


SUMMARIES



Snježana Čolić

The Contemporary Consumer Culture of Neoliberal Capitalism and Sustainability: Global Aspects

The article discusses the global consumer culture of (neoliberal) capitalism and sustainability. Contemporary consumer culture and consumerism as the dominant ideology of contemporary capitalism are based on principles of market competition and notions of constant growth. Economic growth is the core of modern capitalism and generally means increased spending. Such growth is understood as a function of inequality and the need to maintain a non-egalitarian social order. The current global world order is physically and morally unsustainable because it devastates the environment and destroys living conditions for the majority of the world's population. The use of people in the sense that people serve the market is at work, rather than the use of the market for people. Such aspirations desire to legitimise globalisation processes. Contemporary (neoliberal) capitalism is oriented towards the short-term profit of a few, rather than the long-term social well-being of many persons. The global free market project is not a model of natural socially embedded development. It prevents legitimate forms of development, adapted to culture, traditions and needs of specific societies and cultures, creating a growing resistance in them. In terms of sustainability, contemporary consumer culture and its ideology of consumerism is unsustainable culture. Sustainability and sustainable development require a profound change in the global economic order as well as the rejection of orthodox economic models that assume people's insatiable desire for commodities. Competitive globalisation within which commercial interests are put above human interests, need to be opposed by a possible globalisation of solidarity. A solution and a way out of the current situation can be brought about by raising awareness and changes through civil society and the world of life. For instance, this could be the strengthening of civilian control over the state and the market, as well as the promotion of the global eco-social market economy and the achievement of economically sustainable production and consumption. In doing so, sustainable development only makes sense within economy based on solidarity and the globalisation of solidarity that are not driven exclusively by profit.

Keywords: consumer culture, consumption, sustainability, consumerism, market, society, economic growth, development, neoliberal capitalism, globalisation

Krešimir Peračković

Basic Concepts in Sociology of Consumption

This paper presents different approach to consumption in the fields of sociology, economics, demography and psychology. The first chapter is about the socio-economic aspects of consumption which discusses the concepts of supply and demand, output and

consumption, sales and trade, market place and shopping mall, consumer and customer, purchase (buying) and shopping. The second chapter presents the demographic aspects of consumption where the population is viewed as a function of both producers and consumers. The third chapter reveals the basic sociological concepts and approaches to consumption, and also the characteristics of the consumer society and the factors of its creation and development, followed by some classical and contemporary sociological approaches to consumption starting from the Frankfurt School, Veblen and Packrad up to Bourdieu, Baudrillard and Corrigan; in the end there is an analysis of the difference of term *consumer society* from the concept of *consumer culture*. The fourth chapter provides basic differences in the sociological and psychological approach to consumption through a comparison of concepts purpose and need. In the concluding observations are offered sociological definition of consumption (as a kind of social action) and the definition of the sociology of consumption spending that approach as a social process, as a social group, the consumers and the market as a social relation.

Keywords: consumption, sociology of consumption, consumer society, consumer culture

Martin Lojkić

Social Meaning, Function and Purpose of Commodities

In this articles is analyzed a social function, meaning and purpose of the commodities, especially in the context of modern capitalism and fetish character of goods. In the first part the goods is considered mainly in its „technical“ element – in its exchange and useful value and the process of commodification and distinctions of commodity products, starting from the classics of sociological thought on this subject. Here are presented the basic concepts of Marx, Lukács, Mills and all the way to more modern authors such as Veblen, Baudrillard and Rifkin, where we meet with the commodities in an entirely new concepts such as space, time, sexuality, or the person himself. A special chapter is about the approach of economic anthropology of the E. Mandel, who analyzes the role of goods in the „tribal“* societies. The second part is based on modern understanding of the goods through brand and marketing and the issue of commodification of recognizable brand symbols in the theory of Naomi Klein and Philip Kotler. The final part is based on Fromm's and Marcuse's thinking in terms of consumerism, consumption and possession of goods concerned. However, analyzing the complexities of modern human society and its interdependence on other social structures and institutions, we see that man is totally dependent on others and the market, and mutual exchange of goods is one of the foremost human instances. Thus

* Based on the critique of the evolutionary paradigm in socio-cultural anthropology, some other expressions are preferred today, such as small-scale cultures, that is, populations of the Fourth World (see Čolić, 2002).

goods actually has a social significance, its distinctive function and purpose of sociology and is here to brighten and become aware about what and why people actually buy and use.

Keywords: commodity, exchange, commodity exchange value, commodity fetishism, reification, commodification, fictitious goods, services and brand

Hajrudin Hromadžić

Consumerism: A Driving Force of Late Capitalist Ideology

The paper attempts to rethink the nature of the era of consumer capitalism and the adequacy of the thesis of consumerism as an ideology of everyday life of the modern world in the context of specific post-industrial era of late capitalism, economic and political neo-liberalism and cultural postmodernism, through social, political, economic and cultural levels of theoretical analysis. The basic thesis of consumerism as a powerful and influential ideology represents a view according to which consumerism is more than just a product range of consumer practices, as well as more than the sum of movements, organizations, strategies and tactics by which consumers seek to realize their rights in a clash with producers and suppliers of goods and services. The key problem of the text seeks to be complexly interpreted through Badiou's concept of Event as the moment of sudden, immediate and radical break with the existing reality. The key question that arises is whether it is even possible to think/expect Event within coordinates of social reality of contemporary consumerism, which exists – within the theory about the end of the history of post-ideological epoch – on the socio-cultural side of the political-economic model of neo-liberal capitalism.

Keywords: consumer capitalism, ideology of consumerism, the concept of Event

Igor Duda

With Consumerism toward Communism? Consumer Culture in Croatia 1950s–1980s

Fast economic development in the decades after the Second World War brought to a number of social changes, growth of the standard of living and flourishing of consumer culture which gained a massive scale in the sixties. Although the connection between the standard of living and the possibilities for consumption was pointed out already in the Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in 1958, consumerism was a difficult issue for the socialist ideology which was accepting it only within certain limits, regularly linking it with the consumption based on work and placing it in the picture of general progress. Unlike the Soviet-Bloc countries, Yugoslavia was mostly not marked by the economy of shortages and the dictatorship over needs, the country was

largely open to cultural and consumer influences from the West, what distinguished her from the countries of state socialism. Although it was unable to form a liberal democratic environment and the West-European standard of living, the Yugoslav self-management and market socialism created an industrial society, opened the state borders and within one generation enabled the modern living conditions for the population. This was visible in three fields selected in the paper: acquisition of household durables, motorization and tourism. Consumer culture is discussed from the perspective of social history and the history of everyday life, based on newspapers and popular magazines, official statistics and market research, as well as state, party and literary sources.

Keywords: consumerism, socialism, household durables, motorization, tourism

Ivan Burić

Banks: Money Retailers as Architects of Consumer Personality

This paper analyses functions and instruments used by banks in establishing of macro and micro structures of consumer society developed in Croatia during the last ten years. As institutions that enabled the acceleration of financial flows and inclusion of all social categories in the process of economic exchange, banks provided the preconditions for its constitution and continuous reproduction. On the other hand, through specific reflexive business processes, primarily through processes of data-based marketing, banks had taken important role in constitution of social subjectivity of consumers. Through the activities of business tools and financial products development, banks constructed the areas of consumer freedom: They defined zones of consumer desires and consuming possibilities. On this way, banks played significant role in the production of consumer as the central subject of Croatian consumer society.

Keywords: banks, consumer society, production of consumer, data-based marketing, consumer freedom, consumer subjectivity

Sanja Stanić

Shopping Center as a Representative of Consumer Society

Shopping center is a modern consumer structure, product of specific consumer society and consumer culture. The emergence of shopping center is closely related with consumer and socialization needs of the population of post-war American suburb, but today it has become a global consumer form, which marks the modern era of consumption. The secret of success of the shopping center lies in mode of consumption which is here fused with the leisure time and activities, and that takes place in a space of comfort, convenience and safety. The primary purpose of this structure is realization

of profit, which is achieved through various strategies. Among them manipulation of space has a special place. Social functions of a shopping center cannot be denied, but the word is about transformed social relations and false sociability, which is mediated by objects, and takes place in the consumer environment. Shopping centers have become the part of the Croatian consumer and social reality. On the one hand, they are signs of negation of the minimalist socialist consumer culture, while on the other they contribute to the promotion of consumerism as a way of life. The expansion of shopping centers in Croatia is disproportionate to the economic developments as well as financial capacities of citizens. Shopping center is ambivalent place; in many aspects it seems to be what is really not. In this sense, shopping center represents the structure of work and consumption as the most abundant and opposing activities of modern society.

Keywords: means of consumption, space, profit, sociality, Croatia, consumption, work

Tihana Štojs

Buying an Identity in Contemporary Consumer Society

The paper discusses the reasons why consumption has become one of the mechanisms for formation of personal identity in the postmodern time and demonstrates how people use their goods to create and maintain a sense of self. Besides giving insight to the ways in which classical authors looked upon the connection between being and having, the paper explains some of the contemporary sociological approaches to consumption and analyses the role of modern marketing industry since it is her transition from communication built around the product and its functional advantages to communication that emphasizes emotions and desires that has significantly strengthened the subjective, identity building function of consumption. Finally, it is explained how, due to growing up in a commercialized world, teenagers and young adults are strongly influenced by the advertising industry and accept brands as legitimate communicators, using them to show who they are and linking their sense of self with some of the many logos on the global market.

Keywords: identity, consumer society, advertising industry, youth, brands

Katica Stažić

Social Opposition to Consumerism: Anti-Consumerist or Alter-Consumerist Movements

This paper discusses some of the anti-consumerist movements and questions their ingrained definitions and classifications. First part of the paper offers some definitions

of consumerism, points out the distinction between the traditional and the modern type of consumerism and briefly describes the historical transition from one type to the other. Furthermore, it defines and represents movements developed in the West that are popularly classified as anti-consumerist, starting with those developed within the contraculture in the 1960s, followed by the Situationists as a specific mixture of theoretical and engaged social action, *Adbusters*, *Yomango* and *Enough!* as part of the mainstream, subcultural freeganism with its numerous references and finally ethical consumerism which comprises a number of different orientations. We conclude with the critical analysis of the mentioned practices, questioning their effectiveness and (un) seriousness and by proposing a change of classification. We believe that it would be more appropriate to classify most of the movements that are referred as anti-consumerist as alter-consumerist, and we find that explicit anti-capitalist character is a necessary feature of anti-consumerist movements.

Keywords: consumerism, anti-consumerism, anti-consumerist movements, anti-capitalist movements, alter-consumerism, new social movements