Gei\Der, Marketing and Consumer Behavior

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Proceedings of the Fourth Conference on

GENDER, MARKETING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

June 25 - 27, 1998
San Francisco, California

Sponsors:
Association for Consumer Research
College of Business, San Francisco State University

Co-Chairs:
Eileen Fischer, York University
Daniel L. Wardlow, San Francisco State University

NOTE! This volume was printed and bound incorrectly (odd pages on the left, even on the right). Due to the late printing deadline and to save a few trees, we have decided to accept the error. We apologize for any inconvenience.

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FOREWORD(S): A Duet

Eileen Fischer, York University, 1998 Conference Co-Chair
Daniel L. Wardlow, San Francisco State University, 1998 Conference Co-Chair

DW: These Proceedings include the competitive papers and special sessions abstracts of the Fourth Conference on Gender, Marketing and Consumer Behavior, held in San Francisco, California in June 1998. The Conference was co-sponsored by the Association for Consumer Research and the College of Business at San Francisco State University. Significantly, this is the first of the “Gender Conferences” not held in Salt Lake City, and not chaired by our Founding Mother, Dr. Janeen Arnold Costa of the Department of Marketing in the David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah. Janeen chaired the first three conferences (1991, 1993, and 1996). To me, our move to San Francisco for the Fourth Conference signifies a maturing of the “Gender Conference”... we’re on our own two feet, established in the academic world, and ready to embrace an increasing breadth of perspectives and a growing community of scholars. At the same time, we remain true to our purpose of exploration of issues surrounding gender and consumption, and ever grateful to our Founding Mother for our conception and continued nurturance.

EF: The content and range of papers and special sessions in this conference reflect the maturation of the community of thought associated with the conference. One evidence of this maturation is the emphasis on the multiplicity of understandings and experiences of masculinities and femininities. As the papers during the first morning of the conference reveal, the simplifications of the past are giving way to more sustained analyses of the relationship between consumption and different feminisms, different gender identities, different sexualities. The papers during the first afternoon of the conference suggest that maturation is also occurring in the depth and breadth of analysis being given to issues of sex/gender differences that affect consumption related dependent variables, such as responses to marketing stimuli.

The papers on the second day of this conference, taken together with those from previous conferences, serve to improve our conceptual map of the many ways that gender and consumption intersect with and co-constitute one another across different life stages, social roles, and places or "scapes." And the final session of this conference challenges us to better understand the institutional environments in which gender and consumption are simultaneously constructed.

DW: While past conferences have included marketing practitioners as attendees, for the 1998 Conference we are pleased to welcome a presentation by Pam Scott and Diana Kapp of the advertising agency Goodby, Silverstein & Partners of San Francisco. Pam and Diana will speak at our Friday luncheon on their advertising work on the Nike women’s shoe account. Goodby, Silverstein & Partners is responsible for the innovative and award-winning “Charlestown Cougars” ad campaign, which follows a fictitious women’s basketball team through a victorious season of play.

EF: One question which I hope will be provoked by the diverse perspectives and objectives this conference entails is what directions we should chart for the future. I believe that the challenges for the future -- both the next gender conference, and the next generation of research -- are threefold, and that all three are nascent in this conference.
First, I believe that we must continue to problematize and question the simplified but dominant conceptualizations of what gender and sexuality are and how they relate to consumption and marketing. Second, I believe we must further our understanding of the institutional arrangements and cultural conditions which shape taken for granted accounts of gender, marketing and consumption. And third, I believe that we must integrate what we already have learned in order to increase the impact we may have on the ways that marketing is taught and practiced, and consumption is promulgated.

**DW:** I am especially gratified by the response of the conference’s contributors to expanding the conceptualizations of gender “beyond the dichotomous” as suggested at the third conference’s panel on “Gender 2000.” Work appearing in this fourth conference challenges our discipline’s dominant paradigms, and in ways which I see as mind expanding. I would like to echo Eileen’s comments on furthering our understanding of cultural conditions which shape distinct understandings of gender’s role in consumption behavior. As Janeen Costa said in the Foreword to the third conference: “we need to consider the way in which gender issues are framed in terms of Western society, in order to become more self-critical and to understand gender in greater depth.” We’ve only begun these self-critical explorations in this fourth conference, and such study provides us with fertile ground for our upcoming fifth conference.

**EF:** In closing, I must thank, first and foremost, Dan Wardlow who has made working on this conference a pure pleasure. His attention to all the organizational details has been what’s made this conference possible. I’d also like to thank Janeen Costa for her support and guidance, which have proven invaluable. Finally, I’d like to thank all the contributors to the conference. Their enthusiasm for improving our understanding of gender, marketing and consumer behavior has been contagious and sustaining.

**DW:** I’d like to thank Eileen Fischer, who as conference co-chair, has been a delight to work with. Our “division of labour” worked exactly as we’d planned, and Eileen’s detailed attention to the content review process has guaranteed the intellectual success of this conference. I’d also like to thank Janeen Costa for her inspiration for this fourth conference, and also for passing on the organizing lessons she’d learned from the first three conferences. My thanks also go to Dr. Art Wallace, the Dean of the College of Business at San Francisco State University for his generous support of this conference, and to Drs. Subodh Bhat and Kathy O’Donnell who have graciously formed an “ad-hoc hospitality committee” for the conference, simply because they live in the neighborhood of the Hotel Majestic and are familiar with dining and entertainment in the area. The Hotel Majestic staff have been most accommodating, and greatly assisted in the details. Finally, my graduate assistant, Marc Wintriss, put in long hours at the conference helping with registration and audio-visual needs, all above and beyond his call to duty.

June, 1998