Consumer Pride: Emotion As a Social Phenomenon
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Sociologists describe emotion as a key outcome of ritual, and consider pride the “master emotion,” that along with shame drives social interactions (Durkheim 1912, Cooley 1902). Pride remains at the sidelines of interpretive consumer research on rituals. Social psychologists note that pride emerges in social contexts, and that pride plays a central role in facilitating relationships and in maintaining social hierarchies (Leary 2007). Beyond using pride as an independent variable in experimental consumer research, not much is known about pride (Aaker and Williams 1998; Louro, Pieters, and Zeelenberg 2005; Mukhopadhyay and Johar 2007). This research introduces Interaction Ritual Chain (IRC), a theory for analyzing emotion as a social phenomenon, elicited in rituals, with outcomes for consumer practices (Collins 2004). Using IRC as an analytical perspective, it also develops a construct of consumer pride, based on interviews with over 50 informants and participation in Sunday family dinners in Zagreb, Croatia.

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**Consumer Pride: Emotion as a Social Phenomenon**

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Consumer emotions are rarely examined from a phenomenological perspective, with few exceptions. One consumer practice that generates emotion and involves consumption is ritual (Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel 1999). According to Collins’ Interaction Ritual Chain (2004), elements of sustained rituals elicit emotion in observable ways. This working paper investigates how the elements of consumption-based family rituals elicit pride. It takes an ethnographic approach, using long interviews and participant observation. The focus is on working class, middle class, and upper middle class Sunday family dinners in contemporary Zagreb, Croatia. The findings point to time, aesthetic goods, and family as elements that elicit pride. The paper presents a construct of consumer pride.

**Conceptualization**

Few articles in the field of consumer behavior research look specifically at pride. Using experimental research, scholars examine pride as a variable to manipulate in persuasive communications (Aaker and Williams 1998) or as a variable in consumer decision-making (Louro, Pieters, and Zeelenberg 2005; Mukhopadhyay and Johar 2007). In a related field, social psychologists note that pride emerges in social contexts and plays a central role in facilitating relationships and in maintaining social hierarchies (Leary 2007). Pride is also distinct from hubris (Tracy and Robins 2007). In spite of the growth of research in the sociology of emotions, there is little research on pride in that field (Turner and Stets 2006). Although emotions arise in ritual, interpretive consumer research on rituals tends to focus on individual practices or on social relationships (Rook 1985; Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). Scholarship on specific group rituals, for example, family meals, tends to examine the role of ritual in creating meanings at the group and social levels (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991). Research on consumption-based rituals such as gift-giving argues that individual emotions are an important outcome of these interactions (Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel 1999; Wooten 2000).

I apply Interaction Ritual Chain (IRC), a theory for understanding the relationships between emotions, rituals, and goods, on a micro (small group) as well as a macro-social level (Collins 2004). According to Collins’ Interaction Ritual Chain (2004), elements of sustained rituals such as Sunday family dinner reinforce expression of emotion and the status of symbolic goods. My question in this research is: how do consumption-based family rituals elicit pride through the use of aesthetic goods? Overall, this research project will contribute to interpretive consumer research by examining relationships between consumer rituals, aesthetic goods, and family consumption, focusing on three points that, so far, have received little attention in the literature. First, this work aims to provide a means for understanding emotions from a phenomenological perspective. Second, it develops a construct of pride, a specific emotion elicited in rituals. Third, it will consider the ways emotions elicited in ritual influence the consumption of aesthetic and luxury goods (Charters 2006).

This work examines the role of pride and aesthetic goods (i.e. tableware) in consumption-based family rituals in contemporary Zagreb, Croatia, a society that experienced the transition from state socialism as well as war in the 1990s. The mid-day Sunday meal ritual has been practiced among members of working, middle, and upper middle classes in Zagreb through pre-socialist, socialist, and post-
socialist (i.e. contemporary) eras. For decades, 2:00pm to 5.30pm on Sunday has been considered a sacred time (Belk et al.) in Zagreb, as all other activity is suspended, while generations of family members gather in the home for lunch.

Globalization has brought many changes, from new suburban shopping centers outside Zagreb, open on Sunday, to new hours for the working week. In the Yugoslav period, the work day ran from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., providing non-working time in the daylight hours. Sunday was a non-working day. Time outside of work was for leisure and family. Now, the work day runs until 5 p.m. Supermarket chains from Austria and Italy expanded into Zagreb's suburbs and opened on Sunday. Sunday is the second most profitable day of the week for the mega-grocery stores in the suburbs (“Croatian Firms,” 2009). The influence of these local and global forces on families and their social function has been significant (Ule 2004). Exploring the elements of the Sunday mid-day, such as emotions elicited, tableware used, time held, group members attending, and place held, is an opportunity better understand the role of ritual in globalization, the role of aesthetic goods in ritual, and the role of emotions in maintaining (or devaluing) rituals.

Method
Conducting depth interviews, small focus groups, and participant-observation of meals allowed this research to move beyond the traditional experimental examination of pride as solely an individual, psychobiological, or cognitive experience (McCracken 1988). In interviews, I used a semi-structured interview format to allow themes to emerge (McCracken). I inquired about informants’ meal practices in their families, about their tableware inheritance and use, and about their views on family consumption and, finally, the transformation. I used the snowball method of sampling and recruiting informants who are theoretically representative: I accessed informants through key informants and through friends. A total of 39 informants participated in audio and/or video recorded interviews. Interviews were conducted in Croatian or English and yielded over 17 hours of audio, and about 560 pages of transcripts, translated into English by native Croatian speakers. I participated in 15 family meals over the course of fieldwork, which yielded 100 pages of notes and reflections. Interviews and participant observation were conducted in Zagreb, from October 2006 to July 2007.

Findings
The data analysis applies Interaction Ritual Chain (IRC), a theory developed by Randall Collins (2004), to develop a construct of pride, to understand the phenomenological experience of consumer emotions, and to consider how pride influences the consumption of goods in rituals. The findings indicate three stereotyped components of the ritual-time, aesthetic goods, and family-are integral to eliciting pride. Together, these elements create moments for experiencing pride, influence the use of aesthetic goods to elicit and communicate pride, and reinforce group hierarchies and emotional bonds. The ritual expresses pride in cultural continuity in the context of globalization. Furthermore, cultural norms affirm pride and discourage hubris. A construct of consumer pride is offered, based on the findings, with reference to social psychology scholarship on pride:

Consumer pride is an adaptive, positively valenced, self-conscious emotion, felt in the body, emergent in socially situated action, to which consumers ascribe culturally bound meaning, before, during and after interactions. Consumer pride is bolstered by acknowledgment of the self as responsible for socially valued outcomes, by display and use of goods and services, and by feedback from others. Pride is an enduring emotion, felt at the individual, group and cultural levels, that moderates consumption choices by motivating consumers to perform positive social roles through consumption, and to elicit recognition of individual achievement through consumption and social display. In sum, this working paper argues that consumers experience specific emotions (pride) in rituals. It presents a definition of consumer pride. It also argues that consumers use aesthetic goods to express pride. Future work will further explore the relationships between pride and the ritual elements and processes that elicit emotion: time, aesthetic goods, and family.

References
Consumer Knowledge as a Moderator of Specificity-Based Product Selection

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One way marketers differentiate functionally equivalent or similar offerings is by varying product claim specificity. For example, Wyeth’s Advil brand is promoted as “the every pain reliever,” but Advil also offers a specific migraine product. Both contain the same active ingredient (200mg solubilized ibuprofen)—but do migraine sufferers prefer Advil Migraine to Advil Liqui-Gels? Previous research has shown that consumers favor products with specific claims over those with general positioning strategies. For instance, Chernev (2007) demonstrates that “all-in-one” products offering a number of functional features are perceived as less effective compared to products with one focal feature. However, we argue that preference for specific-use alternatives may depend on the consumer’s subjective category knowledge and present a study demonstrating this effect.

Prior research demonstrates that knowledge serves as an influential factor in the type and extent of information search behavior (Brucks 1985; Moorman et al. 2004), the range of choice heuristics available (Bettman, Luce, and Payne 1998), and the formation and recall of category structures (Hutchinson 1983; Alba and Hutchinson 1987). However, the relationship between objective and perceived or subjective knowledge remains unclear (Moorman et al. 2004). Subjective knowledge has been demonstrated to affect consumer choice behavior for new items with which consumers have little familiarity (Park et al. 1988), but to our knowledge, questions remain regarding the impact of subjective knowledge on familiar product categories. Together, this research suggests consumers obtain, interpret, and employ product attribute information differently depending upon both their objective and subjective knowledge, which may affect preferences for high or low product claim specificity.

We performed an experiment to examine whether perceived knowledge influences preferences for specific versus general products. The study employed a 2x2 design (choice set: [specific v. all-in-one products] v. [specific v. general products] x price: high specific v. low specific) that also measured subjects’ self-reported product category knowledge. Subjects were randomly assigned to conditions with stimuli order counterbalanced.

Participants were asked to imagine they had a headache and were at a store to buy medication. They were instructed to choose between two analgesics from the same fictional brand with varied package designs. All subjects saw a specific “headache-relief” product packaged in a box featuring a glowing orange head and a “relieves your TOUGHEST headaches” tagline. Next to this, subjects saw one of two alternatives. In the all-in-one condition, an all-in-one “pain relief” product indicated for multiple uses was presented next to the specific product—these multiple uses were depicted by a glowing orange back, hand, and head on the box. Alternately, in the general condition, a “pain relief” product featuring a body with an all-encompassing orange glow was shown next to the specific product. Both alternative products claimed to relieve “your TOUGHEST pain.”

Product prices were varied by condition to determine whether consumers would simply select the less-expensive alternative and to increase generalizability. In the high specific price condition, the “headache relief” medicine was priced at $9.99 while the alternative was priced at $7.99, and vice-versa in the low specific price condition.

After choosing an analgesic, participants’ subjective knowledge of the product category was assessed using a continuous self-report measure.

Subjects reporting lower perceived knowledge selected the specific-use headache medication with approximately the same frequency when it was paired with either the general-use or all-in-one products. However, among higher-knowledge participants, choice share of the specific-use product dropped significantly when presented alongside the multiple-use item. Thus, while the majority of consumers preferred the specific-use product, a significant number of higher-knowledge individuals preferred the all-in-one item. All main effects and interactions involving price were non-significant.

These preliminary findings suggest that subjective knowledge influences consumer preference for specific-use products, but additional research is needed to untangle the causes underlying this phenomenon. One possibility is that the specific ailments listed on the all-in-one package could invoke feelings of marketplace metacognition (Wright 2002; Brown and Krishna 2004), such that higher-knowledge consumers may be making choices to counteract perceptions that marketers are encouraging redundant purchases by offering both specific and general alternatives. Alternately, metacognitive perceptions of extensive knowledge may be influencing consumers’ propensity to think broadly and consider multiple usage scenarios—past research has demonstrated a broadening effect for high objective knowledge in brand recall tasks (Cowley and Mitchell 2003), but the role of subjective perceptions of knowledge remains unclear.

Alternately, subjective consumer knowledge may be influencing goal-directed purchase inferences. Recall that we gave subjects the specific goal of buying a product for headache relief. Recent research (Labroo and Kim 2009) demonstrates that consumers use increased processing effort as a signal of product instrumentality when engaged in goal-directed situations. Our findings concern the difficulty of matching an appropriate product to a salient need; this difficulty may vary depending upon the consumer’s level of knowledge and the level of product claim specificity. Thus, it is possible that the higher effort required to match the all-in-one product leads higher-knowledge participants to prefer it. However, when a general-use product is included in the choice set, and/or when the consumer has a low level of knowledge, the required processing effort may be too great, leading consumers to prefer the “easier” specific product.

Follow-up studies are being considered to analyze these theoretical implications. Future experiments will manipulate the perception of knowledge by employing difficult/easy product tests for greater experimental control. We also plan to vary the level of objective