ANTI-CONSUMPTION AND CONSUMER RESISTANCE: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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Objectives

- To provide some insight on the concepts of anti-consumption and consumer resistance
- To propose a framework that describes the dynamic nature of anti-consumption attitudes and behaviours.
Anti-consumption

- AC literally means “against consumption” (Lee et al., 2009a, p. 145)
- The heart of AC is consumer rejection (Hogg et al., 2009)
• AC includes both attitudes and activities (Sandikci and Ekici, 2009)

• Can be expressed individually or collectively (Funches et al., 2009; Sandikci and Ekici, 2009)

• Rejecting particular brands, refusing to purchase from specific organizations, or resisting the whole marketplace (Lee and Fernandez, 2006)

• Caused by unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence, and ideological incompatibility (Lee et al., 2009)

• May merely stated preference but may also involve deep sentiment (Zavestoski, 2002a)
AC research is focused on the “reasons against consumption” or “reasons for avoiding a product or brand” (Lee et al., 2009a, p. 145)

or “why individuals fail to consume” or “actively choose not to consume” (Close and Zinkhan, 2009, p. 200)
International Centre for Anti-consumption Research website (www.icar.auckland.ac.nz)

- Authenticity
- Boycotting
- Brand avoidance
- Brand dislike
- Consumer resistance and culture jamming
- Consumer grudge-holding and retaliation
- Demarketing
- Dissatisfaction and exiting
- Innovation resistance and technophobia
- Negative disconfirmation
- Negative information
- Organizational disidentification
- Risk aversion toward genetically modified foods
- Social marketing to promote responsible consumption behaviour
- Undesired self and image congruency
Consumer resistance

- **Resistance** “counter-hegemonic social attitudes, behaviours and actions which aim at weakening the classification among social categories and which are directed against the dominant power(s) and against those who exercise it (them), having as a purpose its (their) redistribution in a more equitative way.” (Fernandez, 1988, p.174)

- “the way individuals and groups practice a strategy of appropriation in response to structures of domination” (Poster, 1992, p. 94)
Consumer resistance is primarily related to consumer attitudes and behaviours which are directed against dominant forces in the marketplace with the intention to gain more equal distribution of power (Dobscha, 1998; Penaloza and Price, 1993)
Initially focused on more active and collective actions aimed at changes in company marketing practices and rectifying larger social injustice (Penaloza & Price, 1993)

CR may also include individual and more benign actions against mainstream consumer culture (Penaloza & Price, 1993)
### Continuum of consumer resistance (Fournier, 1998)

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<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>INTENSITY OF RESISTANCE</th>
<th>Strong</th>
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<td>Large</td>
<td>SCOPE</td>
<td>Narrow</td>
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#### Avoidance behaviours
- “Distaste” toward other preferences (e.g., Richardson and Turley, 2006)
- Decision to not adopt new innovation (e.g., Bagozzi and Lee, 1999)

#### Minimization behaviours
- Voluntary simplicity (e.g., Dobscha, 1998)
- Coping strategies (e.g., Roux, 2008)
- Creative or alternative consumption (e.g., Close and Zinkhan, 2007, 2009; Cova and Pace, 2006; Holt, 2002; Thompson, 2004)

#### Active rebellion
- Consumer boycott (e.g., Kozinets and Handelman 2004)
- Culture jamming (e.g., Cherrier, 2009)
- Events or protests (e.g., Kates and Belk, 2001)
Consumer Resistance and anti-consumption

- CR is considered as a part of broad concept of AC
  - CR is a type of AC (Close and Zinkhan, 2009)
  - CR is a manifestation of AC (Cherrier, 2009)
  - CR is one of the topics relevant to AC (www.icar.auckland.ac.nz)
Resistance has been considered as “a more profound type of anti-consumption attitude” (Zavestoski, 2002b, p. 125)

Or a form of anti-consumption in which consumers’ behaviours are more active and visible (e.g., boycott) in contrast to more passive and invisible ones (e.g., brands not bought) (Fournier, 1998; Hogg et al., 2009)
It is proposed that CR may be regarded as a part of AC which is mainly directed against dominant forces in the marketplace
Framework of dynamic AC development

- Personal factors (e.g., involvement, belief, knowledge, socio-demographics, personality traits)
- Situational factors (e.g., novelty of the situation, availability of alternatives, macro environments)

Situational causes

- Marketing practices/ideologies
- Product country of origin
- Product/service performance
- Product/reference group symbolic image

Cognitive appraisal

- Goal relevance
- Goal congruence
- Ego-involvement
- Blame or credit
- Coping potential
- Expectation of duration

Affects and Anti-consumption attitudes

Intensity/ strength of affects

- High
- Low

Emotions (e.g., anger, fear) and Attitudes (e.g., bad, unfavorable, dislike)

Anti-consumption behaviours

- Active/Overt
- General
- Collective
- Passive/Covert
- Specific
- Individual

Feedback

- Recovery marketing actions (e.g., changes in policies and/or marketing mixes)
### Situational causes

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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| Company practice and ideology    | • Disturbing sales call (e.g., Roux, 2008)  
• Exploitation of labours and environment (e.g., Garrett, 1987)  
• Pervasiveness of consumer culture (e.g., Holt, 2002) |
| Product country of origin        | • Animosity (e.g., Klein et al., 1998)  
• Ethnocentrism (e.g., Watson and Wright, 2000)  
• Negative beliefs about COM reputation (e.g., Hui and Zhou, 2003) |
| Product/reference group symbolic image | • Distaste toward others’ preferences or images (Hogg et al., 2009; Richardson and Turley, 2006) |
| Product/service performance      | • Negative product or service experience (e.g., Funches et al., 2009)  
• Trepidation toward new technological innovation and GMF (e.g., Bagozzi and Lee, 1999; Huffman et al., 2004) |

The classifications are based on Lee et al. (2009)
AC behaviours are intentional, involving cognitive processing of external situations (e.g., Bagozzi and Lee, 1999; Funches et al., 2009; Hogg et al., 2009)

Components of cognitive assessment:
- Goal relevance
- Goal congruence
- Ego-involvement
- Blame or credit
- Coping potential
- Expectation of duration (Lazarus 1991b; Stephens and Gwinner, 1998)
Personal factors (e.g., involvement, socio-demographics) as well as situational factors (e.g., novelty, macro economics) may influence individual evaluation of particular issues.
Affects and anti-consumption attitudes

- Attitudes (and emotions) are parts of affect (Bagozzi et al., 1999) resulted from cognitive assessment (Lazarus, 1991, Wilson et al., 2000)

- Anger is commonly aroused when the negative situations insult one’s ego involvement and is attributed to other parties (Lazarus, 1991b)
AC attitudes depict negative overall evaluations about the situation.

Emotions and attitudes may provide feedback for subsequent thoughts and influence how individuals evaluate a particular issue (Lazarus, 1991a; Wilson et al., 2000).
The cognitive process and the resulting negative affects are likely to motivate consumers to engage in anti-consumption behaviours.

- **Personal concerns:**
  - To regain justice
  - To get more equal power and control of the marketplace
  - To protect oneself and self-esteem
  - *To get the most value and enhance self-esteem*

- **Social concerns:**
  - To protect other people
  - To protect the environment

(Funches et al., 2009; Hogg et al., 2009)
Personal factors (e.g., personality traits), situational factors (e.g., alternative products), and company’s recovery behaviours (e.g., changes in marketing policies) may influence the consistency between consumers’ attitudes and behaviours.
Anti-consumption behaviours

Classifications of AC behaviours:

- Covert ↔ overt (Close and Zinkhan, 2007)
- Specific ↔ general (Iyer and Muncy, 2009)
- Individual ↔ collective (Penaloza and Price, 1993)
When the intensity of affects is high, it is likely that individual will engage in higher scale of anti-consumption behaviours (Funches et al., 2009)

In dynamic view, consumers are likely to evaluate the outcomes of their actions, providing feedback loop for subsequent thoughts, affects, and behaviours (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982)
Without appropriate handling by the relevant companies:

- Passive/covert
- Specific
- Individual

- Active/ overt
- General
- Collective

Situational causes
Cognitive assessment
Affects
Behaviours
Managerial implications

- Carefully consider the causes of AC behaviours and try to avoid them at the very first.
- Consumer discontent should be directed into complains to the company and be given appropriate solutions to prevent transformation into more serious problem.
Theoretical Contributions

- Provides some insights on the conceptualization of AC (versus CR)
- Proposes a framework that may serve as a guideline for future research to identify the existing gaps within the process of anti-consumption development
thank you for your attention