



ASSOCIATION FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH

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Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Creating an Identity-Enhancing Assemblage of Public and Private Servicescapes in the Global City

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We draw upon the global city literature to integrate two disparate strands of consumer research: consumer acculturation and servicescapes. Based on a multi-city investigation of Roma migrants, we develop the construct of ethnic entrepreneurship as an underrepresented mode of producerly-consumption through which an array of public and private servicescapes is transformed into an assemblage of identity-enhancing resources.

[to cite]:

Ela Veresiu and Markus Giesler (2011), "Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Creating an Identity-Enhancing Assemblage of Public and Private Servicescapes in the Global City ", in NA - Advances in Consumer Research Volume 39, eds. Rohini Ahluwalia, Tanya L. Chartrand, and Rebecca K. Ratner, Duluth, MN : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 125-126.

[url]:

<http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/1009661/volumes/v39/NA-39>

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Servicescapes: Spaces of Representation and Dispute in Ethnic Consumer Identity Construction

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Paper #1: Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Creating an Identity-Enhancing Assemblage of Public and Private Servicescapes in the Global City

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Paper #2: How Marketplace Performances Produce Interdependent Status Games and Reconfigurations of Identity Resources: The Case of Rural Migrant Service Workers

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Paper #3: Culturally and Linguistically Appropriated Servicescapes: The Making of Ethnicity in the Context of Healthcare Services

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SESSION OVERVIEW

Careful attention to time-space intersections is a fundamental feature of consumer research (Arnould and Thompson 2005; Peñaloza, Toulouse and Visconti forthcoming). The relevance of physical space is particularly striking when considering the powerful role of commercial spaces in shaping (and constraining) consumer identity projects (e.g., Borghini et al. 2009, Maclaran and Brown 2005). Over the past decade servicescapes (Booms and Bitner 1981)—the role of physical surroundings in consumption settings—has become an increasingly important area of consumer research. Among others, Borghini et al. (2009) have recently documented the identity enhancing and empowering potential of themed commercial spaces on retail consumers.

Studies investigating the role of the marketplace in ethnic consumer identity construction, however, have clearly prioritized *time* over *space* (Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard 2005; Oswald 1999; Peñaloza 1994; Üstüner and Holt 2007). To date space has been mostly objectified in terms of the crystallized notions of *country of origin* and *country of destination* (Visconti 2010). This constitutes a paradoxical omission since migration should structurally stimulate reflexivity upon the movement between and within spaces. Consequently, the spaces in which migrant consumers operate require much more theoretical attention than has currently been devoted.

What happens when ethnic migrant consumers, commonly portrayed as inherently disempowered relative to the cultural majority, interact with various servicescapes both as providers and consumers of services? The goal of this session is to investigate the role of commercial and non-commercial, private and public servicescapes in the making and negotiating of ethnicity. Collectively, the three completed empirical studies demonstrate that the servicescape is not ideologically neutral nor is it epiphenomenal to the construction, contestation, and sharing of ethnic structures. Additionally, the authors show that the migrants' access, utility, and experience in consuming and producing services are highly affected by various servicescape structures.

In detail, Veresiu and Giesler first highlight the role of global cities' public and private servicescapes in enabling partial and inconsistent identity-enhancing tactics for ethnic migrant consumers,

which they define as ethnic entrepreneurship. Next, Üstüner and Thompson cast a new theoretical light on the institutional shaping of servicescape relationships by investigating the role of commercial space in mediating sociocultural differences between urban customers and migrant, rural laborers. Finally, Visconti and de Cordova document the strategic role of space in public services. Relying upon the theoretical pillars of cultural psychology, they display four forms of servicescapes in the sphere of healthcare.

Overall, this session should appeal to a broad audience, including scholars (and managers) in the field of acculturation studies, service marketing, experience management, and space/place attachment. We anticipate our discussant Lisa Peñaloza will encourage audience participation and provide important directions for future research, drawing from her pioneering studies on consumer acculturation and the contemporary marketplace. Consistent with the ACR 2011 theme, this session builds bridges on four levels: (1) contributions stem from various theoretical domains, including consumer research, cultural psychology, sociology, and anthropology; (2) the separate research streams of servicescapes and migrant identity construction are brought together; (3) the ambits of public and private servicescapes are contrasted; and, (4) managerial practices and academic reflections are conceptually integrated.

Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Creating an Identity-Enhancing Assemblage of Public and Private Servicescapes in the Global City

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumer acculturation—the adaptation to an unfamiliar consumer cultural environment by ethnic minorities—is of great and growing interest to consumer researchers (Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard 2005; Oswald 1999; Peñaloza 1994; Üstüner and Holt 2007). Previous studies have documented migrant consumers' negotiation of competing identity positions and cultural value systems in both North American and non-North American contexts. While this work is groundbreaking, it has devoted surprisingly little theoretical attention to the strategic role of market-mediated physical space in ethnic consumer identity construction. How do migrant consumers leverage their surroundings in order to construct their identities? What is the role of spaces in allowing migrant consumers to acquire agency?

To interrogate these important yet equally under researched questions, we focus on a well-defined commercial space: the servicescape. Booms and Bitner (1981) developed the concept in order to emphasize the impact of the physical environment in which the service process unfolds. Over the years, consumer research has expanded the theoretical boundaries of servicescapes by investigating retail atmospherics, themed environments, brandscapes, cybemarketscapes, retroscapes, as well as public-, private- and gendered-servicescapes (e.g., Brown and Sherry 2003; Sherry 1998; Visconti et al. 2010). Yet it is surprising to find that the role of ethnicity in servicescape structures has remained largely unexplored.

In this paper, we bring these two disparate research streams together by means of a detailed ethnographic investigation of migrant

individuals of Roma ethnicity in a particular space, the global city. Sociologist Saskia Sassen (2006) has argued that global cities play a profound role in enabling migrant consumers to create a tenuous visibility and establish a meaningful presence. We build upon her theoretical insights by investigating the role of public and private servicescapes on migrant consumer identity construction. More specifically, we develop the construct of ethnic entrepreneurship as an underrepresented mode of producerly-consumption through which an array of servicescapes found in global cities is transformed into an assemblage of deliberative relationships and resources allowing migrant individuals to leverage their ethnicity and expand their economic and social possibilities.

To illustrate ethnic entrepreneurship, we conducted a multi-sited ethnographic and netnographic (Kozinets 2002) investigation of Roma individuals in Toronto, Berlin and Pisa. The study intentionally spans three cities for the purpose of interpretive triangulation. Couched in participant observation and historical research, 70 in-depth, semi-structured interviews were completed with Roma individuals, local citizens and city officials. Roma informants were solicited through non-profit organizations and personal recommendations. During our conversations with the Roma, everyday living activities were discussed (e.g., housing, working, education, health-care, food, clothing, and entertainment). In order to better understand the overall sociocultural and political environment of the respective cities, we also interviewed national citizens, which were solicited from anti-Roma websites and online discussion forums, as well as public officials across the social services, immigration, child welfare, education, and public shelter sectors. The data set was completed in the winter of 2010 and subsequently analyzed using a hermeneutical approach (Thompson 1997).

Our findings reveal how ethnic identity construction is mediated through the global city's public and private servicescapes. For example, we found that our informants strategically use and creatively combine all available servicescapes in the global city's network in order to reinforce their identity and the core values of their ethnicity. All of the Roma informants demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to develop and utilize personal networks not only in their narratives, but also by attempting to recruit us (in the role of researchers) to translate documents, to assist in employment search, to recommend new hospitals for long-term care, etc. We discuss these findings in detail and compare the limitations of servicescapes in a small town (Pisa) versus a global city (Toronto).

The contributions of this research are threefold. First, it advances consumer acculturation research by exploring the lucrative role of a particular space, global city servicescapes, in ethnic consumer identity construction. Second, it contributes to the research on servicescapes by analyzing the relationship between ethnicity and both public and private servicescapes. Third, this study contributes to the sociology of globalized spaces literature by interrogating ethnic entrepreneurship as the migrant consumer's contribution to reinforcing and advancing the global city theoretical construct.

How Marketplace Performances Produce Interdependent Status Games and Reconfigurations of Identity Resources: The Case of Rural Migrant Service Workers

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This study investigates how socio-cultural differences between consumers and service workers are mediated by the institutionalized power relationships and asymmetrical interdependencies that operate in a servicescape context. These socio-cultural dimensions of servicescape interactions and institutional identities have fallen in a theo-

retical blind spot that exists between the respective analytic orientations of the service relationship (Arnould 2005; Berry 2002; Vargo and Lusch 2008) and sociology of servicework paradigms (Hochschild 1983, 2003; Sherman 2007). This oversight is particularly glaring because, in the global service economy, these occupations are increasingly being filled by workers matriculating from deeply impoverished rural areas (Sassen 2006). Indeed, one of the most significant trends impacting global economic development is a massive population shift from rural to metropolitan areas (Meng 2005). Numerous studies of developing economies have documented that rural inhabitants have considerably less access to educational resources and, a higher proportion of households headed by individuals with little or no formal education, than their socio-economic counterparts in urban areas (Ferreira and Walton 2006).

These socio-economic shifts also create a structural mismatch between the socio-cultural backgrounds these service workers bring to the urban glamour zones and the aptitudes needed to effectively perform aesthetic labor (Witz, Warhurst, and Nickson 2003). Although many forms of service work fall on the low end of the income and occupational status scales, they are by no means a province for unskilled or deskilled workers. Many of these service jobs are highly interactive, requiring specific forms of cultural knowledge, practical skill, and interpersonal acumen that generate symbolic and aesthetic value for a metropolitan and well-educated clientele.

Our analysis highlights the commercially-mediated power relations that create a new class of aesthetic laborers and also bind customers' and workers' identities in a network of asymmetrical interdependencies known as figurations (Elias 1978). Our research context is the hairdressing industry in metropolitan regions of Turkey. Much like their North American and European counterparts, Turkish hair salons tend to foster long-term relationships between hairdressers and customers. These relationships also represent an intersection between the rural, socio-economic periphery of the globalizing economy and its consumer-oriented socio-economic center points (Sassen 2006).

To gain insights into the relational dynamics of this servicescape context, we interviewed 9 hair salon-owners, 11 staff at varying stages in their careers, and 11 middle or upper-middle class women who patronize such salons. The interviews were conducted in Turkish and ranged from 1 ½ hour to 2 ½ hours in length. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim (and translated into English). Each interview began with general questions about the participants' background, personal interests and life goals, and then proceeded with queries about their specific experiences as salon workers or customers. In keeping with the conversation with a purpose of depth interviewing (McCracken 1988), participants largely set the flow of the interview, with the first author asking follow-up questions and probing for more descriptive details. In making sense of the interview data, we used an iterative, part-to-whole process of hermeneutic analysis (Thompson 1997). Initially, we first independently analyzed the entire set of transcripts and formed provisional understandings of emergent thematic commonalities.

Our analysis reveals that these servicescape figurations play out through an intricate system of interpersonal strategies and alliances. Salon owners become the de facto enforcers of customers' institutionalized authority through their actions in creating an appropriate salon aesthetic and socially conditioning (through sometimes heavy handed methods) their employees in the prevailing middle class norms. Owing to the fact that the salon is, indeed, a path for attaining economic and cultural resources, rural migrant and urban underclass men accept these modes of governance and internalize them as forms of self-improvement and in turn gradually become distanced