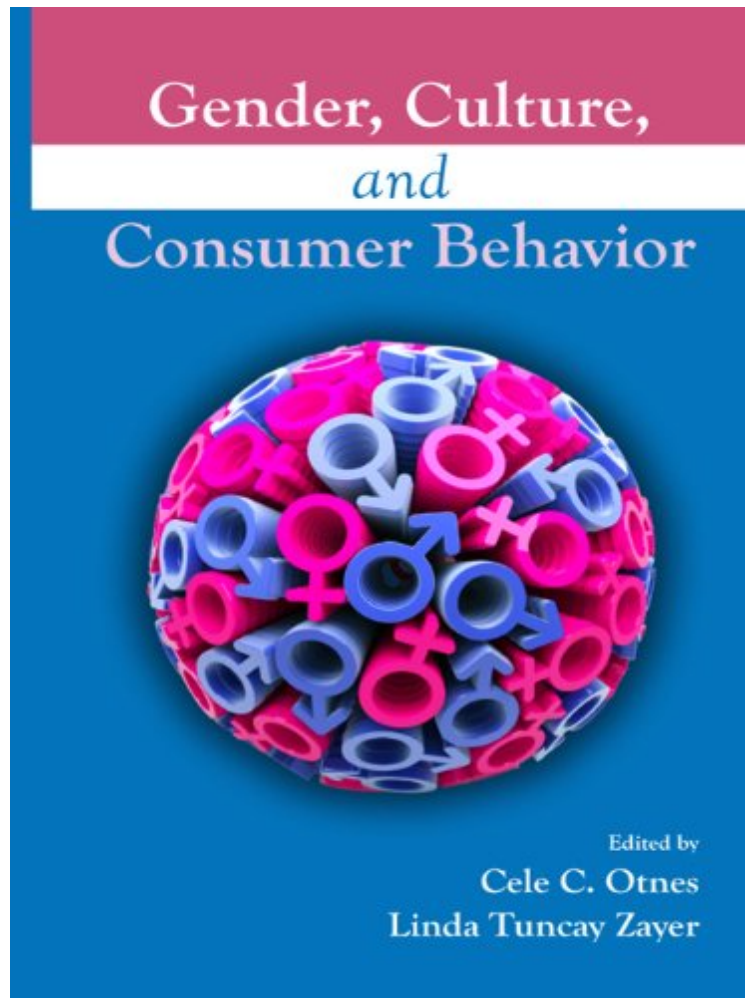


Gender, Culture, and Consumer Behavior

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From Routledge : Gender, Culture, and Consumer Behavior before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gender, Culture, and Consumer Behavior:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Sex and the Busy MarketerBy George F. SimonsGender has long been the ultimate cultural difference because it always shows up in whichever parts of the world and in whatever environment human beings are found. To clarify at the outset, when we speak of "sex" we're addressing biological, chromosomal identification that makes us "women" or "men," and when we speak of "gender" we are focusing on the identity, socially constructed around this identification, that defines characteristics of women and men as "female" or "male". This is not independent but added to sexual identity. Generally speaking, in proper English language discourse we should not be speaking of "males" and "females", but "men" and "women." (Ab)using these adjectives as nouns is the lexical privilege of biologists and zoologists as they speak of our species and other. Put simply, I speak of myself as a "man," not as a "male," though I may describe certain things I do as "male" behaviors or simply "manly," the latter

with its overtones of a certain dignity in some places culturally accorded to representative specimens of my gender and, as we will see in this book, marketed as such. Enter the troops of marketing and advertising. Where products and services are designed, developed, produced and sold on the basis of the attractiveness of their features to one or the other or both sexes. In every culture sex becomes an inevitable determinant of at least some definition of roles, responsibilities, and the distribution of labor. Here more than anywhere else the intimate connection of biology and social discourse is both hard to examine and hard to separate. However, it is the marketer's responsibility to identify those qualities, which can be most successfully touted to sexual differences and gender tastes of her customers, more specifically those who are most likely to make the decision to buy. The question then is whether to play the gender card in marketing and, if so, when. Calling on the understanding that people acquire and display, the traits and attitudes and behaviors of their gender identity, may lead to gender specific reactions that might not show up if one's marketing and advertising addresses different traits and preferences common to other perspectives on identity and human consumption. One would think that marketers have a distinct and enviable advantage over interculturalists when testing the viability of cultural discourse. They can turn their theories into explicit campaigns and test their success against the hard numbers generated by sales and votes. As *Gender, Culture, and Consumer Behavior* shows, however, identifying target markets by gender characteristics and preferences as well as interpreting results can be quite a tricky matter. Marketing does not come cheap and errors can be disastrous for the sales and the future of products, services, and the election of candidates to high office. Hence blind research, test groups, focus groups and the like become the prerequisite information gathering devices needed for launching a campaign. (Notice the prevailing military terminology in the business of competition--"This is Sparta!"). Perhaps nothing better represents the chicken and egg nature of our encounter with what we call culture than the world of marketing and advertising. Marketers must recognize, understand, use, rely on and create cultural discourse to appeal to the mentality of the people they intend to reach. At the same time cultural identity and identification, which were once local, ethnic, national, and religious have lost none of these dimensions per se, rather the user and their derivatives have become amplified beyond measure by the availability of media to broadcast both locally and worldwide. For the question in the background is forever: to what degree does marketing depend on culture and to what degree does it create it? Rather than search for percentages for some kind of measurement, we are best off to see them in an ongoing dance where it is hard and perhaps less beneficial to try to understand them in a discreet way. I realize that this is a wordier than normal preface to the review of an anthology of research and analysis, but it felt to me like the reader must first examine the frames in which she or he perceives gender and gender issues. The book represents the efforts of almost 30 authors working in largely Anglophone contexts. The chapters are broken into five sections, beginning with a first section containing two discussions of feminist theory and discourses and a second section addressing the media's exposition of gender roles for both women and men. Discussion begins with television series' fandom, with the fresh perspectives on feminine emancipation represented by *Sex in the City*, and the *Twilight* saga. It deals with men's ambivalence toward portrayals of standards of masculinity in advertising. It addresses gym addiction and questions of the relationship of sustainability to consumption. There is a further question of what kind of and how much information is expected or used by men or women in making the decision to buy or use a product or service. In other words, what is the acceptable logic that leads to credibility and subsequently getting the sale? Are men more likely than women to respond to sexually oriented advertisements? How do notice sexual elements and how do they react differently? Section 3 looks at "Gender, Culture, and the Market." Is gender a resource that potentially creates value in the mind of the consumer? Apparently, both traditional and alternative discourses about gender identity, if attended to, can bring about this result. Here one of the more fascinating chapters of the book is entitled "Lived Consumer Bodies: Narcissism, Bodily Discourse, and Women's Pursuit Of The Body Beautiful." It is about how we, as well as personal and social others view our appearance, the role of diet and gym in satisfying these expectations. The vulnerability around identity construction and self-esteem here is enormous, and can dominate a great deal of one's consciousness and behavior. Gift giving and reciprocity are looked at through the lens of Valentine's Day, a gender focused holiday, and in particular the obligations that women feel around both giving and receiving special attention, as well as the exclusion brought about by lack of a partner. The commercialization of this event brings both subtle and overt resistance on the part of many, while at the same time a solidification of gender identity is occurring. Section 4 turns to "Masculine Discourses". The discussion starts with, of all things, men's socks as a way of leading into the kinds of discourses and status games at play in the world of masculine fashions. Fashion as a preoccupation began in the courtly context of the late middle ages but it was the acceleration of change due to mercantile and industrial revolutions that amplified the rage and distribution of great varieties of fashionable goods. Currently, the dogmas of male attire have faded and men are invited "to partake in the carnival of consumption" along with women and construct their identity somewhere between effeminacy and sloppiness. Beyond this, however, having laid out how language constructs social reality, there is a study of how status is declared, defined, and enforced and how it reflects itself in the appropriate fashions, making place for both local and global elite looks, even in societies where egalitarianism is broadly proclaimed (the example being Sweden). I am reminded of how "dress down Fridays" created an almost immediate market for "dress down" fashions setting subtle norms for what was meant to be relaxation. The most fascinating piece, a rare discussion

of non-Western cultural gender trends is found in the following chapter on "Masculinity and Consumption in Contemporary Japan." Here attention is drawn to a new generation of men with less competitive ambition and more feminized consumption patterns, something akin to the metrosexual, but for a generation of men showing reduced interest in a career and relationship. They are compared as "herbivores" with those who identify with former standards of strict, competitive masculine ideals (carnivores) and now statistically outnumber them. This chapter looks at how this population emerged in the interplay of culture and consumption and diminished Japanese economic and demographic situations. The salaryman is gone, and the new Soshokukei Danshi masculinity is in force, supported by women, the media, the manga, digital gaming and, above all, the market. For a boy brought up with only the choice between jockey and boxer shorts, and spending some years in Germany in the late 1970s, when men washed daily but changed their underwear only once a week, I suspected that the chapter on male lingerie would be a difficult read for me. In fact, it turned out to be a good overview of male cultural programming, particularly in regard to intimacy. It details how shifts in the consumption of appearance-related products, often initiated and supported by wives, mothers and girlfriends are now accepted as a "between us" dimension in a heterosexual relationship. In the following chapter, single fathers provide the focus for studying the habits of those men who have consumption tasks and household responsibility as well as detailed involvement in their children's lives, areas that traditionally have fallen to women. The focus is on how one may emerge from the process of transition, and how to reestablish priorities in order to become nurturing parent. This normally requires reassessments of men's traditional economic, career so socialization lives as well. It may cause them to be judged by both women and other men as deficient in terms of measuring up to the male stereotype. A variety of strategies for adapting to this role are discussed which inevitably involve the man becoming a consumer exploring and purchasing products that either were out of his ambit previously or done mechanically without a sense of their function in everyday family life. Men tend to be practical shoppers, with less brand loyalty and more attention to price and timesaving convenience. The final section of the book attempts to identify actual new directions that will lead towards future trends. Attention is paid to sustainability and the fact that marketing has not had a good track record in regard to developing critical perspective on this. Eco-feminism centered on traditional discourse about women's relationship with the earth. Feminist sociology calls attention to women's lesser decision-making role when it comes to corporate and social priorities. Feminist economics call into question classical economic models, which appear to be more the source of sustainability problems than their solution. Feminist geography is also addressed, the propensity of women to identify with more human contextual factors and how women see and portray the world in terms of local and familial structures in more carefully observed environments. Chapter 15 introduces the concept of intersectionality, defined as the "idea that each and every person holds a position in society at the intersection of multiple social axes such as race, class, and of course, gender. ...every person is subject to advantages and disadvantages particular to his or her intersectional position." This chapter introduces the literature of intersection, how it affects consumer culture theory, and may suggest future directions. The final chapter addresses the history of gender market research in terms of an ingeacute;nue that has come of age over the past half-century, beginning with fragile limitations and empirical focus and broadening out to embrace the insights of more disciplines both theoretical and practical. In sum, while the book is largely an academic reportage of research and inquiry, the concreteness of marketing engagement and the visibility of the discourse used in advertising makes the book an interesting read for interculturalists struggling to understand the ways in which cultural discourse and identity are created and propagated.

This book covers the gamut of topics related to gender and consumer culture. Changing gender roles have forced scholars and practitioners to re-examine some of the fundamental assumptions and theories in this area. Gender is a core component of identity and thus holds significant implications for how consumers behave in the marketplace. This book offers innovative research in gender and consumer behavior with topics relevant to psychology, marketing, advertising, sociology, women's studies and cultural studies. It offers 16 chapters of cutting-edge research on gender, international culture and consumption. Unique to this volume is its emphasis on consumption and masculinity and inclusion of topics on a rapidly changing world of issues related to culture and gender in advertising, communications, psychology and consumer behavior.

"Highly Recommended. Much of what one can learn by studying consumer culture, and behaviors within it, can be found in this volume, which presents current research on an international scale. Editors Otnes and Tuncay-Zayer bring together the work of 30 contributors, who apply high-quality research and analysis to questions about gender as it pertains to consumption, entertainment and advertising media, and culture. ... An insightful literature review provides perspective on relevant scholarship; a glossary helps with inevitable jargon within well-written and accessible social-science-based essays. The editors targeted postsecondary students in gender studies, communication, advertising, and consumer behavior as well as general audiences, and all of these will find the studies quite worthwhile." - P. W. Laird, University of Colorado Denver, USA, in CHOICE "Despite reports that we live in a post-gender society, gender remains a central organizing feature of identity. This collection reveals how gender can be understood as more than a

simple "Mars vs. Venus" individual difference, or a biologically determined, hardwired phenomenon. Rather, gender is revealed as a basic cognitive construct, cultural category and ideological concern that influences the gamut of consumer behavior and marketing. The authors nicely balance key issues of culture, femininity, and masculinity with the concerns of feminism, ideology and politics. This book will be useful to readers less familiar with gender theory, as well as advanced researchers seeking an update on current trends on gender research in consumer behavior and marketing." - Jonathan E. Schroeder, Communications, Rochester Institute of Technology, Editor of Consumption Markets Culture "This new volume focuses on a topic important to all of our lives and that relates to a number of disciplines (not just marketing), its contents include up-to-date examples of the concepts it discusses so students/readers can readily relate and apply the material. The authors include top international scholars who publish work in this area." - Joan Meyers-Levy, Marketing, Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota "This book is a worthy successor to the path-breaking volume by Costa published nearly 20 years ago. Much has changed as indicated by developments such as Internet gender support forums, same-sex marriage laws, and the Saudi promise to allow women to drive in 2015. But clearly more is needed to end gender discrimination and achieve equal human rights. This provocative set of chapters will help shape an agenda for the next 20 years of research." - Russell Belk, Schulich School of Business, York University, Canada "The authors cross cultures and genres in pursuit of gendered understanding of consumer behavior, demonstrating that gender is both an object and a subject, as constructed as it is constructing. They touch all the experiential bases ndash; cognitive, emotional, sensual, ideological ndash; in engaging fashion. From disciplinary evolution to contemporary marketing implications, the authors challenge our conceptions of gender. Scholars and practicing managers will find the insights in this volume well worth the reading." - John F. Sherry, Herrick Professor Department Chair, Mendoza College, University of Notre Dame "The global supply of authors is incredibly important, as many volumes of this sort are usually U.S. ndash;centric or Western-centric." - Tina Lowrey, Marketing, University of Texas at San Antonio "This is a timely, relevant contribution to our understanding of gender and consumer behavior. It provides a thoughtful review of the existing knowledge on the topic and extends an interesting field of enquiry. By combining an established research tradition with emergent issues, the book suggests interesting trajectories in consumer research. Each chapter combines sophisticated theory with a pleasurable and accessible reading. This book will be an important milestone for both academics and professionals, an essential reading for students in consumer behavior, a must in our personal library." - Stefania Borghini, Associate Professor of Marketing, Universita Bocconi, Italy

About the Author
Cele C. Otnes is the Investors in Business Education Professor of Marketing at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, her M.A. in Advertising from the University of Texas at Austin and her B.A. in English Literature at Louisiana State University. Her research focuses on ritualistic consumption, and how ritual practices by retailers and providers impact consumer experience. She is co-author with Elizabeth Pleck of *Cinderella Dreams: The Allure of the Lavish Wedding* (University of California Press, 2003) and co-editor with Tina M. Lowrey of *Contemporary Consumption Rituals: A Research Anthology*. Her work has appeared in numerous journals in marketing, advertising, and anthropology. She has served on the Executive Board of the Association of Consumer Research, as co-chair of the Gender, Marketing and Consumer Behavior conference (with Jonathan Schroeder in 2000) and as co-chair of the Association for Consumer Research conference (2012). She has taught courses on the undergraduate, MBA and/or doctoral level in consumer behavior, consumer insights, marketing theory and retailing. She is active in her church, and enjoys yoga, cooking, traveling, socializing with her friends and colleagues and the challenge of parenting a creative and articulate teenager.

Linda Tuncay Zayer is Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Business at Loyola University Chicago. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, M.B.A from the University of Notre Dame, and Bachelor of Science from Indiana University. Her research interests include how cultural discourses influence consumers. In particular, she examines how gender impacts identity, persuasion, and shopping behavior. Zayer's dissertation examined how men negotiate their gender identities in the marketplace. She has published in journals such as *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Retailing*, *Qualitative Market Research*, among others. She currently serves as the Vice President of Communications for the Consumer Behavior Special Interest Group of the American Marketing Association. In addition to academia, she owns a marketing consulting company, tealeaf consulting, and works with both small and large businesses.