



Revista de Gestão dos Países de Língua Portuguesa

ISSN: 2674-5895

INDEG-IUL - ISCTE Executive Education

VERA, LUCIANA ALVES RODAS; GOSLING, MARLUSA
DE SEVILHA; SHIGAKI, HELENA BELINTANI
Teoria da Cultura do Consumo: possibilidades, limitações e caminhos em estudos de marketing no Brasil
Revista de Gestão dos Países de Língua Portuguesa,
vol. 18, núm. 1, 2019, Janeiro-Abril, pp. 15-32
INDEG-IUL - ISCTE Executive Education

DOI: 10.12660/rgplp.v18n1.2019.78889

Disponível em: <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=568060415002>

- ▶ Como citar este artigo
- ▶ Número completo
- ▶ Mais informações do artigo
- ▶ Site da revista em [redalyc.org](http://www.redalyc.org)



Sistema de Informação Científica Redalyc

Rede de Revistas Científicas da América Latina e do Caribe, Espanha e Portugal

Sem fins lucrativos académica projeto, desenvolvido no âmbito da iniciativa
acesso aberto

Consumer Culture Theory: Limitations and possibilities for marketing studies in Brazil

LUCIANA ALVES RODAS VERA ^{1 2}

MARLUSA DE SEVILHA GOSLING ²

HELENA BELINTANI SHIGAKI ²

¹ Universidade Salvador (UNIFACS) / Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração da Unifacs, Salvador – BA, Brazil

² Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG) / Centro de Pós-graduação e Pesquisas em Administração (CEPEAD), Belo Horizonte – MG, Brazil

Abstract

The Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) gains relevance in a culture where consumers are represented and understood as subjects in search of a reflective and empowered identity. This theoretical essay presents a brief review of the literature on CCT and aims to discuss the possibilities and limitations of this theoretical tradition in marketing studies in Brazil. The conclusion of this work is that the consumer culture theory has gained increasing attention in the field of consumer behavior, and there are studies carried out on patterns of socio-historical consumption, market culture, consumer identity, and media use appropriation. Also, it is perceived that the CCT has many possibilities in marketing research, both in the Brazilian and international contexts. Finally the few criticisms of the CCT can be addressed and reversed when observed based on the interdisciplinary context that this new field of study proposes.

KEYWORDS: Consumer Culture Theory. Consumer Culture. Possibilities. Limitations.

Article submitted on December 19, 2016 and accepted for publication on April 04, 2018.
[Translated version] Note: All quotes in English translated by this article's translator.
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12660/rgplp.v18n1.2019.78889>



Teoria da Cultura do Consumo: possibilidades, limitações e caminhos em estudos de marketing no Brasil

Resumo

Em uma cultura em que os consumidores passam a ser representados e compreendidos como sujeitos em busca de uma identidade reflexiva e empoderada, o tema Consumer Culture Theory ou Teoria da Cultura do Consumo (CCT) ganha relevância. Este ensaio teórico tem por objetivo a discussão sobre as possibilidades, as críticas e os caminhos dessa tradição teórica em estudos de Marketing no Brasil. Os resultados deste ensaio teórico apontam que tal abordagem tem ganhado crescente atenção no campo do comportamento do consumidor, com estudos desenvolvidos em vários sentidos, como padrões sócio-históricos de consumo, culturas de mercado, identidade do consumidor e apropriações do uso de mídias. Igualmente, nota-se que a CCT apresenta muitas possibilidades em pesquisa de marketing, tanto no contexto brasileiro quanto estrangeiro e que suas poucas críticas podem ser solucionadas e revertidas por meio do contexto interdisciplinar que este novo campo de estudo propõe.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Consumer Culture Theory. Cultura do Consumo. Possibilidades. Limitações.

Teoría de la Cultura del Consumo: posibilidades, limitaciones y caminos en estudios de marketing en Brasil

Resumen

En una cultura en la que los consumidores pasan a ser representados y comprendidos como sujetos en busca de una identidad reflexiva y empoderada, el tema *Consumer Culture Theory* o Teoría de la Cultura del Consumo (CCT) adquiere relevancia. Este ensayo teórico tiene como objetivo la discusión sobre las posibilidades, las críticas y los caminos de esa tradición teórica en estudios de Marketing en Brasil. Los resultados de este ensayo teórico señalan que dicho abordaje ha obtenido una creciente atención en el campo del comportamiento del consumidor, con estudios desarrollados desde diversos enfoques, como estándares socio-históricos de consumo, culturas de mercado, identidad del consumidor y apropiaciones del uso de los medios. Igualmente, se nota que la CCT presenta muchas posibilidades en investigación de marketing, tanto en el contexto brasileño como extranjero y que sus pocas críticas pueden solucionarse y revertirse por medio del contexto interdisciplinario que este nuevo campo de estudio propone.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Consumer Culture Theory. Cultura del consumo. Posibilidades. Limitaciones.

Introduction

The theory of consumer behavior is a Marketing study area that has received increasing interest from the academy over the past 50 years due to increasing competition and the phenomenon of globalization, which indicates challenges for companies in maintaining and gaining markets (CASOTTI and SUAREZ, 2016). It is noted that throughout this period, three perspectives have emerged within this scope: the Behavioral Decision Theory (BDT), the Information Processing rational Model (IPM) and the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT).

The BDT, according to the authors mentioned above, is focused on rational aspects of consumption and is based on cognitive and economic psychology fundamentals to elucidate issues such as decision making, heuristics and biases, intertemporal choice and judgment face to the uncertainty. The IPM-based perspective emphasizes information processes for decision-making and complements more rational approaches by investigating less conscious aspects of the consumption process (CASOTTI and SUAREZ, 2016).

The CCT, however, corresponds to a more recent perspective, which has encouraged the investigation of the contextual, symbolic and experiential aspects of consumption. It is defined by Arnould and Thompson (2005) as a group of theoretical perspectives that approach the dynamic relations among consumer actions, market and cultural meanings. The idea of consumption has been moved from that based on maximizing (economic) utility or the acquisition process (business studies) to a view based on (a) the process that permeates the relations between society and individual, (b) in the forms of social classification and communication systems, (c) in the processes of identity formation, rituals and purchasing communities, and (d) the search for full existential experiences (ASKEGAARD and LINNET, 2011).

This theoretical essay aims to discuss the possibilities of the CCT, the criticisms, limits and limitations made to it and the possible ways of this approach in marketing research, especially in Brazil. The elaboration of this essay can be justified by the contribution with future researches in the area, by pointing out possible ways, to elucidate the criticisms that have been made, as well as to try to solve them, besides showing the current reality of Brazil in this new field of study. Likewise, the results presented in this essay may contribute to future research in the area through the questions presented and the reflections produced.

A Brief Review about CCT Research Possibilities

Studies under the consumer's experiential perspective do not have their origin defined in the literature. However, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) are considered the first authors of this discussion. These authors, according to Pinto, Freitas, Resende et al. (2015), emphasized the importance of studies in this area, from the point of view of aspects like fantasy, feelings and fun, involving dreams, emotions and pleasures. Pinto, Freitas, Resende et al. (2015) began to explore issues related to consumer rituals and symbolism, consumer experiences and fantasies, the symbolism of goods and cultural issues in consumer behavior (COSKUNER-BALLI, 2013).

From this perspective, although Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) seminal study is concerned, there have been earlier authors who began their studies on consumer experience.

Among them, Pinto, Freitas, Resende et al. (2000), cite: Wroe Alderson (1957) and Lawrence Abbott (195-), who emphasized the importance of consumer experience, and Stanley Lebergott (1993) who sought to identify and develop the concept of consumer experience based on John Maynard Keynes, Alfred Marshall and Adam Smith. In addition, authors such as Brillat-Savarin, Paul Lazarsfeld and Ernest Dichter are pointed out as qualitative and interpretative consumer behavior researchers by Levy (2006) and Belk (2014). Other researchers have also made important contributions to studying consumers qualitatively, such as Veblen, James, Malinowski, Geertz, Sahlins, Mead, Bateson, Douglas and Miller.

The CCT theory has the origins in a project called Consumer Behavior Odyssey, started in 1985 in the United States by a group of approximately twelve researchers, such as Russell Belk, Melanie Wallendorf and John Sherry, who left the United States in a van to conduct a multilocalized ethnographic study, with interviews, photographs and filming (JOY and LI, 2012). So far, at the time, the leading marketing journals were largely dominated by quantitative and experimental studies. One of the objectives of this movement was to propose the development of studies that went beyond the works of positivist character predominant until the moment (BELK, 2014).

The idea of the project was to develop an eclectic and multidisciplinary study that focused on consumer behavior rather than buyer behavior. The aim was to move away from positivism, with a research focused on the experiment, survey and the statistics methods (BELK, 2014). The works resulting from Odyssey project had an impact in the consumer behavior field and resulted in further studies.

Thompson (2004) presented the term Consumer Culture Theory in 2004 for the first time in the Doctoral Consortium at the University of Nebraska in Portland, Oregon. Later, Arnould and Thompson (2005) used again the term in the article “Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty years of research”, in order to name a number of works developed since the beginning of the Odyssey project. These authors explain that this research tradition corresponds to a group of theoretical perspectives that approaches the dynamic relations between consumer actions, the market and cultural meanings. While representing a plurality of distinct theoretical approaches and research objectives, CCT researchers, however, share a common theoretical orientation to the study of the complexity of culture, which programmatically links their respective research efforts.

In this way, culture is no longer seen as a “homogeneous system of collectively shared meanings” (PINTO, FREITAS, RESENDE et al., 2015, p. 51), but rather as the heterogeneous distribution of these meanings, in order to understand the groups and their manifestations via socio-historical formations (PINTO, FREITAS, RESENDE et al., 2015). Since then, the CCT has become an acronym used and recognized in the main journals of the area (COVA and COVA, 2014), with visibility in international journals, such as Journal of Consumer Research; Journal of Marketing; European Journal of Marketing; Culture, Markets and Consumption; Journal of Consumer Culture; Journal of Marketing Research; Journal of Retailing; Journal of the Academy of Marketing; Journal of Advertising; Research in Consumer Behavior; Consumption Markets and Culture; and Journal of Consumer Behavior. In Brazilian journals: Revista de Marketing (ReMark); Cadernos EBAPE.BR; Revista de Administração de Empresas (RAE); Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo; ADM.MADE; Revista Interdisciplinar

de Marketing; Revista de Administração Contemporânea (RAC); Revista Eletrônica de Administração (REAd); and Revista de Negócios (MORAIS and QUINTÃO, 2016). Also, at national and international conferences: Anpad Meeting, Association for Consumer Research (ACR), American Marketing Association (AMA) and Consumer Culture Theory Conference.

The CCT theory explores the heterogeneous distribution of meanings and the multiplicity of cultural groups that exist within the broader socio-historical framework of globalization and market capitalism. In CCT, consumer culture is a central construct, conceived as a social arrangement in which the relations between lived culture and social resources, and between significant forms of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, are mediated by the market (ARNOULD and THOMPSON, 2005; ARNOULD, 2006). Kozinets (2001) defines consumer culture as a particular system intertwined with images, texts and commercially produced objects used by particular groups - through the construction of overlapping, even conflicting, practices, identities and meanings - to create a collective sense of their environments and to guide the experiences and lives of its members.

Arnould (2006) explains that consumer research inspired by this construct generally refers to sociocultural, experiential, symbolic and ideological aspects of consumption. In addition, Arnould and Thompson (2005) argue that this tradition of research has developed significantly through interpretative empirical studies that analyze how particular manifestations of consumer culture are constituted, sustained, transformed, and shaped by broader historical forces (such as cultural, mythological and ideological narratives) based on socioeconomic circumstances and specific market systems.

Thus, these authors define CCT as a tradition of interdisciplinary research that has advanced knowledge about consumer culture (in its heterogeneous manifestations) and has generated empirically grounded conclusions and theoretical innovations that are relevant to a set of related disciplines of social sciences of managerial sectors.

The research tradition of the CCT is directed to the study of the contexts of consumption to generate new constructs and theoretical insights, as well as to stimulate the investigation of the contextual, symbolic and experiential aspects of consumption that are unfolding through a cycle of consumption, including acquisition, consumption and possession, and the processes of disposition and analysis of these phenomena, under micro, meso and macro theoretical perspectives (ARNOULD and THOMPSON, 2005). In summary, the main theoretical issues of the CCT are organized into four structures of interest, as shown in Box 1.

BOX 1

Common Structures of Theoretical Interest

Structures	Issues of theoretical interest	Examples of developed work
Market Cultures	Sociocultural dynamics imbued in brand communities; fan communities; microcultures of consumption; subcultures of consumption; tribes of consumption; as a mediator of social relations and social relationships.	Peñaloza and Price (1993); Celsi, Rose and Leigh (1993); Kozinets (2001); Kozinets (2006); Paiva, Arruda, Forte et al. (2010); Leão, Vieira and Gaião (2011); Cruz, Augusto, Vieira et al. (2012); Henkes and Dalmoro (2015).
Consumer Identity Projects	Identity games; corporal image and self-presentation; gender performance; symbolic distinctions; extended self; negotiation of cultural contradictions; experiential dimensions of consumption.	Holbrook and Hirschman (1982); Arnould and Price (1993); Carvalho and Motta (2004); Belk and Yeh (2011); Almeida, Froemming and Huber (2013); Barboza and Ayrosa (2013); Belk (2013); Aguiar and Farias (2014); Farias, Aguiar and Melo (2014); Gopaldas (2014); Pinto, Reale, Segabinazzi et al. (2015); Cupolillo and Ayrosa (2016).
Socio-historical patterns of consumption	Formation of consumption by class, ethnicity, gender and other usual social categories; consumption under conditions of reduced cultural resources; institutionalization and reproduction of power relations in socioeconomic hierarchies; anticonsumption; conscious consumption; resistance to consumption.	Fabi, Lourenço, Silva et al. (2009); Barros, Sauerbronn, Costa et al. (2010); Peñaloza and Barnhart (2011); Izberk-Bilgin (2012); Kraemer, Silveira and Rossi (2012); Dalmoro, Peñaloza and Nique (2014); Ceglia, Lima, Leocádio et al. (2015); Rohden, Durayski, Teixeira et al. (2015); Pereira and Souza (2018).
Ideologies of the mass media market and consumer interpretive strategies	Material representations, discursive and through images of consumerist ideologies in the market; active use of the media by consumers and critical readings contrary to hegemonic codes; corporate cooptation dynamics; globalization in media and consumption.	Hirschman and Thompson (1997); Lawrence and Phillips (2002); Kozinets and Handelman (2004); Zhao and Belk (2008); Baldanza and Abreu (2010); Brei, Garcia and Strehlau (2011); Barros (2014); Faria and Casotti (2014).

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on Arnould and Thompson (2005) and Morais and Quintão (2016).

Among other possibilities of study, besides those presented in Box 1, Cova and Cova (2015) pointed out studies related to icon brands based on ethnographic studies, in order to seek the understanding of the creation of a convincing myth and a history that can help to resolve acute stresses that people feel in their own lives. The same happens in studies of

relationship marketing, where the employee is asked to have a one-day 'customer experience' to understand power relationships, hierarchy, and variation of relationship, such as satisfaction, loyalty, or respect (COVA and COVA, 2015). Another possibility of study is about brand communities, in which we can think in a holistic way, with a focus on the consumer. In addition, the voluntary behavior of consumers and their need to be part of the process of service or product co-creating have been studied more recently.

Thus, the CCT addresses the complex dynamics between: consumer identity projects, popular culture, market structures, emergent socio-historical consumption patterns and market ideologies (ARNOULD and THOMPSON, 2005; ARNOULD, 2006). That is, "[...] the consumer objective would be to operate a coherent system of cultural information and classification" (PEREIRA and SOUZA, 2018, p. 133).

In the words of Arnould (2006), in CCT the consumers are seen as producers of identity projects that proceed using the symbolic and material resources offered by the market. Askegaard and Linnet (2011) have added that it has been central to the CCT that consumer representation is a subject that seeks a reflexive and empowered identity, traversing its path through the myriad of opportunities provided by the market, and often reflecting, mediated by messages that involve both consciously and critically on the market.

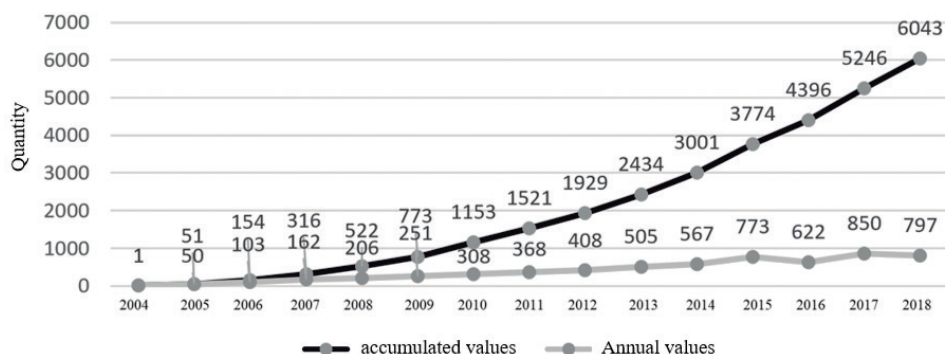
This work theorizes cultural discourses and practices related to the orientation and structuring of socio-cultural forms of life that produce meanings in the individual and in the market (PEÑALOZA and MISH, 2011). The CCT emphasizes that cultural meanings are only partially understood as an "influence on" individual behavior. This tradition conceptualizes meaning as a group reproduction, and culture as a discursive field and a set of improvised practices fundamental to the formation of actors' subjectivities and activities.

According to Peñaloza and Mish (2011), cultural meanings provide the subjective material according to which people interpret themselves as individuals and realize an understanding of the shared goal, making their interactions intelligible with others inside and outside markets. For the authors, are examples of meanings: identities, relationships, cosmological worldviews, organization's mission statements, stories and myths.

In a study using the desk research method, Gaião, Souza and Leão (2012) proposed an investigation - based on articles and journals of the area - about the CCT being able to be considered an autonomous school of thought within the field of research of the behavior of the consumer. Based on three fundamental criteria, proposed and confirmed in the philosophy of science literature for the qualification of a school of thought (academic recognition, body of knowledge and contributions), the authors concluded that the CCT meets the criteria, as it is constituted by a solid body of knowledge, with thematic and characteristic theories, and aimed at answering the aspects that guide marketing activities (GAIÃO, SOUZA and LEÃO, 2012).

Morais and Quintão (2016) indicated in their study that the number of publications in CCT, by Brazilian researchers, in national and foreign journals, has grown substantially. The same growth can be observed in Brazilian and foreign researchers, as shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
Publications in Consumer Culture Theory



Source: Google Scholar.

* Data were collected from 2004, date of the first publication, until the date of December 31, 2018.

The data indicate that there was substantial growth by 2015, and that from 2016 the number of publications fell by approximately 20% but grew again in the following years, largely consistent with the statement by Fitchett, Patsiaouras and Davies (2014) that the CCT has been an emerging and rapidly rising issue. The following year, it returned to be relevant in national and foreign publications. The research was conducted via Google Scholar, excepting citations and patents, since, for comparison, the number of academic publications (6043 studies) is higher than what was found in the Capes Database (949 studies).

With the substantial growth in the area, but still with few studies in Brazil, Pinto and Batinga (2018, p. 15) organized the book *Culture and Consumption in Brazil*, the first book about this subject, with discussions focused on its history and application in the Brazilian context in cases that deal with product forgery, ostentation funk, female erotic consumption and the representations of the Brazilian family of low income in the media. According to the authors, it is essential “to think about consumption when we look at our relationship with the objects that we possess or would like to possess”. They also defend the idea of a pure non-import of foreign theories, but rather a search for articulation of existing theories with the context in which we are inserted, with our cultures and particularities.

The objective of this article is to discuss the criticisms, limits and limitations to the CCT theory, as well as the possible ways of this approach in marketing research, especially in Brazil, and meets what Brazilian CCT researchers have sought in the country.

Limits and Limitations to CCT

Although the CCT, during these twenty years, has had a growing recognition of the academy, there are authors that point out some limits and limitations on its use.

Askegaard and Linnet (2011, p. 382), for example, cite that the very general view offered by the Consumer Culture Theory label has been considered “[...] provocative for its omissions and its alleged attempt to present a ‘totalizing narrative’ of a unified theory - criticized as a hegemonic vision of a great diversity and a polyphonic field of voices”. However, the authors draw attention to the fact that, in contemporary consumer research, benefits can be gained by constructing a specific label, as long as its purpose and effect are to establish an inclusive dialogue platform rather than an exclusive dogma.

The establishment of common ground beyond the loose paradigmatic assertion that this research is ‘interpretive’ (which research is not?), and the attempts to distinguish this group of research (and researchers) from other academic communities (e.g. sociologists or anthropologists of consumption), is crucial for scholarly identification, especially of doctoral students (ASKEGAARD and LINNET, 2011, p. 382).

Faced with this criticism, it is questioned and problematized that the fact that the name/label of the CCT alludes to a theory of consumer culture, and it is not a single theory that seeks to explain a certain phenomenon. Similarly, Fitchett, Patsiaouras and Davies (2014) argue that the several cultural and interpretivist communities do not necessarily value an identity (individual or group/community), which made the term widely used and accepted, functioning as a sort of myth of creation.

Although several researchers argue for the use of the term, one wonders why to call Consumer Culture Theory if it is not a specific theory? Why limit to the word theory so many perspectives with diverse and different points of interests? Instead of limiting such a large and diverse sub-area of consumer behavior to the term “theory,” the suggestion of the present theoretical essay is to offer a nomenclature such as “approach”, “current” or “analytical” consumption culture.

This question is problematized in this article because it is understood that a single theory has not been developed, but rather an approach, an analytical about the consumption culture and the field of consumer behavior of more plural character, exactly to escape a construction of a closed theory or a positivist theoretical model. Equally, Fitchett, Patsiaouras and Davies (2014) argue that the CCT is not a response to social and cultural changes, but rather a product of them; and McCracken (2007) recalls that the concept of culture is considered a phenomenon. In this way, it is defended the substitution of the denomination Consumer Culture Theory by Analytical or Approach Consumption Culture.

It is possible to understand that the construction of the CCT label/brand has an important sense of academic identification, as Askegaard and Linnet (2011) pointed out, and institutional creation of a place of speech in the marketing field, but the criticism of the present theoretical essay refers to the limit that the term “theory” imposes on what the CCT represents. The growth of studies made under such a brand and the advancement they have provided to the discipline of marketing as a whole are visible. However, the word theory does not seem adequate, taking into account that CCT is conceptualized as a field of research

with theoretical and methodological approaches for different stakeholders (ARNOULD and THOMPSON, 2015).

Askegaard and Linnet (2011) and Casotti and Suarez (2016) also indicate limitations of the CCT research because it is focused on the individuals. In the view of the authors, the strength of the CCT, compared to consumer sociologies, has always been tied to the inclusion of rich and detailed records of real-life experiences of consumers, such as individuals or small groups. Thus, Askegaard and Linnet (2011) point out that this led to neglect elements of forces (predominantly social) that shape the consumers lives and are not necessarily part of ordinary consumer experiences. That is, the focus on lived experiences should not lead the CCT to repeat the individualization tendencies of the rest of the consumer research community:

Experiences are individualized, but the element of 'lived' draws our attention to the conditions under which these experiences unfold, conditions that are not necessarily experienced *per se* (ASKEGAARD and LINNET, 2011, p. 397).

McCracken (2007, p. 100) corroborates that cultural meaning must be considered in view of its three places in theory: “[...] in the culturally constituted world, in the consumer good and in the individual consumer, moving on a trajectory with two transfer points: from the world for good and good for the individual”.

With origin from an anti-establishment movement, CCT grew by developing positive aspects: a self-critical sensitivity and a strong reflexive vocation (CASTILLES, 2015). To their authors, because of this was possible to be aware of the field's own limitation, as well as to indicate aspects that need to be improved, as was the case of Thompson, Arnould and Giesler (2013). Thompson, Arnould and Giesler (2013, p. 164) criticize the concentration of research on the Europe-North America and claim that this naturalizes and institutionalizes northern hegemony and contributes to the establishment of a center-periphery relationship in which the South would be in a position of “[...] as a source of exotic data and as objects of social science knowledge, rather than as those who can produce reflexive knowledge of their own social existence, much less as ideas and concepts provider and having intellectual value in northern epistemes”. Thus, the authors call attention to the need to expand the work of the CCT to the South American context and see it as a failure of the CCT the omission of works by influential cultural theorists such as Néstor García Canclini and Epli Hau'ofa.

Last but not least, a common question refers to the method used in CCT research, with a predominant focus on qualitative method. The criticism is given to the production of knowledge based on few data, which would hamper population generalization, but not theoretical; in addition to an earlier critique (1980-90 decades): that interpretative research generated shallow results in the descriptions and categorizations of social reality (CASOTTI and SUAREZ, 2016). Moreover, qualitative research can promote accidental discoveries (serendipity) (GODOY, 1995).

CCT as a Path to Marketing Research in the Brazilian Context

While representing a plurality of theoretical approaches and research objectives, CCT researchers, however, share a common theoretical orientation to the study of the complexity of culture, which programmatically links their respective research efforts. Considering that the CCT seeks to explore the heterogeneous distribution of meanings and the multiplicity of cultural groups that exist within the broader socio-historical framework of globalization and market capitalism (ARNOULD and THOMPSON, 2005), it is noted that such a theoretical tradition framework can be a very rich path for marketing research in the Brazilian context. Considering the complexity of Brazilian culture and the specificities of the consumption context in Brazil - different from consumption in developed countries - it was possible to perceive that the Brazilian context can add much to the CCT, leading to new phenomena and new constructs, as well as leading to a more interpretive view at the consumption culture in the country.

Quintão (2018) warns on the work that has been developed by Casotti and Ayrosa since 2009 in order to hold events and coordinate the path of research, guidelines and publications in the area. For him, several Brazilian universities have joined studies in this field of knowledge, which presented an evolution in the last six years, with emphasis on the Southeast region - COPPEAD-UFRJ, Unigranrio, ESPM, PUC Minas, PUC Rio, UFF, FGV, UFSJ, IFSP - also in the South - with UFRGS, UEM and Univates - and Northeast - UFPE.

For Casotti and Suarez (2016), the Brazilian CCT researchers still seek for greater recognition of their work in their country, since in the international context, there is a decrease in resistances, prejudices and questions about the scientific nature of the interpretative research results. In a country with a very peculiar culture and with so acute social problems, it would be interesting to investigate the theoretical issues proposed by CCT, such as consumption experiences, cultural meanings, consumer identity projects, consumption by class, ethnicity, gender and other usual social categories; institutionalization and reproduction of power relations in socioeconomic hierarchies. Pereira and Souza (2018), in their study about heterosexism, consumption, gender and sexuality, show that the symbolic meaning of a product is socially constructed and that, therefore, the consumption practice understanding contributes to the managerial understanding of the phenomenon.

This argument is supported, for example, by Pinto and Freitas (2012, p. 5), in which they point to a list of possibilities for “[...] conducting research that portrays the reality lived by consumers” and for the fact that “[...] regional studies also gain space, in which it would be possible to investigate habits, rituals and consumption myths of a multitude of products and services, as well as the possessions and experiences that can be symbolically constructed by individuals involved”.

Castilhos (2015) also sees possibilities for a genuinely Brazilian contribution to the debates in the CCT field. The author points out the analysis of the market dynamics in the urban space as an opportunity for the establishment of a systematic study agenda, for the insertion of Brazilian researchers in a leading position in the knowledge production in this field.

The profound social inequality that results in urban violence, the presence of a society at the same time extremely classist and where the markers of social belonging are not always explicit and the existence of a recent mobility dynamics are projected in the urban space of the great Brazilian cities and make them privileged contexts that exacerbate the characteristics of the phenomena to be investigated (CASTILLOS, 2015, p. 162).

The CCT represents, therefore, a rich field of research opportunities for marketing in Brazil and has been gradually gaining space in the country. According to Belk and Casotti (2014), since the second half of the 2000s, there seems to be a greater concern in Brazil about the discussion of the methodological characteristics of the scientific knowledge geared to marketing, as well as studies have been focused on the culture of consumption in the country. They explain that some papers highlight the predominance of positivism, but there is also a steady expansion of interpretive studies in marketing research and discussions that explore different theoretical proposals and methods of qualitative research.

Such theoretical and contextual proposals present a level of cultural diversity characteristic of Brazil and are in line with the CCT. Belk and Casotti (2014) cite some examples of papers already published with this content, such as: consumption and identity studies (BARROS, SAUERBRONN, COSTA et al., 2010; BARBOZA and AYROSA, 2013); researches focusing on specific consumption groups that rarely appear in consumer behavior studies such as low-income consumers (PINTO, 2013), homosexuals (PEREIRA and AYROSA, 2012) and people with disabilities (FARIAS and CASOTTI, 2014); and subjects more critical to consumption, such as resistance to consumption, category abandonment and anti-consumption (SUAREZ, CHAUVELL and CASOTTI, 2012; SUAREZ, 2014).

Thus, Belk and Casotti (2014) affirm that there are generalized demands to expand the cultural and historical points of view in the CCT research, besides the construction of a specific theoretical group for this area of knowledge. Corroborating the arguments already brought by this article - Pinto and Freitas (2012) and Castilhos (2015) -, Belk and Casotti (2014) indicate that, because they offer a huge diversity of historical, demographic, economic, political, and religious contexts, the Brazilian society can provide a very rich field for the investigation of practices and expressions of consumption by urban groups, virtual communities and popular movements, enriching the research of CCT.

Conclusion

This article aimed to discuss the possibilities of Consumer Culture Theory, the criticisms made to it by other authors and possible ways of this theoretical tradition in marketing research in Brazil. It was concluded that CCT has gained increasing attention in the field of consumer behavior, with studies developed in several senses, such as socio-historical consumer patterns, market cultures, consumer identity, appropriations of media usage, among others.

The merit of this work is to show the critiques, limitations and possible solutions and questionings pointed out by some authors. The contributions of this article were formulated aiming at improving, refining this line of thought rather than making it invalid. The main

criticism made in the present theoretical essay to the CCT was related to the nomenclature “theory” of the Consumer Culture Theory, since it is understood that this is not a closed theory to explain a unique phenomenon. That is, the term theory seems inadequate for reference and the suggestion of the present theoretical essay is to offer a nomenclature as “approach” or “analytical” of the consumption culture.

It was noticed that the CCT manifests many possibilities in the marketing research, mainly in the Brazilian context, since the country presents a rich and diverse culture regarding historical, social, economic and demographic issues, linked to the consumption aspect. As a suggestion for future research related to CCT in the Brazilian context are studies on experiences with new family arrangements, experiences related to ethnicity, experiences of non-consumption, resistance to consumption or abandonment of category and experiences lived by socioeconomic classes.

For example, it is possible to affirm that the theme “experiences lived by socioeconomic classes” can be inserted in several aspects of interest of the CCT, such as market cultures, socio-historical consumption patterns, consumer identity projects, meanings of consumption and dimensions of consumer experiences. Thus, there are ways in the CCT in which it is possible to explore the issue of consumer culture tied to the experiences experienced by different socioeconomic classes, ranging from the luxury products consumption and services by more affluent classes up to the consumption of C class or the low-income population.

It is also suggested for future studies related to the CCT in Brazil that the marketing researchers should not only refer and import the bibliography of the international CCT as a theoretical basis but rather dare and pay attention to important and classic Brazilian authors from areas such as Anthropology, Sociology and History. The works of several Brazilian authors can contribute greatly to the understanding of the consumer culture that exists in Brazil and in its different regions.

Yet, the anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro (1995), in his work entitled *O Povo Brasileiro*, addressed the formation of our people, their cultural and ethnic shades, miscegenation as a characteristic feature of the country and the stratification of social classes. The sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1997), in his work *Casa-Grande & Senzala*, also addressed the Brazilian sociocultural formation and miscegenation, highlighting the importance of the *casa grande* (family house of the owner of the rural properties of colonial Brazil) and the slave quarters (slaves’ dwellings), which, in the author’s view, were complemented by the constitution of the Brazilian people. Such works can contribute to the studies on consumption in Brazil, as they provide a reflection on the formation of Brazilian culture and can collaborate to understand the rituals and consumption behaviors of the Brazilian society, which may have historical roots and regional and identity differences.

Thus, a possible question for researchers is: what do the works of Ribeiro (1995) and Freyre (1981) say and help to reflect on the Brazilian consumer culture? Attention to this can contribute to the development of studies that reveal the cultures of consumption of the several Brazils that exist in this immense country and its historical and socio-cultural roots.

References

- AGUIAR, E. C.; FARIAS, S. A. Estímulos sensoriais e seus significados para o consumidor: investigando uma atmosfera de serviço centrado na experiência. **Revista Brasileira de Marketing**, v. 13, n. 5, p. 65-77, 2014.
- ALMEIDA, M. R. C.; FROEMMING, L. M. S.; HUBER, C. M. Experiência de Compra no Ponto de Venda em Lojas de Varejo de Panifício. **Revista de Administração IMED**, v. 3, n. 3, p. 209-220, 2013.
- ARNOULD, E. J. Consumer culture theory: retrospect and prospect. **European Advances in Consumer Research**, v. 7, n. 1, p. 605-607, 2006.
- ARNOULD, E.J.; THOMPSON, C.J. Consumer culture theory (CCT): twenty years of research. **Journal of Consumer Research**, v. 31, n. 4, p. 868-882, 2005.
- ARNOULD, E. J.; THOMPSON, C. J. Consumer Culture Theory: Ten years gone (and beyond). In: THYRAFF, A.; MURRAY, J. B.; BELK, R.W. (Org.). **Research in consumer behavior**. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing, 2015. p. 1-21.
- ARNOULD, E. J.; PRICE, L. River Magic: Extraordinary experience and the extended service encounter. **Journal of Consumer Research**, v. 20, n. 1, p. 24-45, 1993.
- ASKEGAARD, S.; LINNET, J. P. Towards an Epistemology of Consumer Culture Theory: Phenomenology and the context of context. **Marketing Theory**, v. 11, n. 4, p. 381-404, 2011.
- BALDANZA, R. F.; ABREU, N. R. Reflexões sobre as influências da indústria cultural na difusão de valores estéticos: a TV aberta brasileira e a padronização da beleza. **Mediaciones Sociales**, v. 7, p. 91-110, 2010.
- BARBOZA, R. A.; AYROSA, E. A. Um estudo empírico sobre a construção da identidade social do consumidor de Toy Art. **Revista de Ciências da Administração**, v. 1, n. 1, p. 11-21, 2013.
- BARROS, D. F. et al. Download, pirataria e resistência: uma investigação sobre o consumidor de música digital. **Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo**, v. 7, n. 18, p. 125-151, 2010.
- BARROS, C. Luz, Câmera... Inanição!: os caminhos do consumo em um seriado sobre dois mundos. **PragMATIZES-Revista Latino-Americana de Estudos em Cultura**, v. 4, n. 6, p. 72-84, 2014.
- BELK, R.; YEH, J. H. Tourist photographs: signs of self. **International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research**, v. 5, n. 4, p. 345-353, 2011.
- BELK, R. W. Extended self in a digital world. **Journal of Consumer Research**, v. 40, n. 3, p. 477-500, 2013.
- BELK, R.; CASOTTI, L. M. Ethnographic research in marketing: past, present, and possible futures. **Revista Brasileira de Marketing**, v. 13, n. 6, p. 1-17, 2014.
- BELK, R. W. The labors of the Odysseans and the legacy of the Odyssey. **Journal of Historical Research in Marketing**, v. 6, n. 3, p. 379-404, 2014.
- BREI, V. A.; GARCIA, L. B.; STREHLAU, S. A influência do marketing na erotização precoce infantil feminina. **TPA-Teoria e Prática em Administração**, v. 1, n. 1, p. 97-116, 2012.

- CARVALHO, J. L. F. D. S. D.; MOTTA, P. C. A iluminação ambiental vista pelos participantes das interações de serviços. **GESTÃO. Org-Revista Eletrônica de Gestão Organizacional**, v. 2, n. 1, p. 19-34, 2004.
- CASOTTI, L. M.; SUAREZ, M. C. Dez anos de Consumer Culture Theory: delimitações e aberturas. **Revista de Administração de Empresas**, v. 56, n. 3, p. 353-359, 2016.
- CASTILHOS, R. Dinâmicas de Mercado no Espaço Urbano: lógica teórica e agenda de pesquisa. **Revista Brasileira de Marketing**, v. 14, n. 2, p. 154-165, 2015.
- CEGLIA, D.; OLIVEIRA LIMA, S. H.; LEOCÁDIO, Á. L. An alternative theoretical discussion on cross-cultural sustainable consumption. **Sustainable Development**, v. 23, n. 6, p. 414-424, 2015.
- CELSI, R. L.; ROSE, R. L.; LEIGH, T. W. An exploration of high-risk leisure consumption through skydiving. **Journal of consumer research**, v. 20, n. 1, p. 1-23, 1993.
- COSKUNER-BALLI, G. Market practices of legitimization: Insights from Consumer Culture Theory. **Marketing Theory**, v. 13, n. 2, p. 193-211, 2013.
- COVA, B.; COVA, V. CCT applied research and the limits of consumers' heroicisation. **Journal of Marketing Management**, v. 30, n. 11-12, p. 1086-1100, 2014.
- CRUZ, Z. G. et al. O processo de transferência de significados: um estudo sobre o consumo simbólico de lingerie por mulheres de baixa renda. **Comunicação Mídia e Consumo**, v. 9, n. 25, p. 141-178, 2012.
- CUPOLILLO, F. B. N.; AYROSA, E. A. T. Reflexões sobre consumo, identidade e masculinidade em um bairro carioca. **Revista Interdisciplinar de Marketing**, v. 5, n. 2, p. 19-33, 2016.
- DALMORO, M.; PEÑALOZA, L.; NIQUE, W. M. Resistência do Consumidor: Diferentes Estágios Teóricos de um mesmo Conceito. **Revista Brasileira de Marketing**, v. 13, n. 1, p. 119-132, 2014.
- FABI, M. J. S.; LOURENÇO, C. D. S.; SILVA, S. S.; SETTE, R. S. Consumo consciente: a atitude do cliente perante o comportamento socioambiental empresarial. **Revista Symposium (Lavras)**, v. 7, p. 104-127, 2009.
- FARIA, M. D.; CASOTTI, L. M. Representações e estereótipos das pessoas com deficiência como consumidoras: o drama dos personagens com deficiência nas telenovelas brasileiras. **Organizações & Sociedade**, v. 21, n. 70, p. 387-404, 2014.
- FARIAS, S. A.; AGUIAR, E. C.; MELO, F. V. S. Store atmospherics and experiential marketing: A conceptual framework and research propositions for an extraordinary customer experience. **International Business Research**, v. 7, n. 2, p. 87, 2014.
- FITCHETT, J. A.; PATSIAOURAS, G.; DAVIES, A. Myth and ideology in Consumer Culture Theory. **Marketing Theory**, v. 14, n. 4, p. 495-506, 2014.
- FREYRE, G. **Casa grande e senzala**: formação da família brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1997.
- GAIÃO, B. F. S.; SOUZA, I. L.; LEÃO, A. L. M. S. Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) já é uma escola de pensamento em marketing? **Revista de Administração de Empresas**, v. 52, n. 3, p. 330-344, 2012.
- GODOY, A. S. Pesquisa Qualitativa: tipos fundamentais. **Revista de Administração de Empresas**, v. 35, n. 3, p. 20-29, 1995.

- GOPALDAS, A. Marketplace sentiments. **Journal of Consumer Research**, v. 41, n. 4, p. 995-1014, 2014.
- HENKES, L.; DALMORO, M. Mulheres ricas: distinção e subjetivação nas práticas de consumo da classe A. **Revista Interdisciplinar de Marketing**, v. 5, n. 2, p. 34-48, 2016.
- HIRSCHMAN, E.; THOMPSON, C. J. Why media matter: towards a richer understanding of consumers' relationships with advertising and mass media. **Journal of Advertising**, v. 26, n. 1, p. 43-60, 1997.
- HOLBROOK, M. B.; HIRSCHMAN, E. C. The experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun. **Journal of Consumer Research**, v. 9, n. 2, p. 132-140, 1982.
- IZBERK-BILGIN, E. Infidel brands: unveiling alternative meanings of global brands at the nexus of globalization, consumer culture, and Islamism. **Journal of Consumer Research**, v. 39, n. 4, p. 663-687, 2012.
- JOY, A.; L. I., E. P. H. Studying consumption behaviour through multiple lenses: an overview of Consumer Culture Theory. **Journal of Business Anthropology**, v. 1, n. 1, p. 141-73, 2012.
- KOZINETS, R. V. Utopian enterprise: Articulating the meanings of Star Trek's culture of consumption. **Journal of consumer research**, v. 28, n. 1, p. 67-88, 2001.
- KOZINETS, R. V.; HANDELMAN, J. M. Adversaries of consumption: Consumer movements, activism, and ideology. **Journal of consumer research**, v. 31, n. 3, p. 691-704, 2004.
- KOZINETS, R. V. Click to connect: netnography and tribal advertising. **Journal of advertising research**, v. 46, n. 3, p. 279-288, 2006.
- KRAEMER, F.; SILVEIRA, T.; ROSSI, C. A. V. Evidências cotidianas de resistência ao consumo como práticas individuais na busca pelo desenvolvimento sustentável. **Cadernos EBAPE.BR**, v. 10, n. 3, p. 677-700, 2012.
- LAWRENCE, T. B.; PHILLIPS, N. Understanding cultural industries. **Journal of Management Inquiry**, v. 11, n. 4, p. 430-41, 2002.
- LEÃO, A. L. M.; VIEIRA, R. S. G.; GAIÃO, B. F. Proposição tipológica de perfis de consumidores de vinhos baseada em valores humanos. **Revista Economia & Gestão**, v. 11, n. 26, p. 8-32, 2011.
- LEVY, S. History of qualitative research methods in marketing. In: BELK, R. (Ed.). **Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing**. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2006. p. 3-16.
- MCCRACKEN, G. Cultura e Consumo: uma explicação teórica da estrutura e do movimento do significado cultural dos bens de consumo. **RAE-Clássicos, Revista de Administração de Empresas**, v. 47, n. 1, p. 99-115, Mar. 2007.
- MORAIS, I. C.; QUINTÃO, R. T. Reflexões sobre o campo de pesquisa da Consumer Culture Theory no Brasil. In: LATIN AMERICAN RETAIL CONFERENCE, 9., 2016, São Paulo. **Anais...** São Paulo: CLAV, 2016. Available at: <<https://www.bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/ocs/index.php/clav/clav2016/paper/download/5895/1683>>. Accessed on: Mar. 13, 2019.
- PAIVA, M. B. M. et al. O consumo de luxo: um estudo sobre valores e significados no consumo de bolsas por mulheres brasileiras. **FFBusiness**, v. 7, p. 93-108, 2010.

- PEÑALOZA, L.; BARNHART, M. Living U.S. Capitalism: The Normalization of Credit/Debt. **Journal of Consumer Research**, v. 38, n. 4, 2011.
- PEÑALOZA, L.; MISH, J. The nature and processes of market co-creation in triple bottom line firms: Leveraging insights from consumer culture theory and service dominant logic. **Marketing Theory**, v. 11, n. 1, p. 9-34, 2011.
- PEÑALOZA, L.; PRICE, L. Consumer resistance: a conceptual overview. **Advances in Consumer Research**, v. 20, n. 1, p. 123-128, 1993.
- PEREIRA, S. J. N.; AYROSA, E. A. T. Between two worlds: on ethnographic study of gay consumer culture in Rio de Janeiro. **BAR**, v. 9, n. 2, p. 211-228, 2012.
- PEREIRA, S. J. N.; SOUZA, E. M. Azul para os meninos, Rosa para as meninas: Heterossexismo, consumo, gênero e sexualidade. In: PINTO, M. R.; BATINGA, G. L. (Org.). **Cultura e Consumo no Brasil: estado atual e novas perspectivas**. Belo Horizonte: PUC Minas, 2018. p. 83-101.
- PINTO, D. C. et al. Online identity construction: How gamers redefine their identity in experiential communities. **Journal of Consumer Behaviour**, v. 14, n. 6, p. 399-409, 2015.
- PINTO, M. R. As experiências de consumo de eletrônicos de consumidores de baixa renda no Brasil. **Revista Brasileira de Marketing**, v. 12, n. 1, p. 166-195, 2013.
- PINTO, M. R.; BATINGA, G. L. **Cultura e Consumo no Brasil: estado atual e novas perspectivas**. Belo Horizonte: PUC Minas, 2018.
- PINTO, M. R. et al. Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) no contexto das experiências de consumo de serviços: em busca de uma agenda de pesquisa. **RIMAR**, v. 5, n. 2, p. 49-68, July/Dec. 2015.
- PINTO, M. R.; FREITAS, R. C. A Teoria da Cultura do Consumo no contexto das experiências de consumo de serviços: discussões e questões para um campo ainda inexplorado para pesquisas. In: SEMINÁRIOS EM ADMINISTRAÇÃO (SEMEAD), 15., São Paulo. **Anais...** São Paulo: USP, 2012.
- QUINTÃO, R. T. O campo de pesquisa da cultura de consumo no Brasil. In: PINTO, M. R.; BATINGA, G. L. (Org.). **Cultura e Consumo no Brasil: estado atual e novas perspectivas**. Belo Horizonte: PUC Minas, 2008. p. 83-101.
- RIBEIRO, D. **O povo brasileiro: evolução e o sentido do Brasil**. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995. 476 p.
- ROHDEN, S. F. et al. Consumo colaborativo: economia, modismo ou revolução?. **Desenvolve: revista de gestão do Unilasalle**, Canoas, v. 4, n. 2, p. 9-24, July 2015.
- SUAREZ, M. C.; CHAUVELL, M. A.; CASOTTI, L. M. Motivações e significados do abandono de categoria: aprendizado a partir da investigação com ex-fumantes e ex-proprietários de automóveis. **Cadernos EBAPE.BR**, Rio de Janeiro, v. 10, n. 2, p. 412-434, June 2012.
- SUAREZ, M. C. Meanings of consumption and abandonment: understanding smoking cessation symbolism. **BAR**, v. 11, n. 2, p. 210-227, 2014.
- THOMPSON, C. J.; ARNOULD, E.; GIESLER, M. Discursivity, difference, and disruption: genealogical reflections on the consumer culture theory heteroglossia. **Marketing Theory**, v. 13, n. 2, p. 1-27, 2013.

THOMPSON, C. J. **Research Frontiers in Research Frontiers in Consumer Culture Theory**. 2004. Available at: <<http://www.w.acrwebsite.org/presentations/Eric%20Arnould.pdf>>. Accessed on: Mar. 13, 2019.

ZHAO, X.; BELK, R. W. Politicizing consumer culture: Advertising's appropriation of political ideology in China's social transition. **Journal of Consumer Research**, v. 35, n. 2, p. 231-244, 2008.

LUCIANA ALVES RODAS VERA

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6043-3252>

Ph.D in Business Administration at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG); Professor at Universidade Salvador (UNIFACS), Salvador – BA, Brazil. E-mail: lu.alvesvera@gmail.com

MARLUSA DE SEVILHA GOSLING

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7674-2866>

Ph.D in Business Administration at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG); Professor at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte – MG, Brazil. Email: marlusa@ufmg.br

HELENA BELINTANI SHIGAKI

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0456-7146>

Ph.D candidate in Business Administration at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte – MG, Brazil. Email: belintanihs@gmail.com