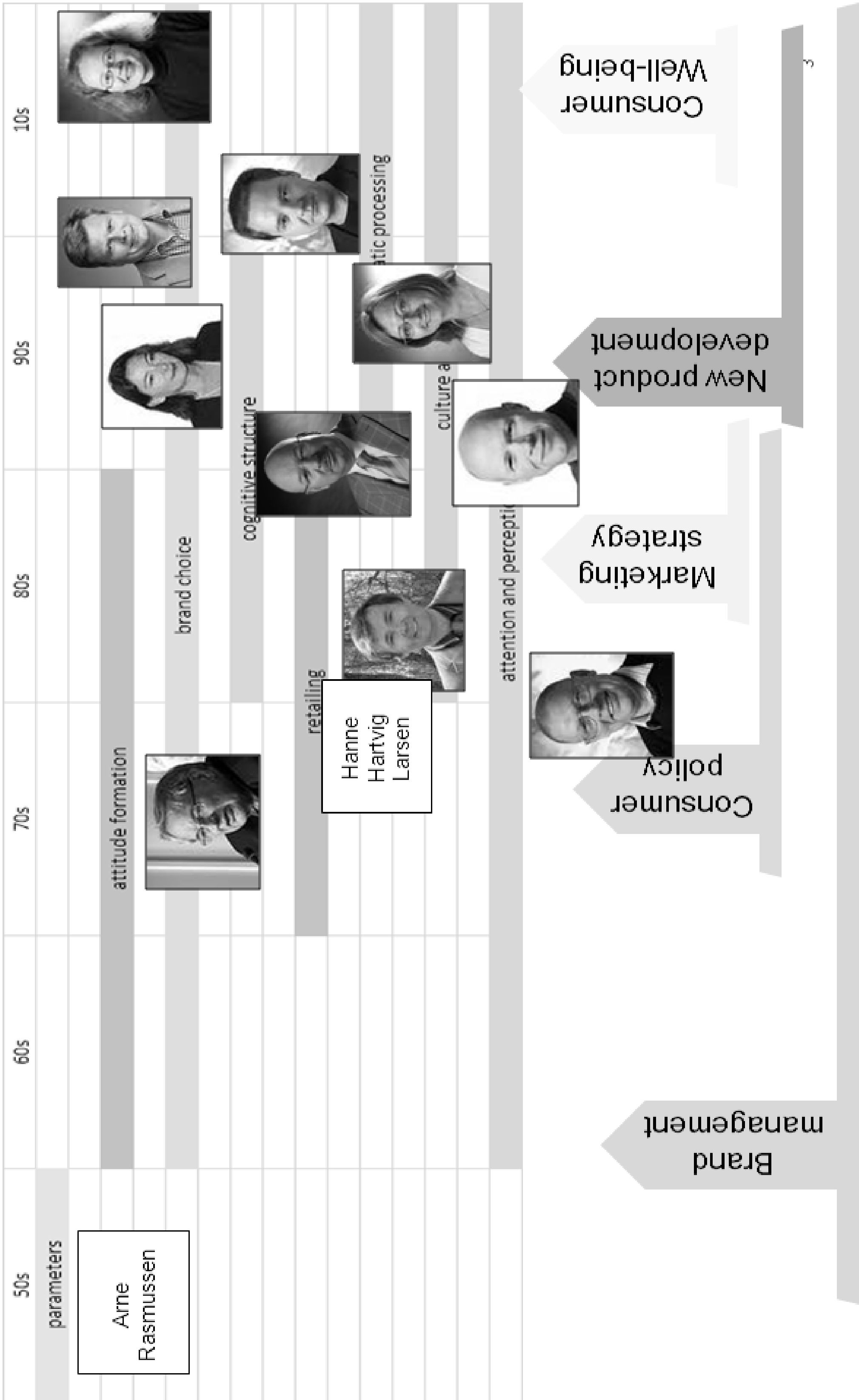

Figure 1. A view of Danish consumer research.

Figure 1 also maps the user interests that have contributed to driving consumer research. Both the business sector and public policy have interests in consumer research, though they have changed over the years. Brand management was what drove consumer research in the first place, and is still a major area of application. In the seventies, then, consumer policy was high on the political agenda, and generated an interest - and funding opportunities - for policy-oriented consumer research that lasted until the late eighties. At that time, business-oriented consumer researchers were for some time forced into the defensive when the strategy wave rolled over both business practitioners and business researchers, because of the belief that consumer research only deals with 'tactical' issues and diverts attention from the really interesting grand questions of business strategy. Fortunately, later another wave, the market orientation wave, firmly re-established the importance of knowing consumers for business performance, and especially showed the potential of linking consumer research to the new product development process. More recently, there is a renewed interest in consumer research from a public policy perspective, with focus on topics like healthy eating or sustainability. All these changes in user interests have, together with the funding opportunities that they have generated, left their traces on Danish consumer research.

In the following, I will present six examples, or 'glimpses', from Danish consumer research. These are my subjective selection and do not claim any representativeness or comprehensiveness. However, I hope that they show the variety of Danish consumer research, and that they also show how research develops in the interaction of researchers and the environment in which they work.

2. Six glimpses

2.1. Consumer policy research

Consumer research, also in Denmark, originated from a management perspective. But in the business-critical late sixties and early seventies, there was a lot of talk about consumers being the underdogs in a market economy dominated by powerful business actors, leading to asymmetries of information and market power to the detriment of consumers. This led to a focus on consumer policy and an interest in policy-oriented consumer research, with the group around Folke Ölander in Aarhus playing a major role. In a seminal article (Ölander 1990), he explained how policy-oriented consumer research should differ from business-oriented consumer research. Business-oriented consumer research tries to explain how consumers *react* to various stimuli – most notably those under the control of the seller, like the marketing parameters. In policy-oriented consumer research, one should focus more on the consumer as an active being – somebody who deliberates on his or her choices, and one should address the (complex) question on which choices are in the real interest of the consumer, as opposed to the interest of the marketer. A considerable stream of work originated from this perspective, some in direct response to open policy questions. An interesting example is a piece of work on policy implications of the possible introduction of electronic media for advertising and selling through the so-called videotext systems (Ölander & Sepstrup 1987) – an early precursor of the internet that one tried to introduce in countries like France, Germany and the UK in the early eighties. All these early attempts failed, as neither the technology nor consumers were ready for such media, but all consumer concerns discussed today with regard to advertising and selling over the internet were already clearly formulated in the piece by Ölander and Sepstrup from 1987, years before the introduction of the internet.

Recently, we have seen a resurrection of policy-oriented consumer research under the heading of 'transformative' consumer research, which can loosely be defined as consumer research that aims at increasing consumers' well-being (see Mick, 2006). An example of that is the research on healthy eating that has been going on at the MAPP centre recently (e.g., Grunert, Wills & Fernandez-Celemin 2010). This research can draw on the theoretical progress that has been made in the consumer behaviour field during the past decades, like the importance of heuristic decision-making, of peripheral processing, and of automatic reactions to external stimuli, and also on the methodological progress, like the use of observational techniques and eye-tracking in addition to retrospective questioning. However, it is interesting to see that one of the limitations addressed already by Ölander, namely the focus on single brand choices, still is a limitation today (Grunert, Bolton & Raats in press). Healthy eating results from the sum of many brand and consumption choices, and while the individual brand choice is an important building block, insights into those choices need to be complemented by how they form part of an ongoing process of small decisions that together form patterns of consumption.

2.2. Research on culture and lifestyle

Culture and lifestyle are often named together in textbooks on consumer research, although they have been mostly dealt with in different research traditions, as we can see also in Danish consumer research. Lifestyle, a diffuse term with origins in psychology and sociology, was adopted in marketing-driven consumer research in the seventies in the form of the activities-opinions-interests approach, employing a quantitative, survey-based methodology. Culture has been viewed as a context factor, framing consumer behaviour in ways that the individual consumer usually does not reflect upon. Both lifestyle and culture researchers have developed an early interest in comparative studies, where it is common to distinguish emic and etic approaches.

Etic approaches emphasize comparability and are willing to offer some cultural subtleties to achieve it. An example is the research on food-related lifestyle originated by Karen Brunsø (Brunsø & Grunert 1993; Brunsø, Scholderer & Grunert 2004). The aim was to develop a domain-specific, theory-driven instrument that could be used for cross-national comparisons. She developed a survey-based instrument measuring 23 aspects of purchasing motives, quality aspects, ways of shopping, cooking methods and consumption situations. The research instrument that came out of this effort did indeed exhibit cross-national validity (as measured by a factor invariance criterion, see Scholderer et al. 2004) and was shown to have nomological validity by mediating between human values on the one side and purchase behaviour on the other side (Brunsø, Scholderer & Grunert 2004); when applied in segmentation studies, it led to types of segments that were comparable across countries. It has since been widely used across Europe.

In terms of underlying paradigm and methodology, this research is in stark contrast to the work done by the group around Søren Askegaard in Odense, which has achieved worldwide reputation and some top publications. They use an ethnographic methodology, working with small numbers of informants to gain in-depth knowledge. As an example, Kjeldgaard and Askegaard (2006) compared youth cultures in Denmark and Greenland in both urban and rural settings. Across these very different settings, they found three common ‘structures’: the role of consumption in identity construction, the center-periphery distinction as an important dimension of locating oneself (especially in the rural areas), and youth as a site of consumption.

Despite the stark methodological contrasts between these two research approaches – one based on psychometric scale construction, the other on ethnographic methods – they can sometimes converge to the benefit of both sides. In a recent project, researchers from Odense and Aarhus collaborated on a healthy eating topic. The Odense team did ethnographic studies on the discourses on healthy eating that prevail in the Danish society, distinguishing four discourses: the ordinary, the indulgent, the controlled, and the resigned. The Aarhus team then developed scales measuring the importance of those four discourses in the lives of consumers, and succeeded in segmenting Danish consumers based on the values obtained into three groups (commons, idealists, pragmatists). The process was documented in a joint publication (Chrysochou et al. 2010).

2.3. Research on attitude formation

Attitude research has been a mainstream topic also in Danish consumer research for many years. Like elsewhere, early research in the area was dominated by the Fishbein attitude model and its adaptations. Some research done at the MAPP centre provides an interesting case on how an unexpected research result can lead to new directions in theory development.

A basic assumption in the Fisbhein-type attitude model is that changes in beliefs about the attitude object will lead to change in the attitude. As part of a project on consumer attitudes towards the use of genetic modification in food production, experiments were carried out on how information designed to change beliefs would affect the attitude and the behaviour in choosing between different food products. Results showed that not only did none of the informational stimuli provided result in any attitude change, but also that subjects in all experimental groups were less likely to choose a genetically modified product than subjects in a control group, no matter how the informational stimuli supposed to affect the attitude were composed. It seemed that the information designed to affect beliefs and hence attitude did rather activate a pre-existent attitude, which then became more behaviourally relevant (Scholderer & Frewer 2003).

This raised two questions – how were those pre-existent attitudes formed (if not based on beliefs about the attitude object), and are there any other factors that could lead to their change? Exploratory analysis of the data led to the hypothesis that these attitudes were formed in a top-down rather than a bottom-up manner: the attitude to the object is not based on beliefs about the object, but on categorization of the attitude object as an instance of a group of objects to which higher-order attitudes already exist. In the example, consumers categorized genetic modification as instances of unwanted technological progress, interference with the environment, and industrial food production, all of which were viewed negatively. This hypothesis was later confirmed in other studies (Søndergaard, Grunert & Scholderer 2005). A possible answer to the second question – how such attitudes change – came up more or less by accident when it was found that attitudes became more positive when consumers had tasted such a product, and liked the taste (Grunert et al. 2004). This finding is compatible with an affective conditioning mechanism, by which the cognitively controlled attitude formation by top-down categorization possibly can be bypassed. This hypothesis is currently being tested. Ongoing research also addresses the question how situational factors can affect the behavioural relevance of attitudes.

2.4. Research on cognitive structure

A basic premise of the Fishbein model is that attitude is based on the cognitive structure with regard to the attitude object. The model of cognitive structure employed by the Fishbein model is very simple, consisting only of the salient associations to the attitude object. For some years, considerable effort went into building and measuring more complex models of consumers' cognitive structure. One such model, where also Danish researchers made a contribution, is the means-model of cognitive structure (Gutman 1982). The means-end model assumes that cognitive structure is hierarchical, and can be conceived as being composed of chains that link perceived product attributes to consequences of using a product having these attributes, which in turn are linked to human values. Especially the group in Aarhus did for several years research both on methodological issues in measuring means-end chains and on theoretical developments on how means-end chains can be related to choice behaviour (e.g., Bech-Larsen & Grunert 2005; Grunert & Grunert 1995). This has resulted in useful insights mainly into the appropriate use of the laddering interview technique, which is the methodology mainly used when measuring means-end chains. But the main issues on the behavioural relevance of means-end chains are still only partly resolved; they relate to the much more fundamental issue of how to explain which parts of a consumers' cognitive system are activated in any given situational context, and how these parts then are used to direct behaviour.

2.5. Research on attention, perception and inference

This is another example of how two originally distinct streams of research can come together in a fruitful way. Research on attention in consumer behaviour has traditionally focussed on attention as a bottleneck, due to the limitations of conscious cognitive processing. Later, focus was more on the unconscious elements in attention and perception (Grunert 1992), and on which traces exposure may leave beyond the limitations of conscious processing. Priming research (which has not played a big role in Denmark until very recently) is a major example of this.

Early research on inferences, especially inferences on the quality of a product, have taken attention for given and concentrated on the processes going on once certain pieces of information about a product have become known. Research on inferences from quality cues have been an important activity in Danish consumer research for many years (e.g. Bredahl 2003; Hansen 2005). At the MAPP centre, the Total Food Quality Model has been developed as a conceptual framework not only for the process of making quality inferences from quality cues, but also for how the formation of quality expectations before the purchase relates to possible disconfirmations of these expectations after the purchase due to own experience or additional cues becoming available (Grunert 2005). This model has been used as a framework for quality perception research also outside Denmark.

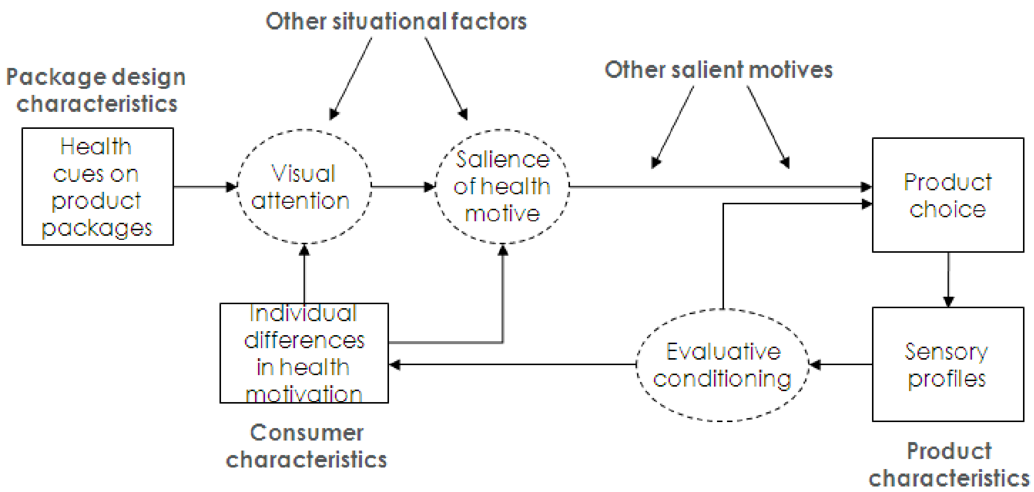

Figure 2. A paradigm for investigating the interaction of attention, inferences and quality perception (the HEALTHCOG project).

One insight gained from this line of research was that inferences from quality cues can be automatic, unconscious, and hence not available for introspection. This suggests that it may be useful to combine insights and methodologies on automatic processes in attention and perception to an analysis of the quality perception process, so that attention, motivation and cognitive processing can be integrated into a common frame of analysis. Figure 2 shows a research paradigm where this is attempted, and which is currently applied in an ongoing project. Visual attention is measured by an eye-tracking methodology, and effects of different visual cues on motive salience, quality perception and choice are investigated. In addition, it is also analysed how the perceptions formed in the process are modified by experience with the product, and how mechanisms of evaluative conditioning interplay with the cognitive processes in affecting possible repurchase. In this way, this line of research also converges with the stream of attitude formation and change research described earlier.

2.6. Research on retailing

Most consumer buying decisions are made in a retail environment, but for some reason retailing research has always been the underdog of the consumer research area. There is a large body of literature on store image, but much of it is conceptually very simple and emulates the structure of the Fishbein attitude model without using the theory. Likewise, the literature on store choice has employed choice models with a lesser degree of sophistication compared to the literature on brand choice.

The group around Hanne Hartvig Larsen at the marketing department in Copenhagen was a major exception. A major highlight of the work there was the publication of a book on household's store choice (Engstrøm & Hartvig Larsen 1987), which unfortunately was available only in Danish. The book carefully constructs an elaborate conceptual model of the store choice process. Usage situations for the products to be bought, time allocation patterns in the family, and key issues like icon products together result in cognitive maps of possible shopping sequences, among which the household then has to choose. The chosen shopping trip is then implemented, subject to unforeseen circumstances. The book is a theoretical treatment and witnesses a kind of conceptual thoroughness seldom seen today, where book publications (and conceptual ones especially) have become rare.

Retailing research is still going on in Copenhagen and more recently also in Aarhus.

3. Danish consumer research in a Nordic context

Like most other consumer research groups, also the Danish groups have been during the past 50 years in a process of internationalization. Also in Denmark, the North American influence has been strongest, supplemented by some French and German influence due to the import of professors from these countries. Compared to these, the influences from the other Nordic countries have been relatively minor. As the contributions in this volume show, the Nordic countries each have followed their own path in developing a consumer behaviour research tradition, and increased collaboration across the actors in the Nordic countries could be beneficial for all.

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GOOD BAD CONSUMPTION: REFLECTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSUMER RESEARCH IN FINLAND

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Abstract. The article discusses first the ambivalent relationship we have toward consumption in Nordic societies; consumption can represent both a desired, good thing which describes the general welfare in society but also a detested, wasteful thing that contributes to the neglect of the environment and other non-material needs. The past consumer research covers both sides. Several paradigm changes have taken place during the years. Starting from scarcity research and poverty issues, consumer research developed into economic analyses of aggregate consumption choices and their prediction. The first behavioral turn directed the interest in cognitive information and decision processes of the individual consumers. The second behavioral turn introduced social scientific studies in which consumption was seen as socially and culturally determined and indicator of a broader way of life. In the next, environmental turn, researchers became interested in the external effects of consumer behavior on the ecological welfare, nature and energy use. Consumers were treated in the role of citizens who cooperate in favor of the common goods. Finally, the cultural paradigm that now is predominant, is analyzing cultural and symbolic meanings of consumption and consumer experiences. Correspondingly, methodological approaches have followed the changes, reaching from economic choice models and multivariate analyses to cultural research approaches and methodologies such as constructivism and discourse analysis. Moreover, recent ‘neuroeconomic’ research on consumers’ perceptual visual and brain processes and emotions have also re-elevated the traditional experimental methods. Presently, several disciplinary and methodological paradigms live in parallel, and it is not always easy to find coherence between them.

Keywords: Consumer research, Paradigm change, Cognitive, Social, Environmental, Cultural

1. Introduction

Consumer studies form an interdisciplinary field that has always been connected both with theoretical developments in social and economic sciences and with several practical interests in society. By theory developments I refer to the gradual expansion of behavioral models within all economic sciences; the necessity to better understand the motives, preferences and choices, decision making process, as well as collective consequences of behavior.

Not only theoretical but also practical, problem solving interests guide consumer studies. They deal with a variety of social issues, for example, how consumption contributes to welfare, macro-economic growth and market efficiency, how to understand and predict changes in consumers’ interests and satisfaction, as well as how consumer preferences and action can be changed into a socially desirable direction.

In this article I try to reveal some "mental turns" or paradigm shifts that have taken place in consumer research in Finland during the last century, but particularly in the last forty years when I have been closely working with consumer research myself. Similar paradigm turns could possibly be identified in other Nordic countries too and thus claimed to be typical of the North-European consumer research in general.

My review of consumer research is skewed towards consumer behavior theory in marketing and sociology whereas consumer studies in economics, social history, food sciences and social or and consumer policy will largely be bypassed although they are also important and have inspired marketing and sociology scholars. Each researcher who has published a doctoral dissertation or other major books will be mentioned by his/her dissertation which often tells the main field of interest. I hope that the readers will also find out their articles.

Before contemplating the paradigm shifts of the field, a couple of words about the public reactions to consumption and consumer behavior in general are in order.

1.1. Good – bad controversy

One main feature in treating consumption in public discussion and research is its emotional connotations. Consumption is often the embodiment of either good or bad things in society, sometimes both, but seldom treated in neutral tones as for example as one treats other economic concepts such as income, production or employment.

In the first half of the 20th century consumption was mainly treated as a good thing and associated with progress, better living conditions and higher quality of life, something that everyone was striving for. Later on, consumption became an ambivalent and "bad" thing for moral and egalitarian reasons, especially if income and consumption were unevenly distributed among the population. Moreover, saving and frugality have been also strongly rooted in the thinking of citizens in Finland, and probably also in other Nordic countries, due to the long scarcity during the wartime in the 1940's and long after. At present times environmental movements often generalize that all consumption is harmful to the nature or climate without specifying which aspects are harmful and which are neutral and maybe even beneficial to the environment. It is thus almost an inborn attitude of the Finnish population that consumption is a bad thing.

At the same time, however, it has been fully acceptable to strive for higher living standard through the public spending for example on free schools, child care, medical care and hospitals and welfare benefits. Public consumption is almost without exception considered morally good because it is associated with human rights, egalitarianism and solidarity in society in contrast to private consumption that mostly is entitled to represent conspicuous consumption, waste and destruction of natural resources. The new green or “de-growth” ideologies attack in the first place private consumption whereas there is a strong resistance to give up any acquired public benefits and public consumption.

Only lately has this dualistic good-bad confrontation in the attitudes toward consumption become somewhat less drastic. Postmodern times have somewhat relaxed the moral attitude and given consumers the permission to enjoy consumption as playful experiences. Social gatherings and distinction with the help of consumption such as clothing, music taste and leisure activities are for example an important part of present-day youth culture. The more permissive attitude passes through all society. For example, in the last recession in 2008, private consumption was for the first time treated by government and media as a good and encouraged thing that helped to level off the economic downturn, whereas still in the 1990-1995 depression, restraining from consumption was the commonly approved social norm (Uusitalo 2005).

Consumer research has during the years covered both sides of consumption, good and bad. However, in most economic research the starting assumption is that consumption is a good and desired activity. Consequently, the externalities of consumption have been left too much to the realm of moral discourse instead of doing careful empirical economic analysis of them.

According to my view, Finnish researchers have in many occasions been earlier in shifting to new theoretical paradigms and methodological approaches than colleagues in other Nordic countries. This has many explanations. One is the strong expansion of universities, business schools and marketing departments and their doctoral degrees in late 20th century Finland, which has furthered new paths of interdisciplinary research. Another explanation comes from the many connections of Finnish researchers directly with the American consumer research and Middle-European social research. The contacts to U.S. were built early through the ASLA-Fulbright scholarship system, and several scientists were working at the United States universities where consumer behavior studies were already established in early 1970’s. A similar trend to adopt ideas from the American consumer behavior research took place in other Nordic countries too but maybe somewhat later. Further, the early willingness to paradigm changes can be explained by the close contacts of our social scientists with the continental French and German traditions and methodological approaches in social science.

As society Finland wanted after the Second World War catch up the consumption standard of other Western countries, especially Sweden, which during the whole 20th century was our main reference point in consumption and social policy. After the television spread out, the variety of ideal life styles broadened. Consumption-related aspirations were also supported by abundant television and printed advertising. Among the Nordic countries Finland took the most liberal attitude toward advertising and commercial television. This shows not only as one of the highest per capita advertising costs in the world, but abundant advertising has also supported a great number of published newspapers and magazines, and in international comparison, substantial time spent for daily reading in Finland.

2. Prehistory of consumer behavior studies

2.1. Scarcity and poverty

Interest in consumer behavior developed along the development of consumer goods industry and markets. In past times households produced their own necessities, and the monetary income and choices were limited. The very first empirical consumer studies in the beginning of 20th century (Hjelt 1912) were focusing on worker families in cities and how they could manage their living under poverty. As Ahlqvist (2010) has shown in her dissertation on the history of consumer statistics and studies, social welfare issues dominated the interest in families' consumer behavior in the first half of 20th century. It was only after Keynesian ideas started to spread and influence economic policy, that consumption was seen as an important element in economic growth, and modeling and predicting consumer demand and saving behavior started to preoccupy also economists in a broader scale. In Finland, the idea that increasing consumer income had positive effects on demand and thus finally benefited whole economy, was introduced to the general public not by economists. It was a social politician, Pekka Kuusi (1961), who published a much debated book on the social policy for the 1960's in which he justified a demand-oriented economic policy in which improving workers' incomes and social welfare benefited whole society in economic terms.

Before the Second World War consumer studies were more or less sporadic, and only from 1960 onwards do we have more systematic statistics on all types of consumption, not only food. It also covers the whole population and allows comparisons between various population groups (Ahlqvist 2010, 51, Laurila 1985). Still, in gathering data on consumer expenditures in the 1950-60's, the main purpose was to develop reliable cost-of-living and price indexes rather than predicting or understanding the mechanisms of consumer demand and choices (Ahlqvist 2010).

Scarcity and poverty as problems that were targets of the very first consumer studies have not disappeared, but the issue is no more whether daily food intake and housing are satisfying the basic needs. Now it comes down to relative poverty, in other words, how fair and justifiable the income distribution is and in which direction it develops. One can rightfully claim that consumer research in Nordic social sciences has been more occupied with class and income differences than consumer research elsewhere, and this continues. Background of this interest is found in the democratic policies, the history of strong worker unions and, presently, the aim to maintain what is left of the welfare state and income equality, which have shown to be fairly successful in reaching political legitimacy and citizen commitment in all Nordic societies.

The issue of absolute poverty has moved to global level. However, the world development and poverty problems have received only little attention from the consumer researchers who have only few contacts with the development economists and global non-governmental organizations. Thus, also in Nordic countries, most consumer researchers work to understand consumer behavior and problems of their own affluent, developed societies. By scarcity is now referred either to relative scarcity or the scarcity of natural resources, consequences that the neglect of collective environmental effects of consumption has brought up.

2.2. Explaining aggregate consumption and saving

Predicting aggregate demand and saving became a central target of early economic research on consumption from the 1950-60 onwards. Already Klaus Waris (1945), who later became the director of the Finnish Bank and chancellor of the Helsinki School of Economics, published in 1945 a study on the incomes, consumption and saving of Finnish households in the 1930's.

Along with the development of econometric models and possibilities to handle electronically large statistical data, various demand models became common. Econometric models of explaining aggregate demand and saving, but also expenditures on specific product classes could be tested. For example, Lauri Korpelainen (1967) and Meeri Saarsalmi (1972), the first female professor in marketing in Finland, studied the demand of household durables, Sirkka Hämäläinen (1981) consumption vs. saving behavior, and Sinikka Salo (1984) household housing investments. ETLA (The Research Institute of the Finnish economy) and VATT (The Government Institute for Economic Research) conducted during the years a series of studies to estimate the future structure of household expenditures and the income and price elasticities and cross elasticities between various expenditure groups (Marjomaa 1969, Hämäläinen 1973, Väisänen 1980, Virén 1983, Suoniemi & Sullström 1995).

Later on it showed that these kind of aggregate models and expenditure system models were perhaps very useful for macroeconomic forecasts and policy, but not for business planning or understanding consumers profoundly. The analyses showed general trends of various product classes, but did not indicate exactly what type of products within a product class could become successful. No wonder that the management and business schools in countries which had become 'consumer societies' with high discretionary spending (such as the United States), became very interested in consumer research that could improve their understanding of the modern consumers and improve business firms' capability to better meet the variety of preferences, and thus improve their competitive position.

According to my opinion, economists were too committed to the neo-classical theory and the assumptions of given preferences and individual rationality, and had too much distinguished themselves from the behavioral and social sciences. The introduction of the time allocation theory and rational expectations models to the economists' palette did not much change the situation. The formation and changes in consumer preferences remained largely unexplained by the economists.

3. First behavioral turn – cognitive information and decision processes

The behavioral turn took place in consequence of the development in the United States where marketing departments in business schools put their minds to a more detailed analysis of consumer information and decision processes from the turn of 1960-70 onwards. Psychological concepts, explanations and measurement scales that had been neglected by the economists for so long were spreading among the marketing and communication researchers.

In the first phase research was fairly pragmatic and management-oriented, trying to understand consumer response to business parameters (such as price, product quality, promotion and the place of distribution, all used to create a good brand image). The theoretical foundations of the so called parameter theory and the importance of branding in marketing were already in the 1950's developed by Nordic business economists (Arne Rasmussen, Gösta Mickwitz, Mika Kaskimies), but the American textbooks by Philip Kotler and others made them pragmatic marketing wisdom worldwide by listing the important parameters by which marketers could influence consumers.

Later on it became evident that understanding which marketing stimuli are important is not enough to understand consumer choices. Important is also how and through which processes they were perceived and interpreted by the consumer. Moreover, consumers were not only influenced by rational arguments but also by intuition and feelings. Not only marketing parameters were important but also consumers' own personality, involvement, and social context.

In the behavioral paradigm, the clarity of earlier (economic) consumer choice models was to some degree lost and replaced with a variety of models, for example, behavioristic learning models, probability models of repetitive behavior, and later on, with various versions of multiattribute attitude and choice models. Consumer information and decision processes were partitioned in smaller steps, and each part was analyzed separately. The black box between input stimuli and output behavior was really torn open. All this resulted in much more detailed and accurate picture of consumer cognitive learning and memory processes and of preference and attitude formation.

Inspiration in the 1970's came from new books and empirical articles by James F. Engel, David T. Kollat & Roger D. Blackwell, Howard Sheth, Francesco Nicosia, John G. Myers, Thomas S. Robertson, Harold Kassarjian, Gerard Zaltman, Richard Bagozzi, Russel Belk, James Bettman, Elizabeth Hirschman, just to mention a few early scholars who developed consumer behavior as an independent, interdisciplinary research field within marketing.

'Consumer behavior' research in contrast to earlier 'consumption research' clearly differed from the models of rational choice and aggregate demand in microeconomics so far. The Association for Consumer Research was founded in the 1970's and new trends and ideas were disseminated in the yearly conferences held in the United States. The North-American consumer behavior tradition was very much oriented towards cognitive psychology, information and decision making processes. Basically the research relied on the same rationality assumptions as in economic theory that consumers form their attitudes individually on the basis of careful evaluation of various product attributes and uses a rational decision rule to choose the best alternative. The impact of the cognitive psychological tradition can be seen also in the majority of the Finnish marketing dissertations on consumer behavior until present times when the so called cultural approach has partly replaced psychology as the major approach of the marketing scholars. Early examples of information and decision process-oriented doctoral dissertations are, for example, Lehtinen 1975, Liisa Uusitalo 1977 (licentiate diss.), Möller 1979, Martti Laaksonen 1987, Anttila 1990 , Pirjo Laaksonen 1994, Kuusela 1992, Vuokko 1992, Panula 1993, Kujala 1994, Raijas 1997, Outi Uusitalo 1998, Luomala 1998. Also Olli Ahtola (1985) who several years had worked at the universities of Florida and Denver was familiar with cognitive consumer theory and methods. However, his influence on young researchers in Finland remained limited since he, after returning to Finland, became soon vice rector at the Helsinki School of Economics.

Consumer behavior courses were in the 1980's first started at the Helsinki School of Economics, the predecessor of the Aalto University School of Economics, but we never succeeded to have a professor dedicated to the field. As a consequence, when doing consumer research, I have always felt somewhat guilty since my professor chair (1990-2009) was dedicated to marketing, especially advertising and other marketing communication, not to consumer behavior which has been my main interest. To meet the requirements I have given regular lectures on the advertising effects on consumer, and even wrote a review article on that topic for a book on Nordic consumer behavior edited by Karin Ekström in Sweden (Uusitalo 2010).

4. Second behavioral turn – consumption as indicator of social behavior and way of life

A behavioral turn also took place among social scientific studies. They studied consumer behavior from a more holistic point of view examining its social background and distinctiveness as well as connection to social structures. However, only few sociologists – with the exception of a few cultural anthropologist − focused on consumer behavior before the late 1980's. It was only alcohol consumption that gained attention as a social problem.

During the time of radicalism at the universities in the 1970's, even basic research on consumer behavior was often treated by social scientists as a non-legitimate, commercial topic and consumer researchers as servants of the capitalistic system of need production and manipulation. The sociological analyses remained on an abstract, critical level without proof from consumer statistics or other empirical findings (e.g. Ilmonen1985). Consumer behavior was not yet recognized as an important part of social behavior and social interaction. A gradual change in the attitude towards consumer research came from abroad, mainly from European research but it was also inspired by Finnish sociologists interested in welfare issues such as Allardt (1976), or in the way of life differences and social distinctions in general, such as Roos (1976).

Finnish sociology had traditionally close contacts either to the Marxist tradition and its followers in Britain (e.g. Scott Lash, Zygmund Bauman, Anthony Giddens), or to the Frankfurt critical school and its successors in Germany (e.g. Theodore Adorno, Norbert Elias, Jürgen Habermas, Niklas Luhman, Ulrich Beck, Claus Offe, Gerhard Schultze) , and later on, to a wide variety of French philosophical and sociological thinkers, many of them leaning towards post-structural and post-modern theories (e.g. Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Maffesoli, François Lyotard, Henri Lefebvre, Gabriel Tarde). The most influential in Finnish consumer sociology were perhaps Bourdieu (1984) and Campbell (1987).

Also writers working outside discipline-specific research traditions have found soon response among socially oriented consumer researchers in Finland. Of those I wish to mention especially Fred Hirsch, Albert O. Hirschman, Tibor Scitovsky, Jon Elster, William Leiss and George Ritzer who all have inspired my own research. This exemplary sample demonstrates that the geographic marginal position of Finland has encouraged to rather than prevented from rapid co-opting ideas globally.

Although Finnish sociologists, following the footsteps of the above mentioned scholars, finally accepted consumer behavior as a legitimate part of social behavior and target of research, still only a few empirical studies or dissertations were conducted on the topic, and consumer sociology was seldom appearing as an own fraction in sociology conferences. The first pioneers who really did empirical sociological research on consumption patterns and social distinctions based on large statistical data are Liisa Uusitalo (1979) and Timo Toivonen (1986), both employed by the business schools (Helsinki School of Economics and Turku School of Economics).

Toivonen's main work was conducted still in the spirit of class theory, but in my own doctoral dissertation *Consumption style and way of life* (Uusitalo 1979) I wanted to question not only the previous economic and individualistic explanations of consumption, but also the oversimplified class explanations typical to sociology so far. My interdisciplinary approach that utilizes both economic and sociological theory was then – and still is – somewhat rare within consumer behavior research. The results showed that social and structural factors are important to understand differences in consumption styles but their influence varies greatly depending on the aspect of consumption under study, for example, whether we explain the modern-traditional dimension, variety and richness of consumption, or transportation and communication choices.

Moreover, by starting the study by first looking at the interconnections between various consumption expenditures (as also Bourdieu did at the same time in France) and identifying main differences in consumption styles, and afterwards explaining each dimension separately helped to specify the relative importance of social factors. It also helped to understand that people do not make their consumption choices for each product group separately, but consumption depends on the way of life consisting of a variety of products and services from various groups. It showed also that consumption activity can be a structuring force in society and not only the other way around as class theories assume, and that people hold emancipator power and can re-shape their living conditions to meet their aspirations (see also Uusitalo 1998).

As these examples show, consumption was in sociology treated within the broader frame of way of life, social distinction and class differences, or as a side topic in the study of specific social problems such as income differences, alcohol consumption, food consumption, the great migration from country to cities, depression and unemployment, or youth problems (e.g., Hannu Uusitalo 1988, Kortteinen 1982, Roos & Rahkonen 1985, Tuorila 1986, Sulkunen 1992, Falk 1994, Uusitalo & Lindholm 1995, Noro 1995, Gronow 1997, Lehtonen & Mäenpää 1997, Wilska 1999, Lehtonen 1999, Gronow & Warde 2001, Mäkelä 2002, Kajalo 2002, Räsänen 2003, Mäenpää 2005). Consumption as innovative force or as everyday practice has been studied by Pantzar (1996, 2000) and the role of women and household advisory organizations in constructing consumer society by Heinonen (1998).

In 1970's and 1980's the psychological, choice-oriented consumer paradigm in marketing and the sociological studies of consumption patterns as socially determined ways of life developed rather independently, with only a few connections between the traditions. For myself this has during the years caused some identity difficulties, since I have the foot both in psychological and sociological traditions, and moreover I also have a continuous wish to follow what is going on with the rational choice models in economics.

In addition to the two academic behavior traditions and the corresponding university institutes, a third important actor in the field of consumer behavior research in Finland has been the National Consumer Research Centre that was founded in 1990 to improve the knowledge base for consumer policy and consumer well-being in general. It has also served as footboard towards academic research and given job opportunities to the newly graduated doctors. The main driving force behind the National Consumer Research Centre has during all its existence been its leader, Eila Kilpiö, whose own background was in home economics (e.g. Säntti, Otva & Kilpiö 1982). She earns word of thanks for her interest to develop both the scientific basis and policy oriented research at the institute. The many researchers during the years and their publications can be found at www.ncrc.fi (for example, Mika Pantzar, Johanna Leskinen, Anu Raijas, Johanna Varjonen, Päivi Timonen, Eva Heiskanen, Petteri Repo, Ville Aalto-Setälä, Johanna Mäkelä, and Kristiina Aalto, just to mention a few of them).

As the fourth important actor I like to mention the Statistical Central office of Finland www.stat.fi which since 1950-60's has regularly collected consumption expenditure and time use data on Finnish households (Household, Consumption and Time use Surveys) and provided authentic, up-to-date reports of consumption structures and population group differences , as well as consumer barometer and other specific studies on household consumption of energy, mass communication, leisure etc., and published edited interdisciplinary books on consumer behavior (e.g. Nurmela 1996, Ahlqvist & Raijas 2004, Liikkanen et al. 2005, Ahlqvist et al. 2008).

The closer we come to the present day, the more there is interaction between various paradigms and institutes. Researchers have to find collaborators in order to form project groups and receive funding. Therefore, when approaching 21st century, consumer behavior research starts to broaden and cover new societal problems and apply many new theoretical approaches borrowed from a variety of disciplines. Whereas the previous mental paradigm shifts had more or less a disciplinary origin, the following turn starting in the 1980's came into being based on worries concerning the environmental impacts of economic growth and consumption.

5. Environmental turn − the unintended consequences of consumption

The innocent, happy growth period and enjoyment of new product innovations after the Second World War scarcity and regulation did not last more than twenty years. The oil crises of the 1970's and increasing environmental hazards reversed the interest and a wish emerged to re-direct consumption towards a more sustainable path. Therefore it was important to find out which activities caused most problems and what kind of social or economic incentives were needed to prevent or substitute the harmful behavior.

Personally I tried to contribute to this turn of consumer behavior research in Finland, being one of the first ones to link consumption and ecological issues. The inspiration and financing came first from abroad, and later on from the Academy of Finland which in the 1970's and 1980's was the only major financer of interdisciplinary innovative research. After having finished my dissertation, in 1979, I was fortunate to be employed by the Science Center Berlin (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin), Institute for Environment and Society which had been founded to study social aspects of environmental issues. I started to work with environmental impacts of consumption patterns (e.g., Uusitalo 1986a, 1986b), and later on, to study individual rationality and free rider behavior in connection with environmentally relevant choices. For me, environment appeared as a typical case of public or collective good that requires cooperation and commitment to social norms from all actors (Uusitalo 1989, 1990a, 1990b).

Johanna Moisander (1986, 1996) continued the research on environmental behavior at the Helsinki School of Economics studying empirically e.g. green values, and determinant s of green choices in transportation behavior. Her essay dissertation on green consumerism was the first on this topic in Finland (Moisander 2001). Also National Consumer Research Centre adopted quite early environment as one of its priority fields, for example Eva Heiskanen (2000) has studied product life cycles, and Päivi Timonen (2002) heuristic rules of consumer choice of detergents, Niva, Mäkelä and Kujala preferences for natural and functional foods. The Statistical Central office made several broad surveys to collect comparative data for European purposes (e.g. Tulokas 1990, Tanskanen 1997). In sociological departments of universities, environmental research started somewhat later inspired very much by the German Ulrich Beck and his theory of the global technological risks for which no specific quarter can be attributed liability. Still consumer behavior issues were not specifically emphasized in environmental sociology (e.g. Massa & Sairinen 1991, Massa & Ahonen 2006).

The promising new line of environmental consumer studies came soon to a gradual stop for two reasons. The Finnish economy crashed into a deep depression in 1990-95. This lifted financial, debt and employment issues as the main topics on the public agenda (unemployment figures reaching 18% at the top). Secondly, meanwhile also theoretical interest of consumer researchers had turned toward consumer behavior as a cultural and symbolic phenomenon. The interest of consumer researchers was also directed toward new phenomena on the virtual markets and network society (e.g. Uusitalo 2001).

Also, a great shift took place in research methodology now emphasizing discourse analysis, ethnic and other qualitative research methods. A new researcher generation was entering the scene that did not want to combine quantitative and qualitative research but was directly growing up in the spirit of constructionism and interpretative research. The purpose was no more to model, explain and predict behavior but rather to understand and reveal the deep cultural meanings of it.

Management-oriented environmental research had also its downhill after the enthusiastic start but was better holding on by changing to the new cultural methods and by broadening the approach to ethical business issues in general (e.g. Joutsenvirta 2006, Joutsenvirta & Uusitalo 2010, Uusitalo & Joutsenvirta 2009). Also, more traditional consumer choice and segmentation models were continued and supplemented by studying the importance of environment in relation to other product characteristics in consumer choice (Rokka & Uusitalo 2009).

6. Cultural turn – the power of the symbolic

No research turn takes place abruptly. Interest in the cultural symbolism and meanings of products, services and practices in their everyday context were already embedded in earlier research on consumption patterns and ways of life, dispersion of product innovations, involvement studies, studies on green consumption and in the interpretative studies of advertising and art reception. These studies took place in Finland long before the British and American cultural-theory oriented (marketing) researchers launched the CCT Consumer Culture Theory as an umbrella brand name covering various types of qualitative research on consumption.

In the earlier phase of this cultural approach, consumer cultural context was better accounted for than in previous studies but the social research methods were not questioned. For example, the Academy project on cultural production and consumption 1986-96, a cooperative project between Helsinki School of Economics and Research Centre of Contemporary Culture at the University Jyväskylä, still more or less applied in its consumer studies quantitative consumer surveys and multivariate analyses, or qualitative interviews of key persons and their interpretations (e.g., Kerttula 1988, Ahola 1995, Takala 1991, Valkeinen & Valsta 1992, Linko 1998, see also a collection of studies in Uusitalo 2008). It was also new to combine consumer studies with studies on cultural production and management and trying to understand the mechanisms behind the changing cultural patterns (e.g. Lassila 1987, Brunila & Uusitalo 1989, Jyrämä 1999, Sorjonen 2004).

Several doctoral consumer dissertations in the beginning of the first decennium of 2000 were already at least partly qualitatively oriented but still more or less based on traditional consumer information and decision theory and/or methods (Juntunen 2001, Öörni 2002, Ylikoski 2002, Koiso-Kanttila 2003, Lehikoinen 2005, Huotilainen 2005, Hakala 2006, Niva 2008).

The dissertation on green consumerism of Moisander (2001) was one among the first within marketing consumer research that turned its back to previous methodology and promoted instead a constructionist approach. After that, by the end of the first decennium of this century, a big change has taken place in consumer research that now predominantly concentrates on the cultural and symbolic aspects of consumption and applies research methods familiar from cultural research such as discourse analysis, ethnic analysis, videography etc. The 'consumer culture' tradition in Finland includes for example the following dissertations: Valtonen (2004) on free time and symbolic goods, Lampinen (2005) on users of new technology, Joutsenvirta (2006) on conflicts between forest industry and Greenpeace, Autio (2006) on youth consumption, Lammi (2006) on consumer enlightenment films, Ahola (2008) on consumer experience at trade fairs and art exhibitions, Leipämaa-Leskinen on consumer mental relationship to food (2009), Lähteenmäki (2009) on consumer view on giving personal information to marketers in the internet, Rokka (2010) on new 'translocal' consumer communities in the internet. And many more are underway.

In a small country, one approach and method can easily overshadow other alternative ways of doing research. Cultural approach can bring and has brought many new insights into understanding consumers. Still, it is very difficult to see how well the knowledge base can be accumulated by using exclusively qualitative and interpretative methods. Moreover, not every doctoral students has a background in cultural theory and discourse analysis and neither a passionate interest or opportunity to study them profoundly, which may encourage some degree of eclecticism.

No wonder that many departments and business schools in Nordic and other countries have more or less adhered to a more traditional and pragmatic line of customer research besides the new practices of cultural consumer research. Basic experimental research, causal models and their testing have lately been applied also in quite new problem fields. One example is the rebirth of interest in consumer perceptual and thinking processes in connection with the development of the so called ‘neuroeconomics’. Based on experimental psychology and neurosciences, measuring of brain waves, facial or eye movements or other techniques especially applied for studying consumer perceptual and memory processes and emotional responses to visual communication, is one promising although still very narrow research line within Finnish consumer research. Special interest is paid to consumer reactions to the stimuli in the internet and other virtual communication encounters. The field of neuroeconomics and consumer behavior is dominated by experimental psychologists (e.g., Ravaja et al. 2006, Simola et al. 2009) but employs also some marketing researchers (e.g. Kuisma et al. 2010).

7. Conclusion

When I started my research career in the 1970’s I was strongly against the purely managerial and utilitarian approach to consumer behavior research. I did not want to study brand choices but instead more profound changes in consumption and their social and cultural background. Now I find myself worrying whether consumer research is already too much becoming academic inside-activity with only few direct connections to real world problems including practical marketing and communication problems, social and environmental problems, and problems of the state economy.

Consumer research in Finland has very rapidly adopted the scientific trends and paradigm changes of each time, although the resources and number of researchers have been always rather limited, and only a few of them have been able to concentrate purely on consumer research. The interdisciplinary diversity of both theory and methodology means richness, but it also prevents the construction of a universal research community with a distinct core and methodology. If there is a core, it is somehow related to understanding consumer-citizen preferences and choice processes and their individual and social background. In other words, economic education and models give a good start to consumer studies, and consumer behavior teaching should in my mind be concentrated in economic universities and business schools. However, borrowing from and cooperation with other disciplines is also necessary in order to develop the theory further as a social science.

The disciplinary boarders between economists, marketing scientists, sociologists and psychologists will most probably remain because the publication field is so strongly diversified along disciplinary lines. There are several interdisciplinary journals but not very many of them are highly ranked. The academic background of present-day researchers can become even more dispersed including also technology and art students, social historians etc. In this situation, problem-centeredness seems to be the only way to find cooperation between the various approaches. This, again, requires that participants first possess good knowledge of their own discipline.

Consumer researchers should continuously use their social imagination and be sensitive to phenomena and problems that are relevant from the point of view of social, economic and environmental policy, business problems, or even consumers' and households' own problems typical of the time. What I am really claiming is that choosing a relevant and theoretically interesting topic or problem should come first, and choosing the methodological approach or reference group is always subordinate to this. Methodology choices should be evaluated against the background of how interesting, relevant and reliable the findings are from a theoretical and practical point of view, not on the basis of trendiness.

Finnish consumer research has developed under a pressure of both economic and social interests. It has experienced many mental shifts during the last century. It is still in a subordinate position in most university departments and business schools. However, in global markets as well as in citizen-oriented government and municipal policy, it will be more and more important to understand consumers and citizens and their cultural context. Private business firms and public decision makers alike need to improve their cultural competences in order to understand consumers, their ethical views and aesthetic preferences and to be able to communicate with them efficiently. Consumer behavior research can have a promising future provided that it can find a satisfactory level of scientific quality and coherence.

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THE ROOTS OF CONSUMER RESEARCH IN SWEDEN

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1. Introduction

I am taking a narrow perspective in a physical sense on the early roots of consumer research (CR) in Sweden. That means that I focus on the two business schools, Stockholm School of Economic (HHS) and Gothenburg School of Economics (HHG). Those were the only academic schools that had any teaching and research on consumers in the early 50s when this type of research first emerged in Sweden. Well, there may have been CR pursued in other disciplines as well, for example in psychology and sociology, which I however ignore.

What I want to concentrate on when I explore the roots of the Swedish CR and what came up from those roots is: What type of problems were dealt with, what perspectives were used, what methods and theories were applied and what empirical data was collected.

1.1. Problem areas

Characteristic for this early research is its specific problem orientation. Less business oriented and more oriented towards macro problems, particularly on the capability of the consumers to fulfill their new role in the market economy. How does that come?

The 50s represent the post war period when mass production of consumer goods expanded, when new distribution channels were developed and the mass communication society boosted. During the war time the consumers were given a passive role as receivers of products that were allotted to them, and the market was the seller's market.

In the new situation the problem for the policy planners was whether the consumers were capable of fulfilling their novel role on the market. This is a likely explanation why the research was undertaken from a societal perspective, not from a consumer perspective.

At HHS Gerhard Törnqvist was dealing with the expanding retail and wholesale systems for the many new consumer goods emerging on the market. He can be seen as sowing the seed for Lars Persson's thesis "Kunderna iVällingby", one of the first theses focusing on the consumers. In this case the thesis was about the consumers' role in the development of a shopping center in the first new suburban center built outside Stockholm. Karl-Erik Wärneryd with a PhD from Chicago was also early in consumer research. One of his focus areas was mass communication. Together with Kjell Nowak he published "People and firms in the mass consumption society" (Människor och företag i masskonsumtions-samhället).

A similar approach took place at HHG. Ulf af Trolle was a young, society engaged professor acting as advisor to the government. In the early 50s af Trolle was engaged in a commission on how to promote competition in markets for consumer goods. One recommendation was to abolish the fixed retail prices (bruttopriser). However, the question was, are the consumers sufficiently knowledgeable to take on the role as prompters of the price competition? This resulted in the very first thesis on consumers by Olof Henell in 1953, "Marketing aspects of Housewives' Knowledge of Goods". Bo Wickström's thesis "Methods to measure the effects of advertising also included studies of consumers. Still another study was Solveig Wikström's licentiate theses, "The price consciousness of the consumers" (Konsumenternas prismedvertande beträffande dagligvaror), published 1959 as a book with the title "The intelligent consumer – myth or reality. I will come back to these consumer studies and to Lars Persson's "The customers in Vällingby".

I will use these three theses as case studies in my review of the early roots of CR. This is for several reasons. They were early, they focused directly on the consumers, and for obvious reasons, I happen to know the circumstances around these theses pretty well.

1.2. Marketing aspects of households' knowledge of goods

The purpose of this research was to empirically explore the structure of consumer knowledge of goods and the variables that explain this knowledge structure. For economic reasons the author did not include the relations between knowledge and behavior. Instead he justified his study with an assumption that more knowledge most likely is accompanied by a more discerning behavior. Hence, the more knowledgeable the housewives, the better the market economy would function.

The study was prepared by a pre-study with open-ended questions. The main study was mainly based on multiple choice questions where housewives filled in written forms. There was an enormous amount of questions, knowledge questions as well as variable questions (50 pages of questions). There were several samples, purposeful as well as random ones. Altogether, over a thousand individuals were interviewed all. Some of them were experts.

As this study was mainly empirical, dealing with the statistical procedure and the many knowledge dimensions and explanatory variables dominates the work. However, the correlation between the knowledge dimensions and the explanatory variables was weak. Although there was an account of previous research about knowledge measurements, the thesis included very little of theory based conclusions. As a consequence, there were limited results to report.

The discussion as regards the implications for firms was much richer and more informative. The author had his background in an advertising agency. He had most likely little connection to the academic world during his research, except for statistical advisers. Additionally, the supervising of theses at that time was not advanced, close to nonexistent. So, considering those circumstances, the thesis was a great achievement.

1.3. The intelligent consumer – myth or reality

The IDAF research institute at GHS was in the 50s engaged in research on the preconditions for active market competition. One topic included the consumer role in the competition. The overall purpose of this research was to elucidate whether the consumers were capable to take on the role as driver of efficient competition. This broad purpose included several sub purposes:

- To make clear the meaning of the concept of "price consciousness"
- To check the ability of the consumers to balance cost and benefits.
- To review the consumers' prerequisites to act in a price conscious way.

The microeconomic theory was the theoretical point of departure. However, very little of such references were included. In addition, the setting for price conscious behavior was explored, such as the retail structure and the price differences among the different categories of stores. The discussion was summed up in an analytical schema accounting for the variables that most likely affect the price related behavior of the consumers in the given market situation. In connection to the discussion of the options to pursue a price conscious behavior, another schema was set up on variables affecting the consumers' decision making.

Methodologically the research was innovative. The study was divided into two parts, one qualitative and one quantitative. The qualitative study encompassed 26 households from four different areas in Gothenburg representing different housing- and socioeconomic areas. The study covered consumers' shopping activities during a two-week period with daily visits to check their shopping. The methods for data acquisition were a series of unstructured interviews, starting with an" along the timeline interview" of a typical shopping tour at the first in-home visit. Then, detailed interviews about the shopping and the handling of the products followed. Additionally, projective tests were pursued together with consumer diaries. The consumer narratives were analyzed to uncover patterns of their price related thinking. From the identified classes of reactions as to price, categories representing different degrees of price consciousness were formulated. The study resulted in a set of hypotheses which were tested in the subsequent quantitative study.

The quantitative study consisted of 300 personal interviews focusing on degree of price consciousness and its variables. The statistical analyses confirmed the results from the qualitative study.

The answer to the initial research question, "Are the consumers competent for their role as prompters of efficient competition", was as follows. According to their prerequisites consumers as a collective fulfill their role in a competent way. It is interesting to note that this conclusion was drawn equally from the insight from the qualitative as the quantitative study. Without the qualitative study it would have e been difficult to measure the way consumers showed signs of price consciousness.

1.4. The customers in Vällingby

The focus area of this research was the customers of the new suburban shopping center in Vällingby. In particular, the aim was to study the gravity of the center for different categories of shoppers; people living in the center, people working there and people coming in from adjacent areas. The study was commissioned by the municipality of Stockholm, with the aim of providing guidelines for planning of future facilities of the city of Stockholm. Thus, the perspective was from a city planner's perspective.

The study had a clear theoretical foundation, applying the theory of retail gravity, summarized in Reilly's law (1929). This mechanical theory, developed and used in connection to the huge expansion of suburban centers in the US, was applied on data from the Vällingby case. For this study, a set of measurements had to be developed. The huge amount of empirical data, collected by personal surveys, was acquired in a sequence of rounds. In May 1957, 2 100 visitors to the center were interviewed, and in spring 1958 home interviews were held with a sample of 650 married women living in the district of Vällingby. Later, 900 interviews were conducted with a sample of people who had parked their cars in the center.

The presentation of the results mainly contained numerical and statistical descriptions of the visitors, i.e. how and why people used the different shops in Vällingby. An appendix was later enclosed to the report to the municipality of Stockholm. This appendix was also mainly descriptive. It accounted in detail for the gravitation theory and methods used. This was to support research in connection to building new shopping centers in Sweden. The thesis was well received.

2. Characteristics of the early roots

In summary, the topics dealt with in the early CR mirrored the problems of the dynamic 50s. The perspective was macroeconomic and societal, not consumer oriented. The knowledge and behavior of the consumers was used for solving society's planning activities in connection to the emergence of new types of problems on the market.

The methods were empirical and descriptive. The three studies were quantitative, and two of them contained huge samples of consumers. All interviews were person to person. Methodologically the focus was on the sampling procedure. The discussion of the results was mainly concentrated on their reliability. On the other hand, the discussion of the theoretical implications was limited, next to nonexistent, and the content of the reference list was narrow and mainly non theoretical. This early research to a great extent mirrored the prevailing research tradition.

Methodologically the study of price consciousness of the consumers was special in the sense that it partly was qualitative, and contained most of the elements ascribed to current qualitative methods. The qualitative study was heralded for identifying the nature of the price consciousness, thus creating the tools for the quantitative measurements. And amazingly, the conclusions were based to a considerable extent on the qualitative study.

Compared to today's CR, the roots were superb as to the careful and accurate accounting for the way the empirical work was completed. This is in contrast to current studies which are typically based on limited empirical samples and a short treatment of the procedure for the empirical data collection. As demonstrated, the empirical work was oversized from today's perspective. The reason for the present research procedure is, of course, that researchers now have access to a rich theory base, and by the internet they have an extensive literature in easy reach. Additionally, contemporary researchers have access to a critical mass of fellow researchers, and access to a vast literature on theory and methods. The researchers may also visit international conferences where they can judge their own research standard. The young researchers also have a doctoral program educating them in research procedures, and further they often have highly committed theses supervisors. This type of support was limited for the forerunners. They had mainly to lean on their own energy, entrepreneurial spirit and endurance.

What happened then to these early consumer researchers? Did they follow the early research path? Yes, they did.

2.1. The future of the forerunners

Olof Henell continued on his academic road and became professor of marketing at the Swedish School of Business in Helsinki, later on at Lund University. His subsequent contribution was his early recognition of the phenomenology and the importance of the emotional aspects for understanding the consumers. He was heavily involved in the in the research on negative effects of consumption of alcohol.

Solveig Wikström left the academic world for ten years. But despite her exodus from academic world her heart was all the time with the consumers and the consumer perspective. First she became a marketing manager, then an expert for government commission at the Department of Finance and the Department of Commerce, involved a. a. in studies on consequences for the consumers of the new retail structures. In 1968 she was appointed associate professor in Business Administration at Stockholm University. Ten years later she became professor of marketing and consumer policy. At Lund she succeeded Olof Henell. In 1998 she moved back to Stockholm University as professor of business strategy and consumption.

Shortly after his PhD 1960 Lars Person became deputy professor of Business Administration at Uppsala University. In 1971 he was appointed full professor of Business Administration at Stockholm University, where he engineered the dynamic formational period of the department. He stayed as head of the department for about 30 years, more or less until his retirement. His main research area was market competition, particularly within the retail industry where he conducted several commissions. Much of his time was taken up of theses advising, committees, and administrative work.

As you can see, CR has been an important gateway to a professor's chair in those days when access to such a chair was rare.

3. What fruits are still to be reaped from the CR tree?

The consumer perspective is still in its infancy, both theoretically and empirically. More generic development is needed. Most B-to-C firms confess that they are consumer oriented. However, they repeatedly admit that they have difficulties to understand the consumer. They often argue that consumers say one thing, but later they may do something else. This account indicates that the understanding of the consumer perspective is still insufficient. Hence, a great challenge for CR is to develop theories and methods that offer a solid consumer understanding. But first more preparatory work has to be done. Recent research indicates that a precondition for understanding consumer behavior is to better grasp how consumers perceive value and to explore the mechanisms for consumer value creation. I believe is that CR still has a long way to go before we have a satisfactory understanding of the consumers and what value is about for them.

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EMANCIPATORY CONSUMER RESEARCH

Working with children as co-researchers

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Abstract. The objective of the article is to discuss the implications of the BAMM project for consumer emancipation and empowerment and to contribute to the body of literature on children as co-researchers. BAMM is also a deliberate attempt to conduct a post-structuralist-oriented project. In this project we tried to avoid processes of hierarchicalization and instead strive for equal or 'symmetrical' relations between adults and children. We also tried to avoid essentializing children, by acknowledging that children are not, inherently, experts in doing research – like adults they need training. To this end we organized a research school, and the focus of this article is a description and analysis of the work in the research school. Our conclusion is that by regarding children as co-researchers working in pairs with adult tutors it is possible to conduct emancipatory consumer research without the pitfalls of repeating modernist assumptions of the relation between children and adults as hierarchical and essential, and to follow an empowering agenda without deciding beforehand what is in the best interest of the child, instead leaving this to the child. This also offers children the real possibility of launching and influencing societal change.

Keywords: Emancipatory consumer research, children as co-researchers, ethnography, Childhood Studies, post-structuralism

1. Introduction

In the 1980s critical theory, inspired by the Frankfurt School, reached consumer research with the explicit emancipatory interest of helping people envisage a better future. The belief in human potential to affect the social world and oppose oppression was huge (Murray & Ozanne 1991). The original assumption in critical theory that it was the scientist, not the practitioners, who knew best and who assumed the perspective of the other was soon countered by an interest in collaborative and participative research, involving those who were the subjects of the studies and thus creating their commitment to the research outcomes (Catterall, Maclaran & Stevens 1999). Within Childhood Studies, which has inspired us in this project; the approach to children as active participants, co-researchers, in the research process was developed.

Post-Foucauldian readings of identity/knowledge/power make, achieving ethical research more complex, however, since the notions of emancipation and empowerment seem to be clearly located within a modernist perspective (Holt

2010). The critiques of modernist assumptions of power and identity seem to leave no room for empowering research. So where does this leave emancipatory consumer research? Given the important role that consumer research is often expected to play in the areas of public policy, consumerism and social welfare, a social change orientation still seems highly relevant - as opposed to the instrumentalist orientation of marketing and business studies (Schor et. al. 2010). Although research with children with empowering ambitions faces huge challenges in an age of post-structuralism, we argue that it is not impossible to perform such research.

In this article we present a project with the ambition of conducting a post-structuralist-oriented project with children as co-researchers, inspired by Childhood Studies researchers such as Pia Christensen, Patricia Alderson and Ruth Kellett. It is not easy to resist the dominant discourses of childhood and adulthood that circulate in society and are reproduced in schools, but as we will show in this paper, it is not impossible. In this endeavour, differences between adults and children must not be viewed as hierarchical or essential, and children must not be viewed as less important than adults. The researcher can no longer regard herself or himself as an expert but as a “supplicant” (Holt 2010) who seeks to learn as far as possible from the knowledge of her/his partner.

Our project Children as co-researchers of foodscapes (in Swedish Barn som medforskare av matlandskap, BAMM[1]) at the Centre for Consumer Science in Gothenburg addresses concerns regarding children’s food habits, and worries that children’s health is jeopardized by bad food habits and junk food, an area where children are effectively “othered” in public debate, and considered problematic and in need of changed lifestyles and adult guidance in order to achieve this. Too often children’s voices are muted and their perspectives neglected. This is indeed an area in need of emancipatory and empowering research.

In BAMM we addressed this issue by inviting the children to be our co-researchers. By doing so, we tried to evade processes of hierarchicalization and instead strive for equal or ‘symmetrical’ relations between adults and children. Our ambition was, for example, to act as tutors for the children, to be alert to their interests and wishes and to let them show us around in their foodscapes; we did not pre-determine in detail how the co-research would progress, but let the research cooperation emerge together with the children. We have elaborated these

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[1] The authors wish to acknowledge the Swedish research funding agency Formas for its grant for the project Sustainable Eating Children’s Way (2008-2010). For practical reasons, in contact with children, parents and teachers we popularized the title as *Barn som medforskare av matlandskap* (BAMM, which translates as Children as Co-researchers of Foodscape). This is the title we have used throughout the project.

aspects elsewhere, and they will only be briefly mentioned here (Johansson et al. 2010). Our second ambition, and an attempt to avoid essentializing children, was to acknowledge that children are not, inherently, experts in doing research – like adults they need training. Our solution to this problem was to organize a research school, and the focus of this article is a description and analysis of the work in the research school. The objective of the article is to discuss the implications of the BAMM project for consumer emancipation and empowerment and to contribute to the body of literature on children as co-researchers.

The inclusion of children in the research process is the exception rather than the rule, even though the object of study is children, which might seem strange in consumer research, where consumers and their perspectives ought to be taken seriously, be they adults or children. Inviting children as co-researchers is even rarer within the field of food and health, which is dominated by quantitative studies, where the object is often to monitor, measure and evaluate the impact of various interventions aimed at children. In recent years, these studies have often been focused on introducing healthy eating and physical activity. We did not, however, want to do research on children, but with them. Our starting point was the children, their focus of interest and their questions. What is interesting for them? What are their skills and what are they curious to learn about? How do they learn about what they are interested in? How do they compile and present their research? How do they propose and visualize changes? Can children's research make a difference? For them? For society? This methodological approach is also necessarily a criticism of the current top-down models for interventions targeted at children.

In this article, we first present different views on childhood, discuss empowerment in relation to co-research and try to position our project within a poststructuralist agenda. We then briefly present the BAMM project as a whole and then go on to discuss the co-researching process and the research school. Finally, we draw some conclusions from our work, present some recommendations for other researchers who wish to try this method, and ask ourselves whether the children were empowered and if the research brought about any change.

2. Views on childhood

Childhood researchers Pia Christensen and Allison James have identified four ways of viewing children and childhood in research: children as objects, children as subjects, children as social actors and children as co-researchers (Christensen

& James 2000). The most traditional and so far most common approach, especially in research on food and health, is to regard children as objects, who are vulnerable to the behaviour of others. Here, the point of departure is a view of children as dependent. Their lives and wellbeing are studied from an adult perspective, using information from parents, teachers and others involved with the children, alternatively by using height, weight, diet and other data collected by adults. In the background there is often a genuine, albeit paternalistic, desire to protect children, who are seen as fundamentally incompetent and vulnerable. It is a vision of children as "becomings", unfinished people in need of adult care and education (Qvortrup 1994, Johansson 2005).

Alongside this research orientation is a view, which is based on children as "beings", as subjects with their own desires, thoughts and life-worlds. The drawback with this approach is that children in many cases tend to become essentialized to residents in their own worlds, separated from adults. Children are seen as valuable but different. This approach has been developed by the interdisciplinary research strand Childhood Studies, where children are not just seen as subjects but as social actors in their own right, acting, taking part in, changing and being changed by socio-cultural processes in the world they inhabit. Childhood is not a universal experience, but different children's childhoods are framed in different ways depending on time, place and social environment (see for example Prout & James 1990, Thorne 1993, Corsaro 1997). The idea of the active child paved the way for a view of children as competent, robust individuals who can take care of themselves, a view that has dominated childhood research in the Nordic countries in recent decades (Brembeck, Johansson & Kampmann 2004). Analytically children are no longer understood merely as parts of family, school or other institutions, which children have traditionally been seen as dependent on, but as independent individuals, as social actors.

From the perspective of children as social actors, the approach to children as active participants, co-researchers, in the research process has been developed (Alderson 2000). This perspective is supported by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), particularly the articles which emphasize children's right to participation. The CRC emphasizes that all actions affecting children's lives (including research) must be based on an approach to children as fellow humans and active citizens (Powell & Smith 2009). It conveys the idea that children must be involved, informed, consulted and heard. But children's rights to participation can also be problematized and questioned. In whose interests are children and youth encouraged to participate? Can children's participation, initiated by adults, have a hidden agenda, instead favouring the interests of adults, such as commercial interests? What happens when children's and adults' interests and values do not coincide (Clark & Percy-Smith 2006)? When adults act as gatekeepers for children's participation in research, the principles of children's rights to protection and children's rights to participation can come into conflict with each other (Powell & Smith 2009).

3. Health promotion and empowerment

Our project concerns food and health and thereby touches on the adjoining area of health promotion. According to the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO 1986:1), health promotion is a process that enables people to increase their control over and improve their health. Health promotion in this definition is closely linked to empowerment, which refers to giving more power to people (children, in our case) on issues relating to health. Participation is considered to increase the possibility of so-called weak groups (such as children) gaining control over decisions and actions affecting their health (Nutbeam 1998: 363). But as sociologist Peter Korp points out, the term participation and what participation really means is rarely discussed in health promotion, particularly in relation to children (Korp 2004). We therefore believe that theories and methods relating to children as co-researchers are important complements to existing models for health promoting work, as these are described for example by Naidoo and Willis (2000).

4. Co-research in a post-structuralist context

All these theories are firmly positioned within modernist theorizing. Childhood Research has, however, begun in recent years to be influenced by neo-materialist currents that have inspired us in this project. Science and Technology Studies (STS) look at ways in which science, technology and society mutually construct each other. Researchers with this focus renounce the idea of given entities that act in the world and believe that reality instead is constantly created through events, where actors are temporarily linked (Deleuze & Guattari 1988, Latour 1998). When this research orientation around 2000 gained influence on childhood research, the concept of 'becoming' acquired a new meaning. It was noted that the present is characterized by the fact that we all reconsider our lives, our identities and our goals, and that all, both adults and children, are therefore 'becomings' who are constantly on their way towards new (or the same) goals. We are never autonomous and independent, but always dependent on other people as well as things for our lives to function (Lee 2001, Prout 2005, Johansson

2005). It is this vision of ‘becoming’, which is the reason why co-research in our project has been attached to the research field of ‘foodscapes’, which is about how food, eaters and the food environment and the Centre for Consumer Science, University of Gothenburg come into being in interaction with each other (Brembeck et al. 2010). The Dutch philosopher Rick Dolphijn defines foodscape as “immanent structures that are always in a process of change”, and more specifically how food functions in such structures (Dolphijn 2004: 8). These food-related structures, or foodscapes, can be of many different kinds, and they evolve as the child explores them.

From our poststructuralist agenda, working with children as co-researchers makes it necessary to consider one’s role as the adult researcher in the cooperation (Johansson forthcoming). Louise Holt (2010) points to the importance of placing “our shifting selves as embodied and feeling subject/agents, connected relationally to other embodied and feeling subject/agents within the specific moments that comprise research” (ibid:24). For us, it was important to pay attention to how childhood and adulthood are constructed – not always as dichotomies - and how issues of power are enacted and negotiated.

5. Generation and power

In the field of Childhood Studies the concept of “generational order” was coined, by analogy with “gender order”, to mark the asymmetrical relationship between children and adults (Alanen 1992, Qvortrup 1994). The concepts point to the structural inequality between adults and children, appearing on several levels, economic, legal, social and psychological. Adults control the resources and the public domain, they have interpretive priority and they work as gatekeepers for children. Even the CRC is written by adults (ibid., Kellett et al. 2004). Research, as well as other activities, takes place in social and cultural contexts, with in-built, more or less visible, power relations, and the generational order always has a potential impact on the encounters between people of different ages, especially between children and adults. When it comes to power relations with two clearly distinct groups (e.g. children – adults, women – men, upper class – lower class), a number of counter-power strategies are available to the subordinate party. Children can, in a subversive way, undermine adults’ power positions with tactics such as evasive answers, subterfuges and humour. Here, they pick their strength in a counterculture community in which children and adults are set against each other (Corsaro 1985, Davies 1989, Johansson 2000).

The generational order can thus be considered as a factor which is always more or less present and which positions people of different ages in certain ways, always providing the starting point in the encounter between adults and children. In Childhood Studies, this structural perspective has been contrasted with a more ethnographic research, where specific children and settings have been studied, and which has found it more relevant to talk about childhoods than an all-embracing childhood. These researchers advocated instead a more unprejudiced approach to age and generation, where no distinctions between children and adults are taken for granted. Christensen and Prout (2002) introduced the concept of “ethical symmetry”, which means that the researcher takes as a starting point that the ethical relation between researcher and informant is the same regardless of whether the research concerns adult or children. Upcoming power asymmetries are hence interpreted situationally, instead of being taken for granted in advance. It also means that all research methods must accord with children’s experiences, interests, values and everyday practices (ibid., Alderson 2000). In BAMM, our aim was to base ourselves on ethical symmetry and to make use of the ideas and definitions of our co-researchers. Moreover, this perspective is in accordance with the idea that reality comes into being in actions and events (Deleuze & Guattari 1988, Latour 1998, Dolphijn 2004).

6. Brief description of BAMM

The purpose of BAMM was to work with children as co-researchers of foodscapes and see if we together could highlight the healthy aspects of their food environments in a way that was attractive to them. As mentioned above, the concept of foodscape means the process in which the eater and the food mutually construct each other. However, in the project with the children we used “foodscape” in a more concrete way, signifying all the places where one comes into contact with food and eating. (In Swedish we used the term “matlandskap”.) The concept thus served to direct the children’s attention to places of food and eating in their everyday lives. It was the door-opener that allowed the children to control the data collection as far as possible. We have elaborated on the theoretical implications of the concept elsewhere (for example Brembeck et al. 2010).

45 children in two parallel fourth-grade classes in a school in a municipality close to Gothenburg acted as our co-researchers. The project was divided into two phases, Phase One, where the children acted as co-researchers, and Phase Two where they acted as co-designers. The projects ran during the 2008-2009 school

year with Phase One during the autumn semester, and Phase Two the following spring semester. In this paper we report on Phase One, the co-research, with only a brief glimpse at Phase Two, the co-design. The children were divided by the teachers into six groups of 7-8 children, and each group had one (or two) of us researchers as a tutor. We spent every Tuesday afternoon after lunch with the children, from mid-September until the autumn break in early November, initially in the classroom and after school hours at the after-school club. We also had the opportunity to participate in Tuesday morning lessons. After the autumn break we continued the research solely at the after-school club.

As an important step in allowing the co-researchers to be heard, the project team met every Wednesday during the project period, the day after the visit to the school. We then talked about the week's visit and only then decided how we would proceed, based on the children’s interests and desires which had emerged the day before. It was exciting and challenging to leave the project open in this way, but it also gave us a certain feeling of uncertainty and anxiety since we were used to planning the data collection process in far greater detail. But we were determined to try to lower our adult authority a little to give the children more space.

The reason why we chose school as our starting point was our previous experience that this is a practical way in which to reach many children (Johansson 2000, 2005). As our ambitions were to explore foodscapes, school seemed as an excellent point of entry: this is where children spend much of their waking hours, eat lunch, and in many cases also eat snacks and sometimes even breakfast. We chose children from fourth grade (ten-year-olds) because of our past experience that it is not until this age that children master reading, writing and arithmetic well enough to participate in a project where such skills are required (ibid.). But we firmly believe that even younger children could be made co-researchers by adapting methods and, for example, letting children draw, paint and dramatize instead of writing. In our case, the school staff came to be an important part of the research project. There was a warm atmosphere between the teachers and the pupils, and the teachers encouraged the children to participate in the research project and incorporated questions about food and health into their teaching. The teachers took part in the research, participated in the discussions, and organized the children into groups that they knew worked, supported those who needed extra help, calmed the class down if it was too loud in the classroom and on some occasions took care of children who needed to get away from the class for a while. The person in charge of the after-school club helped us to obtain space and materials and continuously recorded and reported what happened in the project on the after-school club’s website and on the large notice-board in the corridor outside the after-school club. In this way, parents, children and other interested could be kept informed of the progress of the project.

7. The Research School

We knew that the children already had good knowledge of food and about what is considered healthy and unhealthy food for children. They were, of course, also experts on being children and on their own foodscapes. On the other hand, they could not be expected to know much about research. This was expertise that we possessed. Inspired by Mary Kellett et al. (2004), we organized, within the project framework, a simple "research school" consisting of the following phases:

- Start-up – introducing food and foodscape
- Formulating research questions
- Developing methods - gather materials
- Analysing
- Reporting

7.1. Start-up

First on the agenda was to direct the children's interest towards the focus of our project: food, to problematize the concept of food with them, to introduce our tool foodscape and to some extent to teach them a little about food and health.

Each classroom had a study area, and we placed two groups in each classroom and one group in each study area. We moved benches together to form a large table that we could sit around together. At the first meeting with their tutors all the children received research books: hardcover, black books with red edges and lined paper. They were also asked to choose the name of the group, and because the group's name appeared in some of the texts and pictures produced by the co-researchers, we believe that the naming may have been important and have contributed to team spirit. We tried to leave the definitions of food and foodscape to the children by using the brainstorming method, and made use of their creativity and interest in other forms of expression than words by asking them to draw and paint. This was done using the following four activities:

7.2. What is food?

The co-researchers were asked to associate to the word 'food' and write a list of what came into their minds. The activity worked well. At the children's lists there were food and dishes of various kinds, such as pizza, grilled chicken, fried squid, fruit, ice cream, candy, cake and soft drinks as pear soda and lemonade. There were also tastes such as “good” and “disgusting” and places such as “farm” and tools such as “grill”. Others approached the question from a broader perspective and wrote that food is what you can eat, what you put into your mouth, or that you have to eat food to live. A boy said that food is nutrients and atoms, and another boy gave the recipe for his favourite dish, chicken with rice and “secret sauce”. In discussions afterwards, some children also linked food to dishes cooked for example by Mum, Dad or Grandma.

7.3. Drawing foodscapes

Since we had realized, from our initial discussions with the children, that the concept of foodscape was not so obvious to the children, and might be perceived as “a city of food”, specifically in the form of houses and other things made of cucumbers, meat balls, oranges, etc. we decided to tell them that in this project foodscape meant “places where there is food.” Each child was given a large sheet of paper, colour crayons and pencils and was asked to draw his/her foodscape. The co-researchers accomplished the task in various ways. Home and school were included in almost all the scapes, kitchens were depicted and the school canteen was included, as were the local grocery shop and a pizzeria. Mothers and fathers and the children themselves were in the kitchens, in the TV rooms and in their bedrooms. Some chose to draw their favourite dish. One boy drew squares showing different parts of the day and marked the time, and his friend watched and tried to do the same. Another boy chose to place a pizzeria in the middle and drew roads leading to it. One of the girls depicted her breakfast, another girl drew a grocery shop. One girl spent a long time drawing a nice coffee shop that she wanted to work in when she grew up. A boy with divorced parents drew both the high-rise block where his mother lived and the terraced house where his father lived. Some children found it difficult to think what to draw and received help and advice from their tutors. Some were encouraged to think about where food comes from before it reaches the shop, and they drew farms, industrial poultry units, spinach growing in the fields and fishing at the pier. One boy drew a farmhouse in detail with a barn, tractor, dairy, etc. Another boy began to consider where rice comes from. He drew a ship at sea, transporting food from across the world to Sweden.

7.4. Food diaries

We also gave the children the task of recording a food day. Keeping a food diary is a simple way of structuring the observations of everyday eating into when, what, where and with whom you eat. This is a proven method in human geography (Ellegård and Wihlborg 2001) and domestic science (Pipping Ekström and Shanahan 1999), and we have also used food diaries with great success in past projects (Brembeck et al. 2005, 2006, 2007). Since we expected that the drawings of foodscapes would mainly provide information about where the food is in the children's everyday lives, we regarded the food diary as a way of broadening horizons and also drawing the children's attention to issues such as when and who one eats with. This would give them a better basis on which to set research issues. When the children had finished drawing the foodscapes, the tutors asked them to draw columns in their research books, entitled "When", "What", "Where" and "Who with". The children were subsequently invited to fill in all the meals in a day in the columns.

7.5. Compilation and analysis

The exercise began with the co-researchers presenting their food days from their diaries to the others in the group. They were also invited to ask questions about each other's food diaries and to tell the group what they thought was particularly interesting. The tutors then raised the issue of how to compile what they had learned and suggested bar charts, because we thought that this was a moderately demanding method for the children, which they had already worked with at school. We suggested that the children could concentrate on breakfast. Prepared graph paper headed 'Where do we eat breakfast?' and 'Who do we eat breakfast with?' were distributed. The children took turns to write and colour the different bars in different colours. Then it was time for analysis. Analysis is when you think about what you learned, we told the children. What had they actually learned from their compilations? The children found that almost everybody had eaten in the kitchen, but some in their mother's kitchen and some in their father's kitchen, and the discussion showed that other days it might very well happen that they ate in the living room. In reply to the question "Who with?" there were many options: Mum, Mum and brother, mother and younger sister, family, alone, Dad and stepmother and others.

7.6. Research questions

The tutors went on to ask: "What are we not told by the graph?" Perhaps there were more things the co-researchers wanted to know about the breakfast or any other meal? What were they curious about? This, we told them, is asking research questions. Brainstorming ensued and the tutors wrote down the various issues that cropped up. Initially, it was not so easy for the children to come up with research questions, and as tutors we helped in various ways. One of us referred to the food diary and asked what extra columns could have been added. Then some children in the group came up with: Are there any brands? What shop does the food come from? What does the food cost? How does it taste? How much energy is there in the food? In another group, the tutor initiated a discussion about where in the world food comes from and the co-researchers then realized that you do not just eat on earth but in space as well, and they pondered on questions like: 'What do astronauts eat?' and 'What do astronauts do when the food runs out?'. When we subsequently reflected on the day, we noted that it would probably not be a problem for the children to think of research questions if they received some help.

The groups also had time for a brief discussion on how to find out what you are concerned about, and we tutors had decided in advance to highlight methods the children had not previously tried, such as taking photographs and conducting interviews.

7.7. The research process

Finally, on that day, we tried to summarize the research along with the co-researchers in each group. They took out their research books again and wrote, "What is research?". Then the supervisors went through the difficult concepts from research question to analysis: research questions, learning about your topic, data collection, compilation, analysis, which the children wrote down. We also clarified by recalling that we had already raised research questions with them (where, what, when, with who they eat during the course of one day), that they had collected data using their food diaries, and that we had now made a compilation of the research results in the diagrams. Now it was time to ask new research questions based on the foodscapes they designed the previous time and to move forward with new data collection. Some brightened up and seemed to understand, others were less interested.

We had actually planned a second occasion, where we would go through more collecting of data and the ethics related to it, and maybe let the co-researchers interview each other. But after today's experience, where the children showed impatience about sitting and talking and doing very little in the way of practical activities, we realized that their patience would not suffice for another research occasion with a similar approach, and that it was better to start with more specific research. We therefore decided to deal with ethical issues and to introduce various data collection techniques as they appeared in the groups. At the same time, we felt that the rudimentary basic skills in the research process we had given to the co-researchers and the concepts we had introduced as a tool had been necessary in order to move forward. We also felt that the discussion on research issues in the various groups provided many good ideas to work on. Both we and the children were now ready to seriously get to grips with food research.

8. The fieldwork develops in different directions

In the continued work, we strove constantly to build on the research questions the children asked. We were also greatly helped here by the teachers, who during the part of the week when we were not there talked about BAMM and encouraged the children to think of research questions. When the material was collected, compiled and analysed, we always asked the children “What else do you want to know?”, “What are you curious about?”. This meant that the research in the various groups came to develop in different directions.

One group began by making observations in the shop, then became interested in the list of ingredients on packs and the sugar content of breakfast cereals, then wanted to taste cereals, and then switched tracks and wanted to interview the parents. One of the groups started by visiting a pizzeria, became curious about what really happened behind the counter and next time visited the school kitchen.

Two groups began the research by exploring the phenomenon of taste. The tutors arranged testing of cereals, where the children rated both taste and the pack on a scale of 1-5 and filled in a diagram. The packing with the lowest rating received comments such as “looked healthy” and “looked like adult cereals”, while brightly coloured packages and a pack showing a picture of a celebrity was scored highly. With regard to taste, the group concluded that sweet is tasty, but also unhealthy, which is a problem. They formulated the research question: “Why is everything that tastes good unhealthy?”, and the next task was to go to the local food shop and look for products that tasted good but did not contain sugar. When they came together for analysis the groups showed an interested in additives and noted that fruits such as apples and bananas are natural products without additives, whereas a “fruit drink” contains a lot of ingredients. They also noted that you feel hungry on walking into a grocery shop, and a discussion arose about what shops do to make people buy more. New questions arose about advertising and eventually TV commercials were screened with all the co-researchers.

One of the groups had become fascinated by the energy content of food. This proved to be a group where everyone, both boys and girls, was involved in sports of various kinds and the co-researchers decided to find out what should be eaten to help with training. They also wondered about the level of nutrients in various foodstuffs. The group therefore decided to start their research by working out the nutritional content of their breakfasts. The children wanted information on individual nutrition needs. The tutor guided them to nutritional calculations contained in computer software and to a nutrition program, which the children could work on using the computer. Here, they were able to compare their breakfasts with the recommendations, in terms of energy and nutrient intake, which nutrition experts had worked out for 10-year-olds. Two girls who played football wanted to explore what food was good for girls like them, and since all the children wanted to know more about food and sport, the question was raised as to whether you could make your own sports drink, and they decided to try to make one. Some of the co-researchers mixed one sports drink based on fruit syrup and another with tropical fruit juice as flavouring. The tutor had also purchased a sports drink for comparison. In testing, the three drinks were presented anonymously as A, B and C. The results showed that the self-mixed juice-based drink was scored highest. The children also looked at the contents of the purchased beverage and found that it had many strange ingredients. The tutor had counted the cost and energy content, and this provoked a lively discussion.

9. Giving voice to children

In this paper we have presented a poststructuralist-inspired method of working with empowerment and children as co-researchers. We have highlighted the importance of avoiding hierarcalization and essentialization, by opting for symmetrical relations and providing a research school. We have tried not to regard children as less important than adults, and have positioned ourselves as their ‘supplicants’ or ‘tutors’. A few points that we regard as important to consider when working with children as co-researchers and aiming to contribute to their empowerment are: 1) the extent to which children should be invited to be involved, which differs depending on the purpose of the project; 2) the co-researchers have to gain an insight into how a research process is conducted that is conducive both to enabling them to pursue their own research more independently and to being critical of other research; 3) the importance of place, where school, home and various recreational venues have their pros and cons for the individual; 4) and diffusion of research results, where it is important that the results reach beyond the school walls, that the risk of being confused with other school activities is avoided, and that the children receive feedback on their research from recipients outside the school.

Giving voice to children gave us new knowledge, such as on children's sensual approach to the foodscape, their perception of what research is, and their strategies for navigating in a value-loaded foodscape. Each person's unique knowledge-building process enriched all the participants' perspectives, regardless of age. The children were interviewed on the radio and in the local newspaper and reported how the project had had an impact on their everyday life, and had given them new knowledge, leading to new practices, even empowerment, we might argue, in the form of a better control of their lives and eating. The research questions that emerged indicated problems that the children had experienced in practice in their daily lives. Opting for social change was not far away. In Phase Two, co-design, the children, encouraged to question their foodscapes, began to propose new solutions, new artefacts, to replace the existing ones. They could, for example, see the possibility of having the school canteen serve two different dishes rather than one. They could envisage new colours on the walls and other materials in the furniture, the school canteen transformed into a jungle landscape (Karlsson & Engelbrektsson 2011).

Through BAMM we have gained new knowledge about how children's food environments can become healthier, by working with them as co-researchers. We believe that measures are needed at the individual, school and municipal levels. The premise is that children are treated as individuals with resources to contribute to health promotion work. It means seizing the child's experience and knowledge and giving children opportunities, both in and outside school, to find out more about what they are interested in. We believe that co-research can be a way for children to exercise and strengthen their empowerment. BAMM focused on children and food, but we firmly believe that the method is useful in all research that involves children and children's perspectives.

Our way of regarding children as co-researchers working in pairs with adult tutors proves that it is possible to do emancipatory consumer research without the pitfalls of repeating modernist assumptions of the relation between children and adults as hierarchical and essential, and to work with an empowering agenda without beforehand deciding what is in the best interest of the child, leaving this instead to the child. This also offers children a real opportunity to launch and influence societal change.

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SELF-IDENTIFICATION IN CONSUMER-PROGRAM RELATIONSHIPS

A structural equation modeling approach

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Abstract. Television programs can provide many symbolic resources for the construction of identity. However, the role of media consumption in consumers' identity construction needs further conceptual clarification and empirical evidence. The purpose of this paper is to model the phenomenon of consumers' self-identification in the context of consumer-program relationships. The empirical data for this study is based on quantitative survey. This study provides clarification of the conceptual nature of self-identification in consumer-program relationships with the means of structural equation modeling. As a result, self-identification appears to have four distinct dimensions; connectedness, attachment, emotional attachment and self-connection.

Keywords: identity, symbolic consumption, television programs, consumer-program relationships, structural equation modeling

1. Introduction to the symbolic consumption of television programs

The phenomenon of symbolic consumption attaches to the idea that people search for identity through consumption (Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998; Wattanasuwan 2005; Shankar & Fitchett 2002). Scholars such as consumer researchers, sociologists and psychologists have identified consumption as means of constructing and expressing identity. Elliott (1997) states that products have symbolic meanings which operate in two directions: outward in constructing the social world and inward in constructing self-identity. In this respect, consumers can use symbolic meanings of consumption objects to make sense of the world they live in, to identify associations with other people, and to construct, maintain and express their identities. Consumers may have different interpretations and meanings for the consumption objects and events, so that meanings are not delivered in the communication but are constructed within it (Anderson & Meyer 1998). To manage the phenomenon of meaning making in general, and identity construction in particular, understanding the nature and development of relevant *consumer-object relationships* is essential.

In the previous literature it is acknowledged that possessions, brands and places can play a role in defining the consumer's sense of self (e.g. Belk 1988). In a similar vein, we may see that television programs have such characteristics that consumers can identify with. We may further suggest that "we are what we watch on television." Yet, consumer-program relationships are not widely studied in consumer research. Consequently, *the purpose of this study is to model self-identification in consumer-program relationships*. Firstly, this will require a clarification of the conceptual domain of self-identification. Secondly, I will specify the structural relations of concepts related to self-identification in consumer-program relationships. Thirdly, I will evaluate the model fit to empirical data and interpret the findings.

1.1. Conceptualization of identity construction

There are several concepts, such as *self*, *self-concept*, *identity*, *personal identity* and *social identity* that relate to identity construction. Self-concept is a cognitive and mental representation that one has of oneself. Identity (also referred to as self-identity) is that part of the self which can be specified and expressed to other people. Thus, the basic distinction between the concepts of self and identity lies in that self connotes a more individualistic frame of analysis whereas identity implies some collective basis for self-definition (Deaux 1992). At a more precise level of conceptualization of identity, *personal identity* refers to the awareness of self as being different from others, unique. *Social identity*, for one, is awareness of self as having similarities with other people.

Also *lifestyle* often occurs in discussions on identity. Lifestyle can be referred to as practice of identity-making (Jagose 2003). Thus, the clear distinction between identity and lifestyle is that lifestyle consists of expressive behaviors that are observable (Sobel 1981), whereas identity cannot be directly observed, it can only be articulated. Lifestyle and identity are interwoven as it may be argued that "all social choices are not only about how to act but who to be" (Giddens 1991). As lifestyle and life situations are likely to change over time, so can identities develop. It is quite commonly agreed among postmodern researchers that identity is a dynamic construct. Not only people can redefine their identity, they also can have many different kinds of identity-related projects simultaneously. This is the case when thinking of the many social roles that individuals may possess. To exemplify, a woman can be mother, friend, daughter, employee, wife, voluntary worker, and marathoner. On the other hand, personality traits are rather stable properties of one's identity. Consequently, it is quite difficult to take over identity as an entity and draw absolute distinctions between the things that comprise one's identity and those that do not.

In this study, identity construction is conceptualized as *self-identification*, which means negotiation between one's self-identity and social identity (e.g. Jenkins 2004). Thus, it is suggested that clear distinction between self- and social identity is not possible. The underlying approach to study the self-identification is drawn from symbolic interactionism -literature which states that the self is a function of interpersonal interactions. When related to the context of television program consumption (consumer-program relationships), the construct of self-identification refers to the relevance of a television program to one's self-identification. Like brands, television programs are good at telling stories and conduct social meanings (cf. Edson Escalas 2004). These stories can be adopted, altered or discarded based on the consumers' different interpretive strategies and life projects (Hirschman & Thompson 1997; Aitken, Gray & Lawson 2008; Ahuvia 2005). It is suggested here that self-identification can be realized through the symbolic consumption of television programming. However, it is also suggested here, that the phenomenon of self-identification is not directly observable, yet it can be empirically approached from different standpoints that relate to consumer-program relationships. The cognitive and psychological approach to examine consumer-program relationships is adopted in this study. Thus, the focus is on attitudes toward the consumption of television programming instead of an emphasis on actual viewing practices. This choice of focus also means that subconscious identity construction is beyond the scope of this study.

1.2. Conceptual framework for self-identification in consumer-program relationships

The theoretical grounding for this study is in the symbolic consumption literature in the interplay of consuming and being. As a conceptual framework for this study, four distinct concepts related to identity-related consumption of television programs are next presented. The concepts of *connectedness*, *self-connection*, *attachment* and *emotional attachment* are derived from the consumption research on the symbolic meaning of consumption, extended self and consumer-object relationships. Thus, this study aims to contribute to these streams of research by providing a valid conceptualization of the phenomenon of identity construction in consumer-program relationships. The four concepts are expected to be linked to each other by manifesting different aspects of consumers' self-identification in the context of consumption of television programs.

Connectedness manifests how television program becomes part of one's daily life. The concept of audience connectedness was first introduced by Russell and Puto (1999) who proposed that this concept can capture the extent to which a program extends beyond the mere viewing experience, contributing to a viewer's self and social identity. Russell, Norman & Heckler (2004) further define connectedness as "the level of intensity of the relationship(s) that a viewer develops with the characters and the contextual settings of a program in the parasocial television environment." Connectedness to a program can vary from indifferent entertainment to high-involved fanaticism. High connectedness develops if the program is considered to be personally relevant (Russell & Puto 1999). Clearly, connectedness is a *conative* concept in terms of concrete and visible acts of self-identification. Russell et. al. (2004) further identify six dimensions of connectedness that manifest different daily activities in which television programs and/or their characters can one way or another be present and have relevance. These dimensions are escape, fashion, imitation, modeling, aspiration and paraphernalia. In addition to these dimensions, it is likely, that there may be also other manifestations of connectedness, such as program-related online activity and consumption.

Self-connection manifests how an individual sees program as relation to her/his predominant self-needs and -goals, such as striving for self-verification and self-enhancement. In this vein, the self- connection has been defined as a dimension of the consumer-object relationship that indicates the amount that the particular object contributes to one's identity projects and concerns. Hence, this connection expresses significant aspects of self (Fournier 1998; Swaminathan, Page & Gürhan-Canli 2007; Thomson, MacInnis & Park 2005). Relatedly, an important distinction can be made between one's actual self and ideal self. Actual self refers to how a person perceives him/herself, whereas ideal self refers to how a person would like to perceive herself (Sirgy 1982). Self-connection refers to *cognitive evaluation* of the television program quality in terms of one's goal-oriented self-identification.

Attachment theory began with John Bowlby's ideas about the nature and function of human attachments. There is a wide array of areas into which attachment theory has been extended since Bowlby's original ideas. One of those areas is consumer research. Kleine, Kleine III and Allen (1995) characterize attachment as a signifier of self-extension, which means that attachment describes the degree of "me-ness" of the consumption object as relation to different temporal orientations of self. The previous discussion has emphasized development of self as life stories and narratives (e.g. Ahuvia 2005). Basically this conception suggests that self-identity is developed when people integrate their remembered past, experienced present and anticipated future into a coherent whole (Baumgartner 2002). As Belk (1988) has pointed out, a sense of past is essential to a sense of self as it enriches our sense of self when defining who we are and where we are going. Also Giddens (1991) presents that self is reflexively understood in terms of biography. Furthermore, attachment can be related to the dimensions of individual and social identification, which means that possessions can have significance in terms of both self- and social symbolism. Clearly, attachment is here conceived as a *cognitive* concept in terms of the narration of self-identification. It illustrates how program is experienced and interpreted as relation to the sense of self.

Emotional attachment is closely related to concept of attachment. However, we may distinguish between attachment and emotional attachment since emotional attachment is not evaluative, but it is emotion-laden, *affective* concept (see Ball & Tasaki 1992 for the measurement of emotional aspects in attachment). Further, it does not imply a temporal orientation. It is likely that the things that are closer to our identities result in greater emotional attachment than things that are less relevant to our identities (Belk 1988). Ahuvia (2005) has further noticed that consumers use the things they love to construct a sense of self especially in the face of identity conflicts. Loved objects are also connected to self-expression by making visible internal dispositions, preferences, and impulses.

As a whole, the concept of connectedness brings out the intensity of one’s relationship with a television program by showing how the television program is a part of the consumer’s daily life. The concept of self-connection is needed to indicate the overall relationship quality and depth in terms of the aspects of self-verification and self-enhancement. Attachment manifests and specifies the particular nature and orientation of the consumer-program relationship, whereas the concept emotional attachment can capture affection-laden responses that relate to consumption of a particular television program. Operationalization of the four constructs as Likert-scaled statements is presented in Appendix 1 within the limits of chosen items for the final structural model.

2. The research method – structural equation modeling

Structural Equation Modeling (hereafter SEM) is an advanced multivariate technique to examine multiple dependence relationships between variables simultaneously (Singh 2009). Thus, SEM is a combination of factor analysis and multiple regression. SEM methods are also able to take measurement error into account in the estimation process (Terblanche & Boshoff 2008). One of the strengths of SEM is the ability to construct latent variables (factors) and thereby to provide statistical tests of construct dimensionality. The interest in SEM is often on theoretical constructs, which are represented by latent variables (Hox & Bechger 1998). Latent variables are unobserved, which means that they are not measured directly, but are estimated from several measured (ie. observed) variables. Also relations between latent variables can be estimated. In fact, the SEM can be divided in two parts. The measurement model is the part that relates measured variables to latent variables, whereas the structural model is the part that relates latent variables to one another.

In this study, it is expected that there exists a structure of four latent variables: connectedness, attachment, emotional attachment and self-concept connection. Each of these concepts was measured with several observed variables, altogether 47 variables. It is further expected that there should exist a relationship between these variables because they are all imply to the phenomenon of self-identification. An important issue concerning the use of SEM is the issue of causal interpretation. When data is non-experimental by nature, it should be noticed, that there is nothing in structural equation modeling that transforms correlational data into causal conclusions (Hox & Bechger 1998). Therefore, no causal relations between the latent variables can be suggested on the basis of their covariance structure.

As a whole, the purpose of SEM is to construct a model that fits closely to the observed data. Model fit is never absolute in the strictest sense of the meaning, and there are several possible models that may fit the observed data to the same degree. Therefore modeling requires evaluating various model fit indices and choosing the model which has the most plausible and relevant interpretation in the context of the real world phenomenon in general, and the research question in particular.

2.1. Criteria for the model's goodness-of fit

A good structural model 1) fits closely to empirical data observations, 2) is parsimonious, and 3) it is interpretable. Basically, model fitting is about balancing between the fit of a model, which can be improved by increasing the number of parameters, and the parsimony of the model, which can be improved by lessening the number of parameters. A variety of criteria have been used to indicate how closely the correlation (or covariance) matrix conforms to the observed data, and thus to guide searches for best-fitting models. Typically researchers also employ several criteria to determine the best fitting model. The fit criteria that are most commonly used in structural equation modeling, and that are also applied in this study are chi-square *(χ^2),* a chi-square difference test (CMIN/DF), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness of fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI), parsimony goodness of fit (PGFI), and comparative goodness of fit (CFI) . Each of tests has some limitations as a descriptive index of model fit. Therefore, there is a need to complement one index with others when evaluating the fit of the model.

2.2. Model specification

The specification of the structural model of self-identification in consumer-program relationships is presented in figure 1. As all of the four concepts described earlier; connectedness, self-connection, attachment and emotional attachment have been associated with identity construction in previous research, they are considered here as the manifestations of self-identification. In other words, they reflect self-identification in consumer-program relationships. These kinds of reflective models are typical of factor analysis. Here, it is assumed that the underlying construct of self-identification causes variation in the four concepts rather than the other way round. Hence, change in the higher-order construct affects the underlying measures.

Jarvis et al. (2003) point out that the nomological network for the reflective indicators should not change, but they should have the same antecedents and consequences. Therefore, items in a reflective model should be internally consistent. Here, this means that the four concepts should co-vary with one another, and dropping a variable should not alter the meaning of self-identification, because all of the measures are assumed to be interchangeable, and that way equally valid indicators of the underlying construct. It should also be noted that there may be some other variables that indicate the construct in addition to those that are represented in a model. In the end, only the indicators that are the most significant ones should be included in a model to improve its clarity and parsimony.

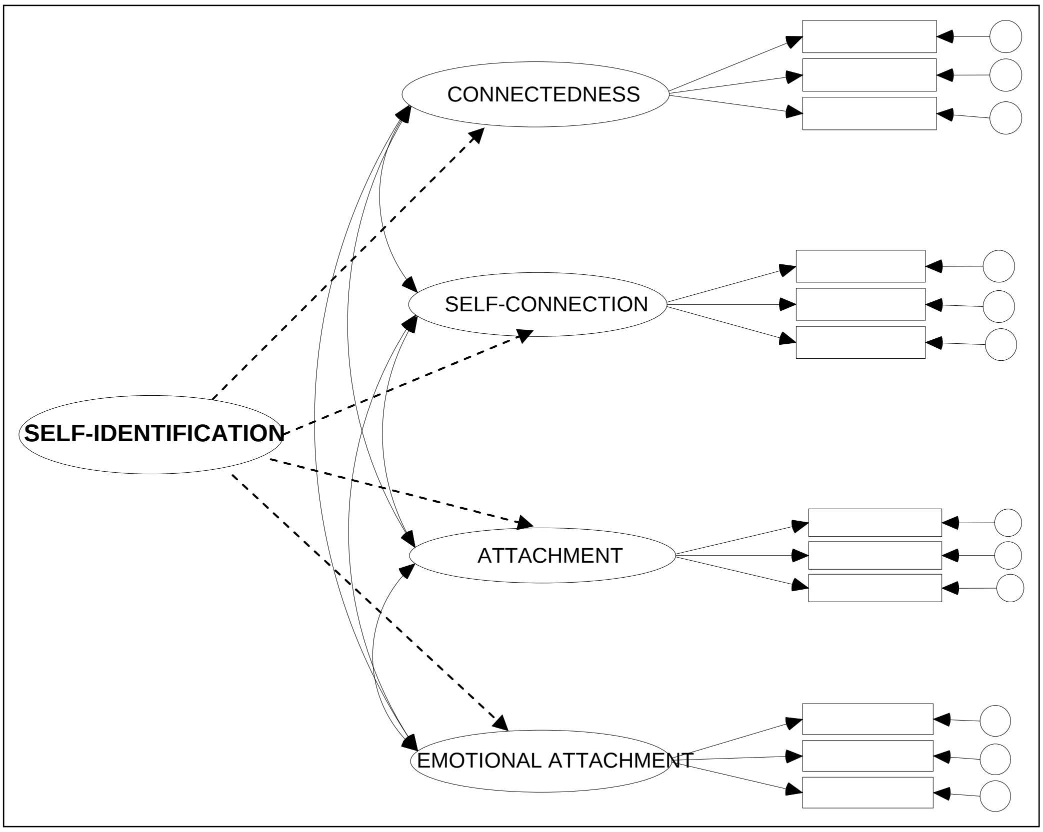

Figure 1. Model specification.

Rectangles represent observed variables or constitutions of them (ie. sum variables), whereas latent constructs are represented with an ellipse. In addition, there will be calculated an error term for each endogenous variable. The construct of self-identification is modeled as a higher-order construct that has multiple dimensions, each of which represents an important aspect of the construct (Bollen & Lennox 1991). The construct of self-identification can be characterized as a hypothetical construct, as it results in the process of conceptual abstraction rather than that of empirical abstraction. Model specifies also the relations between the latent variables as equal indicators of self-identification. Based on the analysis of between-construct correlations we can further illustrate how change in value of one latent variable can affect to the values of another latent variable.

3. Analysis and results

Empirical data for the study consists of responses to an online survey that was placed on a popular Finnish web page[1] that provides complete TV schedules for more than 70 channels. Altogether, 359 valid responses were obtained, and 114 different favorite programs were named as the basis for answering the statements on their consumer-program relationships. Empirical focus was on favorite television programs, because those are most likely to have a role in self-identification processes. Young and young adults (from 10 to 29 years old) were in the majority (58.6%) of the respondents, and 67.4% of the respondents were women. Missing values, and "cannot say"-answers (0-sector) were replaced with a series mean in order to exploit the whole data.

Structural equation modeling was carried out with AMOS 17.0 program. A maximum likelihood criterion was used when estimating the parameters of the model. It is the most commonly used estimation method and requires sample size about 200 cases (Hox & Bechger 1998). First, all of the 47 observed variables were placed in the model. However, it was soon found out that this solution would be too complicated and therefore the number of parameters should be lessened both to increase the validity and reliability of the model, and also to make the model more parsimonious. The fit between theoretical assumptions and the empirical observations can be evaluated based on 1) the fit indices of a structural model 2) the magnitude of the parameter estimates, and 3) the p-values of estimates that indicate the significance level ($p<0.05$ is statistically significant). As a rule, those items that have lowest parameter estimates and statistically insignificant p-values should be eliminated from the model. In addition, we can evaluate construct's validity by assessing average variance extracted (AVE), and evaluate reliability of the model by assessing Crohnbach's alpha value (CA) which represents internal consistency of the reflective indicators of the construct.

After some revisions of the group of observed variables an acceptable model was attained. Finally, the measurement model of self-identification consists of 16 observed variables, and five unobserved variables (latent factors), see figure 2. Each of the latent variables has multiple observed variables to control for possible measurement error. All indicators load significantly on the latent factors and are nontrivial in size (threshold value 0.2). As it was expected, the regression weights are positive, as is the correlation between the latent factors of connectedness, attachment, emotional attachment and self-connection, presented

[1] The web page is http://www.telkku.com, and it has about 600,000 visitors each week (source: telkku.com media info 2009).

in table 1. This finding indicates that the four concepts are manifestations of the same underlying phenomena, that of self-identification. The correlation matrix of the observed variables is provided in appendix 2. The highest squared multiple correlation (R^2) value for the construct of self-connection indicates that it appears to be the best indicator of self-identification, whereas emotional attachment has the lowest estimated reliability. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha values exceed .70 indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The variance of self-identification is estimated to be .675. This indicates that the amount of variance captured by the self-identification construct is good in relation to the variance due to measurement error.

Table 1. Descriptive and measurement statistics of the latent constructs.

	Mean (of the items)	**SD**	**CA (alpha)**	R^2	**1**	**2**	**3**
1 Connectedness	3.00	1.116	.70	.90			
2 Self-Connection	2.75	1.169	.73	.98	.94		
3 Attachment	2.46	1.008	.80	.77	.79	.89	
4 Emotional attachment	2.88	0.997	.74	.59	.78	.71	.68

Satisfactory goodness of fit of the model was attained as well. The fit indices presented in table 2 except Chi-square test and Adjusted-Goodness of fit (AGFI) yielded an acceptable value. Given that the χ^2 statistic 275.205 (100 df, p-value 0.000) is less than triple the available degrees of freedom, the significant χ^2 is likely due to the large sample size rather than true misfit in the model. Thus, the CMIN/DF ratio (2.75) of relative chi-square indicates a good fit. This model with four second order latent factors and one higher order factor proves to be better than model with only one latent factor, that of self-identification. Fit statistics for the one-factor model are weaker in all indices except parsimony fit index. (χ^2 384.407, df 107, p-value 0.000, CMIN/DF 3.593, GFI .871, AGFI .836, CFI .855, PGFI .685, RMSEA .085). In fact, unacceptable fit of the one-construct model validates that constructs are separate even though they are highly correlated. Furthermore, better goodness-of-fit statistics do not result when highly correlated latent factors of self-connection and connectedness are combined into one factor (χ^2 279.109, p-value 0.00, df 101, CMIN/DF 2.763, GFI .909, AGFI .877, CFI .907, PGFI .675, RMSEA .070).

Table 2. Set of model fit indices and their threshold values.

Chi-square	df	P	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	PGFI	RMSEA
275.205	100	0.000	2.752	.910	.877	.909	.669	.070
threshold values		>0.05	<3.0	>.90	>.90	>.90	>.60	<.08

With regard to the reliability of the observed indicators, squared multiple correlations (R^2) that are visible in figure 2, indicate the proportion of variance in a reflective indicator that is explained by its underlying latent variable. The rest is due to measurement error, or it cannot be explained by the model. A high value denotes high reliability for the indicator concerned. It can be seen that *modeling* has the best reliability of the connectedness indicators, with value .43, and *escape* has the lowest value (.08). As regards the concept of self-connection, *ideal* has the best estimated reliability as .57 of the variance of it is accounted for by the variance in self-connection. Attachment, for one, explains .68 of the variance of *present*, whereas the estimated reliability of *reactions* is .74, indicates that it is a good manifestation of emotional attachment.

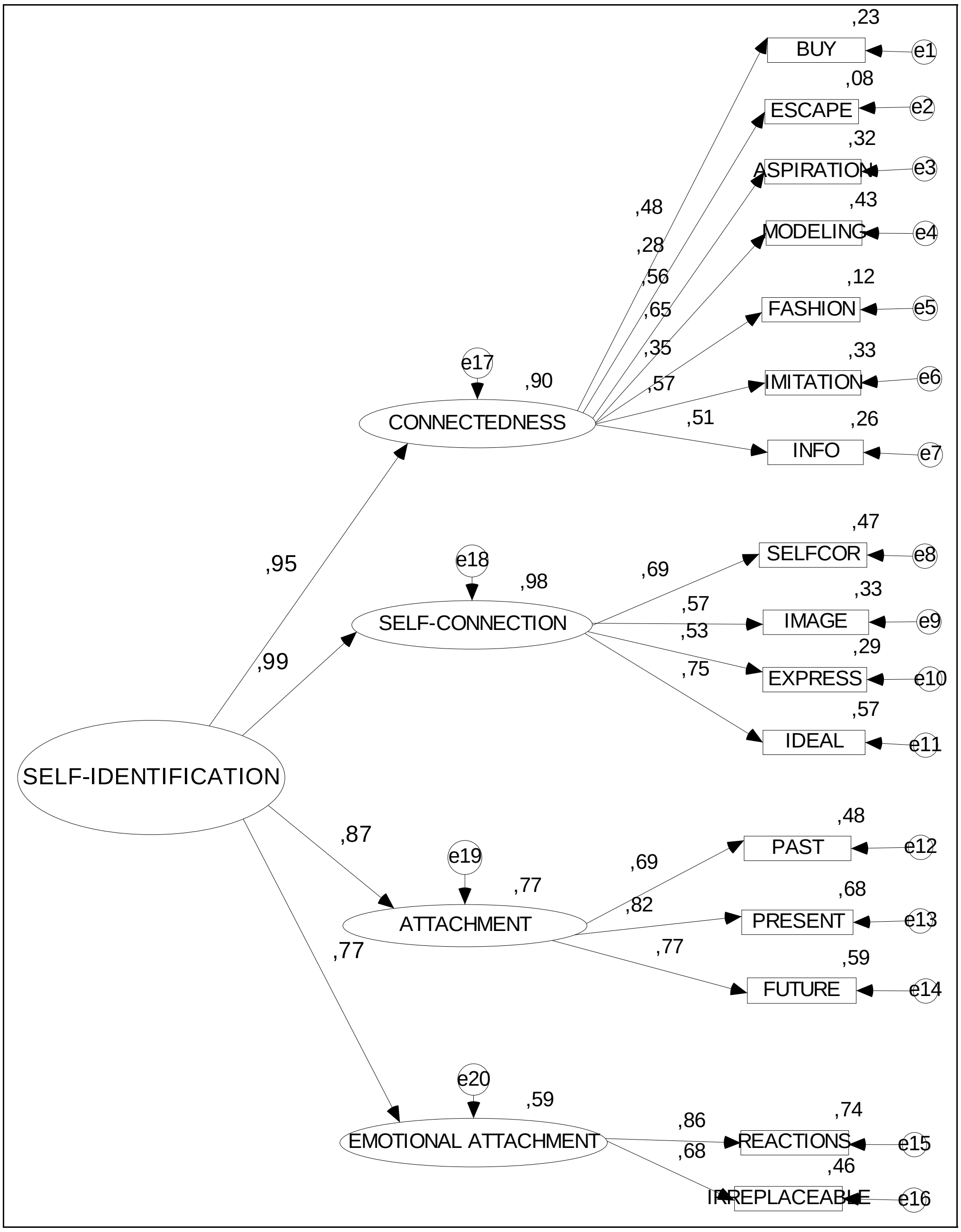

Figure 2. Structural model of self-identification in consumer-program relationships (standardized)

4. Conclusions

This study contributes to existing literature on consumer-object relationships and identity-related consumption by identifying theoretically defensible dimensions of self-identification in the context of consumption of television programs and evaluating the nomological validity of the proposed self-identification construct with the means of structural equation modeling. As Fournier (1998) advanced the understanding the types of relationships consumers form with brands, and provided a diagnostic tool for analyzing the relationship strength, this study contributes to the characterization of consumer-program relationships.

Empirical data was collected in the form of an online survey consisting of quantitative Likert-scaled statements about consumers' relationships with their favorite programs. Favorite television programs were chosen as those are likely to have more significant role in the lives of the respondents than other programs that are watched. Altogether 359 responses were analysed with AMOS-program suitable for structural equation modeling. As a result of this study, self-identification appears to have four distinct dimensions; connectedness, attachment, emotional attachment and self-connection. The concept of connectedness brings out the intensity of one's relationship with a television program by showing how the television program is a part of the consumer's daily life. The concept of self-connection indicates the overall relationship quality and depth in terms of the aspects of self-verification and self-enhancement. Attachment manifests and specifies the particular nature and orientation of the consumer-program relationship, whereas the concept emotional attachment captures the degree of affection-laden consumption of a particular television program.

It is suggested here, that the future development of television programming will increasingly take into account the strength of consumer-program relationship as one of the indicators of program success and attractiveness for the media marketers and advertisers that wish to understand and adopt a consumer's perspective. According to symbolic consumption view, the relationship between consumer's self-concept and image of an object has an instrumental role in consumer behaviour as it influences product evaluations. For example, it is likely that a valid measure of self-identification should predict program-related consumption, and also consumers' willingness to invest in a program to obtain it. However, these hypotheses were not examined in this study. In the future studies, the model provided needs further validation in the context of consumer-program relationships. It would also be interesting to examine, whether the model holds in other contexts of media, and in other populations.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Observed items for each construct. (Measured with five-point Likert-scale 1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)

CONNECTEDNESS	Mean	Std. D.
BUY: I have purchased some products that I have seen on my favorite TV program.	1,79	1,057
ESCAPE: My favorite TV program helps me to forget about the day's problems.	4,13	,895
ASPIRATION: would love to be on my favorite TV program.	3,34	1,341
MODELING: I learn about my own life by watching my favorite TV program.	2,87	1,173
FASHION: I like the clothes they wear on my favorite TV program.	3,37	1,082
IMITATION: Sometimes, I find myself imitating the gestures or facial expressions of the characters on my favorite TV program.	2,25	1,189
INFO (*consisting of two variables)*: I read articles, news or books if they are related to my favorite TV program. I want to search for information about my favorite TV program online.	3,27	1,076
SELF-CONNECTION		
SELFCORRESPONDENCE: I can identify with my favorite TV program/its characters.	2.85	1.212
IMAGE: My friends probably associate me with my favorite TV program when they think of me.	2.49	1.092
EXPRESS: I would probably mention my favorite TV program to my new friends.	3.02	1.182
IDEAL: My favorite TV program reflects a lot about the kind of person I would like to be.	2.62	1.191
ATTACHMENT		
PAST (*consisting of two variables*): It responds to my longing for nostalgia and traditions. It reminds me of who I used to be.	2.40	1.039
PRESENT(*consisting of three variables*): It reminds me of people who are dear to me. It makes me feel different from others, not just like everyone else. It helps me keep up to date.	2.57	.960
FUTURE (*consisting of two variables*): It shows who I am becoming. It has to do with the goals that I have for the future.	2.42	1.025
EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT		
REACTIONS (*consisting of two variables*): I would feel irritated if someone laughed at my favorite TV program. If someone praised my favorite TV program, I would feel like someone had praised me.	2.65	.996
IRREPLACEABLE (*consisting of two variables*): If my favorite TV program ended, I would not easily find a new program to replace it. If I did not see my favorite TV program, it would feel like I had lost a part of myself.	3.10	.999

Appendix 2. Correlation matrix of the observed variables.

	PRES	PAST	FUT	IRREPL	REACT	IDEAL	EXPR	IMAGE	SELFCOR	INFO	IMIT	FASH	MODEL	ASPIR	ESC	BUY
PRESENT	1,000															
PAST	,620	1,000														
FUTURE	,607	,509	1,000													
IRREPLACEAB LE	,363	,248	,323	1,000												
REACTIONS	,496	,386	,474	,586	1,000											
IDEAL	,517	,443	,629	,341	,440	1,000										
EXPRESS	,281	,221	,344	,330	,366	,444	1,000									
IMAGE	,454	,353	,431	,342	,347	,423	,363	1,000								
SELFCOR	,534	,415	,436	,352	,408	,531	,298	,346	1,00							
INFO	,297	,152	,243	,403	,372	,281	,368	,260	,275	1,000						
IMITATION	,362	,294	,352	,328	,444	,360	,312	,345	,365	,306	1,000					
FASHION	,244	,158	,197	,172	,215	,318	,133	,089	,345	,214	,153	1,000				
MODELING	,514	,427	,490	,293	,417	,477	,325	,317	,491	,265	,339	,140	1,000			
ASPIRATION	,308	,220	,355	,245	,333	,425	,321	,279	,414	,386	,320	,230	,336	1,000		
ESCAPE	,138	,117	,120	,251	,249	,166	,156	,088	,224	,203	,078	,177	,204	,229	1,000	
BUY	,317	,243	,352	,233	,294	,285	,266	,277	,232	,385	,373	,190	,292	,219	,060	1,000

UNDERSTANDINGS OF SUSTAINABILITY AMONG YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN SWEDEN

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Abstract. This paper examines young consumers' understandings of sustainability. Using Swedish data in the Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles[1], open answers among young urban professionals are analyzed within a framework of primarily qualitative methodology. Young adults, students and professionals, living in urban areas will shape our future societies. Therefore, understanding their way of life and views of sustainability will be a key part in the larger puzzle of figuring out the opportunities for a sustainable development including sustainable lifestyles and consumption. Our main research questions are: How do young adults describe their current and future consumption practices? Is sustainability concern a part of their everyday consumption? The aim of our study is to describe and analyze aspects related to everyday accounts of understandings of sustainability related to everyday consumption. 111 consumers have described their way of living and envisioned their future lifestyle. They also reacted to custom-designed scenarios presenting different solutions for a more sustainable lifestyle. Three areas of consumption are in focus: provisioning of food, mobility, and housekeeping. The results illustrate substantial diversity in sustainable lifestyle motivation in Sweden. In sum, there are many different forms of (un-)sustainability discourse and practice, not one homogenous ideal informed by reflexive Swedish "young adults". Yet, at the same time the survey also illustrates the distinctive and shared trajectory of sustainability discourse and practice within Sweden.

Keywords: sustainable lifestyles, consumption, practices, young professionals, food, mobility, housekeeping

1. Background: the relationship between consumer lifestyles and sustainability

Many researchers argue that environmental issues entered the global political and economic stages with the UN conference in Stockholm back in 1972. But, in addition to this, even though conventional understandings and concerns with environmental issues such as pollution and poisoning of nature were part of many people's minds or public concerns, it was not until the so-called "Brundlandt report" (1987) that "sustainable development" hit the public debates and became part of a larger discussion about our common future. That report takes a rather optimistic view on the possibilities of combining increased economic growth and ecological sustainability. In 1992 at the Rio conference, another drafted agenda, the Agenda 21 was put together with a more critical view on the role of Northern countries and proposed that lifestyles among people of the wealthy North was a big part of the problem. During this period a transformation took place that

[1] Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles is a joint initiative of United Nations Environmental Program, UNEP and the International Task Force on Sustainable Lifestyles led by Sweden in the framework of the Marrakech Process on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

pertained to include questions of consumption into an area of public, political, and economic debate that hitherto have been charged with primarily “production-leaning” problem solving considerations. Thus, until recently consumption was mainly considered as being a result of production and, therefore, problems associated with consumption practices and consumers’ choices were to be solved by technological development. Consumption patterns remain material- and resource intensive and thus, of course, worthy of our attention and prolonged analysis. Furthermore, and important from a theoretical as well as analytical standpoint, earlier policy recommendations and public discourse about sustainable consumption often stress *the political role of consumers* in promoting sustainable development by ‘shopping for a better world’ (e.g. Garner 2000: 216; cited in Autio et al. 2009). The position of an *individual consumer as a sovereign economic agent* capable of significantly influencing the structures and practices of consumer culture are abound (Autio et al. 2009: 40). This in turn adds up to at least two major problems: 1) focusing on the individual and, 2) the ideas for change often fall outside the frame of everyday life. We try to elaborate on this by including a theoretical framework that places not the individual as focal point of our analysis, but instead, present our data as descriptions of particular consumer practices that includes, of course, the individual consumer, but also the collective (socio-cultural as well as technical) aspects pertaining to explain patterns of getting around, provisioning food and housekeeping. This framework will be presented in the next part of the paper with short introductions to the most important line of thoughts for the rest of the paper.

Our main research questions are: How do young adults describe their current and future consumption practices? Is sustainability concern a part of their everyday consumption? The aim of our study is to describe and analyze aspects related to everyday accounts of understandings of sustainability related to everyday consumption.

2. Theoretical framework: concepts for analyzing consumption and everyday practices

In our analysis we are inspired by recent work on sustainable consumption that combines an everyday perspective on consumption with an eye on consumers’ values and understandings of the impact of consumption on the environment (Röpke 1999) and the need for studying consumption patterns as embedded in somewhat more general or broad categories of everyday practices (Shove 2003). Understandings of sustainability and current status of lifestyles are interwoven with and influenced by both current and past patterns of consumption. Thus, cultural history and social values are important for interpreting our empirical data and we interpret the data trough the cultural lens of Swedish culture.

In this paper we present accounts or narratives of practices of everyday consumption based on texts written by young Swedish consumers. The accounts serve to illustrate culturally specific and available discourses of everyday consumption and environmental concerns provided by young people today. The language used by respondents for writing about consumption - used to understand themselves and to help create their identities - is shared with others. We interpret the accounts as samples of language and culture, following Moisander and Valtonen (2006), reflecting *practices* and *cultural resources of everyday consumption* and how and whether environmental awareness is "connected" to practices of consumption.

A basic theoretical question concerning the study of consumption and everyday life is of course the delimitation of the object of study. It is important to comprehend aspects of acquisition of services such as electricity, housing, water, mobility (to work, school etc.) etc., and "things" that are outside of ordinary shopping. These consumer services are often organized through a variety of institutions. To understand the dynamics of consumption of groups of goods or services, it becomes important to identify the broader "services" and/or practices that they contribute to achieve; cleaning, washing, transportation, food acquisition and so on, as part of everyday life. Such "compositions" are constituted by a variety of elements. Sociologist of consumption Elisabeth Shove (2003: 161) lists "scientific rationales, signifiers of difference and order, socio-technical configurations, socio-temporal structures, systems of provision, experience and expectation" as co-constituting variables of consumer practices.

We try to elaborate on characteristics such as the extent to which practices are morally charged and have social, cultural and symbolic significance. For instance, unsustainable habits of car driving are highly morally charged, institutionally framed, culturally soaked and, more recently, rejected through intensive campaigns with scientifically charged information providing people with "scientific rationales" for adjusting their mobility consumption patterns. In a somewhat different area of consumption, washing-practices are institutionally ingrained and have developed over a long period of time and are part of a large portion of Swedish residents' lifestyle. Thus, one can find consumers being "locked in", their behaviour is delimited *and* enabled by infrastructures and institutions, and consumer patterns are therefore "path-dependent" (Röpke 1999).

In sum, these are theoretical as well as methodological “tools” that enable analysts to move “beyond the individual” and look at consumption and sustainability in a somewhat broader framework of meanings (narrative, norms, and culture), actions (behaviour and patterns) and institutional backgrounds (corporate, governmental).

3. Method for data collection

This paper uses the data from the Swedish part of the Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles – a joint initiative of United Nations Environmental Program, UNEP and the International Task Force on Sustainable Lifestyles led by Sweden in the framework of the Marrakech Process on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP). There are four objectives of the survey (GSSL):

- Investigate how young adults (18-35 years old, students and professionals, in urban areas) from different cultures perceive and describe their current/future lifestyles and find out if sustainability appears as a core value. Three specific areas will be explored: mobility, food and housekeeping (energy and water use).
- Explore how young adults perceive lifestyles as well as sustainable scenarios displayed through the survey, and analyze whether they would adopt these scenarios in their everyday life.
- Evaluate the impact that information on environmental issues, such as climate change, could have on their lifestyles.
- Understand what « sustainable lifestyles » mean to young adults and what are the connotations behind: are sustainable lifestyles perceived as opportunities for a better future or as constraints?

The Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles is a qualitative and projective web-based survey. The questions are primarily open-ended, asking for views and comments. The material is therefore made up of openly worded descriptions and short narratives. The questionnaire contains four parts. The first contains closed question about the respondent’s background (gender, age, activity, etc.). The second part is about everyday life. The respondents are asked to describe their current and expected future lifestyles focusing on food, mobility and housekeeping. In the third part of the questionnaire the respondents are asked to comment scenarios in 1-minute videos showing sustainable solutions to everyday life situations within the three themes food, mobility and housekeeping. The fourth part of the questionnaire informs the respondents on environmental issues, specifically on climate change, and measures how respondents perceive these issues. The questionnaire takes about 50 minutes to complete.

The scenarios used stem from local initiatives worldwide. There are three scenarios within each theme, but only two of them appear in each questionnaire (randomly selected). The respondents comment their favourite scenario within each theme. The food scenarios are: vegetable bag subscription, urban gardens, and fast-food take away. The mobility scenarios are: car sharing, bicycle centre, and car-pooling on demand. The housekeeping scenarios are: energy management, urban composting, and collective laundry.

Information on the GSSL-survey was disseminated during two months (April and May 2009) in the Swedish cities Kalmar and Gothenburg. We focused primarily on students but avoided students in environmental- and sustainable development programs. In total, 124 questionnaires were collected and 111 were analyzed after deleting those who fell out of the age interval of 18-35.

4. The Socio-cultural context of Sweden – Political corporatism, Nature's authenticity, Technocracy and Consumer Culture

Before introducing the survey results, this section provides a short overview of previous research on Swedish society and culture.

Research shows a long *history of political corporatism* in Sweden. The economy have been collectively managed by employers, workers and state officials – a trend in decline following changes during the last 30 years process of "decorporatization" (Rothstein 1988; Lindvall & Sebring 2005). Another characteristic often mentioned is that various sustainability or "green" movements are rooted in a profound *positive reception of "the land" in Scandinavia* (Gullestad 1989; Wessling 1983). Furthermore, *technocratic approaches to sustainability and consumption***,** the application of technical knowledge, expertise, techniques, and methods to problem solving, are positively valued. Swedes traditionally express preferences for a large involvement on the part of the State (government) and a considerable amount of trust in the promises of technological innovation providing for sustainable solutions (Aléx 2003; Eckerberg & Forsberg 1998; Jörby 2002). Given the historical relationship between the Swedes, their self-identification with a symbolic understanding of the values of Nature, a simple life in the countryside, and imperatives for a responsible relationship with the environment, it is a socio-cultural fact that Swedes understand themselves to be a people dreaming of “*a simple life in harmony with Nature*” (Wessling 1983; European Union indicator 2005). According to theology professor Bråkenhielm, today’s intricate social interactions and the complicated and stressful work situation affect work, family life and leisure time (Bråkenhielm 2005). Consequently, as traditional religious world views lose their foothold, Nature can become a kind of resort, and temporarily relieve us from heavy social duties typical of contemporary Swedish society. Feelings of stress and risk behaviour related to health, work, family, friends and the world, are definitely part of the Swedish sample in this survey. Finally, Sweden is often defined as a secular, democratic country, and the church is separated from the state. Freedom of religion is acknowledged according to Swedish law, as finalized in 1952. But, Swedish consumer culture has been heavily inspired by what Campbell (1987) named a Protestant ethics (cf. Weber 2001). The Swedish concepts of “lagom”, basically connoting distribution and consumption equality - not to engage in conspicuous consumption (Veblen 1994) - and “folkhemmet” or “people´s home” – the Swedish welfare state based on employment security, public health care and values of equality – are possibly a pre-text for developing a more “universal” fairness ethic based on values of equity, non-conspicuous consumption and security consciousness (Eriksson-Trenter & Hodacs 2004; Isenhour 2008). Although the “non-conspicuous” consumer ethic has been central to the Swedish context, several researchers argue that a parallel evolutionary thread of conspicuous consumption has always been present, most visibly during the last 20-30 years and at least since the 1950s (Aléx 2003). Contemporary globalization processes have had an impact on the Swedish situation. These changes work alongside changes within social stratification, with less clear cut social distinctions associated with taste, living, and political attitudes (Mörck 1998).

5. Lifestyles of young professionals

When describing their lifestyles today and in the years to come, the respondents describe a much faster, more high-tech, and less controlled life compared to their grandparents. Yet, traditional family values are prominent in their vision of life ten years ahead, along with a wish for an interesting job and a larger/better apartment or house. Values of sustainability also appear quite frequently in their descriptions of housing as well as in social-, societal-, and global relations, whereas the job descriptions lack connections to sustainability issues.

5.1. The slow and simple life of grandparents in comparison to contemporary lifestyle

Respondents picture their elders to have lived closer to their surroundings, family and neighbours, and leading a less stressful and simpler life. On the negative side their life was characterized by hard work, rigid social rules (gender roles, housewife system), poverty, less material wealth, rigid social stratification, war time experiences, and bad health. Elements linked to sustainability are closeness to nature, less energy use, less material consumption, locally produced goods, no pollution, and more homemade possessions and products.

Modern technology, education, spare time, travels, less rigid social stratification (gender roles, social mobility), “individualization” and material wealth are stressed as characteristics of contemporary lifestyles. Respondents locate themselves as “global”, i.e. IT and travelling connects people (implicitly awareness of others increase). Explicit remarks made on sustainability are more cars, pollution, electronic devices, material consumption, and higher levels of energy and resource use. The respondents feel contemporary everyday life is more stressful; complex social relations and stressful work situations affect work, family life and leisure time. As one of the respondents in our sample commented:

> *I’m stressed about future work situation, it’s gonna be hard to get a work. I’ve been depressed last year feeling lonely, and stressed about the school situation and that have been affecting my partner and I in a bad way, But the worst part is over… I hope. (Female, 24-29)*

As a result, as traditional community values lose their grip, social contacts become central, but at the same time more complicated and uncontrollable (cf. Bråkenhielm 2005). Modern industrial and technological production and consumption seem relevant for respondents’ attitude towards today’s energy and resource use. During the 1950s and 1960s Sweden worked hard to become the most modern nation in the world. During these decades there was an unprecedented growth of the standard of living, including a relatively affluent working class. There were new scales of consumption and leisure, as present in the respondents’ answers, and shorter working hours, more pay, and a rapid migration from the countryside to urban centres as national industry was relocated. Blueprints for the welfare state were put into practice (Löfgren 2000).

5.2. Swedish young adults care for traditional family values and interesting jobs

Most respondents envision their future along three overlapping social dimensions: 1) interesting job (well paid, interesting work tasks). 2) Family (with or without children). 3) Bigger apartment or house owners (suburban, countryside, outside larger city). Preferences for more spare time and socializing could mean more time for travels, activities with impact on levels of sustainability. Three aspects stand out related to worst case scenarios: 1) social isolation 2) being homeless, followed by bad housing and too small, 3) being unemployed (not afford a place to live, food etc.).

Interestingly, many respondents envision their future in ways similar to traditions of self-ownership as house-owners and the nuclear family as an ideal way of living, which is nicely illustrated by the following quote:

> *A house with a big garden, together with my partner, our future children, [and] his mother. Working 80% not too far away from home, doing something I really enjoy, and be healthy and in balance. (Female, 24 – 29)*

This is a sharp contrast to their current way of living. Several respondents mention living close to family, friends, nice neighbours and well paid and/or interesting job as part of their ideal way of living. Several cultural, historical and political aspects are worth bearing in mind considered these preferences. Given that two-thirds of the respondents live in small- or medium-size towns and that our sample mainly contains students we have to consider Swedish history of family politics and cultural norms of family tradition. Social scientist Lucas Forsberg has researched Swedish middle-class parents (2009), possibly comparable to our sample, and claims that the ideal of the “dual earner/dual carer family” follows the family politics proposed by the Social Democratic government since the late 1960s, when this ideal was made the norm in Swedish legislation and policy. Given that respondents’ answers resonate with this norm and that they are either close to or at the average age for becoming parents this was expected. Recently, this cultural norm has been manifested as the ideal of middle-class parents and families (Forsberg 2009). Holding a university degree, as a large portion of our sample either do or are on their way to obtain, acclaim them as feasible holders of such an ideal. Also, ethnologist Annette Rosengren (1991) has pointed out that given the large portion of Swedes living in small or medium-sized towns (also present in our sample), family norms and gender roles have historical roots in traditional agricultural society where men and women were supposed to complement each other.

5.3. Expressions on sustainability in everyday life: private and global concerns

Swedish respondents mention aspects explicitly related to sustainability, and among these are preferences for owning electric cars, eco-fuelled cars, more public transport, and less emission. Also, suggestions like people going together and "car pool" are mentioned as hypothetical changes in future mobility. Answers suggest there is an underestimated political energy given respondents' talk about their feelings about the good of public transport, e.g:

> *I dislike that the public transport e.g. the bus is so expensive, it's almost cheaper to go by car and then you can go whenever you want. The public transport isn't planned together with other transports like train and boat departures and arrivals; it's always long waiting hours. (Female, 18 – 23)*

Good environment, environmentally friendly house, "simpler life", and "collective living" are mentioned as future ideals connected to sustainability. ”passive house”, gender equality, social equity, health, peace, a "global we", war, global problems, capitalism as risk factor, pollution, crime, health (private and general), poverty, no democracy, modern life as threat to the environment, over-population, and corporate control are preferences with resonances of sustain-ability in broader terms. None of the respondents mentioned "environmental", "sustainability" or something equivalent in their job descriptions. Another indication of the relatively high importance of the sustainability issue for the respondents is their ranking of global problems[2]. Fighting environmental degradation was ranked second, after reducing poverty.

Considering the sense of global reflexivity (poverty, war, pollution) in combination with private concerns about family, friends and respondents' own sense of insecurity, unemployment, health and so on, some culture scientists have characterized Sweden as a society with a wide ”moral universe” (Shalom 2007). One aspect of this ”universalism” comes to the fore while considering ”equality thinking”, and an environmental consciousness as expressed by respondents in our sample. According to ethnologist Tom O'Dell (1997) Swedish culture is constituted by a deep concern for the Environment. Also, in an international survey conducted in 1985 young people aged 18-24 were asked what they were

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[2] The problems to rank were: 1) Reduce or eradicate poverty, the gap between rich and poor, 2) Combat crime, prevent conflicts, 3) Fight environmental degradation and pollution (e.g. climate change), 4) Improve economic conditions (e.g. employment), 5) Improve and develop social services (education, health), 6) Spread democracy and freedom, 7) Fight against inequalities between men and women.

most proud of in their countries, and unlike for example their American or Japanese counterparts who emphasized their national heritage, young people in Sweden put nature on the top of the list followed by “the welfare state” (cf. discussion in Löfgren 1999).

6. Perceived behaviours and attitudes towards mobility, food and housekeeping

In this part of the article we will present respondents’ perceived behaviours and attitudes towards the three areas of mobility, food and housekeeping. First, there is a short description of everyday life for each area. Second, we present respondents’ reflections on sustainability while talking about scenarios.

6.1. Computer aficionadas with preferences for biking to the closest supermarket

Biking to school/work is the most common way to move around according to the respondents, followed by walking and public transport. It is valued as good exercise *and* good for the environment. The prominent role given to the bicycle could be explained taking into consideration variables such as age, standard of living, and the urban lifestyle characterizing the sample. Cars are enjoyed for convenience aspects and lack of good public transport. The public transport alternative is mentioned as a rational choice made for its’ good environmental aspects, while underdeveloped public transport is a key motivator for choosing the car. Car-driving is related to both positive values such as freedom and convenience, and a “necessary evil” chosen by lack of reasonable alternatives like public transport. In post-war Sweden dreams of a car society carried messages of liberation from the state and car ownership became a symbol of individual freedom and the capitalist spirit. Thus, an influence of American origin functioned as an undertow to mostly nationalized train systems and roads, and cars connoted free enterprise (Löfgren 2000).

Most respondents buy their food at the closest local supermarket (Swedish chain stores ICA, Hemköp, and Coop) and are dependent on the local supermarket´s range of products.

> *I miss having a market with vegetables produced in nearby areas. I wish the organic food was cheaper and easier to get. I don’t like that we overproduce and it´s too much food in the supermarkets. (Female, 24-29)*

Price is the top priority for respondents' choice of food, but is followed by strong preferences for buying *organic* and *ecological products* (it outnumbers quality). Logically, as the quote from the woman above nicely illustrates, the singular consumer's "will to do good" is of no use when the consumer is being locked in within logistic constraints. Expanding supply of eco- and fair-trade products could amount for shifts towards more sustainable food consumption. But, price is still top priority and needs to be considered. Even though our sample shows high levels of preferences for organic and fair-trade products, research says that the bias between wanting and actually buying certified food is quite big (Micheletti 2003). Respondents being young adults surely influence their choice of store, their limits connected to price range and transport alternatives, and higher levels of environmental consciousness.

Everyday use of Internet/computers, watching TV and cooking are the three top activities in the housekeeping area. Together with high levels of use of electric stoves this point towards high levels of energy use. A typical description is:

> *Surfing on the internet and watching TV or movies on my computer. Webcam via Skype. Cooking with my microwave or with my electric stove, talking on my cell phone, using the washing machine. (Male, 18-23)*

Meeting standards of housekeeping appearance, cleanliness and communication imply use of resources (energy, water) and do not amount to any questioning of energy-use or consumption of environmentally ”irresponsible” products. But this fact cannot conceal the underlying materiality of the products that accompanies these lifestyle- or consumption practices. Furthermore, informants' preferences for taking long showers/bath highlight an implicit source of energy-use and convey largely unnoticed and culturally ingrained preferences of comfort, cleanliness and convenience (Shove 2003). Often the use of water is not limited by property owners, and tenants can exploit this without any measures being taken. These, of course, are examples where consumers are enabled to perform everyday consumer practices without deliberately take into consideration any direct contact with the resources providing the service, thus only communication with the system through various technical devices that sustain (possibly) unsustainable consumer practices. Less energy-intense activities at home, often mentioned by the respondents, are socializing with family and friends, and reading.

6.2. Respondents' reflections on sustainability while talking about the scenarios

Food scenario: Many respondents chose the "vegetable bag subscription" whilst highlighting the scenario's "win-win" situation: local producers increase their efforts combined with a more healthy, environmentally friendly and easy access of fresh food. The vegetable bag scenario is linked with concerns about *time-aspects*. Knowledge of food origin, reduced transport, and easy access to eco-/local food are important aspects for choosing this scenario. This is often combined with *comfort as part of change* toward more sustainable choices in everyday life. This resonates well with transformations towards more sustainable choices with quick solutions. In all the food-scenarios the risk of losing one's individual choice as a consumer seems to scare off respondents leaning towards "individualized" consumer choices. This is clearly a perceived risk, as shown in the comment below, where the respondent comments on a given food-scenario based on collective food-arrangements – picturing a scheduled food-schema, where one would cook for others living in the same house:

> *No, cooking is kind of a hobby for me and I don´t want recipes and notes on how to and what to cook every day. But on busy days it´s really convenient. (Female, 24-29)*

Respondents suggested improvements for the "vegetable bag subscription" and they prefer a variety of vegetables to choose from; the possibility to put meat in the bag; and the problem of the Swedish climate needs to be considered. There is an interesting tendency to move away from government/State towards individuals and the private sector when suggesting actors to allocate the work. This is interesting regarding the Swedish context, where strong affiliations between the State and citizens historically have been a common solution. But, the most important aspect to consider in order to understand the potential of the vegetable bag scenario is consumers' habits and their readiness for change.

Mobility scenario: Regarding the "bicycle centre" scenario respondents' express benefits in terms of sustainability as a preferred alternative to using cars and buses. Also, low personal costs (insurance, fuel) and accessibility are mentioned as attractive aspects in this scenario. Bicycling is highlighted as good for one's personal health, a trend that would fit together with sustainable lifestyles, as it works on both personal *and* collective levels. Comments for the two car-scenarios are positive for sustainability-related reasons: eco-friendly, socially attractive (to go shopping, transport family), and reduction of numbers of individually-owned cars. Respondents are anxious about the car-sharing scenario's contribution towards sustainability. They think people won’t change mobility-habits and don’t want to share their car with others.

> *I live in Sweden, and we usually don't like to socialize with strangers. I think most people would find it difficult to have 3-4 others that they don't know in a crowded space early in the morning. (Female, 24-29)*

Laziness is mentioned as a difficulty, and the “social/symbolic” powers of the car is a strong reason for owning a car.

> *It´s good for the environment to go by bike, but people are lazy so they prefer the car. And when you have more than one kid to travel with it is easier to take the car and you can take a couple of bags with you too. (Female, 18-23)*

Government and private/business stand out as the ones’ responsible for taking action in the car-scenarios. This presents a strong trust in technocratic and/or government solutions on the more costly alternatives such as car-owning. Also, several respondents’ comments refer to *corporate responsibility* and show a critical awareness against corporations. There is a gendered bias in the sample towards women’s appreciation of the bicycle scenario, and small town residents tend to choose this scenario. Larger town residents among respondents’ tend to choose the car sharing scenario. There is a small gender bias towards men (aged 24+). This is not surprising considered aspects such as work commuting etc.

Housekeeping scenario: “Urban composting” was the most appreciated scenario in this area. The connection between waste sorting and sustainability is identified in the sample. Easy access, neighbourhood “feel good” and eco-friendly were shared concerns among the respondents. Aspects such as neighbourhood cleanliness are deemed promising. Recycling waste is an established “everyday practice” in Sweden and the scenario fits nicely with everyday practice. Recycling as a responsible act towards Nature resonates with the Swedes’ interest in the well-being of the environment. Both government and municipality are mentioned as important sponsors of this scenario, but individual responsibility is considered as prime mover.

Preferences for "urban composting" is consistent with larger town residents and respondents with high education, and therefore might clash with interests of small-medium sized town dwellers with a lower value on the educational scale. The "urban composting" scenario was mainly appreciated by men living in larger cities, and with high education. No one in the sample recognizes the risk of high-lighting this scenario as the most promising scenario, without mentioning the really high risk behaviour concerning mainly middle class consumption habits. The risk is that people conflate a clean, nice neighbourhood with sustainable lifestyles. In the housekeeping category the scenario “energy management” was rejected for reasons that it appears as complicated, dependent on larger department complexes, and that it was too individualistic. Some traditionally expressed reliance on instrumental rationality and efficiency among Swedes, together with a trust in the State as prime mover in this area shines through in these rejections.

7. Talking about sustainability

Finally, respondents were introduced to a short description of climate change, its causes and effects, and some solutions in the areas of housekeeping, mobility and food. They were asked to comment if more information on climate change would increase peoples’ adoption sustainable solutions, what living sustainable means to them, and what their first steps toward a sustainable everyday life would be.

Most respondents feel they are well informed on environmental sustainability, and are more interested in going from being informed to contribute in a positive way (i.e. reduce unsustainable climate change) and solutions that most people could adjust to in their everyday life. School, media and TV are informing on these issues on a regular basis in Sweden. To support possibilities for changing lifestyle patterns in accordance with already established sustainable values/knowledge is one important future task. General information together with everyday solutions (light bulbs, switch off electric devices, environmental impact of TVs' and computers etc.) would probably induce lifestyle changes, since several respondents define “sustainability” as “low energy use”, “environmental consciousness”, “think environmentally”, and “being aware of consequences”. Interestingly, there are also several comments on consumption-related aspects, i.e. the level of consumption: “no over consumption”, “consume as little as possible” and “recycling”. Broad definitions reflect values related to sustainability in wider terms, such as: “social rights”, “no overconsumption – other values in life”, “solidarity”, “equity”, “being aware” and “less individualistic”. But, also technocratic and political values are represented in the sample, for example:

> *When it comes to environment, I leave that to the scientists. (Male, 18-23)*
>
> *Reduce the power of neoliberal market hegemony through engaging in alternative trading and politics. (Male, 30-35)*

Sustainability is expanding from “environment/climate” towards correlations including everyday lifestyle and issues such as peace, social rights, democracy and levels of consumption. This could become part of government policies for school/education for developing an ecological-systemic understanding of sustainable lifestyles. Many respondents express interest in less energy-consuming electronic devices and low-energy bulbs in their homes. Similar concerns emerges considering less car-use and more biking as changes that respondents feel they are ready for. Generally, there are rather high levels of trust in technocratic solutions like “low-energy solutions”. This calls for an increased level of education and a holistic understanding on the impacts of production and consumption levels in affluent countries like Sweden. There are indicators for lowering the levels of consumption and buying less clothes and meat that seem promising considered the otherwise common mistake of linking “sustainability” to technological progress and technocratic solutions.

8. Conclusions

Politicians and policy makers ought to reconsider a too common individualistic notion of sustainable consumption. In order to be effective, sustainable consumption needs explicit recognition of the socio-cultural nature of both environmental distress and knowledge, and consumer practices. Our study indicates several local-specific understandings and practices connected to consumption that require acknowledgement. A vital public debate could arguably support sustainable consumerism through structural, economic and regulatory policy instruments. These changes require meaningful promotion of responsible consumer choice and lifestyle changes.

Most respondents feel they are already well informed on sustainability; they are concerned about possibilities to go from being informed to contribute in a positive way (i.e. reduce unsustainable climate change); *respondents ask for solutions adjustable to everyday life*. Clearly, disseminating information on sustainability is not enough to induce lifestyle changes. Sustainability is expanding from being equal to the “environment” towards including issues such as peace, social rights, democracy and levels of consumption.

Our survey-results show that understanding transitions toward sustainable consumption practices calls for further in-depth studies and qualitative research on the dispersed social organization of everyday life, including conflicting values, multiple moral incentives, and the endurance of already incorporated (unsustainable) habits.

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THE ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOR RELATIONS IN PET-RELATED CONSUMPTION

Consumer-pet relationships as indicators of pet food consumption

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Abstract. This article revisits the attitude-behavior relations in consumer behavior. It investigates the connection between consumers' relationships with their pets and consumers' consumption in related to their pets by using quantitative structured interviews. The data was analyzed by principal component analysis. The results indicate that attitudes are linked to behaviors, the consumer-pet relationships did have a connection to consumption related to pets, for example regarding a pet as a family member is tied to feeding with homemade food and caressing. The results may provide ideas for pet food marketing and applying the attitude-behavior relationship thinking to other lifestyle, leisure and attachment contexts.

Keywords: Pet-related consumption, attitude-behavior –relations, principal component analysis

1. Introduction

Today, pets appear to be one of the growing consumption trends in Western societies. In Finland, from where this research originates, the Finnish Kennel Club (2009) announced again a record number of dog registrations. Also, magazines constantly write about the role of pets in consumers' lives or even about pet-related consumption, for example in an article, it was calculated that Finns spend more than 30 million euro on their dogs in a year and on average a dog will cost its Finnish owner around EUR 11 000 annually (Tojkander 2008).

What drives consumers to spend all that money on their pets? Despite these rather clear economic figures, this topic has thus far produced quite a narrow research interest among consumer behavior researchers. Aylesworth, Chapman and Dobscha (1999) emphasize how information about human-animal relationships and consumption decisions would help marketing practitioners. Indeed, those few who have studied this area, have concentrated on consumers' relationships with their pets (Beck and Katcher 1983; Belk 1996; Hirschman 1994; Holbrook et al. 2001). The background assumption behind these studies has more often than not been that there must be some kind of connection between consumers' relationships with their pets and consumers' consumption related to their pets, for instance if a pet is regarded as a family member it will most likely be given food of a different quality than an animal that is used as a status symbol. Accordingly, Belk (1996: 125) concludes: "their [pet owners] commitment is also shown in the time and monetary prices they are willing to pay for the care and feeding of these animals."

Consumer researchers have long puzzled over the attitude-behavior link in consumer behavior; how do attitudes predict behaviors? This research line has its roots in Ajzen and Fishbein's (e.g. 1977) model of reasoned action, however in the subsequent decades the literature has been complemented by ever more refined and re-thought constructs and more thorough explorations of their relationships. The relationship between consumer and pet quite obviously relates to the attitude towards pets, so what does that attitude tell us about consumption behavior towards that pet? Thus, the purpose of this article is to investigate what kind of connection there is between consumers' relationships to their pets and consumers' consumption related to their pets. The research is conducted in the spirit of Ajzen and Fishbein's framework, the aim is not to test or refine their modeling, as that has been done sufficiently over the last 50 years. Thus, it is not the object to prove that attitudes and behaviors do or do not have a relationship, but to uncover how those two elements connect in this context. Further, it is acknowledged that the paper in hand is not entirely correctly phrased in their terms; instead it is aimed to lie on their background idea of linking these components together.

The article begins by examining the grounds for a tool designed to measure attitude to pets, via a review of literature considering consumers' relationships to their pets. The literature review is based on both consumer research and studies related to the human-animal bond from other disciplines. The second part of the article consists of testing the measurement. In other words, an empirical analysis of consumers' relationships to their pets and consumers' consumption related to their pets is conducted. Use of pet food is chosen as a representative of pet-related consumption as it is a product category that all pet owners use and it offers a great chance to observe in the range of consumption behavior. In this study, pet food consumption refers to both buying pet food and feeding the pet. The paper uses quantitative interviews in its data collection. The article ends with conclusions and a discussion of how this attitude measurement is connected to consumption directed towards pets. On the whole, it is intended to contribute both to the discussion of pet-related consumption and provide new ideas of applying the attitude-behavior link.

2. The consumer-pet relationships in prior research

Current investigation starts with the research that has concentrated on human to pet relationships. In prior research, pets have been viewed both as objects/products and as companions/subjects (Beck and Katcher 1983; Belk 1988, 1996; Hirschman 1994). When animals are seen as objects or products, they can for example be an avocation, serve as ornaments or be status symbols. On the other hand they can be viewed as companions, in which case they serve as family members, friends and even self, as an extension of one's own personality. Moreover, Belk (1996) discovered a metaphoric relationship to pets, regarding pets as bringing pleasure, problems or as being toys.

2.1. Pets as objects

The first part of the discussion relates to ways in which companion animals may be regarded as objects or products. When companion animals are considered as *ornaments*, they are kept to provide aesthetic value to consumers (Hirschman 1994: 617). Typical examples are exotic birds and tropical fish. However, sometimes cats or dogs also appear in women's magazines portrayed as accessories to match the color scheme of a house. Having a role is like those of paintings or sculptures.

Using animals as *status symbols* is a way of displaying an elite status. Particularly rare, unusual or expensive animals may serve consumers in the same way that a Mercedes Benz or Rolex does (Hirschman 1994: 617). Similarly, certain breeds like Arabian horses or champion pedigree animals may be acquired for the pedigree they embody rather than just to use or enjoy the animals themselves. By owning these animals, consumers can differentiate themselves from others by showing their animals as marks of power or class privilege (Savishinsky 1983: 118).

When pets serve as *an avocation*, they are acquired primarily to breed for showing or exhibiting. According to Hirschman (1994: 617) animal shows are seen as very competitive events, where an animal's success can be seen as a way of enhancing its owner's ego. In breeding and showing animals, there is also a tendency to consciously manipulate gene pools of the animals (Tuan 1984: 102–109). Indeed, regarding pets as *toys* includes controlling pets' breeding, possessing power over the pet by grooming and clothing the pets and wanting the pets to obey (Belk 1996: 123–133). Before the automobile, horses were largely used as *equipment* for transportation and traveling (Hirschman 1994: 618). Dogs in particular are still used in a functional manner today, serving to protect people's homes, find bombs and drugs, guide deaf and blind people, and assist in therapeutic treatments for the elderly and infirm. Sanders (2006) for example discovered the multifaceted role of working dogs and Coppinger & Coppinger (2001) have discussed thoroughly the development of working breeds.

2.2. Pets as subjects

In order for the companion animal to be seen as a subject in its own right, it needs to be seen as human or quasi-human (Belk 1996: 128). The term anthropomorphism refers to this tendency to transfer human characteristics to nonhuman entities, for example pet owners seem to know what their animals think (Hirschman 1994: 617). These features also appear in the natural state of animals, as when dogs and wolves exhibit features that encourage anthropomorphic projection onto them.

Animals may act as *friends*, when they provide a faithful, intimate, and unconditional companionship. Animals are often seen as serving their owners even better than human friends, because humans exhibit more negative behavior and feelings, like jealousy (Belk 1996: 124). Moreover, pets share their owners' beds and wait for them to come home. The relationship between an owner and a pet is found to be mutually evolving, just like between humans, even though in a relationship like this the communication is subtle and nonverbal (Hirschman 1994: 620).

It is estimated that between 70% (Beck and Katcher 1983: 59) and 92 % (American Pet Manufacturers Association 2006) of pet owners define their pets as *family members*. The content of regarding pets as family members has often been approached, for example Cohen (2002: 633) concluded “Pets seem to occupy an overlapping but different space from humans in family.” Most often, the role of pets in the family has been found to be one of *children* or child substitutes. Many of the rituals normally reserved for young children are attached to pets, pets are fed, bathed and groomed (Beck and Katcher 1983: 60). Pet owners often speak in a higher and slower voice to their animals, the same style usually used with human children (Serpell 1986: 64). Animals might also be granted similar privileges to children; they may be allowed to eat at the table (Hirschman 1994: 622).

Animals can also prepare future parents for the responsibilities that children might bring or act as child substitutes for parents whose children have left home, or for people unable to have children (Beck and Katcher 1983: 64; Savishinsky 1986: 64). Indeed, Hirschman (1994: 622–623) found that consumers feel morally obliged to take care of their animals. In a similar spirit, Belk (1996: 125) describes the problems of pet ownership, pets can be messy, do damage, make traveling difficult and even adversely affect human contacts.

There is a clear emotional connection with companion animals as there is with children. Belk (1996: 123) states "pets are one of the true *pleasures* life offers (italics added)." Beck and Katcher (1983: 63–64) found out that love and affection were the two most frequently used words to describe a consumer's relationship with their pets. On the other hand, words like play, activity, obedience and control were in second place, all words that are central in life with children (Beck and Katcher: 64). However, at least one thing differentiates pets and human children: animals are expected to always remain in the condition of immaturity and dependence (Belk 1996: 132; Serpell 1986: 64). Hirschman (1994: 621) found that animals are also regarded similarly to family members other than children; younger, single people saw animals more like siblings. Consumers attached brotherly or sisterly feelings to their animal siblings; consumers might feel a need to protect their younger siblings (Hirschman 1994: 621), or animals might be the cause of sibling rivalry (Belk 1996: 125).

Pets can be seen as the *consumers' self*, extensions of their human owners. It has been suggested that we define ourselves, learn about ourselves and remind others about ourselves through our possessions (Belk 1988: 160). When seeing pets as an extension of the self, consumers adopt their pets' traits, behaviors, and appearance and project their own personalities onto their pet (Beck and Katcher 1983: 253; Savishinsky 1986: 120–121). For this reason the choice of pet may be considered a definition of the self (Belk 1996: 128). It is claimed that this is, because a pet is a representation of ourselves as infants (Beck and Katcher 1983: 88). In this role, the pet represents the id of its owner (Hirschman 1994: 618). Consumers, as adult human beings must control their actions closely, but pets can freely express emotions that are forbidden to human adults (Beck and Katcher 1983: 89).

Finally, pets have been seen as vehicles for narcissistic love, thus they are used to express love towards oneself. Indeed, when we are talking about the love pets offer, we are talking about our feelings, not those of the pets. All pets may be used in narcissistic ways, but interesting examples are exotic animals, like snakes or wildcats. (Beck and Katcher 1983: 92–95.) Moreover, self extension is most evident among men who own large, aggressive male dogs. In these cases, the pet owner can see himself in the sexual potency and virility of his dog (Beck and Katcher 1983: 253; Hirschman 1994: 620; Savishinsky 1983: 120). If pets can be viewed in such a variety of ways, how can different buying behaviors be identified in this context? Are these attitudes realized in consumption behavior?

3. Methodology

As the empirical aim was to explore the attitude-behavior link in pet-related consumption, in other words, how consumers' relationships to their pets can be connected to pet food consumption, quantitative structured interviews were performed to gather the data. This research lies in post-positivistic grounding, and to confirm one of the post-positivistic ideals of embracing natural settings (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 110), structured interviews were conducted in actual buying situations (i.e. at supermarkets and pet stores). The total sample consisted of 265 Finnish pet owners (ages 15–80, 31% males and 68% females). Women were overrepresented in the sample, but otherwise respondents were in line with the general characteristics of the population in Finland. Interviews were performed by students from a course of consumer behavior as a part of their course requirements. Interviewers were trained beforehand by the author and they were tasked to choose respondents representing different demographic and socio-economic backgrounds. In addition, they were encouraged to select pet owners who had different pets.

3.1. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire consisted of items concerning respondents' relationships to their pets (attitude measurement) and consumption directed towards their pets (behavior measurement). As this paper is written in the spirit of attitude-behavior -studies, the measurements don't follow the rules Ajzen & Fishbein strictly, for example some of the behavior-measurement items probably actually measure more the behavioral intention than actual behavior. All the items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The items concerning the respondents' relationship to their pets were developed on the basis of prior literature as presented in the theoretical section of this article. Thus, it was intended that respondents should have the chance to respond in a manner suggested by previous literature, but also that themes be allowed to emerge unhindered (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 110).

Similarly, the items concerning pet-related consumption were inspired by previous literature. First, the literature contributed the formulation of items by giving chances for priory found consumer-pet -relationship to emerge in these items too (for example item "I give my pet the same food as other members of my family" reflects the idea of seeing the pet as a family member). Second, items that have been previously used to measure consumers' food-related lifestyle in several European countries (Brunsø and Grunert 1995) give some inspiration for the formation of current pet-related consumption items (for example "I buy natural food for my pet, thus food that does not include preservatives or additives" shows how natural food has been considered important in consumers' food consumption). Further, also author's prior knowledge of pet markets influenced the formation of some items, for example through the item "The recommendations of experts influence what food I give to my pet", it was aimed to found out the important roles of vets and breeders as observed by author. As the formulation of items has a great impact on results, the questionnaire was pre-tested among pet owners. It was made sure that they understood the items as planned and the items were refined on the basis of their comments. In the final questionnaire, there were 28 items concerning consumers' relationships to pets and 27 items concerning pet food consumption.

3.2. Conducting the data analysis

The first step was to investigate the kind of dimensions found behind the consumer-pet relationship and consumption directed towards their pets. Thus, a principal component analysis was conducted both on items concerning the consumer-pet relationship and on those concerning the consumption towards the pet. Principal component analysis is similar to factor analysis, but is used when the requirement is to discover the structure of the data, whereas factor analysis is used more to confirm a prior theory (Tabachnick and Fidell 2000: 611). Second, to investigate the relationship between the two pairs of items it was first used correlation analysis. This was done for the initial items as well as sum variables formed of both item groups (i.e. for example items within "family member" constituted a sum variable). The correlate tests however gave little information as most of the (sum) variables correlated with each other. This may be due to the fact that consumers' relationship with one's pet is assumed to be multiple and variable. In order to find out higher information value, the components of both variables were analyzed together by principal component matrix, this did result very interesting groupings, the joint components. Further, as it was assumed that the relationship towards one's pet is multifaceted, the cross-loadings that occurred were left in the analysis, even though cross-loadings are sometimes regarded as a reliability problem that also prevents items from discriminating between respondents. The results are discussed below.

4. Results

4.1. Consumer-pet relationship

First, the consumers' relationships to the pets were tested. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was applied to the results of the principal component analysis (resulting in a score of .879 – comfortably above the threshold value of .60), and was followed by Bartlett's test of sphericity (resulting in a score of .000, thus scoring higher than the p < .001 threshold). The results of the analysis and the initial eigenvalues (all at least or approximately 1) and percentages of variance explained (companion, status symbol and work mate less than general rule of thumb 5 %, all the rest above or approximately 5 %) are illustrated in table 1.

The first component is labeled *family member*; because items concerning seeing pets as a close friend, as one's own child and the pet having human features received the highest loadings in it. This component comprised mixed and even rather contradictory items. That is not totally unexpected, as previous research (Hirschman 1994; Beck and Katcher 1983) supports the idea that seeing pets as family members, especially as children is rather multifaceted. To the second component were assigned items that concern seeing a pet as a *hobby*, the highest loading item being "If I didn't have a pet, I would hardly have any hobbies." In this component, a pet's ability to contribute to the consumer's physical and mental health came up, as well as the pets' ability to instigate social contact with other people. The component was labeled 'hobby', because the items did not fit with the previous conceptualizations of pets as an avocation (Hirschman 1994: 617).

The third component is labeled *extended self* as it consists of items like "One can learn a lot about the owner from the pet", "The appearance of my pet accords with my own style" and "My pet is part of me." The items bring out the different features previously attached to regarding pets as self-extensions (Beck and Katcher 1983; Belk 1988; Savishinsky 1983), including social, personal and even narcissistic sides. In line with prior research the items referring to pet owners' childhood also came up: "My pets have made me the way I am today.

Table 1. Results from Principal Component Analysis on Consumer-Pet – Relationship.

	Components							
Items	Family member	Hobby	Extended self	Problem	Life style	Companion	Status symbol	Work mate
My pet is my close friend.	.797							
I have to take my pet into account when I plan my activities.	.437			.362		.579		
I do not care what others say about my pet.					.727			
My pet is also a hobby for me.		.392				.462		.426
My pet has a lot of human features.	.723							
Owning a pet has also brought me troubles and difficulties.				.795				
Actually I take care of my pet as my own child.	.679							
For me the pet is not an object for caressing, but sort of a workmate.								.766
My pets have made me the way I am today.			.696					
My pet helps me to carry on.	.334	.325	.552					
I play with my pet.	.593	.331		.327				
The appearance of my pet accords with my own style.			.359				.539	
If I did not have a pet, I would hardly have any hobbies.		.822						
The activities of my pet make me furious sometimes.				.794				
One can learn a lot about an owner from the pet.			.618					.307
I think it is enjoyable just to watch my pet.			.432			.608		
If I didn't have a pet, I would do a lot more in my spare time.							.794	
My pet makes me laugh from the bottom of my heart.	.448	.343	.346					-.304
My pet helps me to keep my mind clear.			.670					
It is healthy for the children to grow up with pets.					.641	.308		
Most of my friends are also pet owners.					.570		-.372	
The company of my pet makes me feel good.	.355							
I have made the acquaintance of many people through my pet.		.708				.416		
My pet is part of me.	.491	.317	.465					
I probably would not be in this good shape without my pet.		.719						
I want my pet to obey me.	.440	.417		.377				.308
I couldn't imagine a family without a pet.			.424		.528			
I feel safe with my pet.								
Initial eigenvalues	7.899	2.062	1.810	1.581	1.285	1.102	0.989	0.955
% of total variance explained	7.899	2.062	1.810	1.581	1.285	1.102	0.989	0.955
Cumulative %	28.212	7.366	6.466	5.645	4.590	3.935	3.534	3.412
								63.160

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 13 iterations.

The fourth component included items relating to the negative factors of pet ownership, so it was named: *problem* (c.f. Belk 1996). “Owning a pet has also brought me troubles and difficulties” and “The activities of my pet make me furious sometimes” were the two items that had the highest loadings. The fifth component was labeled *lifestyle* as it consisted of rather unconditional items like “I do not care what others say about my pet” and “I couldn’t imagine a family without a pet.” In addition, the item “It is healthy for the children to grow up with pets” was loaded here, which also connects this component to a choice of (family) lifestyle. Similarly, the item “Most of my friends are also pet owners” highlights a pet-related lifestyle, where one can connect with peers.

The sixth component was termed *companion*, as it reflects seeing pets as subjects more than objects, but does not precisely match any of the former conceptualizations. This component consists of items that are connected to seeing a pet in terms of its companionship: looking at the pet, being with the pet and taking the pet into account. The seventh component is labeled *status symbol*, as it incorporates items related to seeing a pet as an inhibitor (“If I didn’t have a pet, I would do a lot more in my spare time”) and style-factor (“The appearance of my pet accords with my own style”). The items that loaded here did not have an emotional content (see Hirschman 1994: 617 for similar ideas). Further, the item “Most of my friends are also pet owners” loaded negatively, which confirms the idea that as status symbols pets are used to distinguish their owners from others (Savishinsky 1983: 116–118)

The last component was related to seeing pet as a *workmate*: “For me the pet is not an object for caressing, but sort of a workmate.” The component is labeled workmate rather than equipment or an avocation, because it appears to contain traits of both of the former. This is a relationship that seems rather formal and unemotional, like seeing pets as equipment, as an example the item “My pet makes me laugh from the bottom of my heart” loaded negatively. Moreover, the positive loading on the item “One can learn a lot about the owner from the pet” has a social emphasis, which connects to the prior research on seeing pets as an avocation (Hirschman 1994: 617).

In summary, many of the previous research findings on the human-pet relationship received confirmation. Viewing pets as a companion and as a lifestyle component also adds new categories to the previously reported conceptualizations. The former understandings of pets as an avocation and as an equipment became blurred. Pets as a hobby consisted of more aspects related to emotions and well-being—contrasting with Hirschman’s (1994) findings of pets as an avocation. On the other hand, animals as workmates appear to incorporate traits of both pets as avocation and pets as equipment. Moreover, some of the previous human-animal relationships did not come up in this research, for example pets as ornaments, friends, pleasure and toys did not emerge as their own components, but traces of them are to be found in several other components. The above were the results illustrating the attitude side, the following discusses consumption behavior.

4.2. Consumption related to pets

The second group of items consisted of consumption claims. In these items, buying pet food and feeding the pet were addressed. On these items, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (.772) and Bartlett's test of sphericity (.000) also reached satisfactory levels. The results of the analysis as well as the initial eigenvalues (all above 1) and percentages of variances explained (all at least or approximately 5 %) are illustrated in table 2. The first component consisted of items of *high quality merchandised pet food*. All of the items addressed high quality in the pet feeding context, and most of the items addressed pet food one can buy ready-made. The second component was loaded with items that made pet food buying seem like *shopping*. In here, shopping is fun, impulsive, social and not overly concerned with high quality or expertise.

Price-orientation and lack of interest in quality are the best ways to describe component number three. "I compare prices in order to find the most affordable" is a good example of the items loaded here. In contrast, component number four consisted of items that emphasized the consumer's *social awareness*. This is due to items like "One can learn a lot about a pet's owner when one knows what food he/she gives it." It was interesting that the item concerning ecological and natural feeding received the highest loading in this component. This may be caused by the desire to respond in a socially desirable manner (which would fit perfectly with this component) or by the fact that natural feeding (e.g. the Biologically Appropriate Raw Food –BARF– diet for dogs) is getting more and more popular and socially accepted.

Table 2. Results from Principal Component Analysis on Consumption to Pets.

Items	Components: High quality merchandised pet food	Shopping	Price-orientation	Social awareness	Home made pet food	Accuracy	Caressing
I want to give my pet only food that has been tested and proved good.	.753						
I prefer buying pet food made by well-known companies.	.721						
I buy quite expensive pet food, because they are of higher quality.	.652						
I want to make sure that my pet grows and develops to be healthy by feeding it high quality pet food.	.641						
The recommendations of experts influence what food I give to my pet.	.571			.319			
I often notice that I have bought more for my pet than I had planned.		.704					
I often buy extra delicacies for my pet.		.598					
I like to try new food for my pet that I have not bought before.		.584	.397				
I pay attention to how others are feeding their pets.		.512		.332			
It happens easily that one talks with others about pet feeding.		.507					
The outlook of pet food influences my buying decision.		.484	.387				
I often buy pet food on sale.			.707				
I do not think it is important that the pet food I buy is domestic.			.592	-.323			
I would on no account spend more money on my pet's food than on my own.			.573				
I compare prices in order to find the most affordable.			.532	.436			
The packaging of pet food influences my buying decision.		.411	.485				
I buy natural food for my pet, thus food that does not include preservatives or additives.				.643			
I would feed my pet differently, if I did not have to think about its appearance.				.623			
One can learn a lot about a pet's owner when one knows what food he/she gives it.				.509			
Leftovers are good enough for my pet.					.890		
I give my pet the same food as other members of my family.					.832		
It is a waste of time to think about the healthiness of pet food.						-.688	
It actually is completely insignificant for me, what my pet eats.			.384			-.599	
For me, it is important to know what the food I have bought for my pet contains.	.382					.562	
It is important for me to know that my pet likes the food.							.702
I think it is fun to buy pet food.		.416					.644
I do not want to change my pet's feeding habits.	.351						.548
Initial eigenvalues	5.033	3.063	1.639	1.600	1.382	1.271	1.222
% of total variance explained	18.641	11.343	6.069	5.926	5.119	4.707	4.525
Cumulative %							56.330

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
a. Rotation converged in 15 iterations.

The fifth component was all about *homemade pet food*. Only two items loaded here: “Leftovers are good enough for my pet” and “I give my pet the same food as other members of my family.” These two items were expected to load on different components, as in the former, the item includes the idea of the pet being inferior to humans and in the latter item, the pet could be regarded as family member. The sixth component was labeled *accuracy* in pet feeding. The item “For me, it is important to know what the food I have bought for my pet contains” got a positive loading and items like “It is waste of time to think about the healthiness of pet food” loaded negatively. The final component contained items that made the pet feeding seem like *caressing*: “It is important for me to know that my pet likes the food” summarizes that very well.

4.3. Joint components

Principal component analysis was run for all of the above presented components. Slightly surprisingly, they loaded neatly so that always one of the relationship components loaded together with one to three of the consumption components. The resulting joint components as well as the initial eigenvalues (all above 1) and percentages of variances explained (all generously above 5 %) are presented in table 3.

Table 3. Results from Principal Component Analysis on Consumer-Pet-Relationship and Consumption to Pets.

	Components							
Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Family member	.923							
Hobby		.835						
Extended self			.851					
Problem				.794				
Lifestyle					-.678			
Companion						.771		
Status symbol							.789	
Workmate								.728
High quality merchandised pet food		.662						.363
Shopping		.375						-.606
Price-orientation				-.304	.669			
(Social)awareness			.409				.590	
Home made pet food	.461			.554				
Accuracy						.673	-.301	
Caressing	.330		.573				-.335	
Initial eigenvalues	1.202	1.682	1.311	1.038	1.001	1.375	1.467	1.119
% of total variance explained	8.016	11.211	8.740	6.921	6.675	9.166	9.779	7.457
Cumulative %								67.965

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 20 iterations.

First, regarding a pet as a family member was connected to feeding with homemade pet food and caressing. This confirms the idea that the pet may, on a practical level be almost equivalent to one of the family members, as it eats exactly the same food (Serpell 1986). Moreover, the food is made with care, which relates to pets as family members (Beck and Katcher 1983: 63–64). Having a pet as a hobby attached to high quality merchandised pet food and shopping. Both the components have a somewhat social content, which also indicates the social nature of hobbies. For instance, certain pet food brands commonly appear in communities of dog enthusiasts (Bettany and Daly 2008: 412).

Not surprisingly, the extended self was tied to social awareness in pet feeding as well as caressing, which reflect both the social and personal aspects of pets as the extended self (Jyrinki and Leipämaa-Leskinen 2006). The component of problems loaded positively with homemade pet food and negatively with price-orientation. Home made pet food is here quite obviously related to the item concerning feeding the pet with leftovers. As the price-orientation loaded negatively, the interpretation is that the high costs of feeding a pet are considered one of the problems. Price-orientation loaded positively and lifestyle negatively together, thus the price-orientation in pet food consumption appears to relate to something other than regarding pets as lifestyle components. This confirms the idea that seeing pets as lifestyle components is rather an unconditional choice (Gillespie et al. 2002). Seeing pets as a companion was connected to accuracy, which reflects the idea that if a pet is regarded as a subject, it must have proper food with all the necessary ingredients.

The status symbol component related positively to social awareness and negatively to accuracy and caressing, which quite naturally link to our prior understanding of pets as status symbols (Hirschman 1994). Finally, workmate was positively connected to high quality merchandised pet food and had a negative connection to shopping. These too make sense, an animal as a workmate needs high quality food in order to complete its assignments, but its feeding is certainly not for fun and amusement. The different ways of feeding the animal when it is seen as a family member, companion and even a hobby in relation to those used for an animal seen as a workmate, support the idea that working dogs are distinguished from the family pets (Sanders 2006).

5. Discussion

The results of the article provide insights into the attitude-behavior link by placing it in the context of pet-related consumption. Moreover, both the conceptualizations of the relationships to pets as well as consuming related to pets enrich and confirm prior research. Here, the consumer-pet relationships were evaluated by eight components labeled family member, hobby, extended self, problem, lifestyle, companion, status symbol and workmate. The consumption related to pets was organized into the following dimensions: high quality merchandised pet food, shopping, price-orientation, social awareness, homemade pet food, accuracy and caressing.

Most interestingly, the results indicate that attitudes and behaviors do connect to each other. Thus, consumers' relationships to their pets did have a connection to consumption related to the pet. The family member component loaded together with caressing and homemade pet food. Hobby was tied to high quality merchandised pet food and shopping. Extended self related to caressing and social awareness. The component of problems loaded positively with homemade pet food and negatively with price-orientation. Lifestyle received a negative loading, with a positive loading to price-orientation. Companion was connected to accuracy. Status symbol related positively to social awareness and negatively to accuracy and caressing. Finally, workmate had a positive connection to high quality merchandised pet food and a negative connection to shopping.

These findings already prompt ideas for pet food marketing, as the relationship to the pet may be attached to the communicative messages of pet products, and consumers could be segmented along those lines. Because the component of high quality merchandised pet food was positively related to pets as a hobby and as a workmate, this implies that there is an opportunity for marketers of high quality pet food to exploit the active pet owner consumer segment. On the other hand, these results also help consumers themselves to better understand their engagement with their animal companions, probably many of them would be intrigued to consider their relationship with and consumption related to their pets.

Naturally, these results give rise to some suggestions for future research. There may be answers sought by both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Indeed, the current attempt to scale the consumer-pet relationship and consumption related to pets needs further confirmation. As an example, the component of homemade pet food included rather contradictory items, and it was actually tied together with pets as family members and pets as problems. Thus, more thorough contemplation and testing for the items still need to be conducted in order to enhance the validity of this measurement. On the other hand, opening up the above presented components, for example by using focus groups would give a deeper understanding of their contents. One of the interesting research questions would consider shopping for the pet, and why some consumers find it fun and entertaining to shop for a pet. In the light of the current results, shopping relates positively to regarding a pet as a hobby and negatively with a pet as a workmate. However, this could be further enhanced by organizing focus groups among those who engage with shopping activities, both for themselves and for their pets. Indeed, why was not the component of shopping related for example to pets as examples of the extended self?

The current research also provides ideas to further apply the attitude-behavior relationships to other lifestyle, leisure and attachment–related contexts. Recent Finnish research has studied enthusiasts of wooden boating (Jalas 2005) and Nordic walking (Oksanen-Särelä and Timonen 2005), which are fruitful examples for further examination. It would be expected that devotion to boating would offer a setting to investigate how this deeply positive attitude reflects on buying behavior. Similarly, it would be intriguing to assess how Nordic walkers invest in their equipment. It may well be feasible and indeed productive to compare the three settings.

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CONSUMER CONTRIBUTION TO PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORDIC SPORTS INDUSTRY

Passionate consumers pose benefits for and challenges to companies

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Abstract. The sports industry is a pioneer in involving consumers in product development. Four key consumer and user groups can be identified in Nordic product development of sports equipment and services: user innovators, professional users, enthusiastic amateurs, and passionate insiders. The identified groups all comprise of passionate consumers and users, which are willing to co-operate with companies because of mutual benefit of better product development. While this approach has proven fruitful for the Nordic sports companies, we argue that attention should also be paid to non-passionate consumers.

Keywords: Consumer involvement, product development, passionate consumers, lead users.

1. Introduction

Four kinds of consumers and users have been identified to be involved in the product development of companies operating in the Nordic sports industry: user innovators, professional athletes, enthusiastic amateurs and passionate insiders (Bråtå et al. 2009; Repo and Kotro 2008). In this paper, we review how consumers and users take part in the development of business products and services. We consider challenges of involving the identified passionate kinds of consumers in product development and discuss if learning from these can be applied to other B-to-C (business-to-consumer) industries as well.

Key concepts in the present paper are user and consumer involvement in business activities. Users are here defined following von Hippel (1988) as individuals that expect to directly benefit from a product or service by using it. So called lead users face needs earlier than others in a marketplace and are able to come up with their own solutions to these needs. The concept of user involvement, in turn, is often used to mean user participation in design processes. The term originates from information systems design where it more specifically refers to psychologically oriented personal relevance of a system for a subject (Barki and Hartwick 1989).

User involvement has spread across various fields of study and the meaning of the concept varies from general notions on the importance of asking users' opinions in private sector or public design processes to more specific patterns of iterating design processes with users. Consumer involvement as a concept refers one hand to discussions on public sector development processes (as in social studies) and commercial projects on the other (consumer involvement in marketing studies). In this present paper we use the concept of consumer involvement to describe both actual and potential relations between the business sector and the end-users. From this perspective, we see consumers as active meaning creating beings, such as pro-ams (Leadbeater and Miller 2004), who engage sometimes passionately in the processes of performing everyday life. User innovation is the most precise of the key concepts here: it refers to an innovation developed by an innovator whose benefit comes from using the innovation (Shah 2000).

This paper is positioned in the field of marketing oriented product development rather than in the field of consumer behaviour. It considers collaboration between consumers and companies (Cova and Dalli 2009), sees user innovativeness to come forth in a process of users trying out emerging solutions (Xie et al. 2008), and acknowledges consumers and companies to have separate agendas that can conform provisionally (Heiskanen et al. 2010; Janssen and Dankbaar 2008). Passionate consumers are in the main focus rather than phases of product development or techniques of user involvement.

We begin by introducing consumers as users as they are referred to in literature. Next we focus on lead users especially in the sports industry and present empirical data on the Nordic sports industry, identifying different types of consumers and users involved in the sports industry. We then briefly discuss if other consumer goods industries could find the involvement of similar user types beneficial. Finally, we discuss potential shortcomings of focusing on the involvement of active – i.e. passionate – consumers in product development.

2. Perspectives on consumer involvement

Research has shown that some of the most important and novel products and processes have been developed by users. Groundbreaking in this field is von

Hippel's (1986; 2001; 2005) research on open source computer programming and lead users' role in developing these as well as lead users' potential in marketing analyses in identifying emerging needs for new products and services. Lead users are "users whose present strong needs will become general in a marketplace months or years in the future" (von Hippel 1986). They can therefore serve as "need-forecasting laboratories" of emerging markets (ibid.).

From this perspective consumers' role as users, and especially as lead users is seen to bear potential. Lead users are interesting because they are an important source of innovativeness for product development in the sports industry and other industries as well (von Hippel 2005). We will discuss this tentative argument later in this paper.

There is a growing body of literature focusing on the rationales and methods of involving consumers in product development. Also in the realm of consumption outside software and sport, consumers have been acknowledged to be a part of the production systems of companies. Consumers have then been named prosumers (Toffler 1980) and co-producers (Wikström 1996; Etgar 2008) to reflect their roles as producers in addition to being consumers. For such consumers, consumption essentially means actively participating in the production of the consumer product, service or experience.

Consumers being a part of a production system implies that there is a potential connection between consumers and product development as well. In fact, this connection is one of the long-time unsolved promises of consumer research (cf. Lindhoff and Ölander 1971, Grunert 2006). Which is the right way or which are the right ways to consider consumers in product development? The multitude of consumer representations (see Solomon 2004; Ekström and Brembeck 2004, for instance) makes consumers a particularly difficult concept to manage in product development.

A number of solutions to considering consumers in product development have been proposed. Research methodologies used in marketing such as surveys, concepts such as consumer quality (cf. Grunert 2006), and data on sales and markets represent conventional solutions to consider consumers. The information stemming from these sources also lives its own life and creates yet another consumer representation - one in the minds of people working for companies (Kotro 2005; 2007). Such representations in companies are obviously important when they contribute to product development that is in the interests of consumers. It can be argued that this is the case especially when these representations produce an actionable type of information, i.e. can easily be put into practical use in the companies (Heiskanen and Repo 2007).

In innovation literature, consumers are mostly seen as active, even passionate, creative actors of their own everyday life (e.g. Leadbeater and Miller 2004; cf. Bloch 1986), whose engagement in daily consumption practices is more than simply taking care of routines. Similarly, in energy and environmental issues, empowering consumers is a new emerging practice in governmental and global decision-making (see Heiskanen 2006; Rask et al. 2009). Also the changing role of consumers as content creators in the new media, such as blogging and social media in general, is emphasizing the role of active consumers. For instance, content created by consumers can be used for analyzing market trends and forecasting the future of consumption (Kotro et al. 2009). Emphasis on both users and consumers is part of the open innovation paradigm (Chesbrough 2003) where everyone is a potential innovator in his or her own cause and success derives from the free moving of ideas across organizational boundaries.

Well-known examples of involving users in the consumer goods sector exist. The case of Lego is often used as an example of a successful ‘mutual benefit’ -relation between the company and the users of the product. Lego has turned active web communities to benefit product development by establishing a user panel. The user panel has been involved in developing next generation products such as Lego Mindstorms (e.g. Kotro et al. 2009). Similarly, firm-hosted communities of users are often utilized in the software and gaming industries (e.g. Jeppesen and Molin 2003).

There is an active debate on the topic of consumers as active citizens, content creators and innovators in many fields of research as well as practice. We shall proceed by discussing user innovation in the sports sector and present empirical data from the research project on how users have been involved in product development in the Nordic sports industry. Then we return to the analogies between user innovation and consumer involvement in product development by highlighting learning from the case studies as well as potential in other industries and shortcomings in general.

3. User innovation in the sports industry as a special case of consumer involvement

What's the "use" of users in product and service development? Shah (2005) notes that the users and manufacturers generate different sets of information. Therefore, user innovations are distinct from those typically developed within firms. Especially, innovations embodying novel product functionality tend to be developed by users, according to Shah's findings on windsurfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding industries. Users are important in product innovation because the act of use itself creates new needs and desires among users. Furthermore, cooperation with user communities is valuable in prototyping and supports their commercialization. For example the whole sport of high performance windsurfing can be traced back to small community of enthusiasts. (ibid.)

The sports equipment sector proves an interesting sector to study user innovation. First, the industry is forced to focus on user innovation since it supplies highly demanding and competent customers (cf. Bloch 1989). In spite of a plethora of products available, close to 10% of consumers of outdoor equipment and almost 40% of ‘extreme’ equipment modify the products they use (von Hippel 2005). It is not surprising then that firms actively seek out athletes, lead users, and innovative customers to inform and influence technical development.

In the course of two studies on extreme sports communities, Schreier et al. (2007) argue that lead user construct might be highly valuable to B-to-C companies beyond the fuzzy front end of new product development. They found that consumers’ leading-edge status is significantly related to domain-specific innovativeness, suggesting that lead users in a given field tend to be early and heavy adopters of new products. They found that lead users tend to perceive new products as “less complex” than more ordinary users, thus shedding some initial light on the question of why lead users might be better prepared to adopt new products. The higher a consumer’s leading edge status, (a) the higher his/her opinion leadership and (b) the lower his/her opinion seeking will be.

Second, the sports industry has a long history of manufacturing and selling intangibles such as style, fashion, trends and symbolic values. This is not to say that consumers would not highly value functional, safe and well-made products, or that traditional product innovation would not be important. Nevertheless, in a marketplace where safe high-tech (and adjustable) performance equipment has become almost standard, intangibles help firms differentiate themselves and create loyal customers. Even here, lead users are used to improve products’ or firms’ brands and create symbolic value through sponsoring, as so called signature models, as spokespersons etc.

A third reason is that there exist small clusters of globally highly competitive firms in the Nordic countries. Our earlier studies of the industry show that even small firms can act on a global scale and are often forced by insufficient local demand to be born-global exporters. Despite the fact that manufacturing is increasingly outsourced to low-cost countries, firms find that innovation, development and branding through local access to users are key factors in keeping them Nordic. (Bråtå et al. 2009)

4. Four categories of passionate users in the sports industry

Our study focuses on firms producing equipment for winter sport and outdoor recreation. The empirical data consists of theme interviews with 13 Nordic companies developing sports products, services or experiences. These companies operate in the Nordic countries, where much of their product development takes place. The companies represent significant shares of the Nordic markets.

We asked those being interviewed to reflect how users have been involved in the development of one product, service or experience that is central for their company. This task included a description of the product or service in question, how consumers and users were involved in its development, and how the company in question used the results of the involvement. The data reflects identified and conscious strategies of involving users in product development. Nevertheless, such data cannot reveal all the ways in which users are involved in the product development of these companies. From experience and literature, we know that companies have a multitude of ways of considering users in product development.

Table 1. Examples of involving user innovators in product development (Bråtå et al. 2009)

User innovators
Kitewing relies on information from individual users and user communities when developing wing shaped kites.
Klättermusen was founded by a user who was not satisfied with outwear and backpack products and it still relies much on information stemming from own direct sporting experience.
The founders of Extrem were skiers who started producing their own skis initially in their parents' garage.
Endre Hals is a skier who builds tailored plastic skis adapted to individual users.

In this empirical section we focus on the finding that there are different types of involved users in the business cases. These types have their counterparts in literature: user innovators (cf. von Hippel 2005, Leadbeater and Miller 2004), professional athletes (cf. Shah 2005; Fink et al. 2004), enthusiastic amateurs (cf. Bloch 1986; Stebbins 1992), and passionate insiders (cf. Kotro 2007). These categories are summarized in Tables 1-4 and described in greater detail in a separate report (Bråtå et al. 2009).

Table 2. Examples of involving professional athletes in product development (Bråtå et al. 2009)

Professional athletes
Karhu employs a team consisting of world-class skiers in the development of skis.
Madshus and a world-class skier worked together to design skis to suit a particular skiing technique.
Helly Hansen supplied the wardrobe for a sailing team participating in an around-the-world-race as a means to test the gear thoroughly in extreme use. Helly Hansen also has a team consisting of skiers and snowboarders to test prototypes.
A sail designer at WB-Sails coaches athletes in the national sailing team.

User innovators in Nordic sports industry are individuals who most often have found the current equipment insufficient and have a prototype for a better one. Their innovations derive from desire to have more functional sports equipment (Table 1). *Professional athletes* are closer to institutions: they have a strong vision of how the sport should be developed and especially how certain product lines should met the requirements of hard core users (Table 2). These lead users have their say in product development through testing and interaction with the product development teams of sports companies.

Table 3. Examples of involving enthusiastic amateurs in product development (Bråtå et al. 2009)

Enthusiastic amateurs
Fjällräven organises a trekking event where it interacts with consumers.
Backpack maker Bergans invites amateurs to take part in festivals, competitions, and web services.
Finnfoam Paippi relied on the experiences of non-professional skiers when designing a ski tunnel for amateurs.

Enthusiastic amateurs are cooperating with the companies in events organized for them by the companies in order to learn from the lead users and gain visibility in the markets (Table 3). Enthusiastic amateurs are also more informally heard when new sports projects are started and their points of view frequently asked through social networks. Enthusiastic amateurs are often important social actors and their opinion guides the formulation of sports trends when it comes to branding which is a significant part of the economy of sports industry.

Table 4. Examples of involving passionate insiders in product development (Bråtå et al. 2009)

Passionate insiders
Suunto employed hobbyists when designing wristop computers for sports communities.
Rottefella tested its ski bindings extensively with experiences skiers when developing a new telemark binding system (NTN).

Passionate insiders are an interesting lead user group since they mediate the users' needs, values and habits to the product development and other functions of the business organization recognizing simultaneously the restrictions product development has depending on e.g. material and price requirements (Table 4). Passionate insiders often resemble enthusiastic amateurs but additionally work for the company carrying out product development. They may also have a background of a user innovator or a former professional athlete.

It is noteworthy that all four identified user groups involved in the product development of the studied Nordic sports companies can be considered to consist of passionate consumers and users. Such passionate consumers have been considered easy and beneficial to involve in the product development of the companies. This leads to two interesting follow-up questions, which are discussed in the next section. First, can it be beneficial to involve passionate consumers and users in other industries as well. Second, are involvement procedures themselves best suitable for passionate consumers and users.

5. Discussion: Passionate consumers and consumer goods industries

We studied four different types of passionate lead users in our study on user involvement in the sports industry. These different types of passionate users contributed to company strategies in product development in several ways, by making suggestions to the product features (user innovators, professional athletes, enthusiastic amateurs) and giving visibility to the brand (professional athletes). Passionate insiders share knowledge with user communities and translate their knowing into company strategies. We will next briefly discuss what other consumer goods industries could benefit from our study in the sports industry and what happens when the involved users are not passionate as in the case of sports industry.

Shah (2005) argues that users innovate whenever they have the means and interests to do so. She takes examples not only from sports but also from the automobile industry (customizing), personal computers, user firms in the 18th century iron industry and amateur astronomy. We argue that similar categories of passionate users we found in the sports industry can also be recognized in other areas of B-to-C markets, such as amateur gastronomy.

The food industry could offer an interesting area of research from this perspective. “User innovators” in this area could be the ones who combine exciting ingredients in experiential cooking and whose experiments have unofficial connections with corporate product development. For example people enjoying chocolate together with candy containing ammoniac could inspire a company to develop chocolate bars containing ammoniac. “Professional athletes” could be equated with well-known TV-chefs who are used in commercials for branding. “Enthusiastic amateurs” in food are the ones who create peer-to-peer values of consuming certain ingredients and cooking equipment and set trends for example for organic food or adding goji berries into diet or using silicone cooking ware for steaming vegetables. “Passionate insiders” in the food industry are those innovators within companies who contribute to the product development with new experiments with ingredients and ideas informed by their insight into global food trends.

We can recognize similar categories of passionate lead users also in the fashion industry, which is lead user intensive, has domain specific innovativeness, and is based on symbolic values. User innovators, we argue, are those who take the meanings of fashion items in their own hands and change their reference system in a way that is no longer guided by fashion institutions, companies and designers. There are numerous of examples of this mechanism of reframing the meaning system through consumption and use. For example, the famous textile pattern by Burberry that used to refer to conservative values and wealth – and still does so in the US and mainland Europe – was taken into the hands of young unschooled working class people, the chavs in the UK. What could be referred to as user innovators' action was answered by the Burberry Company with more radical campaigns where fashion icon Kate Moss starred in a scandalous setting and Emma Watson, famous from Harry Potter, helped to reinvent the brand. The celebrities who are sponsored by fashion houses and dressed by stylists represent an allegory for professional athletes. Fashion bloggers are enthusiastic amateurs who share their findings and opinions on fashion on a daily basis in the social media. People who are passionate about fashion and design and do it for a living, the passionate insiders, are found not only in fashion houses and in the fashion media but also in the marketing departments of a variety of companies that have links to fashion, such as consumer electronics.

The implications of lead user involvement in product development in consumer goods can be considered important at least for three reasons. First, consuming involves passion that cannot be recognized and measured without involving users into the product development. Secondly, preferences and experience of practices and routines of everyday life can be studied with (and not without) consumers because the consumer approach to the practices of everyday life is different from the industry approach. Thirdly, trend forecasting involves users and especially lead users’ insight. Much of current “professionalism” is formulated among laypeople and passionate groups of people operating within their local and global net-based communities. This leads to political and industrial actors’ need to cooperate with peer-to-peer networks of people. (cf. Heiskanen et al. 2010; Bloch 1986)

However, not all consumers are active and passionate about product development nor all products that are being developed. Then, what consequences are there for user involvement when the users involved into product development carried out in companies are laypeople without particular interests in what is being developed? This issue of indifference does not gain particular attention in marketing research because of a distinct division of what takes place within a company and what takes place on markets, i.e. amongst consumers. Besides, many elements of consumption can be considered ordinary or routinized rather than extraordinary, which would require passion (cf. Ilmonen 2001)

Nevertheless, when involving consumers as persons in the product development of companies, new issues arise. Firstly, it is a challenge to involve consumers without making them any more or less passionate than they were before the involvement. Secondly, once involved, the representativity of such consumers can be considered questionable. There seems to be a trade off between the number of involved consumers and the intensity of involvement. From the perspective of this paper, yet another representativity issue emerges: companies should recognize that the category of the involved consumer easily shifts from "a representative layperson" to an enthusiastic amateur in the involvement process.

In a set of user involvement exercises organized to support the development of interactive web services such as mobile blogging, speech recognition services, intelligent news readers and community television, this risk became apparent (Heiskanen et al. 2007). In order for the involved users - i.e. laypeople - to be able to actively participate in the product development of companies, they were first asked to try out the prototype services as these were meant to be used. This procedure turned out very useful in the sense that it focused user involvement and therefore lead to outcomes that the companies could more readily make use of.

During this process, however, the involved laypeople were transformed to experts. This became particularly evident in focus group interviews, where the users confidently acted as experts and gave guidance to company representatives on how they should proceed with product development. In addition to performing a basic technical test of the prototype, the users readily proposed solutions and new service concepts. Laypeople became empowered users i.e. passionate consumers due to the involvement process.

Creating passionate users through involvement is a process with both benefits and disadvantages. It is beneficial for those companies who want to make sure that involved users become at least somewhat passionate about the products being developed. This might well be why the Nordic companies operating in the sports industry have opted to involve passionate users. On the other hand, those companies that wish to involve non-passionate users may find the creation of passion and expertise problematic and should recognize the changes of the intense and knowledge of the user involved.

It should also be recognized that the potential of layman and professional knowing is different. When laymen are asked to contribute to a product development process their needs and potential solutions are constrained by their real world experience. Von Hippel (1986) suggests that they are thus unlikely to generate novel product concepts that would be in conflict with the familiar. Recognizing this limitation especially in studies of emerging markets make a note that the real world experience is simultaneously an advantage of user involvement when understanding users' daily practices and routines is a fruitful ground for product development, and when the products lie in the range of the user's daily experience (Shove et al. forthcoming). Yet, the involvement of lead users is significant source of product innovations in sports industry and can be fruitful also in other consumer goods industries as we have discussed here.

6. Conclusions

Consumers have been acknowledged to be a part of the production systems of companies (Toffler 1980; Wikström 1996). Consumption then essentially means actively participating in the production of the consumer product, service or experience. Similarly, consumers have the potential of becoming a part of a product development system (cf. Lindhoff and Ölander 1971, Grunert 2006).

This paper has reflected on how consumers and users have been involved in product development in the Nordic sports industry. We have studied four key consumer and user groups in the product development sports equipment and services: user innovators, professional athletes, enthusiastic amateurs and passionate insiders. These groups take part in the product development of the companies.

It is noteworthy that the identified groups all consist of passionate consumers and users. It appears that such passionate consumers have been easy and beneficial to involve in the product development of the companies. It would even appear that involvement procedures may themselves create passionate consumers.

In the Nordic sports industry, the focus of involvement is more on users than consumers. This follows the mainstream of academic literature, while user innovation scholars often take one step further and focus on lead users. Users are conceptually more contextually constrained and typically more identifiable than consumers because they are an essential part of the use of the product, service or experience.

When these findings are applied to other industries, an interesting shift of focus can be noticed: laypeople usually form focus groups in market studies and consumer studies. Much of creative and innovative activity stems from everyday behaviour of regular people (Shah 2005), including product, services and experiences which consumers are not particularly passionate about.

While addressing passionate consumers and users is a re-occurring theme in research and business practices, we argue that it would be beneficial to pay attention to non-passionate consumers. Consumer routines and practices may prove difficult to introduce in product development without involving non-passionate consumers. This could very well be the next big challenge for consumer involvement in product development.

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FEELINGS OF TRUST

How educational short films turned suspicion into feelings of trust in industry in the 1920s and 1930s[1]

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Abstract This article focuses on how short films turned suspicion into feelings of trust in Finnish industry. Civic educational organizations, the industry and the school system started to purposefully transform the Finnish public at the turn of the 20th century according to their own agendas. The data of this paper consist of 45 Finnish short films from the 1920s and 1930s. The films were selected from among around 150 films concerned with the topic. Our findings suggest that educational short films were used, firstly, to strengthen general trust towards the emerging industrial system. Secondly, it seems that films were made to improve consumers' competence as autonomous, self-interested and informed decision makers.

Keywords: Trust, short films, industrial system, consumer competence.

1. Introduction

The transformation from a traditional agrarian society to a modern industrial society happened relatively late in Finland. Consumption in the modern sense therefore hardly existed in the early decades of the 20th century, and the prevalent attitude to industrially produced goods was that of suspicion. It was a major challenge for the country’s industry and business to turn this suspicion into feelings of trust. Consumers were principally uninformed and unskilled, and not even very willing to change, modernize or learn new life management skills.

Our baseline assumption is that from the cultural and ideological point of view, the creation of both trust and quality consciousness among the consumers was one of the first steps towards the birth of consumer society. This paper studies the ways how trust and quality consciousness among consumers were built in short films in the 1920s and 1930s. Our preliminary findings suggest that educational short films were used, firstly, to strengthen general trust towards the emerging industrial system. Secondly, it seems that films were made to improve consumers'

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competence as autonomous, self-interested and informed decision makers. During these decades private companies, banks, advisory and civic organizations, municipalities and the state produced short films to advance the goals on their agenda; the films were usually shown to cinemagoers as a ‘preface’ before the actual feature.

Although the standard of living in Finland was far from that of the United States, in Finland, too, the fields of advertising and marketing were becoming professionalized already in the 1920s, following the example of the new world (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001). Concurrently, the possibilities of film started to draw interest from both civic educators and the business world. A nation accustomed to an autarchic way of life related to the new products with a healthy suspicion but also with an inquiring mind. Films were an excellent means for convincing the viewers of the factories’ outstanding standards and the quality of the products.

This article shows how experts and the media contributed to the emergence of one particular feature of consumer society. We shall identify, based on the film material that in the infancy of consumer society business encountered three closely related challenges. First of all, the problem of consumers’ resistance to change and committing: people had to be committed to modernization and the necessity of managing their own lives. Secondly, the problem of trust: there was a need to build up the public’s trust in the system of the developing industrial economy; and, thirdly, the problem of consumer information, skills and attitudes: the birth of a quality-conscious, economical and competent consumer had to be promoted by means of education. It should be stressed that we do not claim that the media or films in particular, were necessarily the best solution to these challenges. Nor are we suggesting that the only aim of the films was to solve the problems encountered in consumer society in its infancy. The production of expensive films was certainly partly ‘autocommunication’ through which early industrialists identified themselves as modern actors, as well as an effort to influence consumers. Some of the themes repeated in the short films were more or less vital to overcoming the obstacles to the birth of consumer society, but others may have appeared rather randomly or served esthetic purposes.

According to Zygmund Bauman (2001), in a modern world people are continuously seeking for equilibrium between safety and freedom. Trust is central to all transactions. Trust has been a subject of interest to researchers ever since the early days of social science. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith, and many others, have dealt in their works with trust and its effects on society. Still, not until recently has trust become a special focus of research. For example, Partha Dasgupta (1988), noted a couple of decades ago that the concept of trust has only rarely been approached in economics and has mainly been regarded as a background factor.

Academic research has in recent years become increasingly interested also in the necessity of the birth of the ‘calculating self” for market economy. French Michel Callon (1998) is the leading figure of this analytical school. Without an economic subject who calculates, and is capable of calculating, the whole system of market economy would be impossible.

In the modern world of weak bonds we have to trust people and institutions as we try to make our future more predictable and controllable (Sztompka 1999). If the trust is questioned the stability of economic, political and social systems is threatened. During the last few years Nobel laureate Paul Krugman has on various occasions approached the recent financial crisis expressly in terms of trust: “Government officials, perhaps influenced by spending too much time with bankers, forgot that if you want to govern effectively, you have to retain the trust of the people. And by treating the financial industry – which got us into this mess in the first place – with kid gloves, they have squandered that trust.” (Krugman 2009).

The general public of the early 20th century, our focus, did not necessarily believe in the ability of the markets and industrial production, which operated far away from the consumption, to serve them and their problems. The underdeveloped state of the markets and supply involved various problems of trust. In this paper we use the word ‘trust’ with reference to people’s feelings toward markets, industry and industrial products. People can trust markets when they react and operate as expected. Industrial products can be trusted when they are what they are said to be and they are as good or even better than home made ones. Short films stood as one actor among the others in solving problems and disseminating new ideals and attitudes. (See also Lammi, Pantzar 2005.)

We begin our paper with an overview of the early stages of Finnish consumer society. From there we proceed to present our empirical data. In the analysis of the data we focus on two key themes, creating trust through visual material and educating quality-conscious consumers. At the end of our paper we discuss what kind of trust institutions we have today and how the future will look when the variation increases.

2. Towards a consumer society

In the early 20th century, the great majority of Finns were still living in rural areas and agriculture was the overwhelmingly dominant form of production. Finland's so-called first period of industrialization (1860–1914) was rather mild but its effects could however be seen in a diversification of the industrial structure and a gradual crumbling of the old system of values. The old society was centrally defined by social immobility and the historical system of estates. Factory industry based on technology and machine power opened new and seemingly unlimited opportunities of growth. They gave rise to social mobility; ancestry began to lose significance and skill surfaced as the decisive factor of an individual's success in life. "Liberalism became the dominant ideology of the economic life, continuous change became the permanent state of society and higher material standard of living became the general goal", Viljo Rasila writes as he describes the ideological change produced by industrialization. (Alapuro 1985: 41–43; Rasila 1982: 13–17.)

The peasant agriculture was quite autarchic still in the mid-19th century: Mainly iron, salt, linen, fish and horses were obtained from outside the farm, usually through bartering. A major contributor to the economic growth of the late 19th century was the liberation of retail trade in rural areas. Up until 1859 trade could only be practiced in towns and a small number of country fairs. Since a majority of the population lived far away from the locations of trade, selling and buying products was cumbersome and restricted only to bare necessities. Rural trade was liberated partly by a decree adopted in 1859 and entirely by a decree adopted in 1879. The shops in the countryside were usually general stores, whereas specialized shops were concentrated in the cities. The rural population also bought from shops certain goods that could be classified as luxury products, such as coffee, sugar, tobacco and silk. (Kaartinen 1996: 181–204; Peltonen 2004: 77–81; Rasila 1982: 89–102.)

The proportion of industry as an employer increased extremely rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s. The development of dairy cattle based agriculture in the late 19th century had for its own part begun to transform agriculture from autarchic production toward a more commercial direction. The effect could be seen in the number of products sold outside the farm and in a change of farmers' consumption. There was an increasing demand for industrial products and groceries due to both the growing numbers of factory workers and the commercializing rural population. The agricultural policy following the First World War again slowed down in the 1920s and 1930s the commercialization of agriculture and the trend of specializing in sellable products. At the end of the 1930s about one half of the farms' production was sold outside the farm. The food, beverage and tobacco industries, same as the textile, shoe and clothing industries, made up around 15 percent of the GNP. The share of the wood, carpentry and furniture industries in turn was around 20 percent. (Hjerppe 1990: 46, 53–55, 62.)

In the period between the world wars the number of companies producing consumables and services grew. For example, many small factories manufacturing groceries were established. The demand for rural commercial services gave birth already in the late 19th century to a number of small general stores serving rural communities. Cooperative societies were also born alongside the private shops, from the turn of the 20th century on. (Hjerppe 1990: 63, 74–75, 127.)

As the standard of living improved and the number of industrial employers grew in the period between the wars, also the consumption structure gradually began to change. On the other hand, the severe shortage of foodstuffs during the First World War and the impacts of the 1930s depression on consumption significantly slowed down the development. But even in these circumstances, modest factory products, such as margarine, started to replace homemade products. The share of groceries was in fact large in private consumption expenditure throughout the whole period between the world wars, around 35-40 percent. The share of clothing was around 15 percent. (Hjerppe 1988: 105–108; Hjerppe 1990: 120–126.)

The change in the consumption structure also involved aspects of publicity. An advertisement world developed in Finland in the 1920s as factories needed to sell their products. The possibilities provided by film also started to interest both civic educators and businesses. Even though policy still favored national self-sufficiency, efforts were made to educate the self-sufficient peasants into being consumers.

The development of a monetary economy was still largely an urban phenomenon. For example, the most rapid development phase in Helsinki took place during the "big boom" in 1890-1913. There was a large amount of new construction and new forms of trade were developing rapidly. Department stores and mail order stood out as distribution innovations of the time. Among the pioneers were Finland's "first continental department store", Stockmann, and the legendary 'mail order man', Eino Louhivuori, from the city of Vaasa.

3. Films showcasing companies and cooperative societies

In the 1920s the interest of filmmakers still revolved around current affairs: sports competitions, festivals and public events. By the beginning of the 1930s short films had ceased to excite and fascinate viewers like they had done in the formative years of cinema. A total of 290 short films were made in Finland during 1920-1932. The two major producers were the film production companies Suomi-Filmi and Aho & Soldan, founded by Heikki Aho and his half-brother Björn Soldan. Aho & Soldan was at the time even larger than the legendary Suomi-Filmi, with 290 short films made in the 1930s, compared to Suomi-Filmi's 275. One fourth of Aho & Soldan's films from the 1930s were industrial films. (Uusitalo 197: 171–206; 1975: 179–183.)

By the late 1920s and early 1930s the number of short films made in Finland had decreased dramatically, to around twenty per year. Most of them were commissioned works, and the economic recession in the 1930s further diminished the commissioners' interest in them. The difficult situation for short films wasn't a problem only in Finland. A tax reduction system for domestic short films had been established in, for example, Germany and the Baltic countries to support the industry. The cinema tax on the main feature of the evening could be lowered if it was accompanied by a domestic short film that met certain quality and content criteria. (Uusitalo 1975: 137; Uusitalo 1965: 72.) Also in Finland a tax reduction system was adopted in 1933 to support domestic short film production. The proponents of the system believed that it would reactivate the production of domestic short films and also improve the quality of feature films by providing filmmakers at the beginning of their career with the opportunity to practice with short films. As cinema-going became a more and more popular pastime, also the short films screened before the main feature of the evening were seen by large numbers of viewers. (Uusitalo 1965: 73; Uusitalo 1975: 138–139.)

The tax reduction films were made in Finland and their topics ranged from science and the arts to the domestic industries. The regulations were rather flexible and the law was loosely interpreted. Since films centering on the industries also qualified as tax reduction films, private companies became active commissioners of short films showcasing their companies and production. The taxation status was granted, first, by the State Board of Film, and starting from 1946, by the National Board of Film Classification. (Laki leimaverolaista / Repealed Act on Stamp Duties, Uusitalo 1965: 73; 1975: 138–139.)

Industrial films were made in the 1920s and 1930s in rather large numbers. In their article on 1930s industrial films, Tapani Mauranen, Erkki Niemi and Esko Varho have listed the industrial films made in the 1930s by branch of industry. One fifth of the films dealt with wood processing, seventeen with the foodstuff industry, seventeen with the metal industry and fourteen with the textile and clothing industry. (Mauranen, Niemi, Varho 1993: 128.)

The tax reduction law was a shot in the arm for domestic short film production: it increased the number of produced short films manifold even during the last years of the 1930s, although the production didn't quite reach the level of the record year, 1933. In 1933-1939 more than a thousand short films were made in Finland. The largest film production companies were, same as in the 1920s, Suomi-Filmi and Aho & Soldan. (Heinonen, Lammi, Varho 1995; Uusitalo 1975: 139–140, 165, 168–170.) The system also created a genre of short films where education and advertising were interlaced.

The data of this paper consist of 45 films from the 1920s and 1930s. The films were selected from among around 150 films concerned with the topic. The work is based on a more extensive study where the research material included 342 consumption-related short films from 1920-1969 (Lammi 2006, see also Lammi 2009 and Lammi, Pantzar 2010). We have endeavored to cover as extensive a range as possible in selecting the films, because relatively few films were made at the time and some of them have become entirely or partly destroyed. Most of the films were silent, and not all of them even had preserved intertitles. In terms of style and topic, the short films of the 1930s were more varied compared to the films made in the 1920s. This was no doubt partly due to the tax reduction system which inspired short film makers to come up with new topics and approaches. The research material from the 1930s tax reduction period includes, similarly as the films from the 1920s, a large number of films introducing production. Films were also made to introduce companies, stores and ideological organizations. Some of the films showcasing companies and products were set within a dramatized plot. Among the short films from the 1930s are also films focusing on certain products, such as milk or eggs. While these films also portrayed the production process, their main focus was on introducing the properties and possible uses of the products. The research material is grouped in Table 1 according to theme and in Table 2 according to commissioner.

Table 1. The number of films studied by theme.

	Studied films by theme	
	1920–1932	**1933–1939**
Industrial process	10	11
Company presentation	5	5
Fair film	2	1
Product presentation	1	6
Others	3	1
Total	21	24

Table 2. The number of films studied by commissioner.

	Studied films by commissioner	
	1920–1932	**1933–1939**
State/ municipality/ public community/ state-owned company	-	1
Organization	1	1
Cooperative stores	7	9
Other stores	2	-
Other companies	8	10
Others	3	3
Total	21	24

Moving images were an effective means not only in shaping consumers' attitudes but also in disseminating new information and skills. Films were an important venue for education and advertising all the way up to the advent of television (Heinonen 1998: 376).

Since the 1970s film research has started to pay less attention to films as art and more as a product of culture. While the aim of the study is to reveal the visible and invisible meanings of the films, also the researchers' own interpretation is emphasized. In recent years the growing branch of socially oriented film research has started to pay wider attention also to documentary and non-fictional films. The idea of studying different areas of film simultaneously and taking these areas, such as the text, production and reception of a film, better into account, has been subject to growing interest (e.g. Berner 2002, Koivunen 2003, Kortti 2003, Mickwitz 1995). This article proceeds from the perception that films are products of culture, which are influenced both by the prevailing production structure and the audiences. By shaping worldviews, general opinions, values, attitudes and behavior, the media are an important forum for exercising societal power (Kellner 1998: 46-47). The impact of film is not linear – some interpretations are more likely than others. More often than not, same messages are produced in several films over and over again.

As mentioned before, this article is based on a more extensive study where the research material included 342 consumption-related short films from 1920-1969 (Lammi 2006). At first, the studied films were selected from a list made by Kari Uusitalo including all the classified films. The list was categorized according to title of the film, and other information on the film that suggested it could relate to the studied matter. Most of the films were chosen in this manner, some through preview. The films were watched shot by shot and content reports were written. We have applied a close reading technique (see e.g. Salmi 1993) in studying the films and performed content analyses, which cover both images, narration and music, as well as the time duration of the different types of scenes. We have also paid attention to the general aspects of the films, people's clothing, the milieu, the atmosphere and things that may seem peculiar to today's viewers. The visual material of the short films is at times rather simple and streamlined. For the purposes of this article, the films were selected on the basis of the content reports. Of the short films examined in this article, we have also sought out the basic information, i.e. author information, buyer information, classification number by the Finnish Board of Film Classification, and information on their taxation status.

In the next chapters we will focus on how the films contributed to the birth of a consumer citizen and built up trust in industrial products, market participation and education aimed at producing quality-conscious consumers.

4. Turning suspicion into trust: Film battles against prejudices

In the early consumer society there was a strong need to build up the public's trust in the system of the developing economy. Media, advertising and articles in newspapers and magazines played a significant role in rooting novelties into the existing cultural categories. Margarine was special because it was the first industrial foodstuff to be marketed worldwide. In the early 20th century butter was generally a much more widely known foodstuff. In Finland attributes connected to margarine stressed the strangeness of the material: "Unnatural, artificial, new, foreign, dirty, made by a corporation". Correspondingly butter was presented as "a part of nature": "natural, familiar, traditional, Finnish, pure, produced by a cooperative...". During the 20th century margarine advertising sought to fight a defensive battle to distance itself from the negative attributes associated with the dualism of culture vs. nature, while butter advertising was built around positive qualities. From this background, it is understandable that, alongside advertisements, short films were used to explain what margarine essentially is and to stamp out prejudices against the new product. (Pantzar, 1995.)

Margarine was created in the second half of the 19th century when various fat mixtures were produced as a by-product of the meat processing industry and an economic solution was sought for the problem of "feeding the workers". Later, the principal raw materials in margarine became various vegetable fats. In Finland, where the first margarine plant was established in 1911, doubts like the following were publicly voiced with regard to margarine: (Pantzar, 1995):

-people who have eaten margarine have fallen ill with serious stomach problems

-switching from natural butter to margarine causes a malady referred to as night blindness

-work performance is lowered by switching from butter to margarine

-margarine evaporates into the air and disappears during frying

-margarine gives rise to bad temper and other unpleasantness

From the viewpoint of the expert, the greatest advantage of margarine was the low cost of the energy input it provided: "Only prejudices and old-fashioned attitudes prevent people from giving up expensive butter and using margarine at half the cost" (Olsoni-Quist 1923: 104). The urban elite in particular regarded it as important that margarine should appear on the worker's table: "It is indeed remarkable how the citizens of our country are very conservative with regard to food and drink, and not the least those sections of the people who are politically situated far to the left" (Tigerstedt 1923: 9).

It was into this prejudice-filled territory that Paasivaara margarine, Suomi margarine, Karjala margarine, Putervo margarine and Martta margarine tried to enter in the 1920s. This atmosphere and context also formed the background behind the film *Paasivaara, Finland's First Margarine Churning Plant*, (*Paasivaara, Suomen ensimmäinen margariinikirnuumo, 1929)*, in which the factory production process is in the main role. The intertitles of the film urge the viewer to pay attention to the level of hygiene in the factory facilities. The outstanding cleanliness of the factory and its employees is stressed on several occasions. Hygiene is further emphasized by pointing out how margarine is packaged with the aid of machines, "untouched by the human hand". Besides hygiene, the skill and speed of the machines is also highlighted: the production process as such doesn't require any physical human labor. The factory's office is equally efficient, the work is handled there, too, "by modern machines". The film ends in an obvious advertisement: a woman makes children sandwiches and tops them with Paasivaara margarine. "Paasivaara is praised throughout Finland, from Helsinki to Petsamo. If you haven't tried it yet, now is the time."

The early history of margarine was in many western countries largely the same as in Finland. For example, in the United States where the dairy lobby fought strongly against margarine, both at the level of legislation and the everyday life of people, advertising was a very important tool for providing information on fat and for wielding institutional influence. Everywhere, media presence and advertising, in particular, were of great significance in margarine becoming rooted as a part of the consumer's everyday life. In the early advertising the battle against prejudices was waged by introducing imagery stressing the similarity of margarine to butter. In Finland even the brand names were closely connected to national imagery and symbols. The main message was however that consumers should substitute butter with margarine because it was cheaper. (Pantzar 1992: 146–150.)

5. Making quality conscious consumers: Films develop an eye for quality

In today's Finland people are raised to be market participants slowly, as part of their natural growing process. The situation was different in the early 20th century, when consumers' growing pains, shortcomings and information needs were dressed in words and images more clearly than today. Consumers weren't regarded as sufficiently matured for the new conditions of market economy. This message was conveyed by the short films, clearly and boldly.

The film *Finland's Second Nutrition and Stimulant Fair* (*Suomen toiset ravinto- ja nautintoainemessut*) from 1932 ceremoniously begins with an inaugural speech stressing the importance of education: "Anyone who has followed the recent developments in our country's economy is, without need of unnecessary explanations, well aware of the significant work that the Finnish Fair Corporation has carried out according to its agenda and goals during its more than a decade-long operations to promote the products of our country's different branches of industry and agriculture and to distribute them as widely as possible among the masses of consumers. For it goes without saying that the health and happiness of individuals and families, that is, the entire nation, relies profoundly and extensively on well organized households and the production of groceries as well as their proper distribution and use. The contribution of the launched grocery store exhibition to this educational work can be predicted to be important, because it illustrates in practice to every one of its visitors the significance of nutritional questions to life at home."

At the beginning of the 20th century advertising started to determine more and more clearly what people needed or didn't need. Perhaps one of the key contributions of films to modern consumer society was that they developed the 'consumer's eye for quality' – capacity to see quality where it couldn't be directly perceived by the eye or tasted in the mouth. This seems to be the principal task of the films when new products (mainly in food industries) are described with different adjectives and clusters of properties. For example, the film *Eat More Cheese* (*Syö enemmän juustoa*), made by Suomi-Filmi in 1936, introduces the production process of cheese and describes its nutritional properties. In the 1930s cheese was still seen as a luxury product, so it is hardly surprising that the film tries to convince the viewers that cheese is inexpensive considering its high nutritional value. Cheese is praised as reasonably priced food, which "rich in calcium, strengthens the teeth and bones; containing phosphorous, stimulates the functioning of the brain; and as a source of iron, is good for the heart and blood. Thanks to its Vitamin A content, cheese keeps your eyesight sharp. Furthermore, containing protein and fat, it is an excellent source of energy and a building block of tissues."

In the films anybody could see for themselves what kind of a home the 'innovations felt comfortable in' and how, for example, products and lifestyles created together order in everyday life. As such, films were also an efficient venue for educators to promote economizing. An economizing family smiles a lot and can afford, besides bread and butter, also to save, or to enjoy certain carefully considered pleasures, such as holidays. The prodigal family doesn't have a smile to spare, their clothes are worn and their dishes are lying unwashed in the sink. These visual incentives and hints were common and varied.

Usually the films placed the miracles of the modern times into traditional, existing categories. Juxtapositions and product analogies reinforced and actually created the universe of quality requirements and perceptions. A poignant example is offered by an excerpt from the film *Ham, Everyone's Favorite* (*Kinkku, kaikkien herkku*), made by Filmistudio in 1938, praising the product as follows: "It is a nutrient, decoration and spice, all in one. It truly is every eater's favorite at every table." It may be of at least secondary importance to the development of consumer society that certain products were advertised as meeting certain quality criteria. It is not only so that quality is in the eye of the consumer, also the dimensions of quality are in the eye of the consumer. Without a quality-conscious consumer there could be no price/quality-conscious consumer.

The *Ham* film proceeds to educate the public as follows: "It is economical for a housewife to use the products of this sausage factory and industrial kitchen to diversify the family's diet." The film justifies the use of processed food by stating that modern people use processed food. "The lady manager of the industrial kitchen" goes on to say that processed food products are first rate, inexpensive, versatile, nutritious and tasty. According to the kitchen manager, the industrial kitchen is simple but efficient and the work is "carried out in a capable manner."

6. Film as a promoter of the new era

The messages directed at western consumers, in advertisements and educational films alike, were very similar from country to country, even though the differences in the consumption rates varied hugely between the countries. This was one new, essential manifestation in the birth of a new kind of consumption: National borders and specific cultural conditions started to lose their significance as definers of consumption. (Trentman 2006, 2008). The genre of film presented itself as a perfect promoter of the new era. It was revolutionary both in form and content, thus clearly a force of change: "The day will come when pictures will slay books. I am thinking now of something more than the triumph of educational films... The birth of a modern perception requires, literally, 'perception'" (Paavolainen 1929/ 1961: 22).

The press and the educational organizations served to keep the Finnish public abreast with the onset of product innovations, such as groceries and household appliances, especially in the United States where cars had become a daily means of transportation already in the 1920s. Mass industry and mass distribution developed rapidly, in tandem. Brands, consumer research and market segmentation developed from practical needs as the large-scale producers were distanced from the mass markets.

For the consumers it was short films that offered an image of a democratic consumer society where it was possible for each and everybody to become happy through, for example, proper nutrition or economizing. Up until then it was only the upper class that had access to luxuries and the joys of consumption. The films offered room for an ordinary people to let their imagination fly, similarly as department stores or trade fairs had a few decades before offered opportunities to encounter the wonders of the world markets. Films crossed the boundaries of imagination, even though the economic conditions hadn't for decades made it possible for the public to imitate "courtly models of consumption" (Williams 1982).

Indeed, our sample of films suggests that the emerging consumer citizen of the 20th century might have needed a boost of confidence in serving as an equal market participant. Apart from brands and quality labels, consumers' trust in the system was raised by the possibility to 'see with their own eyes' into the deepest chambers of the factories. The film camera was an extension of the eye, a telescope and periscope into modern production processes and consumption models. The underlying idea of portraying the circulation of goods in the films was to familiarize the viewers with the makings of the market economy. The pattern is very similar as in the films featuring the production process. While the factory process turns raw materials into end products, transportation and storage delivers the products from the manufacturer to the consumer.

The camera concretized product floods beyond what an individual could naturally perceive. The abstract system of market economy was sometimes depicted symbolically. Small droplets and brooks turned into water power and electrical current for the best of the consumer and nation. These streamlined images strived to create in the public a better understanding of the bigger picture, a will to participate in the dynamics of the economy with one's own small contribution. Animations and charts produced generalized information on, for example, the circulation of products and money in department stores, or in the entire national economy. At the same time they created an image of and trust in the economic machinery, of which the consumers were one part. We suggest that this was one of the most significant accomplishments of the films. But first the individuals had to change: they needed calculation skills and an economical mindset, as well as an ability to distinguish the products from each other and awareness to see also invisible markers of quality in the products.

7. What are today's consumer citizens made of?

The Finnish public was prepared for consumer society over a long period of time. Civic educational organizations, the industry and the school system started to purposefully transform the Finnish public at the turn of the 20th century according to their own agendas – sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing.

In the 1920s and 1930s consumers were procreated by 'letting them see into' the production in factories and thus reassuring them that things that are produced in factories can be good and usable. The camera eye watched over factories, carefully recording all the processes and bringing them to the silver screen. Especially the idea of factory-produced foodstuffs called for assurances and trust-building efforts: bread made in factory, hasn't it passed through millions of hands, isn't it dirty? Butter is a natural product, but what awful things do they add into margarine? Films brought the factories in front of the viewer's eyes, to be inspected by all, and assured that the factories were extremely hygienic. Moreover, factories were efficient and skilled, in fact more skilled than housewives.

Technological development has rendered some of the properties of quality obsolete, such as, for example, how steep a hill a car can climb. In 1906 climbing capacity was still an important property with cars. Some properties of quality are naturally redirected to new areas. This has been the case with, for instance, freezers, which were primarily valued in the 1950s for their capacity to save energy in the housewife's work. In the 1970s the marketing of freezers began to focus on their (electric) energy-saving properties. Energy issues are still important today, as are the advantages of freezing in preserving vitamins and nutrients. It is historically interesting that some of the markers of quality have actually turned against themselves. For example, dietary fats or ice-cream haven't since the 1970s been advertised as high-energy food. Over-nutrition has commonly become a greater problem than malnutrition. Domesticity has also changed in significance as a dimension of quality.

If something has played a crucial role in the birth of the consumer citizen it is an emphasis on individual choice rather than responsibility. For a consumer citizen the origin of a product has been transformed from a decisive factor of choice to a property that is weighed against a product's other properties of quality.

The consumer ideals of the different periods entailed elements that emphasize belonging in and influencing society. Cooperative societies stressed, from the very beginning of their existence, the importance of consumer choices, not only for the consumers themselves but also as a means of exercising influence. It was not however until the early 1960s that the cooperative movement in Finland and elsewhere started to speak of consumers as active and competent market participants. At the same time, bank advertising, for example, started to regard consuming in a positive light. Saving was no longer the primary meaning of life (Heinonen 1998; Kuusterä 2002; Lammi 2006; Lehtonen, Pantzar 2002; Uusitalo 1990). Consuming and saving were regarded as having a fundamental impact on the nation and its welfare. By consuming properly and soundly, consumers were acting, not only to the benefit of their families but also to that of the entire community. A good consumer was also a good citizen.

These observations correspond to the conceptions of Finnish identity proposed by Pasi Saukkonen. He calls attention to Finland's profound identity as nation-state, which is marked by a deep-rooted peasant tradition, strong social cohesion and solidarity within the national community. The traditional features of Finnish culture are perceived as eastern or non-European and the modern ones as western European. The role of the elite and its relationship to the public are colored by the underlying notion among the elite that it is more European and modern than 'common people'. (Saukkonen 1999: 289–291.) These cultural features may very well have supported the development of trust in the market economy, the production system and the structures of consumer society, and facilitated the exceptionally rapid transition of Finnish society from an agrarian society to a consumer society.

In the light of the studied film material it appears that the sovereignty of the consumer (as it is spoken of in economics textbooks) was a distant dream in the early stages of an industrializing Finland. One could conclude that (film) propaganda was one way of producing and promoting the ideal of a sovereign consumer. Finally the modern consumer citizen learned, at least in the educational short films, to act almost like the heroes of economics textbooks: to his best knowledge, maximizing profit and keeping within the limits of the budget, with trust in the system. Economical and market liberal thinking advanced the birth of an economical human perception and an economical human being. In other words, not only did economics portray the ideal of consumer but it also created it.

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FROM PRODUCTION TO CONSUMPTION

The reshaping of gardening ideals in the modern consumer societies of Finland and Great Britain[1]

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Abstract. This paper examines the reshaping of gardening ideals in modern consumer society. We concentrate on the Finnish gardening magazine, Kotipuutarha, and the British gardening magazine, The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society / The Garden (renamed in 1975), from 1941 until 2006, every fifth year. We are interested in how the magazines address the topics of consumption and good gardening, and how the focus on production has given way to new emphases connected with consumption. The results show that the meanings of gardening have changed from production-based towards values based on desires. The ideal of a kitchen garden has yielded to the ideals of enjoyment and daydreaming. The changes in ideals also mean growth in consumer spending on garden merchandise.

Keywords Gardening, media, production, consumption

1. Introduction

The transformation from a traditional agrarian society to a modern industrial and consumer society has been gradual both in Finland and Britain, although in Finland the evolution happened relatively late and was among the most drastic ones in Europe. The birth of industrial society is often associated with modern consumerism, but also to political mass mobilization along with new ideologies and expansion of markets (Brewer & Trentmann 2006). Consuming based on needs (satisfaction) has often been connected to traditional society and consuming based on wants (desire) to modern society. These rhetorics relate to ideologies as well: the need rhetoric has its origin in Puritan-inspired utilitarian philosophy and the want rhetoric in a Romantic-inspired philosophy. (Campbell 1998.)

Visa Heinonen has pointed out that in 20th-century Finland the conception of consumption was still weak and a materially independent household was regarded as the ideal. Goods were mostly produced at households, such as meals, clothes and canned food. (Heinonen 1998.) The garden was seen as a place where people could grow food for their consumption to fulfill their own needs. However, economic growth seems to create culture where survival is not the main aim, but

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people can more and more concentrate on the objective of seeking happiness (Inglehart 1997). Colin Campbell has stressed that both in work and consumption people tend to seek not only salary but also individual creative acts of self expression (Campbell 1995: 24-25).

Gardening has often been connected to production, but in the course of the decades, the practice and values of gardening have undergone major changes along with the development of consumer society. In this paper our hypothesis is that the garden has become, rather than a place of production, a site and object of active pastime, pleasure and consumption. In our paper we examine the reshaping of gardening ideals in modern consumer society through the framework of Finnish and British gardening magazines. We concentrate on the Finnish gardening magazine, Kotipuutarha, and the British gardening magazine, The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society / The Garden (renamed in 1975), from 1941 until 2006, every fifth year. The Kotipuutarha magazine started to come out in 1941, in wartime. The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society is older, the first issue was published as early as 1870. The magazine is published by the Royal Horticultural Society, which was founded in 1804.

2. Gardening production is reshaped into consumption

Traditionally consumption has been defined as acting on the market, in other words, acquiring and using goods. More recently, the concepts of consumption, consumerism and the consumer have notably broadened in consumer research (e.g. Heinonen & Raijas 2005). Depending on the applied perspectives and emphases, consumers are featured, beyond their traditional role of choosers, also as explorers, identity-builders, hedonists, artists, communicators, victims, rebels, users, activists, and citizens (Gabriel & Lang 1995, 2006; Pantzar & Heinonen 1998: 12–16).

British sociologist of consumption Colin Campbell (2005) deals in his article, *The Craft Consumer* (Campbell 2005: 23-42), with the practice of craft and the significances of self-expression through doing in consumer society. In his definition, the craft consumer is a consumer who personalizes goods and products. This kind of consumption is characterized by the ideals of skill and mastery. It is conceivable that this consumer group is mostly made up of amateurs. A growing part of today’s consumers fall within Campbell’s category at least partly.

Kaj Ilmonen (2007: 105-113) has pointed out that the individual's ability to willfully decide about the nature and amount of his/her feelings is a key factor of modern hedonism. According to Ilmonen, modern hedonism requires special skills which are used to produce pleasure. Among the central means/skills of modern pleasure are activities connected with leisure. Skills of pleasure have in turn developed historically and culturally, as consumption has turned away from material pleasure toward emotion-based experience.

In his study of change in consumption, Ilmonen (2007: 104) points out that a tradition cannot be overruled unless it is replaced with something else that is equally important. An innovation that replaces something old must have a strong social appeal that helps to see in a new light the objects of consumption, such as gardens as discussed in this article. For the meaning of the object of consumption to change, the new meaning needs to be seen as an object of longing. Here the importance of daydreaming steps in. The substitution of old meanings with new ones presupposes a preconceived idea of the object of consumption. Daydreams bring into light what is ideally expected of an object. (Campbell 1987: 80.)

Earlier studies show that the meanings of gardening, as featured in Finnish media products, have changed from production-based towards values based on desires (e.g. Campbell 1987). The ideal of the kitchen garden has given way to the ideals of pleasure and daydreaming (Lammi and Timonen 2007, 2008). The changes in ideals also mean growth in consumer spending on garden merchandise. The tendency is also apparent in, for example, garden lifestyle programs (Taylor 2002) and public discussion (e.g. Hitchings 2007a and 2007b).

In this article we use the term ‘gardening’ to refer to the activity of caring for the garden and cultivating plants as a pastime, the pleasure derived from the activity and from spending time in and observing the garden and nature. In addition, we include in the definition the consumption connected with gardening, such as buying and reading gardening magazines, designing the garden, acquiring plants and furniture for the garden, and decorating and constructing the garden. By ‘yard’ we mean the area surrounding a house that is separated from organic nature. The yard can however also be a gravel or concrete yard with no plants or plantings. The garden is distinguished from the yard, first and foremost, by its vegetation. In the garden there are plants that are either indigenous or planted by people, either edible or ornamental. The garden and the yard both are areas that are separated from the indigenous ‘wild’ nature and have been reshaped by human beings.

We study our data through the concept pair of *production* and *consumption*. We are interested in how the gardening magazines address the topics of consumption and good gardening, and in how the focus on production has given way to new emphases connected with consumption. We associate with *consumption* the kind of gardening where the production of goods plays a secondary part. The term *product* refers to a creation that may itself consist of several items that are themselves mass-produced retail commodities (Campbell 2005).

Our research design required an analysis of published garden magazines dealing with the efforts of organizations for professional and amateur gardeners to influence opinions / gardening practices. We used a historical and comparative method to study the development of modern consumer society both in Finland and in Britain. The data gathered from the two garden magazines were organized to establish an interpretation of changes in gardening during the period 1941-2006. The purpose of comparison between two countries was to enrich the themes that characterize the changes. Trough examination of text, not only written articles but also indexes and pictures, we identified both temporal and local themes of gardening. Data were also gathered from archives. We organized the content of the magazines to the categories of (a) activities, (b) products and (c) emotions and visual atmosphere. We studied the history of the two published garden magazines in order to establish an understanding of the topics that were illustrative of changes in production and consumption. In our research design we paid special attention to the role of amateurs in temporal changes in production and consumption. This required an analysis of published garden magazines dealing with the efforts of gardeners and organizations to influence ideals of gardening. (About the method, see Scott, Chamblers & Sredl 2006.) In the following chapters we discuss the research material by time period.

3. Emphases of production

When the Second World War began, Finland was up to 95 percent self-sustaining in agriculture (Rantatupa 2004: 449-452), and self-sufficiency was also the ideal for households. Many educational organizations, such as the Martta home economics organization, supported and strongly advocated the ideal. (Heinonen 1998: 32-34; Ollila 1993: 124.) Self-sufficiency relied expressly on women, because it was they who looked after such tasks as food management, gardening, knitting fabrics and other household production (Ollila 1993: 124) both in Finland and in Britain (Allen 2008: 21-41). The garden and its vegetable patch were part of a family's food production system but also served the broader goal of self-sufficiency.

During its first years of publication, during the war and in the period reconstruction in the 1950s, Kotipuutarha Magazine focused on advisory content both in regard of activities and products: it offered practical instructions on how to cultivate, use and preserve fruit, berries and vegetables. Initially the magazine came out once a month and its overall visual appearance was rather modest. It did however also include black and white pictures, mostly to make the instructions more understandable. Besides instructions on the cultivation of food plants, the magazine also focused on introducing less known plants for home gardening use. The magazine explained the cultivation requirements in detail and also reminded its readers of the annual cycle with its gardener's almanacs. It also featured recipes. In 1941 (145) the magazine pondered on the meaning of the garden as follows: "In these times a garden is essentially worth gold. Just think of all the things we can produce ourselves, both to be used throughout the summer and to store for the winter. All this does however require information. Many of the tasks can be taken care of easily and without undue effort when there is a modicum of professional knowledge and skill guiding them."

During the years of war, the British Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society was very similar to the Finnish Kotipuutarha Magazine, both in layout and content. Each issue featured questions of home gardening. Attention was also paid to the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. In 1941 the journal advised amateur gardeners to grow fruit, on the following grounds: "Fruit trees… providing a valuable addition to the home-grown food supply. Further, they will remain a sound investment for many season to come, because it is not likely that large imports of fruit from overseas will be received for several years after victory is achieved." The article recommends that amateur gardeners should choose two to three year old fruit trees trained against walls, which would bear fruit in the next season. Then the article proceeds to explain how to prepare the ground, support the plants, plant the seedlings and select varieties (1941: 87-9).

The goal of preventing food shortage is reflected in the magazine contents both in Finland and Britain. The wartime depression highlighted the aspects of gardening connected with production and sustenance, and the garden was primarily regarded as a place and opportunity for food production. Due to its background, The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society covered a more extensive range of content than its Finnish counterpart: the journal provided information on the activities of its patron association and its large test garden also during the years of food shortage. The activities of Wisley Gardens were featured in every issue. Of course these articles, too, had advisory functions, but the British gardening tradition as it was before the Second World War was still strongly present despite the times of hardship.

Immediately after the years of war the British and the Finnish magazine start to show notable differences. Even during the period of reconstruction Kotipuutarha Magazine continued its strong emphasis on guidance. It can in fact be seen as one among the many Finnish media that took part in the large-scale effort to inform and educate Finnish households and consumers on how to act in the new type of consumer society. This work was carried out ever since the beginning of the 20th century by many different types of organizations, from private companies and banks to insurance companies, civil organizations and cooperative societies (e.g. Heinonen 1998, Lammi 2006). In the gardening magazine the educational objectives were focused on the practical aspects of production and activities, such as the cultivation of different food plants, fertilization, caring for fruit trees and using garden products in households.

The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society in turn detached itself at least to some extent from the educational approach already in the 1950s. This can be partly contributed to the journal's different background: It was largely aimed at people with a serious, semi-professional interest in gardening and as such was more than an instructive journal for the average home gardener. Many of the articles in the journal dealt with decorative plants and their cultivation or different 'showcase' gardens, including exotic gardens abroad. They often also featured specific gardening activities which were explained in rich detail. For example, in 1946 the journal presented a home gardener who had performed experiments with cable soil heating units in a South-East London suburb. In the article he explains very carefully heating units and the processes of obtaining satisfactory sand and testing it with a specific composition of nutrient solution. He also made recommendations for weekend gardeners: a small sand-heating cable takes only 80 watt, has abundant uses and is a fascinating and valuable means of carrying on without adequate help. A fascinating array of time switches, pumps and various electrical gadgets are described, which would take care of nearly everything for the busy man. (1946: 48.)

In the 1950s the British journal also reflected on the transition towards informality in English gardening. This was seen as more of a long-term trend which was reinforced by amateur gardeners. Also the elements of landscaping and design were associated as important parts of the hobby, which had been actively discussed in Britain also before the war. Both in Finland and Britain the wartime food shortage had shifted the focus to the more basic questions of survival. After the war, old traditions were brought back into play. They were of course reformed but they also continued their existence as strong practices of knowledge and doing in the new era of peace.

Besides the different backgrounds, the different paces of industrialization are also reflected in the Finnish and the British magazine. Britain was industrialized and urbanized much earlier on than Finland. More than a half of Britain's population already lived in cities in the mid-19th century, when Finland was still undergoing its first, rather modest period of industrialization (Salmi 2002). The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society featured town gardens and gardening in urban conditions already in the 1950s. For example, an article from 1956 on a lecture delivered by American landscape architect and writer Lanning Roper reflected on the topic of town garden and urban gardening. Roper introduced two urban amateur gardener types: a complete novice with no preconceived idea of gardening in town and the successful country gardener with the wrong practical experience. According to Roper, it is seldom possible to find the right house and the right garden all in one in London. In many town gardens the land is not more than a small court or a strip of open space along the sidewalk. Even so there were abundant possibilities to create gardens. Roper was fascinated by Mrs. Anley and her husband, Brigadier-General Anley, who had created a garden that reflected the taste and interests of the owners. "The herbaceous paeonies are one of the great features of St. George's. In this same bed are various others, all of which, are of American origin, like many other plants of the garden." (1956, 166-174.)

4. Emphases of materiality and amateurship

While the British journal shifted after the years of war towards a rather abundant and even sophisticated discussion on various (ornamental) plants and their requirements, in the Finnish magazine the modernization of society and beginnings of deruralization in the 1960s were reflected in a focus on introducing different material innovations, such as plastics, machines and pesticides. Questions of land use and landscape planning were of course also addressed, with reflection on "the mutual readjustment of urban and natural components" (1966: 54).

In Britain the focus was more on the esthetic aspects of gardening: the amateur gardener had been replaced by people who needed help in getting the best out of the plants in respect of their form and color. The British journal introduces some basic principles offering the reader alternatives to the usual suggestions for planting schemes, as well as an example with a picture of a miniature park (plan of a small park-like area) (1961: 7-13), and even a proposal of how to create a small woodland garden without undue difficulty or expense out of a non-woodland site. Visual or atmospheric ideas on, for example, a garden dominated by white or red colors are not to be found in the Finnish magazine issues from the 1960s, this type of discussion was to arrive in Finland much later.

The improved standard of living and the new winds of consumer society appear in the content of Kotipuutarha Magazine in a much more material context compared to its British counterpart: new tools, garden furniture and also ornamental plants found their way to the pages of the magazine. The Finnish garden of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s was no longer emphatically a vegetable garden for producing food, it had turned into an “increasingly important place of recreation and work, a yard, a summer kitchen and a living room”, as was stated in Kotipuutarha Magazine in 1981 (1981: 492).

The articles of the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society / The Garden hardly ever featured new products: the focus was on plants, different types of gardens and the Society’s own activities. On the first and last pages of the journal there were however advertisements for tools, garden furniture or even garden-themed jewelry. Even though the articles paid little attention to the change in consumption culture, in actuality the material change in the life of the British middle class was quite concrete after the Second World War. (James 2008 [2006]: 434-442). The quality of reconstruction also had its implications for gardening, and post-war architecture was subjected to a large amount of criticism. Combining the finest products of the English gardening tradition with the best of modern architecture was a hard job, as was noted in the journal. (1971: 544).

It could be concluded that the material outlook of Kotipuutarha Magazine and the so-called *proam* (professional amateurs) approach of the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society / The Garden had to do not only with the magazines’ different backgrounds but also with the different development stages of consumer society in the two countries concerned. The British had been living in an urban consumer society for decades longer than the Finns, even though the general increase of prosperity and influx of new materials affected both countries. Britain’s colonial history may very well have made distant countries in the world seem less strange to the British public than they did to Finns. While Finns started to acquaint themselves after the Second World War with a new urban consumption culture, or even the idea of travel abroad, the British could be perceived to have returned, at least in part, to the consumption culture preceding the war. In Finland, in turn, there was a kind of congestion of peak years during which many drastic changes in society occurred over a rather short period of time.

5. Emergence of social discussion

In terms of visual appearance, Kotipuutarha Magazine was modernized already in the 1970s, and the use of color photos became common. The Garden was rather modest in appearance, until the magazine was reformed and modernized in stages, starting from the 1990s. In the 2000s the layout became extremely ascetic and sophisticated, and the magazine started to feature new types of articles. Along with the change in appearance, the magazine also started to engage more in social discussion. An example of this is an article from 1996 in which Stephan Lacey – an author and broadcaster with a lifelong interest in gardening – explains the subject of trees in the urban landscape, and believes that gardeners can play a part in the revitalizing of towns and cities; or an article from 2001, in which Steve Windsor reflects that "creating a wildlife pond is not just the altruistic gardener; residents such as this toad will consume slugs and even snails in large number".

The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society / The Garden has throughout the whole period under study featured various interesting gardens and their owners. This is exemplified in, for example, an article published in 1986, in which “superb plantsman” Lewis Hart’s garden is presented by author Alex Pankhurst. The article is a story from rubble to paradise. For Hart gardening has become an absorbing passion. He emphasizes learning from other people’s gardens, books and nurseries. He enjoys the challenge of difficult plants and creating much from very little and takes pleasure in pointing out the many rarities to Pankhurst. The lack of space has fuelled his interest in container planting and there are ten sinks in the garden, each one a miniature garden. (1986: 374-378.) Stories like these did not become common in Kotipuutarha Magazine until the 1990s.

The lively social discussion of The Garden never really landed in Kotipuutarha Magazine, where the focus revolved around the aesthetic pleasures and innovations that were restructuring consumption. In the Finnish gardens of recent years, in times of prosperity, materialness and consumption have increasingly appeared alongside the values of production and gain, or pleasure. They are motored by dreams and images, as described by Campbell, that are realized in the garden in myriad ways. In the consumption of garden products the creation of images, experiences and fulfillment of dreams play an increasingly significant role. The Kotipuutarha Magazine still includes practical advice on how to design and maintain gardens, but its visual style and selection of content have undergone a major change. More effective illustrations, together with top-quality paper and advanced printing technology, have enabled a stronger emphasis on the visual aspects of the magazine. Gardens, or certain parts of them, sometimes even in extreme detail, are featured in artwork-like photos. A similar development can also be seen in the British magazine. In personality profile articles the garden is presented as strongly linked to the featured individual, also as a reflector and extension of her/his personality. These types of articles are illustrated with color close-ups and decorative, atmospheric lifestyle photographs. It is usually rather difficult to get an overall picture of the garden from these stories and their illustrations. Overall shots are not as spectacular as close-ups, which allow the viewers to fill in the surrounding reality themselves. (1991: 199; 2001; 2006.)

Besides modernization, both magazines also reflect a return to the old in, for example, such contexts as presenting garden tools or discussing the annual cycle in the garden. What is however notable about the ‘reversion’ is that the practice of gardening has been readjusted from production-type food cultivation to an activity of pleasure, in which ‘doing it yourself’ and being in the garden are a central part of the hobby, pleasure and everyday experience. Therefore, articles presenting tools, for instance, do not focus solely on the properties of the tool but may also pay attention to the esthetic and emotional aspects of the tool as an artifact.

The development of Internet has led to a situation where printed magazines are constantly redeveloping their websites. Interestingly enough, both magazines offer on their websites (Kotipuutarha at http://www.kotipuutarha.fi/, Royal Horticultural Society at http://www.rhs.org.uk/ and its publication The Garden at (http://www.rhs.org.uk/Plants/RHS-Publications/Journals/The-Garden) a large amount of advice and practical support – themes that were common during the wartime years of food shortage but have more recently been at least partly cast aside from the pages of the printed magazines. It appears that the websites serve as practical guides for the individualized amateur gardener and information seeker, while the printed magazines offer more extensive discussion and inspiration for gardening ideals and dreams.

6. Conclusions

The data provide an opportunity to examine the reshaping of gardening ideals in two very different consumer societies at two very different stages of development. Based on the comparison, we suggest that in extreme situations, such as during times of war, consistency grows. In normal times the cultural differences between the countries become more pronounced, but similarities are also to be found with the general convergence of consumption culture. The results show that the meanings of gardening have changed from production-based towards values based on desires in both gardening magazines.

Furthermore, we need to remember that gardeners, as craft consumers, transform large numbers of mass-produced products from raw materials to personal garden products. The changes in practices have been linked to the technological and material transformations of gardening. A growing interest in 'doing it yourself' and the satisfaction it provides are clearly visible in both magazines. The concern is with what people actually do with the products once they get them in their garden. Even if ideas for the design of a garden may be taken from magazines, people make their own gardens with skill and by hand. Rather, the gardener puts together a collection of mass-produced items like flowers, plants, pots and furniture. This kind of "ensemble creativity" (Campbell 2005: 34) is a central activity in contemporary craft consumption.

Questions of urbanization are addressed in both magazines practically throughout the whole studied period. The dream of being a green thumb and having a garden in a district of private houses is a significant question of study when we reflect on the organization of consumption and what kind of effects ideals may have on the impacts of consumption in society. The new appreciation for nature, which on the level of everyday life appears as a growing interest in gardening, has for its own part also led to a dispersion of urban structure as migration has occurred out of densely-populated urban areas toward areas surrounding the cities. Green thumbs are even willing to adopt a car-dependent lifestyle in order to be close to nature all week long. The interest in gardening may also to some extent explain why, especially in larger cities, people are starting to move to adjoining municipalities (Kortteinen et al. 2005; Hitchings 2007a and 2007b; for migration to rural areas, see also Kytö and Aatola 2006.)

The decrease in the size of gardens is apparent both in British and Finnish discussion: the task of making a small garden appear lush and natural, as a place for enjoying nature, requires both planning and skill but also insight from urban planners. Apart from these qualities, the goal of practical benefits from growing plants has of course also kept its place in gardening. In food cultivation the joy of 'doing' and experiencing the miracle of growth take precedence over production. These ideals are quite similar in Finland as they are in Britain, as an example. However, newly urbanized Finnish society seems to still have more connections to production and utilization of nature. In contrast, in Britain gardens reflect an individual's historical ties to place and nature, besides providing opportunities to observe and experience nature.

Several theoretical discussions have asserted the importance of self expression and experiences in contemporary society. In discussions about experience economy, the notion reflects the idea that experiences are becoming an accelerating force in our modern life. The viewpoint where experiences are only associated with exceptional situations of consumption, such as travel, often leaves the pleasures of ordinary, daily life without attention. (Pine and Gilmore 1999.) The pleasure provided by nature, which is valued by many, is apparent in many ordinary functions of everyday life, such as gardening.

The pleasure of doing, planning and simply being gain significance along with the modernization of societies. The trend can also be linked with aspirations to reproduce the traditional agrarian lifestyle, nostalgia, searching for a counterbalance to an increasingly technology-led society, and changes in the employment structure. Our historical perspective supports the Campbellian idea of craft consumerism: individuals bring skill, knowledge, love and passion to their consuming and activities (2005: 27), which can be seen as a counterforce to modern society.

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Kotipuutarha years 1941, 1946, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006.

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USING ACTIVITYSCAPES TO ILLUSTRATE PERCEIVED VALUE IN SYSTEMS OF CONSUMER PRACTICES

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Abstract. Consumer practices have recently been presented as units of value creation (Holttinen, 2010), where each practice is seen as a vehicle for consumers to create value. This paper investigates how a consumer's interrelated, separate practices relate to each other as elements in a constellation of practices. A new technique for illustrating consumers' systems of practices is introduced. The technique consists of using an interview to identify those of a consumer's practices which belong to a particular theme, then quantitatively measuring how the consumer evaluates the identified practices on three dimensions: Experienced benefits, sacrifices and frequency. This information is used to create a graphical representation of the consumer's practice system, an "activityscape map". The activityscape representation provides an overview of consumers' perceptions of their activity patterns in a simplified and structured manner. Comparing different consumers' activityscapes, it shows the differences between different consumers' activity structures and their perceptions of them. The paper is conceptual and the empirical illustration indicates the potential in further empirical studies. It opens up new ideas for structured analysis of consumer practices. The paper contributes to practice and value literature within marketing, where there currently are no clearly described standardized techniques for visually mapping out consumers' practices.

Keywords: Practices; value; activityscape; consumer activity systems; graphical representation

1. Introduction

Due to changes in technology, consumers are getting increasingly empowered in terms of how they can act in a consumption setting. Information is readily available, and consumers can choose, learn and contribute in ways previously unimaginable. This has lead to a call for new approaches and methods of studying consumers in such research areas as customer management (Verhoef et al. 2010) and service management (Heinonen et al. 2010). Even though marketers have acknowledged the importance of understanding the consumer as an active participant in the market system (Normann, 2001; Stewart and Pavlou, 2002; Vargo and Lusch, 2008; Beckett and Nayak, 2008), there have been few efforts to systematically understand and illustrate the consumer's structures of activity.

One field of research where independent consumer activity has been systematically analyzed is practice theory (Holt, 1995; Allen, 2002; Warde, 2005; Korkman, 2006; Holttinen, 2010). Practices are the units of routinized, meaning-laden behaviour which people carry out throughout their daily life. Practices are seen as socially created and maintained, and reproduced as well as modified by individuals in social context (Bourdieu, 1977). Within marketing, practice theory has been mostly focused on looking at practices within a particular event, such as a baseball game (Holt 1995) a ferry trip (Korkman 2006), or cooking (Holttinen 2010). This paper goes beyond looking at practices as single events, instead focusing on systems of many separate practices.

The purpose of this paper is to create a simple and formalized method for providing an instantaneous overview of a consumer's perceptions of value in a system of practices. Consumer activity systems will in this paper be investigated in terms of two research questions:

1) How can one define the connecting principle of a system of practices?

2) How can the consumer's perceptions of value in terms of perceived cost / benefit be described within such a system?

The paper combines practice theory with emerging ideas in service marketing, thereby providing a framework for analyzing consumers' systems of practices. The practice provides a useful central unit of analysis, which can be employed to analyze consumer behaviour in a structured way. The contribution to consumer behaviour in twofold: First, by providing a simple framework for looking at practices at different levels, and secondly by providing a tool for graphically comparing practices with each other on a predetermined set of dimensions.

This paper proposes the concept of the "activityscape" as a tool for visually depicting and analyzing perceptions of value in consumers' practice systems. Inspired by Normann's (2001) and Service Dominant Logic's (Vargo and Lusch, 2004 & 2008) view of the customer as an active integrator of services as well as the graphical representations of relationship networks by the IMP-group, this paper introduces the Activityscape Mapping technique. The technique provides a structured approach for identifying and illustrating consumer activity systems from the consumer's own point of view. The graphical presentation style draws on hierarchical value mapping techniques, but instead of focusing on product- or service features, the technique shows consumer activities and how the consumer experiences their value. The paper begins with a discussion of practice theory and systems of practices, continues with a presentation of the activityscape approach, and ends with an illustration of the technique where it is used to map the wine-related activity systems of two wine consumers.

2. Consumer practices

This paper uses Reckwitz' (2002: 249) definition of a practice, which states that practices are:

"[...] a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to each other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge."

This means that practices are to be understood as re-occurring human activity where many different types of resources and elements are combined by the person carrying out the practice. The sentiment is echoed by Korkman (2006, p. 27), who describes practices as *"[...] more or less routinized actions, which are orchestrated by tools, know how, images, physical space, and a subject who is carrying out the practice."* Practices are shared and reproduced in a social context. Schatzki (2001, p. 2) provides further clarification:

"A central core […] of practice theorists conceive of practices as embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared understandings."

From a marketing perspective, the products and services offered by a company are parts of the consumer's practices (Warde, 2005). This means that activities can be carried out independently by the consumer, or may demand interaction with a company.

2.1. The boundaries of a practice

To approach the problem of defining the boundaries of a practice, this paper makes a distinction between consumer actions and consumer activity. A framework for organizing different levels of activity is borrowed from B-to-B research, where company relationships are analyzed in terms of sequences that consist of episodes. Within episodes, actors carry out individual actions (Holmlund, 2004). If applied to a practice context, an episode could be "going to the store", while a corresponding action could be "standing in line at the store's cashier". Alternatively, "cooking a meal" and "chopping the onion".

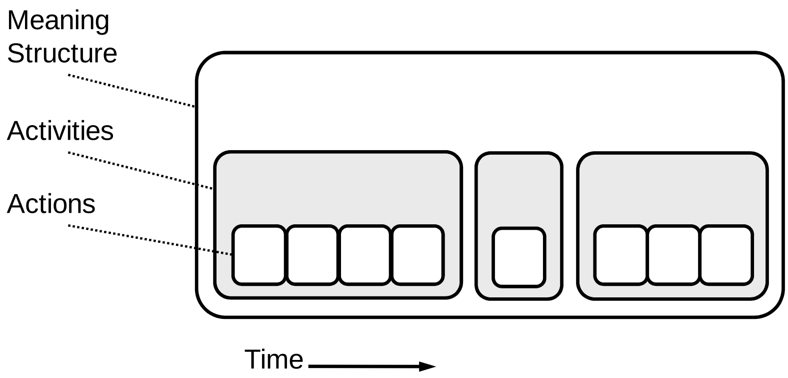

Figure 1. Meaning structure, activities and individual actions (adapted from Holmlund 2004).

Figure 1 illustrates Holmlund’s (2004) framework, as adapted to a consumer perspective. In this paper activities are defined as consumer-initiated, uninterrupted episodes of behaviour that consist of individual actions. The activities are interconnected by belonging to some common guiding principle such as a life-project (Huffman et al. 2000) or some other type of meaning structure (Holttinen 2010). From the point of view of practice theory, all three levels of activity could be understood as expressions of practice, and one could choose investigate the practice of cooking in general (meaning structure), the practice of cooking and eating a particular meal (activity) or the practice of chopping an onion (action).

3. Systems of consumer practice

According to Reckwitz (2002) the individual acts as the carrier of a practice – even of many different practices that need not be coordinated with each other. This indicates that practices can be seen as loose systems of action and activity maintained by individual agents. This section deals with the problems of deciding what a “system of practices” in fact could be, in terms of their connecting principles, and how they should be illustrated.

3.1. The connecting principle of activity systems

In marketing, the problem of finding the connecting principle behind a system of activity has been tackled from many different angles. The drivers of activity have usually been delimited and structured in terms of, for example, tasks, goals or life themes. The core of an activity system can be a single task (such as painting your room), but it could also be some ongoing concern, such as managing your personal economy. Boyd and Levy (1963) suggested that marketers should consider the “total task” (p. 130) of consumption, while Pieters et al. (1995) divide consumer goals into hierarchical levels, and argue that consumer activity can be understood by investigating what consumers are trying to achieve, how they are doing it and the reasons why. Huffman et al. (2000) collected different views of consumer goals into a single hierarchical model, where life themes and values are at the top, current concerns are in the middle and benefits sought are at the bottom. Roughly, goals are classified into three types, “being”, “doing” and “having”.

The “teleoaffective structures” of practice theory (Schatzki, 1996) can be seen as incorporating all of the mentioned types of goals and objectives. It is mostly a collective name for the individual’s drivers for carrying out practices, and does not solve the practical problem of delimiting the boundaries of an activity system. As shown by the examples from the traditional problem-solving approaches of consumer behaviour literature, the case seems to be that it is up to the researcher to decide from which angle a phenomenon is to be studied. This means that a system of activity could be drawn up around a particular practice, such as cooking, or a life project, such as being a teacher, or even a solving a practical problem, such as buying a new car.

3.2. Illustrating activity systems

Illustrations of consumer activity are often presented as chains of events where one activity leads to the next. Practices, though, are seen as replicated and repeated activities that can happen in a particular order, but need not necessarily do so. Rather, the consumer has a relationship with each practice, and can carry out them whenever needed. This indicates that alternative models that are focused on relationships instead of chains of events need to be sought. Relationship-focused models can be found in Business-to-business literature, which has a long tradition of non-linear approaches. Within the research tradition of the IMP-group, business networks are analyzed by creating maps of market actors, their activities, and the resources exchanged between them (Anderson et al., 1994, Håkansson and Snehota 1995). This type of illustration has already been applied to a business-to-consumer setting with Normann’s “value star” (Normann, 2001), Gummesson’s “C2B networks” (Gummesson, 2004) and Vargo’s “customer supply chain” (Vargo et al., 2008). But the focus has in these cases been on actors, not activities. To fully capture the consumer's systems of behaviour, the actor perspective must be changed to an activity perspective. This means mapping out the relationships between a consumer and a set of activities instead of a set of actors.

4. The value of consumer practices

Consumer practices have recently been presented as units of value creation (Holttinen, 2010), where each practice is a vehicle for the consumer to create value for him- or herself. According to Korkman (2006: 49), *"value is formed in the dynamic arrangement of the practice."* From this perspective, the consumer does not necessarily need to be aware of the value of a practice, as many practices are taken for granted. The role of the company is to support practices and try to increase their value by means of a "positive change". According to Holttinen (2010), value is socially constructed and realized by consumers by engaging in practices. Something that is valuable is desired and acquired for the (perceived) positive effect it has in the subject's life. Looking at practices from this point of view, it might be fruitful to look at the perceived positive and negative aspects of a practice, and arrive at some understanding of its value for the subject in that way.

4.1. The benefits and sacrifices of a practice

One can investigate practices using the dominating definition of perceived value, which describes value as a trade-off between benefits and sacrifices (Zeithaml 1988, Monroe 1990, Oliver 1997, Flint, Woodruff and Gardial 2002). Negative and positive aspects of an activity are weighed against each other and the more consumers end up on the positive side, the more value they experience. But research has shown that the matter is not entirely straightforward. The relationship between benefits, sacrifices and perceived value is in fact complex, and cannot be calculated simply by subtracting sacrifices from benefits (Graaf and Maas 2008). Perceptions of benefits are subjective and context bound (Schembri 2006, Vargo and Lusch 2008, Sandström et al., 2009) and so are perceptions of sacrifices. Thus, sacrifices and benefits are both multi-faceted and subjectively interpreted by the consumer.

Experienced benefits. Benefits have been classified in many different ways (Holbrook, 2005; 2006), and it is challenging to find specific dimensions to display in an activity map. Due to this, it may be easier to measure benefits on a general level. One basic and general division that could be used is Alderson's

(1957) division into congenial and instrumental value, later referred to as the division between hedonic and instrumental value (Batra and Ahtola 1990, Voss, Spangenberg and Grohmann 2003). This basic division is arguably valid across most cases of consumer activity. Indeed, Holttinen (2010) describes, based on Schatzki (1996), how a practice can have teleological (goal-oriented) dimensions as well as affective dimensions. To capture the hedonic and instrumental dimensions of activity, consumers could be prompted to evaluate their activities on the dimensions of “importance” and “fun”. The combination of these two should give a basic reflection of the type of experienced benefits of an activity.

Experienced sacrifice. Sacrifices are usually thought of in terms of monetary cost, but besides money, customers also sacrifice time, energy and effort to enable their activities (Zeithaml 1988). These types of sacrifices are interchangeable but – as noted by Ravald (2008) – the “exchange rates” may vary from person to person. Money is a symbolic way to store sacrificed time and effort, and because of this money, time and effort can be analyzed on more or less equal terms (Zeithaml 1988, also see Okada and Hoch 2004 and Johnson 2008).

The frequency of activities. The frequency of an activity can be seen as a multiplier for value. Every time an activity is carried out, the experience of value produced by the activity is repeated. Current discussions of value are mostly focused on understanding experiences of value as individual occurrences and do not take into account repetition (Holbrook, 2006). A relationship view demands a time dimension, and thus a map showing the relationships between a consumer and a set of activities should contain some indication of frequency.

5. The activityscape mapping technique

This paper introduces a new approach to capturing and visualizing the consumer’s systems of practice and the value emerging within activities: The “activityscape” technique. The term activityscape is inspired by Strandvik and Törnroos’ “relationscapes” (1997) from the B-to-B network literature. Relationscapes are a firm’s view of its relationship landscape, and include both active as well as potential business relationships. Transferring this logic to a consumer context, we can investigate the consumers’ activity landscapes; the mental maps of activities that they do within a certain context area. Sawhney (1999) described these mental landscapes as ‘metamarkets’, markets that are not present in the physical world, only in the head of the consumer. These cognitively related activity systems can be illustrated by combining IMP-style network maps with the visual presentation of Gengler et al.’s (1995) value maps.

5.1. Method

The activityscape technique combines qualitative and quantitative methodology, first identifying a consumer's activities through an interview, then individually measuring them on a set of pre-determined dimensions using a questionnaire. The questionnaire provides numeric data for relating the consumer’s activities to each other.

Before the interview, the type of practices that are to be investigated should be decided. To find a cluster of practices the researcher can ask the respondent about some connecting (or teleoaffective) principle behind them, such as a life-theme, hobby, motive or goal, and then try to find out what activities the consumer does that are related to it. The interview is done in a structured manner, keeping the focus firmly on activities that the consumer does on a regular basis. The respondent is asked to try to think of all the activities he does that are relevant to some goal or theme chosen by the researcher. The informant can be assisted by asking about activities where she buys something, activities where she reads about things related to the theme (either online or offline), or whether she talks or writes about it. The aim should be to get an overview of the system of relevant, reoccurring activities within the context.

Having identified the significant activities, the next step is to quantify the differences between them. The respondent is presented with a set of identical questionnaires, one for each activity. Every activity is to be evaluated by the respondent on three separate dimensions: Sacrifice, benefit and frequency. The questionnaire template can be viewed in Appendix 1. Items are graded on a seven point Liekert-like scale.

5.2. Drawing the activityscape map

When data about the individual activities has been gathered, a graphical representation can be drawn. The proportions in the activityscape picture represent the sacrifice, benefit and frequency dimensions and are presented in a way similar to the IMP-approach, as circles connected with lines. The activityscape places the consumer as a circle in the middle, while the activities are placed around it, thus forming a centralized network (Baran, 1964). The length of the lines between the consumer and the activities signifies the sacrifices they require. Line length is calculated by adding together the values from items 1-6 in the questionnaire. To show importance, the sizes of the circles are made bigger or smaller. The data for determining the diameter of the circles is obtained by measuring how the respondent has placed the different activities between the extremes "very important" and "not at all important" in item 9 in the questionnaire (see appendix 1). The more to the right the activity has been placed, the more important the activity, and the bigger the circle in the activityscape. The thickness of the lines connecting the activity to the consumer shows frequency, i.e. the number of times the activity has been carried out. The more traffic a path has had, the wider it has become. The thickness is obtained by multiplying item seven (time since first occasion) with item eight (frequency). Figure 2 is a key for reading the activityscape representation, where each of the dimensions illustrated in the figure is presented.

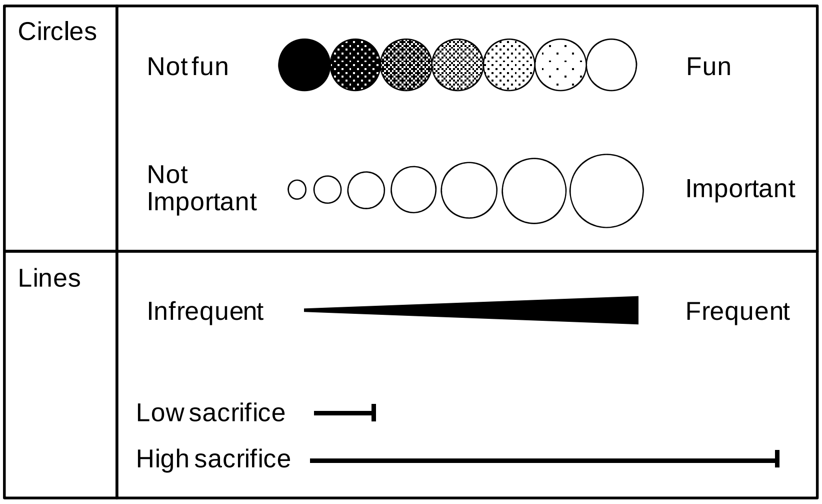

Figure 2. Activityscape key

5.3. Empirical illustration of the technique

The approach was tested on a wine consumer. The respondent was an urban male, about 40, who saw wine as an important hobby. This means that he should have a clear understanding of the connecting principle (wine hobby) behind the different practices that he carries out. The respondent was interviewed with the aim of identifying the wine-related activities that he does on a regular basis. (This means that wine-related activities that only had been done once were left out.) He was assisted in thinking about his activities by questions regarding activities where wine plays a part, whether he reads about wine and how he gets his wine. During the interview, the respondent mentioned eleven different wine-related activities that he does regularly. Based on this set of activities, eleven questionnaires were created using the template in appendix 1 and given to the respondent. When the questionnaires had been answered, the obtained data was used to calculate the proportions in the activityscape presented in Figure 3.

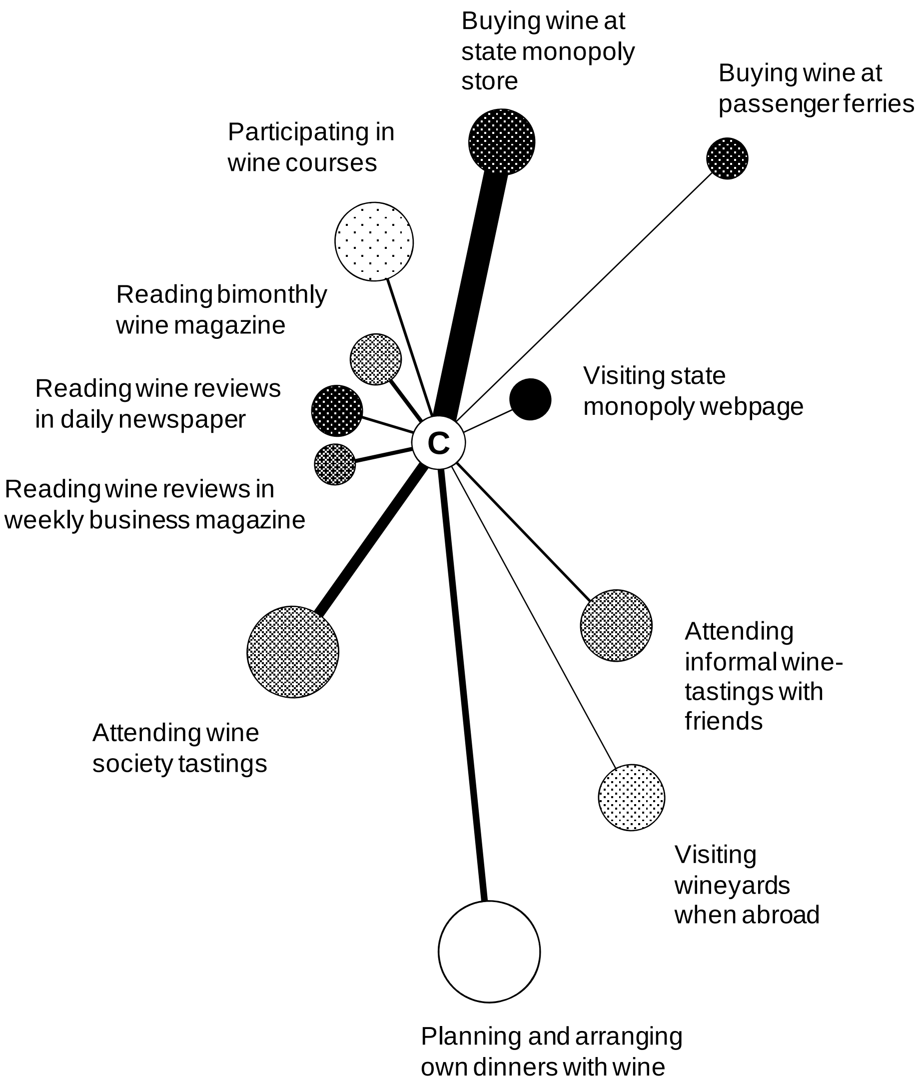

Figure 3. The activityscape of a wine consumer

The picture contains all the activities mentioned by the respondent in the interview. The circle in the middle of the picture represents the consumer. The properties of the different activities – as they were seen by the respondent – have been illustrated by the shapes and hues in the picture. The length of the lines show the perceived sacrifice needed to complete the activity. In the activityscape we can see that the respondent experienced the planning and realization of dinners with wine as one of the most demanding parts of his activity system. This activity requires a lot of time, money and effort, and is repeated about once a month. Because of this, the activity becomes expensive both on a long-term aggregate level as well as when viewed as a single occasion. On the other hand, the respondent sees these dinners as his most important wine-related activity. Importance is shown by the size of the circle. In contrast, reading wine reviews and buying wine at passenger ferries (where the circles are small) are seen as the quite unimportant activities.

The hue of the circles shows whether the respondent considered the activity to be fun or not. Visiting the state monopoly store was not seen as much fun, while taking part in wine courses is quite a lot of fun. But not as much fun as the self-arranged dinners, which really seem to be the centerpiece of the system. Dinners scored high on both fun and importance, which indicates that they are highly benefit-bringing. This is balanced out by the high sacrifices required. The thickness of the lines connecting to the circles shows how many times a certain activity has been completed. The path to the state monopoly alcohol store is the most travelled of all in the system (regularly since the respondent turned 18), while the line connecting the respondent to wineyard visits is quite thin, as these visits happen quite seldom (about once every second year). The exact specifics of calculating the proportions will not be described here, as the activityscape only is a visual aid. Minimum and maximum sizes and thicknesses can be calculated as seen fit, as long as the proportions between the representations reflect the data.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this paper was to introduce a simple and formalized method for providing an instantaneous overview of the consumer’s perceptions of value in system of practices. The activityscape technique was introduced and used to illustrate the wine-related activities of a wine consumer. The technique revealed the general shape of the respondent’s activity system, as well as the differences in perceived value between the activities. The technique, as it was presented in this paper, is primarily suited for understanding consumption of services on a long term level.

Reckwitz (2002: 249) explains a practice as *“a pattern which can be filled out with a multitude of single and often unique actions reproducing the practice.”* From this point of view, the activityscape is a map of a practice landscape, where filling out the specifics of each activity is up to the individual consumer. By analyzing the structures of practice on this level, we gain insights that are hard to come by with other approaches. If we view value creation as the consumer's process of carrying out activities with the help of different resources, maps of activity systems can help us understand how different activities support each other. The value that arises within an individual activity may often only make sense within the system of related activities. The wine-consumption case showed that the services of the state monopoly were required but not seen as producing valuable experiences as such. Indeed, many activities in the system were carried out regularly, even though they were not seen as being much fun or very important. This indicates that they have a more instrumental than hedonic function in the system. With this method it may be possible to discover different types of activity systems, and identify the activities that consumers consider as central within them.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

[The following 8 items concern one particular activity in the activity system and are to be modified accordingly]

1. How much time do you need to set aside from your everyday routines in order to complete this activity once?
(In minutes, for example) _______________
2. How much time do you need to use for traveling outside your everyday locations and routes in order to be able to do this activity once? (In minutes, for example) _______________
3. Compared to the amount of money you usually spend in a week, do you consider it to be expensive to do this activity once?

It is free of charge	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**It is very expensive**

4. Is this activity expensive for you in the long run? Please consider how much you pay for doing the activity during a typical year. Compare this to your other expenses. How does the activity compare?

It is free of charge	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**It is very expensive**

5. Do you sometimes feel like you would want to postpone doing this activity because it feels tiresome?

Never	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**Often**

6. How much effort do you feel it takes to do this activity?

No effort	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**A lot of effort**

7. How long is it since you did the activity for the first time?
____

8. Approximately how often have you done this activity since you started?
(times a year, month, or week, for example)
____

[The 8 previous items are repeated for all activities. The following two are presented only once]

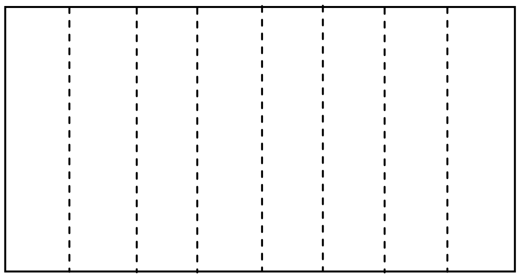
9. Place the following activities into the field below according to how *important* you feel that they are relative to each other. Place the activities so that the important ones are on the right side of the field, while the less important ones are placed more to the left.
Activity A, B, C, D etc.

Not at all important **Very importan**

10. Place the following activities into the field below according to how *fun* you feel that they are. The most fun ones go into the right side of the field, while the less fun ones go into the left side.

Activity A, B, C, D etc.

Not at all fun



Very much fun

INFLUENCE OF REVENUE MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES ON PERCEIVED FAIRNESS AND ACCEPTABILITY OF PRICE DISCRIMINATION INITIATIVES BY CUSTOMERS

Evidence from hospitality sector

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Abstract. Revenue management is increasingly employed by hotel firms on a global scale to improve hospitality structures' profitability. The main tool and lever of revenue management is pricing, which, through price discrimination of different customer segments serves as a sales volume regulator and profit generator at the same time.The present research paper examines fairness perceptions of price discrimination and acceptability of price discrimination bases as perceived by customers. Research findings demonstrate that both, perception of fairness as well as acceptability of price discrimination reasons are fundamentally influenced by perceived outcome, which is well motivated by Theory of Distributive Justice.

Keywords: Revenue management, fairness perceptions, hotels

1. Introduction

The term "revenue management"[1] is usually utilised in many services industries to indicate a variety of techniques appropriate for allocating limited resources, such as hotel rooms, among different segments of clients (i.e., business or leisure guests) (Ingold et al. eds. 2000). Revenue management is based on two strategic levers: capacity management (availability and duration control) and demand-based pricing (Kimes & Chase 1998). The main tool and lever of revenue management is pricing, which, through price discrimination of different customer segments serves as a sales volume regulator and profit generator at the same time. Revenue management is applicable to any business that has a relatively fixed capacity of perishable inventory, manages demand (i.e., through reservations), has high fixed and low variable costs and involves varying degrees of customer price sensitivity (Wirtz & Kimes 2007). It has been first applied in air transportation sector, then in lodging sector, and eventually in other sectors, like restaurants and

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[1] This modus operandi has been implemented firstly in the airline sector under the name of "yield management".

golf. As a matter of fact, over the past years, revenue management has been increasingly applied in the hotel sector (Vinod 2004), being able to enhance the total yield of lodging investments.

Even if empirical evidence has shown that the application of these techniques has caused a substantial increase in hotel profitability, it is also relevant to notice that some problems of perceived unfairness may emerge. Effectively, customers may perceive revenue management as an opportunistic behaviour of firms and then consider these practices as unfair. Consequently, customers' trust and loyalty towards a particular hotel brand may deteriorate significantly and, as a result, profitability may drop. In fact, fairness perceptions have been found out to be related to company profitability (Kahneman, Knetsch & Thaler 1986).

In recent years have been carried on some researches at international level dealing with this topic and the effects of revenue management practices on relationships between hotels and their customers have been investigated (Wirtz et al. 2003; Kimes & Wirtz 2003; Choi & Mattila 2004; Choi & Mattila 2005; Mauri 2007; Wirtz & Kimes 2007).

The present paper, centred on a research undertaken by the authors, tries to verify a hypothesis based on the comprehensive analysis of both, literature as well as hotel practices, with a special aim to investigate the ways customers perceive revenue management tools and the potential conflicts that may occur from their use.

This paper encompasses two main parts. In the first part the concept of perceived fairness is explored and the implications for hotel decision making in application of revenue management tools are focused. The second part presents the empirical research, the test of the formulated hypothesis and the main findings.

2. Price discrimination and perceived fairness

Fairness has been defined as a judgment of whether an outcome and/or the process to reach an outcome are reasonable, acceptable and just (Bolton, Warlop & Alba 2003; Monroe & Xia 2005). In this regard, it is crucial to emphasize that fairness evaluations are necessarily comparative with a reference transaction (Xia, Monroe & Cox 2004).

The subject of fairness perceptions has been studied especially extensively with respect to pricing policies (Martins & Monroe 1994; Campbell 1999; Xia, Monroe & Cox 2004). It is important to state that, in addition to revenue management instruments, perceived fairness may also depend on decisions that affect the nature of the service itself and/or reduce service quality and customer satisfaction (Blodgett, Wakefield & Barnes 1995; Severt & Rompf 2006). Moreover, it must be reminded that some techniques for inventory control, like capacity restrictions and overbooking, may also lead to perceived unfairness.

A few empirical as well as a number of theoretical studies, have identified the factors that significantly affect fairness price perceptions. These factors are: transaction similarity and choice of other comparative parties, cost-profit distribution and attributions for the inequality, buyer-seller relationship and trust, social norms and meta-knowledge of the marketplace (Xia, Monroe & Cox 2004).

Once briefly introduced the perceptions of fairness by customers, we shall try to concentrate on the hotel applications. The paper will deal specifically with the tool of price discrimination.

In order to apply price discrimination, demand is split into a number of different price buckets according to customer price sensitivity. Hotel companies, by offering multiple prices for essentially the same service, can increase revenue and reduce consumer surplus. However, as clients are accustomed to compare their prices with those paid by other clients as well as with the rates they themselves had paid in the past, it is necessary that the motivations for varying price levels are transparent. In fact, perceptions of price unfairness can be blurred by decreasing similarity of transactions, employing rate fences that may be able to differentiate one transaction from another in order to fix different prices, bundling services, and differentiating the service experience.

Table 1. Techniques to Anticipate Conflicts Caused by Price Discrimination

Causes of Perceived Unfairness	**Techniques to Avoid Conflicts**
Unfair price	Fencing, bundling of services, service differentiation, privacy of prices
Unjust fencing	Logical and acceptable rate fences, clear communication of fences
Increase in perceived risk	Guarantees (Best Available Rate)
No reference price (increase in search efforts)	Transparent communication, increase of the rack rate (in the hotel industry, rack rate is the full price chargeable for a hotel room)

Source: adapted from Mauri (2007).

Exhibit 1 shows some examples of causes of perceived unfairness by clients and the recommended solutions to be possibly adopted by hotel managers.

3. Fairness perceptions and outcomes for hotel guests

We can also point out that the adoption of revenue management, as it can assure a better use of service structures and greater profits for hotel firms, may allow to fix, in many instances, lower prices for the customers. In these cases, it is also possible to bring on changes in customers' habits towards different ways of purchasing and using services at cheaper prices (i.e., last minute offers, advanced booking). Anyhow, as there are different prices for the same service, there will be some guests who will pay more and some who will be charged a lower rate.

As a consequence, according to Wirtz and Kimes (2007), customers who are charged a lower price as the outcome of a revenue management practice (e.g., customers who benefit or are in advantage due to off-peak pricing) are supposed to view this practice as being fairer than those customers who pay a higher price (e.g., those who have to pay peak prices). In fact Xia, Monroe and Cox (2004) suggest that perceived price differences can lead to perceptions of advantaged inequality (i.e., the customer pays less than the reference price or another customer) or disadvantaged inequality (i.e., customer pays more).

In other words yield management pricing practices can be seen from two opposite perspectives: first, from perspective of the person paying the higher price, who is prevented by an effective rate fence from taking advantage of the lower price (e.g., a transient hotel guest who pays a full price and cannot take advantage of a special rate), and second, from perspective of the person who is able to take advantage of a lower price through the same fencing mechanism (i.e., a loyal hotel guest who pays a discounted rate).

In our study, we address this issue by explicitly examining fairness perceptions of both the fence-advantaged and the fence-disadvantaged clients. In detail, we have formulated the following hypothesis:

Price discrimination is considered fairer in case the customer thinks of having obtained an advantage (positive outcome) through it.

4. Methodology

This study focuses on fairness perceptions of revenue management, particularly referring to rate fences. Personal intercept survey of 2,538 respondents based on an ad hoc questionnaire was used for data collection. Interviews were conducted in Italy by specially instructed university students of Università IULM of Milan during the academic years 2006–2010. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. First, the questionnaire inquired some socio-demographic and hospitality preference data of the respondents in order to permit customer profiling (8 questions). This section was followed by the questions regarding use of revenue management tools and their acceptability (18 questions). In this article we analyse the questions that are associated with the previously postulated hypothesis and related constructs. In detail the questions concerned: if the hotel guest met in the past price discrimination; if yes, whether the outcome was favourable; and finally which were the resulting perception of fairness and evaluation of price discrimination bases.

Before performing any kind of further analysis, the research data were tested for consistency and sufficiency. Afterwards, the data were analysed using first generation methods (percentages and cross-tabs). Results of the data analysis are presented further in the next chapter.

5. Research results and discussion

In this chapter, we analyse the data providing support for the hypothesis postulated above. Only the results that are directly related to the presented hypothesis and indicate remarkable variations across different variables and layers are presented below for maximum clarity of the findings.

5.1. Fairness perception and outcome favourability

Price discrimination fairness perception’s connections to favourability of its outcome to the customer is well visible from a simple cross-tabulation of those two constructs indicated on Table 2, which suggests a rather high dependency of perception of fairness based on favourability of price discrimination outcome. Based on theory as well as common sense, a simple causal relationship between those two constructs can also be hypothesised here with the direction of influence from discrimination outcome favourability to reception of fairness: as discrimination outcome favourability is unlikely to depend on perception of fairness by customers, yet as fairness perception is customers’ reaction to certain trigger, for example, the same price discrimination, its status as a dependent variable is quite justified.

It is also important to mention that these findings are rather consistent throughout the years, reaching even as high as 89,8% for fair evaluation with favourable outcome and 73,5% for unfair evaluation in case of unfavourable outcome, and as low as 26,5% for unfair evaluation for favourable and 10,2% for fair evaluation and unfavourable outcome.

Table 2. Price Discrimination Fairness Perception Based on Favourability of Price Discrimination Outcome for Customers

ROW%		**Outcome favourability**	
		Favourable	Unfavourable
Price discrimination fairness perception	Fair	84,5%	15,5%
	Unfair	31,5%	68,5%

Source: authors

From the data presented above, we suggest in addition to the main finding supporting our proposed hypothesis also two other important observations.

First, a non-linear relationship between favourability of price discrimination initiatives' outcome and fairness perception of these can be hypothesised on the basis of customer reactions – while the proportion of customers who evaluated the price discrimination activities as fair after receiving an outcome favourable for them reached 84,5%, the percentage of customers evaluating respective activities as unfair based on non-favourability of their outcome was considerably lower – only 68,5%. However, due to the scale restrictions non-linearity of the outcome favourability and fairness valuation's relationship cannot be unanimously determined on the basis of the present research data, for which reason we also offer additional alternative explanations for such findings – for example, there can also be some additional intervening variables involved in formation of these customer reactions, which would justify such findings as well. Debate over conceptualisation, scaling and bipolar nature of fairness and unfairness can also be raised questioning whether the evaluation of fair is always the opposite of evaluation of unfair or these can also be treated as different concepts on different scales, as the debate over customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction has shown. Hence, this topic constitutes a fruitful area for further research called for by the present article. However, we find that the open linearity issue does not hinder the previously demonstrated findings regarding fairness-outcome link but rather extends and enriches them, as the patterns indicated on Table 2 are clear-cut and obvious enough for drawing the conclusions regarding the interrelations of those two constructs. Furthermore, these findings are also supported by the Theory of Distributive Justice (Konow 2003), which states that customers weight their evaluations of actions by the outcomes of actions, as suggested by Kimes and Wirtz (2003), which allows us to regard the abovementioned findings as well-motivated and concise.

The second important additional finding is remarkable two times (and annually even almost up to four times) proportional difference between favourable/unfair and unfavourable/fair evaluations. For rather high unfair evaluation with favourable outcome we suggest the reason being consideration of fairness of different pricing rules by customers instead of weighting the fairness by outcome, as suggested by Procedural Justice Theory (Thibaut 1975; Lind & Tyler 1988; Kimes & Wirtz 2003), where, to some extent, also socially correct behaviour factors are involved throughout the process of judgment formation. The high weight of favourable/unfair findings (double as opposed to the diagonal opposite) can be justified by proposition that as the person has achieved an outcome favourable to him/herself personally, there is a relatively large scale of possible judgments, as the person is not constrained with the superimposed judgments stemming from the loss of favoured outcome. Therefore the person can "allow" him/herself "socially merciful" or socially correct set of judgments on a larger scale than he/she otherwise would. The findings on unfavourable-fair interrelation echo this proposition – as suggested by several scholars, customers are much more sensitive and prone to react to the loss rather than to the gain, for which reason their judgments in case of unfavourable outcome representing the losses are much more unanimous and restricted in attaching a positive or negative value to these, which justifies the lowest proportion of unfavourable-fair judgments.

Taking the findings above altogether, we suggest in line with Theory of Distributive Justice that customers reflect the perceived positivity or negativity of a price discrimination rule through positivity or negativity of their judgments regarding its outcome for them – if the outcome imposed by the rule on them has been positive (favourable) for them, they are inclined to judge this rule rather positive than negative, and vice versa, if the outcome of the rule has been negative for them, they tend to judge this principle negative rather than positive.

There can be two possible reasons for this kind of favourability-fairness link with the customers, constituting a fruitful area for further research, as diagnostic issues extended beyond the scope of the present research paper. First, it is plausible to hypothesise, that positive or negative emotions and reactions associated with comparative gain or loss resulting from revenue management and consequent price discrimination activities overrule the rational judgments (Seiders & Berry 1998) resulting in distorted perception and interpretation of revenue management actions, especially for experiential services like lodging services may be. However, it is also feasible to suggest, that applied price differences were unfair in reality, being justifiably classified as such by customers. In the first case, for example, a customer could have requested a hotel room upon arrival, assuming, that last minute offers should have a favourable price differential advantage (as it is a policy sometimes used in the hospitality business) or at least the same prices as booking over internet, and a request to pay a higher price according to the hotel policy has resulted in disconfirmation of expectations (cf. Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1985, 1988 and further works of respective authors regarding disconfirmation paradigm) as well as following disappointment and unfairness perception. In the second case, a customer could have requested a room in the hotel and after paying the bill, received the information about the discount s/he was not offered, yet was entitled to (for example, additional free day of stay in case of at least 2-day long stay period). In this case the customer did not receive all the benefits s/he was entitled to and has all the reasons to perceive the price differential as unfair.

5.2. Fairness perception, discrimination reasons and outcome favourability

Rather interesting findings, supporting the aforementioned reasons behind such favourability-fairness findings are also visible from cross-tabulating evaluation of price discrimination reasons with both of the previously discussed factors (favourability, and perceived fairness), where the results appear to be similar or even more extreme (see Table 3): while with favourable price differential majority of respondents evaluated also the reasons behind such differential as being acceptable, then also majority of respondents, who perceived the price discrimination as being fair, found it to be so for acceptable reasons. At the same time, 63,9% of the respondents who perceived the price differential as unfair, evaluated it as being so for unacceptable reasons, as opposed to 36,1% for unfair-acceptable. This finding suggests that customers are quite certain of the correctness of their judgments and don’t question them, which allows us to propose, that fairness perception can be moderated by both – favourability of revenue management outcome as well as evaluation of price discrimination reasons.

However, there can be also another, more plausible explanation behind the clear-cut findings in case of price discrimination acceptability evaluations with favourable outcomes to the customer, which stems again from the aforementioned Theory of Distributive Justice, according to which, customers weight their evaluations of actions by the outcomes of actions (Kimes & Wirtz 2003). In the present case the customers could weight both: evaluated fairness/acceptability of price discrimination reasons as well as perceived fairness of price discrimination.

Table 3. Evaluated Fairness/Acceptability of Price Discrimination Reasons Based on Favourability of Outcome and Perceived Fairness of Price Discrimination

ROW%		**Evaluated fairness/acceptability of price discrimination reasons**	
		Fair/Acceptable	Unfair/Unacc.
Favourability of the price discrimination outcome for customer	Favourable	85,2%	14,8%
	Unfavourable	43,4%	56,6%
Perceived fairness of price discrimination	Fair	92,3%	7,7%
	Unfair	36,1%	63,9%

Source: authors

However, there can be also another, more plausible explanation behind the clear-cut findings in case of price discrimination acceptability evaluations with favourable outcomes to the customer, which stems again from the aforementioned Theory of Distributive Justice, according to which, customers weight their evaluations of actions by the outcomes of actions (Kimes & Wirtz 2003). In the present case the customers could weight both: evaluated fairness/acceptability of price discrimination reasons as well as perceived fairness of price discrimination.

The third reason behind such proportion of findings can be even simpler and much more pragmatic – it is also justified to presume that companies are letting customers know of price discrimination much more often in cases, when customers obtain an advantage through such discrimination rather than in those, where the customers find themselves in disadvantaged situation, hence the customers who have noted price discrimination as such tend to see themselves as having obtained an advantage through it. It is also important to add, that in case of both rows – favourability of outcome as well as perceived fairness – there are considerably more occurrences with positive (favourable and fair) outcomes rather than those with negative (unfavourable and unfair) ones (only 36,4% and 39,9%, are negative cases, respectively, if calculated by the summed column percentage), which supports the abovementioned third explanation for described distribution of our findings.

However, based on the available data all these explanations remain at the level of hypotheses and the actual reasons behind such clear-cut findings in case of favourable outcomes have yet to be determined by further research, which is authored by the present findings as well as theorised reasons behind these.

Founded on the discussion above, the same hypotheses as in case of advantage regard also perceived fairness, where layering according to evaluated fairness of price discrimination reasons returns even more extreme results for fair perception, which also calls for further research into the reasons behind such clear-cut divisions, which, however, lays beyond the scope of the present paper.

Yet, there is another important recurring pattern, which is observable from the Tables 2 and 3 presented above and regards so far little elaborated negative outcomes, whether judgmental or actual, namely: unfavourable price discrimination outcome and unfair perception of price discrimination. It is clearly visible from Tables 2 and 3 that while positive outcomes return much more clear-cut results regarding discrimination reason fairness/acceptability judgments, negative outcomes yielded much more balanced and even distribution (85,2% vs. 14,8% and 92,3% vs. 7,7% as opposed to 43,4% vs. 56,6% and 36,1% vs. 63,9%). Based on these findings it is motivated to suggest, that while the rather clear-cut findings above were well explained and justified by the Theory of Distributive Justice, then more balanced distribution in case of negative outcomes is caused by higher intervention of processes described by Theory of Procedural Justice, in case of which, according to this theory, "...customers consider the fairness of different pricing rules..." (Kimes & Wirtz, 2003) themselves, without factoring in the outcomes and consequent subjective issues. In other words, based on our research findings we propose the following hypothesis needing further proof and verification: perceived fairness and acceptability of price discrimination reasons are influenced predominantly by distributive justice in case of favourable price discrimination outcome for customer, and are influenced predominantly by procedural justice in case of unfavourable price discrimination outcome. This hypothesis is yet to be verified, for which we also air a call for further research.

As it is well visible from Table 4, the largest proportion of customers (46,9%) who have perceived the price discrimination being favourable to them, also evaluated as fair both, price discrimination act as such as well as the reasons behind this act, which is well in line with Theory of Distributive Justice discussed above. As also expected and congruent with the propositions and hypothesis presented above, the proportion of consumers with unfair-unacceptable-unfavourable perceptions remained over two times lower (20,0%). The lowest proportion of customers (0,7%) indicated perception of unfavourable price discrimination outcome and its unacceptable reasons, yet fair discrimination act as such, in which case the low proportion is well justified by the Theory of Cognitive Dissonance. The same regards also fair-unacceptable-favourable pattern, where the proportion is still somewhat higher (4,0%), which is explained by the hypothesis presented above.

Table 4. Favourability of the Price Discrimination Outcome for Customer Layered by Perceived Fairness of Price Discrimination and Evaluated Fairness/Acceptability of Price Discrimination Reasons

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="4" colspan="2">TABLE%</td><td colspan="4">Perceived fairness of price discrimination</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Fair</td><td colspan="2">Unfair</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Evaluated fairness/acceptability of price discrimination reasons</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fair/
Accept.</td><td>Unfair/
Unacc.</td><td>Fair/
Accept.</td><td>Unfair/
Unacc.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Favourability of the price discrimination outcome for customer</td><td>Favourable</td><td>46,9%</td><td>4,0%</td><td>7,1%</td><td>5,5%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Unfavourable</td><td>8,5%</td><td>0,7%</td><td>7,3%</td><td>20,0%</td></tr>
</table>

Source: authors

As an explanation for the judgment formation of consumer groups with fair-acceptable-unfavourable pattern (8,5%) and unfair-unacceptable-favourable pattern (5,5%) we propose the Theory of Procedural Justice and hypothesise that these customers are weighting their judgments rather rationally than emotionally and are able to evaluate the rules rather "objectively" (in the meaning of overall justice rather than their own personal subjective benefit). For example, if a 40-year old customer has obtained a plane ticket for higher price than 18-year old, who is entitled to youth discount, s/he might evaluate the price discrimination basis as acceptable and regard price discrimination as fair, although s/he has not obtained an advantage through it – in this case the price discrimination is based on more or less objective factors and customer accepts it as such. And vice versa: if customer has obtained an advantage through price discrimination, yet s/he does not regard it as fair, s/he also does not accept the reasons behind such price discrimination, and the other way about. Stemming from the aforesaid, we also call for research into causality and detailed relationships and influences of perceived fairness evaluation, acceptability of price discrimination reasons and favourability of price discrimination for the customer.

The most puzzling customer clusters, however, are the ones with patterns unfair-acceptable-favourable and unfair-acceptable-unfavourable, which return surprisingly high proportion of customers (over 10 times larger than fair-unacceptable-unfavourable cluster), forming altogether 14,4% of the total sample, which cannot be disregarded due to its high proportion. Although these two groups counter the Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, we propose a plausible explanation for emergence of such judgments – although customers evaluate the bases for price discrimination (for example: age) to be acceptable, they might disagree with exact boundaries of different price segments or the offered advantages. However, validity of this proposal is yet to be determined, for which reason we also author further research into this issue.

We also propose another area of study in regard to price discrimination, evaluated outcome, acceptability of reasons and fairness perception – as aforementioned evaluations form subjective personal reactions to a certain stimuli, it would be important to study influence of personality factors on these subjective judgments. We are certain that although the proposed topic lies beyond the scope of the present paper, it would constitute a fruitful area for additional research.

To further motivate the proposed hypotheses and explanations, we switch independent variable (outcome favourability) and one dependent variable (perceived fairness) and provide clustered proportions based on acceptability of price discrimination reasons, as indicated in Table 5.

Table 5. Effects of Favourability/Advantage of Price Discrimination and Outcome Favourability on Perceived Fairness

		Evaluated fairness/acceptability of price discrimination reasons			
		Fair/Acceptable		Unfair/Unacceptable	
CLUSTERED ROW%		**Outcome Favourability**		**Outcome Favourability**	
		Favourable	Unfavour.	Favourable	Unfavour.
Perceived fairness of price discrimination	Fair	92,2%	92,9%	7,8%	7,1%
	Unfair	56,4%	26,8%	43,6%	73,2%

Source: authors

It is important to mention, that when layered by price differential's favourability for the customer, proportions of customers perceiving price discrimination as fair despite of the reasons behind such price discrimination remained quite stable (92,2%/92,9% vs. 7,8%/7,1%), however, there are interesting changes in unfairness perception depending on favourability of the outcome for customers: while over half of the customers (56,4%) with price differential in their favour considered the price discrimination reasons to be acceptable even when perceived as unfair, this proportion sharply decreased to about a quarter (26,8%) in case the outcome was unfavourable for them (see Table 5). These findings suggest, that customers tolerate and accept some unfairness based on favourability/ unfavourability of the outcome for them, that is, in case they benefit from unfairness, they tolerate and accept it more readily than in case the outcome is unfavourable for them. This hypothesis is further supported by exploring the differences within groups giving similar evaluations of the reasons for price discrimination (acceptable/non-acceptable. These findings also suggest again that the concept interpretation, perception and evaluation of fairness by customers is highly subjective and contextual by nature, calling for further research into it.

As the research findings presented in Table 5 support our hypotheses and proposed explanations presented earlier, we consider these as motivated and noteworthy for further research, and proceed with conclusions of the present paper.

6. Conclusions

Revenue management practises and price discrimination are increasingly applied in the hotel sector. Our research has shown the importance of employing these tools with care, due to risk of perceived unfairness by customers. Perceptions of fairness are fundamentally influenced by perceived outcome, especially in case of favourable outcome, which is well motivated by Theory of Distributive Justice. In case of non-favourable outcome, the judgments are not so clear-cut, although also well demonstrating the influence on fairness perceptions. The latter findings are well motivated by Theory of Procedural Justice. In addition to perception of fairness, price discrimination outcome influences also the acceptability of price discrimination reasons, which is also very strongly associated with fairness perception, however, exact causality of these reactions is yet to be verified, although we hypothesise bidirectional influence between those constructs.

Our research also proposed an additional hypothesis stemming from the research findings, and indicated numerous directions for further research.

To conclude, it is justified to state that in designing price discrimination initiatives, it is important to consider customers’ perceptions of fairness and acceptability in order to avoid negative evaluations and alienation of customers.

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INDUSTRIAL DESIGN IN THE CONTEXT OF CONSUMPTION

Interpretations of the meanings represented by the economic press

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Abstract. This paper is about the media presentations of industrial design in the context of consumption. I seek to answer two-fold research question: firstly, how are industrial design and consumption discussed in the economic media, and secondly, what are the meanings this combination produces? The research framework is thus interpretive and qualitative. The article is based on a sample of 130 articles from the economic papers published in Finland. In the concluding section I suggest that distinction, differentiation and stigmatisation are useful terms in interpreting the media representations of industrial design. The rhetoric of functionality and aesthetics is also discussed.

Keywords: Consumption, design, differentiation, distinction, economic press, industrial design, media.

1. Introduction

This paper is about industrial design in the context of consumption. The emphasis is on the meanings of industrial design as they appear in the media materials. I will not consider industrial design from point of view of the companies or producers. My approach is not about consumers' attitudes towards design or how they perceive the concrete products or designed objects either. These research designs would be typical of contemporary consumer research. I wanted to do something vague and daring – some might think that this kind of research is not significant to the consumer research community. I interpret the meanings of industrial design reproduced by the economic press. I understand these meanings as mediated by the language and shared by the actors in society. The level of inquiry is therefore rather abstract. However, the interpreted meanings are important. People usually trust their culturally shared interpretations of consumer products, which therefore guide actual behaviour. A more general level, it can be suggested that human understanding is based on everyday interpretations and meaning-making processes.

The meanings associated with designed consumer goods are an important but unfortunately often neglected topic of consumer research. The reason for this is that meanings are quite hard to grasp empirically. Another problem is that interpretations of the meanings of consumption may well remain obscure. Despite these difficulties I will interpret the economic press materials in order to grasp meanings associated with industrial design in the context of consumption.

In this paper, I will examine the media presentation of industrial design, which is usually linked to product development in its representation in the economic press. The users aspect, their demands and needs, are also emphasised: "*Design represents comprehension of the demands of the environment and the users. It is also about changing human needs into a material and viable form.*" (TalSa 14.3.2001). Industrial design, giving a form to products, is an essential part of contemporary product development. It is also a factor that affects consumption and consumers choice. It is acknowledged that well-designed, aesthetic and functional goods are perceived positively (Cooper & Press 1995; Bruce & Bessant 2002).

Although there are a variety of viable definitions of industrial design, my solution was research material-based. I examined the economic press articles and constructed a definition based on what the economic press was describing as design. I found that design has been divided into three distinctive areas in the Finnish economic press: craft design, industrial (or applied) arts design and industrial design, each with a somewhat different emphasis on practice, teamwork, type of product, manufacture, and sales and marketing (Ryynänen 2009b). Industrial design was discussed most often in the economic press, but interestingly there were also many articles addressing craft design. (Ryynänen 2009a).

Herbert Simon's (1969[1996]) well-known description of design states that everyone who designs changes or devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones. In his classic text about the sciences of the artificial, design is defined as human action that takes place in different settings to natural sciences. Another approach adopted by John Heskett (2002) is to define design as designing a design for a design. Roughly speaking he means that design can be defined from various viewpoints depending on the stand an interpreter chooses to take.

In this paper, I will outline cultural meanings of industrial design which is reproduced implicitly in the daily discussions of consumers. The cultural discussions change slowly and the agendas appear frequently in the media. The cultural stories are repeated on a daily basis and are quite enduring. The stories and associated meanings also constitute a shared knowledge base. The thematic examination of industrial design in the context of consumption was increased in the economic press materials during the 2000s. The media still frequently repeats the accepted wisdoms of industrial design which is contradicted when consumption is subjected to closer consideration. For example, "*design is a bridge between consumer and producer*" or that "*a designer is the consumer's advocate in the product development process*" are positive statements usually introduced by the producers themselves. The consumers' "voice" is hardly present on the pages of the Finnish economic press.

As a result, a reasoned theoretical discussion concerning the meanings of and the relationship between industrial design and consumption in the media is introduced. In the final section, I will conclude with how the media presentations communicate various meanings of industrial design to consumers. Despite the persuasive powers of the media the role of industrial design, as well as consumption, are doubtless more wide-ranging than the presentations of the economic press alone can achieve. Despite this my goal is to conduct a presumably culturally shared interpretation based on the contemporary media texts (cf. Moisander & Valtonen 2006). The interpretations and constructed cultural meanings of the design-consumption synthesis derived from this are therefore based on the language usage and representations of the media texts. The meanings of an act of consumption or consumer views concerning the meaning of design in the context of consumption are not important here. Since these are research goals that cannot be reached by simply interpreting the media texts. The articles analysed cannot provide answers to questions concerning actual consumption or the influence of design on consumer selection.

2. Research approach: research questions, materials and the hermeneutic philosophy of science

This article is led by research material in the sense that there is no a priori theoretical framework that might guide the research process or its outcome for that matter. The interpretations conducted in this paper are also research material led. I explore how the media describes the mediated relationship between design and consumption, the meanings I can "read out" from the economic press articles. Another point in my inquiry is that I will not apply any particular research method. This is in line with the spirit of Gadamerian hermeneutics (see Gadamer 2004). Hans-Georg Gadamer suggested that any interpretation theory or research method applied in a qualitative setting is rather predetermining the research results than opening up new and fresh points of view. I will use research literature to justify my interpretations.

The research materials included 1,131 articles originally collected for the author's academic dissertation in the years 1988 to 2008. The articles were from the Finnish economic papers with the largest circulation.[1] These included all design-related articles published during these years. All kinds of genres were represented: small-news, news, columns, reports, editorials and letters to the editor. From this body of press materials, 130 articles were chosen for further examination because they touched upon industrial design and designed products in relation to consumption. Other articles were discarded as they could not provide proper material for answering the research question.

The time-frame was chosen in terms of the design-consumption linkage: design and consumption were linked in the economic press earlier but were not discussed as a meaningful entity before the 1990s. Consumption was not a clear part of design discussions, or to put it another way, despite this, the economic press promoted aspects of the user in the context of industrial design. Another point is that consumption and consumers were seen as inferior to the use of designed products and their users. One could interpret this as an ideological defence of action (industrial design) that actually increases the mass of products on the market, which are in turn consumed. The consumer is somehow perceived as a negative force in the field of design: “consumer exhausts” the resources and “ruins” the environment. At least consumers are perceived as more negative than users in this context.

This article seeks to answer a two-fold research question. The first part of the question is descriptive: how are industrial design and consumption discussed in the Finnish economic media? The second part of the question is related to the cultural meaning: what are the meanings that this combination of consumption and media representations of industrial design produces? People have culturally shared and usually implicit ways of thinking. In other words, the question is about how various things are classified and justified as a coherently perceived entity. People will generate explanations, naïve rationalisations, about phenomena they see and perceive in their everyday lives. My objective is to generalise analytically

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[1] The economic newspapers used were *Kauppalehti* 1988-2008 (publisher: Alma Media Oyj, "Business News"), *Taloussanomat* 1997-2006 (publisher: SanomaWSOY-group, "Economic Inquiry") and a sample from the economic papers published by Talentum Oyj 1998-2006 (*Talouselämä*, "Economic Life"; *T&T* "Technology and the Economy"; *M&M*, "Marketing and Advertising"; *Metallitekniikka*, "Metal Technology"). Original quotations are in Finnish and have been translated by the author.

or theoretically culturally organised meanings which will be attained through the hermeneutic interpretation process.[2]

The strength of hermeneutic understanding is that it can be acquired through quite free interpretation of the research materials. There are no predetermined viewpoints or theories to start with. Instead, there is the researcher's pre-understanding or presuppositions. The "quality of the interpretations" concerning the meanings the research material embodies is evaluated in terms of their credibility. Other evaluation criteria are how the interpretations are related to existing research literature once the interpretation is done. The focus should be on the context, and the interpretation should provide new and provocative ideas or theoretical constructions (Spiggle 1994), otherwise the qualitative interpretation is not "efficient" and will not generate new notions. In the worst case, the interpretation is conducted in a way that will only support the existing theories. In this kind of case, a quantitative research setting to test the existing theory would be more suitable than a qualitative one. In this senses the strength of hermeneutic interpretation is that it can create a new classification concerning the phenomenon under study. The aim should not be to verify or to generalise already existing theory.

The question is not so much about how the designers' perceive the linkage between design and consumption or how industrial design should be practised in an economic context. Most of the articles in the Finnish economic press embody such media representations, which concern the justification of design from the economic or manufacturing point of view (Ryynänen & Valtonen 2008; Valtonen & Ryynänen 2008). The first impression on reading several articles concerning design-economy linkage was that journalists and interviewees listed every single positive factor design can possibly embody. It was usually the industry's or manufacturer's point of view that was emphasised, the question of what the positive factors of industrial design in the context of consumption are was not chosen for detailed examination.

Hermeneutics is the philosophical background of the study: how knowledge is produced (epistemology) and how the reality under examination is understood (ontology)? Hermeneutics can also be applied as a logically proceeding research method when a researcher follows analytical steps or the rules of interpretation that are defined in advance. In this paper, hermeneutics is applied as the philosophical background, not as a method guiding my interpretation.

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[2] For hermeneutic interpretation see Arnold and Fischer (1994), Gadamer (2004) and Ricœur (2004).

It is suggested that hermeneutics has at least three distinctive areas of relevance in consumer research. Firstly, purporting to understand understanding itself, philosophical hermeneutics is basic to any scientific endeavour. I am trying to understand the meanings of industrial design in the context of consumption. Secondly, hermeneutics refines our understanding of the interpretive approaches used in consumer research. My use of hermeneutics as an epistemological and ontological starting-point *is just one possible approach to hermeneutics*. Thirdly, hermeneutic concepts of pre-*understanding, hermeneutic circle, the fusion of the horizon*s and *the dialogic community* are suggested to have distinct implications for consumer research despite the fact that hermeneutics is not associated with any particular research method. (Arnold and Fischer 1994: 55.)

In the context of this paper *pre-understanding* refers to the researcher's knowledge and presuppositions which affect the research results and the interpretation. However, pre-understanding is fundamental, because without it interpretation would be impossible. A researcher must have something to reflect the interpretations. The *fusion of horizons* refers to action in which the interpretation is made: the researcher's pre-understanding and the viewpoint offered by the research material are intertwined in the fusion and a completely new (third) horizon is created. This new horizon is more than pre-understanding and the aspect of the data summed up. The *hermeneutic circle* is the process in which the fusion of horizons takes place. The circle starts from the researcher's pre-understanding, proceeds to analysing the materials and ends with a new interpretation concerning the phenomenon. A new cycle starts from this new interpretation. As a result, a sharper and more appropriate interpretation is produced in this spiral-like movement from pre-understanding to research materials and to interpretation.

The *dialogic community* refers to existing literature and the scientific community surrounding the researcher. The interpretations made in the hermeneutic research process are accepted (or not) by the dialogic community. This community also provides a sounding board for the interpretations. If the interpretations and understanding are not credible, if there is no scientific community to support the findings or if there is no literature to back up the outcomes of the hermeneutic research, the interpretations are disregarded by the dialogic community. Although the qualitative research is usually inductive in nature, this does not mean that the interpretations provided can be totally abstract or surreal. The interpretations of the article texts should describe, classify or provide a new understanding of the phenomenon in question.

It is suggested that one of the major themes of contemporary hermeneutic philosophy is closely linked to interpretation and understanding of personal experiences. It is also maintained that the interpretations are reflected in language usage which mediates broader cultural viewpoints (Thompson, Pollio and Locander 1994, 432). In these terms, media texts concerning the relationship between design and consumption should be viewed as interpretations in which these more general cultural viewpoints are adapted to various contemporary contexts.

Methodological individualism is a philosophical approach in which a subject is the only actor that matters. This approach is not worth adopting in this case, since the individual logic of needs and wants, satisfaction and desire, cannot be reduced simply to individual consumer choice. It seems that consumption and industrial design are in relation to each other more generally than individual choice alone. The hermeneutic philosophy of science is also in line with socially constructed aspects of consumption. I argue that the “reality” described by the press is constructed in social interaction. We have a shared system of meanings which we use in order to make sense of the world we live in. Economic press materials do not reflect “a genuine” or single reality. Several realities exist, not just one reality or truth, depending on the viewpoints adopted in the media discussions.

Since, texts are placed at the service of the examination of some other phenomena which are conceived separately, the text is purportedly a resource for accessing these phenomena (Watson 1997: 81). In this case, the phenomenon under scrutiny is the relationship between consumption and industrial design. Or more precisely, the meaning of industrial design in the context of consumption. This meaning exists beyond the text, and is comprehended as such when the researcher interprets the text. The text operates as a kind of “window” in which the interpreted meaning can be shown as an example (Watson 1997: 81). The articles may thus be interpreted for how they make sense of the industrial design-consumption linkage in an economic context.

3. The meanings of designed products: Beyond the traditional use and exchange value

Interpreting the economic press articles that describe consumption shows that few issues seem to be repeated frequently. Distinction and differentiation of the consumer seem to be relevant. These are achieved by designing product characteristics that communicate particular meanings. It is also stated in the press that the functional and aesthetic features of the product are the means to communicate differentiation and distinction. A variety of factors are highlighted from the perspective of production. The media representations of consumption and production seem to be polarised from the aspect of industrial design.

This polarisation can be presented as “the order of production” and its subsequent “order of consumption”. These Marxist terms indicate that productive and consumption “forces” or approaches are constructed on different grounds. The traditional production oriented Marxist approach was present to a larger extent in the economic press articles, industrial design being linked to the product development processes of the manufacturing companies. The Baudrillardian approach emphasises the consumption side of this phenomenon. He suggests that the sign-value of the consumer goods generated by the symbols and signs are important when consumption is taken into consideration (Baudrillard 1998). We consume meanings, signs and messages rather than the actual commodities “the order of production” fabricates. “Commodities are no longer defined by their use, but rather by what they signify. And what they signify is defined not by what they do, but by their relationship to the entire system of commodities and signs […] What people seek in consumption is not so much a particular object as difference and the search for the latter is unending” (Baudrillard 1998: 7).

There are examples of sign and symbol values created by design in the economic press articles. It is argued that consumer goods should communicate suitable feelings and experiences symbolically:

> - Products also have a symbolic value […] Products are signs of a company’s or a consumer’s personality and status. (KL 28.6.1994)
>
> A product’s or service’s technical functionality, convenience in usage and appropriateness are self-evident for a consumer. A consumer will appreciate enjoyment, feelings and new experiences. The shift will be from the products’ technical functionality to ‘an experimental’ use-value. An individual ‘inner spirit’ or ethos is grown into the objects and goods. (KL 4.11.1999)

On the other hand, there are plenty of descriptions from the point of view of the companies and industries. Basically the topics are how industrial design can increase economic benefit. The economic gains will help the whole society through various and usually hazy economic mechanisms in the end. This aspect is natural for the economic press, whose role is to promote and publish news concerning the economic situations both locally and internationally. The economic benefits generated by industrial design are an issue that the audience of this particular type of press might be interested in. This is also a means of integrating industrial design into the global economy:

> An obsolescent design will create a negative image and communicate the poor quality of a product. In a global competition, one needs to differentiate oneself from the other technically similar products. Successful design will provide value added, for which a consumer is even willing to pay more. (TalSa 9.1.2003)

Colin Campbell (1998: 244) has demonstrated that there are two discourses or forms of rhetoric playing a central role in all the major theories of consumption describing modern consumer societies. These are the discourse of need (satisfaction) and the discourse of want (desire). Campbell concludes that there has been a strong moral bias in favour of the discourse of need. The need rhetoric originates from the Puritan-inspired utilitarian philosophy of comfort and satisfaction, while the want and desire rhetoric dates back to the Romanticism-inspired philosophy of pleasure-seeking (Campbell 1998: 235). Interestingly, the debate about needs and wants can be applied in the context of industrial design. The majority of products are justified in terms of functionality or the need the object satisfies. The discourse of want, which is related to aesthetics in the case of industrial design, is apparent in the media texts:

> The strengths of design are beauty and practicality, aesthetic character and functionality. Design must support the usability of the product, since mere beauty is not enough. Successful design is above all user-friendly. (TalSa 2.7.2000)

> The product has a second or two to win my interest, otherwise it will remain on the shelf as a loser. How to beat competing products, which product (brand) promises most, which functions best, which matches my life-style and feelings? The same questions arise everywhere whether the topic is clothing, cars, mobile phones, make-up or flights. The markets of plentiful and increasing competition make differentiation created by design a vital condition. Brand image created by design is crucial. A brand crystallises consumers' rational, functional, emotional, and symbolic values. The relationship between people and products is deeper and more multidimensional than as is usually thought. The stronger the emotional and social relationship is with a brand the harder it is to choose differently. (KL Presso 5.8.2006)

The economic press articles are always written from some point of view, even if it is not explicitly stated in the text itself. This means that they may refer to several realities. But what are we actually constructing when we talk about functionality or aesthetics in the context of consumption? How about the debate over differentiation and distinction?

Differentiation is an established term originating from marketing science. It means "[…] the act of designing a set of meaningful differences to distinguish the company's offering from competitors' offerings" (Kotler 2000: 287). This meaning can also be extended to cover consumers, who want to be different from others in terms of the consumer products they buy and use. Product differentiation is achieved by mixing characteristics such as form, features, performance and conformance quality, durability, reliability, repairability, style and product design in the product development (Kotler 2000: 288-292). The alternative ways to communicate the "message" to the consumers are introduced especially when the companies' technical know-how is similar. The following examples are from the economic press:

> When all of the stereos are technically top class and all of the shoes are comfortable, the differences between the brands can be created by incorporating the symbolic meanings into the products and companies. Products become communication vehicles. They communicate about their user and owner. When the technical quality is taken for granted, another kind of quality becomes a competitive advantage. Products must be morally acceptable, aesthetically pleasing, and environmentally friendly. They must communicate to others their owners' values and ideals. Different products and brands must have different symbolic meanings. It is designer's task to create meanings relevant to products. (KL 20.8.1992)
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> There are no essential differences between the products, because most of the producers have attained the technical standards. The purchase choice is based on other attributes: What is its usability? What are the packages like? How about the manuals, and ultimately 'the message' based on the appearance and form of the product? (T&T 11.1.2001)

If these excerpts from the economic press describe differentiation that is mediated by industrial design, the term distinction refers to something else. *Distinction* is a term used in spoken language usually as a synonym for differentiation. It is also a term associated with the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and his seminal book about taste and social discrepancy published originally in French in 1979. Bourdieu (2002) noted that various types of capital (economic, cultural and social), "habitus"[3] and the social class of a human being define how s/he is perceived by the other people. A person not only differentiates her/himself from others, but is included in a certain group of people by distinctive characteristics. I define distinction as a group of characteristics that determine whether a person belongs to some group of people. Consumers can differentiate themselves from others, but they can also belong to a group by adopting the distinctive characteristics of a group of people they perceive as pleasant or somehow desirable. The characteristics or attributes that define both differentiation and distinction are in many cases implicit and culturally shared – "a consumer tribe" having some distinctive and differentiative characters is a working example (see Maffesoli 1996; Cova, Kozinets and Shankar 2007). I argue that differentiation and distinction are different sides of the same phenomenon. The following press excerpts describe the differentiation and distinction features industrial design is argued to create:

> People are no longer buying solely in order to satisfy material needs. Consumption is communication – a message that defines the social group one wish to belong to. Design has to follow the trends of the society, and in these times society is more heterogeneous than ever. (KLO 12.2.1998)
>
> What does it mean when the clothes are 'like mine' or when the chair is 'just made for me'? People seek meanings and the feeling of belonging in their lives. […] By acquiring products people are aspiring to feelings which are mediated by the styles. A style is, for example, composed of colour, form, lines, patterning, materials used, sounds and scents. […] A taste-community is the present or an intended 'interaction world' a person wants to belong to. (KL 23.3.2000).
>
> If you use other than Nokia's mobile phone you will differentiate yourself from others in Finland. The "nonconformist" choosing arguments are based occasionally on the principles or ethos and sometimes on the exterior features of a mobile phone. Nowadays the exclusive features seldom affect consumer choice […] – I swapped Nokia to a small Motorola only because it was so beautiful. When I

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[3] By the term "habitus" I mean an ability and an inclination to make social distinctions within the culture a person is socialised into. This established cultural attitude or system of distinction is used to justify the social consensus of the ways of actions in the field of cultural capital. Culture is therefore produced in action which is built around symbolic capital. Cultural values guide distinction, which equates to the ability to indentify differences in social action. These abilities provide status in the society which will increase one's qualification based social position in society.

> chose the most recent Siemens I had the same selection criteria: it appeared personal, I wanted to be different from others […]. (TalSa 10.9.2003)

The issue of individual differentiation is in many cases ascribed to personalisation or even to individual identity building. The typical sociological explanation is that individuals consciously seek to distinguish themselves from others. In Baudrillard's view (1998) it is the code, or the culturally produced system of differences that causes individuals to be similar or different from one another. In the very act of particularising themselves, people are reading and conforming to the code. If a consumer fails to fall into distinctive group defined by the culturally shared "Baudrillardian code", stigmatisation occurs. Stigma is a term introduced into social psychology by Erving Goffman (1990: 9), who defines it[4] as "the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance". Being part of social identity, stigmatisation is perceived as strange or peculiar by "the normals". I argue that in the context of consumption stigmatisation takes place when a consumer does not belong to distinctive group of consumers and, for that matter, is not differentiated from other consumer groups.

The meaning of a matter – e.g., distinction or belonging to a particular group of people by purchasing a design object - always emerges from the relationship to what it is not. This deconstructivistic way of thinking suggests that the meaning of the texts analysed and the concepts introduced to interpret them are in relation to innumerable factors. In the context of consumption, distinction and differentiation exist at the same time. If an anomaly arises, the combination of the styles and goods of a consumer cannot be associated with a distinctive class. The anomaly does not fit into the web of existing meanings, and will be perceived as peculiar. Stigmatisation takes command. Whenever a new category emerges "the normals" will stigmatise these individuals.

The cultural "code" or "the web of meanings" guiding the meanings of consumption can be described as a web of characters determining differentiation or distinction. In the case of stigmatisation, the cultural sorting system does not recognise the group a stigmatised individual belongs to. I argue that the web of meanings is always relative in the sense that differentiation and distinction are both manifestations of the same phenomenon. They are related to the fixed factors: a social group of people, a certain consumer good, or the cultural

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[4] The three usually mentioned types of stigma are 1.) abominations of the body, 2.) blemishes of individual character, and 3.) the tribal stigma of race, nation, or religion (Goffman 1990: 14).

interpretations made by other consumers. Being culturally determined, the web of meaning cannot be controlled by the individual actor. This is the reason why I discarded methodological individualism as a basis for the research.

Consumers' identifying with the product means that they adopt the product. It also means that the product is appropriate for one's style. This is something the advocates of companies emphasise frequently:

> Creating a personal visualisation or a mental image is especially important in consumer products. Style in products is something one can identify with. The product must embody features that seem personal and emphasise the consumer as an individual. Style is also enduring. A stylish product does not become obsolete with time. (TalSa 4.10.1999)

Functional and aesthetic or satisfying and desirable features of consumer products cannot be easily distinguished from each other. Consumer goods are almost without exception parts of everyday life, in which context, design and products functionality have concrete and very practical significance. At the same time, designed products communicate in terms of differentiation and distinction. This communication is made possible with the distinctively designed consumer product features.

4. Discussion

The subject matter of this paper is quite close to a discussion called the "symbolic exchange of consumption" introduced by the visionary researcher Jean Baudrillard at the end of 1960s (see Baudrillard 1998; 2005). Consumer products are not evaluated on the basis of use-value or exchange-value alone. I have argued that industrial design, giving form and appearance to consumer products, is one of the factors affecting this symbolic exchange. The empirical materials of this paper were the economic media texts concerning consumption and industrial design in the 1990s and 2000s. My interpretations are based on these materials.

I argued that industrial design represented in the economic press embody meanings of differentiation and distinction in the context of consumption. By differentiation I meant consumers that strive to be different from each other by using individualistically labelled or designed consumer goods. In the same context, distinction meant that by purchasing and using a particular object a consumer will automatically identify with some social group. It was also suggested that differentiation and distinction describe different sides of the same phenomenon. Adopting a deconstructivist position revealed that the meaning of some matter is always in a relationship to what it is not. I also canvassed the theoretical situation in which a consumer does not belong to distinctive group and therefore does not differentiate her/himself. This is an anomaly which I described in terms of the stigmatisation introduced originally by the sociologist Erving Goffman (1990). The future debate could concentrate on stigmatising consumption. Is there such a thing, and how it could be described? What would a stigma created by consumption be like?

In addition, and based on my interpretation, I argued that the media represents and distinguishes the functional and aesthetic levels of a consumer product. These are the means of producing and reproducing consumer differentiation and distinction through product design. The media seems to be reproducing a cultural division of the rhetoric of need and want. As Campbell (1998) has shown in a different context, I linked product functionality to the discourse of need (satisfaction) and product aesthetics to the discourse of want (desire). Since the rhetoric of need has been, and still is, related to rationality, it is used more widely than the competing rhetoric. In the case of justifying the design of the consumer goods, this imbalance seems to be changing. The rhetoric of want or desire is no longer burdened by irrational allusions. Nowadays it is acceptable for a consumer to justify purchases by the aesthetic dimension of a product. Industrial design is one of the means to create meanings and alter the subtleties of existing meanings embedded in consumer goods. It is in fact suggested in the press that both the usability (function, need, satisfaction) and the image (aesthetics, want, desire) are fundamental characteristics in contemporary consumer markets:

> The closer the product is to the consumer, the more important its design is. It is fundamental both in terms of the usability and the image […] The engineers' dull technological construction will turn into a desirable and functional object. (KLO 15.4.2004)

Basically it is the Marxist views of use-value and exchange value that are highlighted when industrial design as usability or functionality is under consideration. I interpret this as being a part of the rhetoric of need. On the other hand, the Baudrillardian sign-value is involved when styles, fashion, aesthetics and the outer form of the product is discussed. I link this to the discourse of want introduced earlier by Colin Campbell (1998).

Seeing consumption as a language, shows how people converse and communicate with other people. Consumption mediates meanings incorporated in particular goods. The treatment of the consumption world as a language or as an interpretive system of arbitrary meaning-making allows a deeper interpretation of consumer goods. I chose to interpret media texts discussing industrial design and consumption. Another point is that the meanings mediated by industrially designed consumer products are shared by a number of people. The meanings of consumption are social in the sense that they can be noticed and understood by others. Meanings are socially constructed and cultural, which in turn means that they are shared by the larger social community. In this sense, cultural differences are differences between the defined social groups and cultures.

Consumer culture, the culture of consumption (Slater 1996), can be understood both at the global level, and as a smaller community united by consumption or the goods consumed. I have not analysed the “actual behaviour” or even “expected behaviour” of the consumers. My approach was not based on a theoretical “a priori” research design. Instead I have discussed interpreted meanings “behind” or “embedded in” this action: the web of social meanings of consumer goods, and the form and shape industrial designers in particular have created to the products. The question therefore concerns the dynamic accumulation of meanings centred on the phenomenon we call consumer culture. This kind of understanding of the meanings of consumption is followed by holistic interpretation.

Product characteristics appeal to the feelings of consumers and other factors mediating social acceptance. It seems, that the meanings the product design mediate and communicate. These also affect one’s social acceptance and status. It is frequently repeated in the research materials that the technological and functional aspects of a product are to a great extent standardised. Product features that appeal to consumers’ feelings and to implicit processes of social acceptance have become more important than the mere functionality of a product. This is the case especially in the media debate on industrially designed consumer goods:

> Consumers hovering in the product-space are not buying a dish-brush but a delightful object. They are not purchasing a mere kettle. They are building the house of their dreams. They are not investing in a new mobile phone but in the image of the leading brand in the market. (Talouselämä 31.5.2003)

As noted, industrial design is increasingly discussed in the pages of the economic press. The debate over design is probably a global phenomenon. An analytical generalisation might be that the media is increasingly global both in terms of mediating technologies and substances communicated to the audience. Equally, the economic phenomena at the macro-level follow quite similar patterns all over the globe. If we accept these generalisations, it can be argued that the media describes industrial design as being a part of the business world and the economy.

The cultural differences still exist and are even increasing at the local level. It seems that there are two inconsistent trends. One of them is globalisation, which will standardise and equalise consumption both in a negative and a positive sense. At the same time, the local meanings of consumption will be increased. Localisation of consumer goods is boosted by consciously associating cultural meanings with them. The media repeats and reproduces these culturally shared meanings, which are then adapted to everyday language usage. If we accept the notion that language can mediate action or produce and change reality, the meanings mediated by the press are worth further investigation.

The contribution of this article is that it offers an interpretation of industrial design in the context of consumption. I provided an overview of issues that are commonly discussed in the economic media when consumption and industrial design are related. In addition, I demonstrated how culturally constructed linkages between consumption and industrial design are recreated and reproduced in the rhetorical differentiation-distinction case and the functional-aesthetic case on a daily basis.

People seem to be consuming the social meanings of consumption. The typical approach adopted by most economists and marketing researchers – “the actual act of consumption” or exchanging one’s money for a consumer product – is hardly mentioned in the pages of the Finnish economic press. Consumption is thus surely more that this simple transaction. Consumers also consume the meanings constructed around the consumer goods. It is suggested that consumption has been extended to all areas of culture (see Baudrillard 1998). The role of consumer culture or commodification of the culture also seems to be evident in the representations of industrial design discussed in this paper.

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CONSUMPTION OF LIFE CARE SERVICES AND THE ROLES OF HOUSEHOLD, MARKET AND PUBLIC SECTORS IN THEIR PROVISION

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Abstract. Life care services (LCS) are services that are indispensable for surviving i.e. shelter, meals and care. Traditionally these services have been provided by households for themselves and later also by the welfare states, mainly, as a part of family policy. Concerns over the sustainability of the welfare state have directed policies towards privatisation of services. This means that in the future people will take a stronger consumer role. They will choose between the service providers and decide on the level of quality of services, in addition to covering the costs. The paper investigates consumers' choices between consumption of market and public services vs. providing the services themselves. The data used in the calculations are drawn from the Finnish household satellite accounts, expenditure survey and national accounts in 2006. The results show that a major part of the life care services are still produced by households. The baby boom generation is one of the most active groups in providing LCS. Younger generations seem to trust in market or public services. It may be concluded that the baby boom generation will stay active in providing LCS for themselves and their children's families, and will not overburden the welfare state in the coming ten to fifteen years. A wider variety of market services probably needs to be developed to attract older people to replace self-provision with market services.

Keywords: Services, consumption, households, unpaid work

1. Introduction

Life care services are services indispensable for the well-being of people. It is not possible to survive without shelter, food and care. Welfare states have ensured their citizens a minimum standard of these services. Due to the foreseeable aging of population, political concerns about the costs of providing these services have emerged. However, traditionally these services have been provided by households for themselves, and they still produce a major part of them. The failure to recognize this is largely due to the measurement tradition in national accounts (SNA). Service statistics include only the value of market and public services but exclude the ones produced by households.

The esteemed Stiglitz Committee has published a report on the measurement of economic performance and social progress (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi 2009). The report encourages paying more attention to measuring well-being instead of economic production. It also suggests that statistics of the household sector should be developed to obtain better information on its role in providing well-being.

The information on non-market production would contribute to better estimates of economic growth. Researchers assume with some proof, that market production and non-market production act counter-cyclically (Abraham and Mackie 2005; Ironmonger 1997). Therefore, the recession in the national economy may not affect the household consumption of life care services in the same proportion as it does the GDP. People replace market services with home production. Research has also evidenced that extended income (money income plus value of household production) is more equally distributed than money income (Frazis and Stewart 2009; Frick, Grabka and Groh-Samberg 2009). This is explained by the research finding that life care services are produced in close to equal quantities at all income levels (Varjonen and Aalto 2010).

This paper addresses the consumption of life care services provided by the market sector, public sector and households themselves. The magnitude of these services in Finland in 2006 is estimated. The provision of services is examined from a macro-perspective: How much market, public and household sectors contribute to it. Consumption of services is examined from a micro-perspective: How much different types of households pay for market and public services and what is the value of the services they provided themselves.

At first, a short overview of the history of service provision is given. The following chapters clarify the definitions of the focal concepts and the object of the study. In the second section the theoretical approach, method and data are explained. Results are presented in the third section, and conclusions and discussion in the fourth section.

1.1. Short historical overview of the provision of life care services

Historically, the production of life care services has been organized in several ways and combinations of ways. In earlier times up to the 19th century markets were important providers of services alongside households. Households hired labour to look after domestic tasks. The workers could be specialized, such as nannies, child minders, wet mothers, cooks, cleaners and stablemen, or just helping hands. Goods and services were bought from bakers, shoemakers, carpenters, etc. Board and lodging was a common accommodation for single males. It is estimated that hired workers covered 10-20 per cent of the workforce in Europe at the end of the 19th century (Fauve-Chamoux 2004: 2). At that time in

Finland one fourth of the women in paid labour (excluding farm workers) were estimated to have worked as servants in households. (Taimio1991: 57).

The Finnish welfare state developed gradually from the 1960s on. It took greater responsibility for children's day-care services, which made it easier for women to participate in work outside home. The care of elderly was also transferred to public institutions. Regulations by the central government standardized the availability and quality of life care services. At the same time the market sector developed means to help working parents to manage with the provision of services. Good examples of this are ready-prepared meals that have proliferated since the 1960s. Still, a number of life care services were produced and consumed by households.

Demands for the reduction of public expenditure on welfare services have brought up new ideas and policies on how to produce life care services. A partial solution is to privatize their production. That would mean that consumers and households would have more voice in what kind of services they would like to have and how much they would like to pay for them. Here the question of supply becomes important: Is the variety of private services large enough that consumers want to use these services and are willing to pay for them?

1.2. Definitions of concepts

The concept *life care services* (LCS) is used in forensic economics (Ireland and Riccardi 2003) and adopted by the author of this article from there. Life care services is an appropriate term in the respect that it emphasizes the special nature of these services: they satisfy basic human needs. One has to eat, have a place to live and have clean clothes, and children and the elderly have to be cared for. These needs are universal, which also means that the provision of life care services has to be organized in one way or the other in all countries of the world, and in all times and circumstances. The concept life care services is used in this article to describe all these services regardless of the provider. In literature the term may vary according to the provider: services provided by the public sector are often called welfare services, and market services are called, according to the contents, food services, care services, laundry services, etc.

Services provided by households for themselves are defined as services produced by household members for their own consumption. Physical measures of these products are expressed, for instance, in kilograms of food products or linen laundered, square metres of floors cleaned, or number of meals or snacks (OECD

1995). What is essential is that the produced services will be consumed without market transactions, and are therefore defined as non-market services. In other words, households provide and produce life care services. The term *provide* refers to the consumption point of view of services, the providers can be households, the public sector or the market sector.

The life care services are called by different names in various countries which indicate that there is not a common, generally approved concept available, yet. The name *care services* is used widely in northern America and *household services* in Europe. Household satellite accounts are developed to provide information about the services produced by households for their own use.

1.3. Object of the study

The object of the study is to outline, first, the value of services consumed at national level and the shares of the public, household and market sectors in the provision of the services. To be able to measure this, the value of services provided by households for their own use must be estimated. The second aim is to examine, from consumers' point of view, how much households in different life stages buy market services and pay for public care services, and how much they produce services for their own consumption.

2. Research frame, method and data

There is a strong research tradition of studying the production processes of market services as well as public services. Ironmonger (1997) drew a parallel between the production processes of market and household services (Table 1). This approach served as a base in building the household satellite account system where household production is measured using concepts of market production (Eurostat 2003, Varjonen and Aalto 2006, Abraham et al. 2005). Satellite accounts are accounts that are separate from but conceptually consistent with the core national accounts. The main purpose of satellite accounts is to give an integrated picture of a given field of economic activities. Separate satellite accounts are suggested (and have already developed) e.g. for household production, tourism and health care (ESA 2005). To be consistent with the national account the concepts and the calculating methods have to follow the SNA guidelines. Further in this article the concepts and methods developed for measuring non-market household services are explained.

2.1. Theoretical approaches

The provision and consumption of life care services have been studied in several scientific fields. From the economic point of view there are two separate mainstream approaches, the macroeconomic and the microeconomic approach. From the gender perspective the aim has been to make visible the extent of equal opportunities and economic independence for women, mainly. The consumption perspective basing on consumption of services has interested the researches only fairly recently, and literature directly linked to life care services is rather scarce (Goertz 2006). However, a consumption approach could provide interesting views and insights. Some of these insights are presented in this article.

Households can obtain goods and services by buying them from the market or producing them themselves (table 1). However, household and market production are interrelated with each other. Market production may use unpaid household work in service production and household production commonly uses some market inputs, capital or paid labour. For example, household members can buy a laundry service from the market (cell 1) or they can wash their laundry at home using their own labour and own washing machine (cell 4). They can also go to a self-service laundry and use market capital (washing machine) and their own labour (cell 3), or they can hire someone (housekeeper) to do the laundry at home using their own capital (cell 2). Ironmonger does not separate market production from public sector production, as both are included in the SNA production and are measured in monetary terms.

Table 1. Alternative ways of producing goods and services for households (Ironmonger 1997).

	Use of capital		
Use of labour		Market (monetary production)	Household
	Market (monetary production)	1	2
	Household	3	4

<u>Macroeconomic approach.</u> Mainstream economics ignore the value of services produced by households. That is why they are not included in economic discussion. Making non-market production visible has macroeconomic

consequences that have not yet been recognized. Services that previously were produced at home have moved to market production but the total production has not actually changed (e.g. Abraham and Mackie 2005; Eurostat 2003; Ironmonger 1997). This means that the exclusion of household non-market production has caused a slight overestimation of long-term economic growth (Landefelt, Fraumeni and Voitech 2009; Soupourmas and Ironmonger 2002; Taimio 1991).

In this article long-term changes in total service production (including non-market production) are not examined due to lack of data. Instead, a cross-sectional description for the year 2006 is given.

<u>The microeconomic approach</u> has a slightly different aim. The focus is on individual decision making, or intra-household decision making on how to allocate resources. People are assumed to make rational choices in their effort to maximize utility. The main research topics concern paid work versus unpaid work participation of family members. Also, outsourcing unpaid work using different means, such as household technology, purchases of services, ready prepared foods, etc., has been examined and explained by various background variables (e.g. Bittman 2003; Bonke 1992; Ours 1991). The boost to this approach was given by Gary Becker's allocation of time theory (1965).

Here, the microeconomic part of the article examines purchases of services from the market, costs caused by the use of public services, such as children's day-care services and the value of services produced and consumed at home. The results reflect the decisions made by households when choosing between market or public services and household-produced services.

Table 2. Alternative ways of obtaining life care services, household perspec tive.

Options acquiring services	Market services	Public services	Household services
Resources needed in production		Government and municipal tax revenue	Work, capital goods, and intermediate consumption
Resources needed for purchase /consumption	Expenditure on meals and transport costs	Fees and payments from households	
Example	Eating out	Eating at student restaurant	Eating at home

Ironmonger's idea is here modified to look at service provision and consumption from households' point of view: What are the options for acquiring life care services and what resources are needed from households to have them

2.2. Data sources

The total numbers and value of life care services consumed by individuals and households are not directly available. The best information, even though not complete, is available on the services provided by the public sector. The value of market services consumed is available in national accounts yearly, and more disaggregated data from an expenditure survey conducted every five years by Statistics Finland. Here both of these data sources are utilized. The household expenditure survey is a nationally representative survey conducted every five years by Statistics Finland (n= 4007 households in 2006). The value of household-provided services is estimated separately by *household satellite accounts*. These have been compiled for 2001 and 2006 by the National Consumer Research Centre in co-operation with Statistics Finland (Varjonen and Aalto 2005 and 2010). The estimation method is based on international guidelines (Eurostat 2003; Abraham and Mackie 2005). The method is thoroughly explained in Varjonen and Aalto (2006 and 2005). Therefore, only the calculation model based on the input method is presented here. The input method is based on the costs of production:

Value of service = value of labour + consumption of capital goods + taxes on production – subsidies on production +intermediate consumption.

Value of labour is obtained by calculating the amount of work (measured as hours spent in production) and giving a money value to it using the replacement cost method (wages of employees doing similar work). The wages of home-based personal care workers (ISCO 51331) were used for calculating the monetary value. The gross wage was 11,98 euros per hour. *Capital consumption* figures were calculated using the Perpetual Inventory Method (PIM) by Statistics Finland. Some *taxes and subsidies* on production were identified (taxes related to transport services, real estate tax, various fishing and hunting license fees). Subsidies were related to care (e.g. child homecare allowance). The data were received from Statistics Finland (2008) and the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela 2007) yearbook. For *intermediate consumption* the individual consumption goods and services from national accounts had to be reclassified into capital goods, intermediate goods and final consumption goods. The disaggregated figures for different household types were calculated using the proportions received from the household expenditure survey data.

3. Results

3.1. Provision of life care services at national level

Data on the magnitudes of LCS production are not directly available. Statistics on service production vary from sector to sector. Household satellite accounts give estimates for household production, and national accounts for the market production of services. Instead, statistics on public sector measure physical quantities rather than monetary values. They measure, for example, the number of meals served but not how much these cost to the municipalities or government. The figures in Table 3 show how households' service consumption varies between service types and provider sectors. Households provided far more services than the market or public sector. The market sector provided more meals than other type of life care services, the public sector provided more care services. The clothing figures include also purchases of prêt-a-porter clothing.

Table 3. Value of life care services consumed in Finland 2006, million euro.

	Services produced by households	**Market goods and services**	**Public services (incl. support for informal care and allowances)**	
MEUR/ 2006			Consumers' payments	Government and municipalities
Meals and snacks	29 081	6 940	75	
Clothing and laundry	8 095	3 584		..
Care for				
children	6 772	109	252	1749
adults		64	75	414
Institutional care of the elderly			145	713
Housing		525		
owner-occupied flats	13 171			15**
other housing	27 406	5319*		416**
		* rents paid		** housing allowance

The only figure that was found for costs of public meals was related to municipalities. They had spent 273 million euro on food purchases in 2004 (Lith 2006). Statistics of physical measures reveal that public institutional kitchens served 427 million meals in 2006, from which the share of school meals was 159 million. Private restaurants, cafes and hotels served 294 million and canteens 60,5 million meals in 2006. (ACNielsen 2006.) The results of a study about laundry services from 2000 (Aalto 2003) showed that households washed 90,4 % of all laundry (measured in kilos) themselves, only 0,3 % of the laundry was washed as market services for households. Laundry for enterprises took 4,5 % and public laundry services took 4,5 % of the total amount of laundry washed in Finland.

3.2. Service consumption from households' point of view

Results in four categories of life care services will be presented in this paper: housing services, meals and snacks, care services, and informal help to other households. The values of transport services as well as shopping, which are essential for both acquiring market services and household production, are allocated to the services they are associated with. Then, for example, transporting a child to school is included in the care service category, shopping for groceries in the meal service category, etc. The value of services is estimated for households in different stages of life to explore changes in needs and life-styles. Figures are presented per household, and not per equivalent unit. Equivalent scales are not suitable for services like meals. For example, in families of two members 2 meals are consumed instead of 1,5 meals as is estimated in the commonly used OECD modified equivalence scale. Services provided by households become scaled in the measuring process based on inputs (for more discussion, see Varjonen and Aalto 2010).

Housing services

Housing services are divided into two types; first, housing services by owner-occupiers (people who live in a dwelling of their own) which are included in the national accounting; and second, other housing services that are excluded from national accounting. The latter includes activities such as furnishing, small repairs, maintaining the house and garden, cleaning, etc. as well as shopping and transport related to housing. In Table 4 the components of services are shown, and the life stage effect can clearly be seen. Only a small portion of young people own their homes and therefore the imputed income from housing is also very small. Intermediate consumption includes normal maintenance costs (heating, water, etc.) and also the share of FISIM (=Financial intermediation services indirectly measured) related to their housing loans. This is one reason why families with small children have the highest costs here: they have the biggest loans.

Table 4. Housing services provided and consumed by households, euro per household in 2006.

	Persons living alone			Couples			Families with children		
Housing services for owner-occupiers	under 45 yrs	45-64 yrs	65 + yrs	under 45 yrs	45-64 yrs	65+ yrs	two parents, youngest child 0-6	single-parent family	two parents, youngest child 7-17
Imputed income from housing	508	1487	1818	683	2913	3028	1897	893	2972
Fixed estate tax	15	59	79	47	259	242	219	42	299
Capital consumption	603	1183	1377	1123	2286	2142	2229	956	2493
Intermediate consumption	974	1246	1424	2089	2368	1870	3226	1407	2700
Total	2100	3975	4698	3941	7826	7281	7571	3298	8464
Other housing services									
Value added, gross	3584	5475	5906	8410	12395	14492	11390	7614	16066
Intermediate consumption (excl. rents)	813	1228	1116	1520	2579	2468	2510	1211	2884
Rents, paid	3781	2109	1409	4422	1062	625	2193	5377	1332
Total	8178	8812	8431	14352	16036	17585	16093	14202	20282

Production and consumption of other housing services peak in families with school age children. This may be due to many reasons. On the average, families have four members, and therefore many activities take place at home, so more room and many facilities are needed. Paid rents are separated from other intermediate consumption in Table 4. It reveals the biggest rent payers: young persons and single-parent families. Housing allowance is not deducted from the rents here.

While some parts of the housing services can be bought from the market, the service itself is not usually outsourced. People move to old-age homes or sheltered homes only when they cannot manage living independently. At the moment, information on how much people pay for these accommodation services is not available. Use of house cleaning or other housekeeping services has got a lot of publicity during recent years. However, counted in average for all households, only elderly people living alone buy these services to a notable extent.

<u>Meals</u>

Unlike with housing, there are many good market options for home made meals. Food companies have developed ready-prepared foods, and possibilities for eating out as well as the number of take-away outlets and the variety of restaurants have proliferated. Figure 1 describes both the expenditure on market option and value of self-provided meals. The share of purchased ingredients for meals makes up 25 per cent of the total value of meals, in average. Older people prefer cooking for themselves and younger people eat out more than people in the other types of households. This may prefigure that more and more of the meal preparation will move to the market sector.

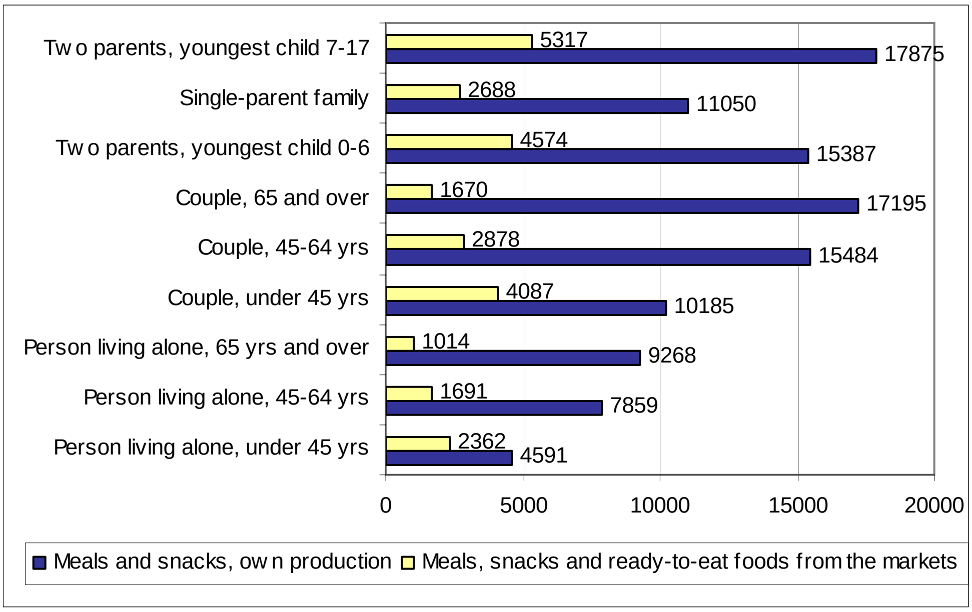

Figure 1. Consumption of meals and snacks in 2006, euro per household.

Care

The need and consumption of care services vary between the different types of households. The public sector has allocated resources to children's day-care services, giving all children under school-age access to public day care services. About 60 % of children aged 1-6 used day care services, and about 8 % of them used private services in 2006 (Stakes 2007). Table 5 indicates that household expenditure on public and private care is fairly low compared to the value of care provided by households. The government pays the lion's share of the costs, as shown in table 5.

Table 5. Consumption of care services in 2006, euro per household.

		Families with children		
	Persons living alone, 65 + yrs	two parents, youngest child 0-6	single-parent family	two parents, youngest child 7-17
Care provided by households		16378	5316	4106
Expenditure on care (public + private)	291	2370	520	457

It is probable that a large part of the care services is provided as informal help to other households. Children help their elderly parents and parents also help their children, in particular by providing care for the grandchildren (Sauli and Nurmela 2009). Table 6 indicates that couples aged 45-64 are big providers of help. Baby boomers belong to this age group. Also families of school-age children provide a great deal of informal help. They may participate in children's hobbies through car-pooling and providing other care.

Table 6. Value of informal help to other households and other volunteer work, euro per household.

	Persons living alone			Couples			Families with children		
	under 45 yrs	45-64 yrs	65 + yrs	under 45 yrs	45-64 yrs	65+ yrs	two parents, youngest child 0-6	single parent family	two parents, youngest child 7-17
Informal help and other volunteer work	1408	2317	1386	2143	4344	3951	2428	1983	4149

4. Conclusions and discussion

The paper presents, in monetary terms, an overview of the consumption of life care services in Finland in 2006. It examines the roles of the market, the public sector and households as providers of these services. The results show that a major part of the consumed life care services were produced by households themselves. The shares of services provided by the different sectors differ however between family types and family life stages. The share by sector also seems to reflect the market supply of the services. The largest market supply seems to include food services and housing (rented flats). The age of household members seems to have significance in the consumption of these services. Expenditure on eating out and purchases of ready-to-eat foods from supermarkets made up 50 % of the value of meals and snacks made at home in single-person in the age group of under 45-year-olds. Accordingly, in the oldest single-person households the share of market food services was only 11 %. Rented flats are most common in households of singles and couples under 45 years old, as well as in single-parent households. Provision of care services has been the major effort of the welfare state. Care services are consumed mostly by families with children and the elderly.

The important role that households have in the provision of life care services has not been fully recognized. It is probable that in the future when the baby boomers will retire there will be no large increase in the demand of market or public services. Evidence from the data from household satellite accounts indicates that the baby boomers are capable and willing to produce the services they will need. It is not likely that they would change the life-style they have adopted. A Danish study concludes that people with high productivity in household production will retire early (Goertz 2006). The demand of life care services will probably increase only after they will reach the age of 75 years. The market sector has about twenty years to develop the services that the elderly then will need.

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