Ideological Maps of Consumer Education

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Ideologies and Paradigms Matter
Ideologies:
Sets of Values
Set of Beliefs
Notions of what counts as truth
If dominant, they are THE ruling ideas of the present times
Prescriptions of preferred ways of living
Views of power

Paradigms:
Observatory Towers
People stand from afar and watch daily life lived out in the ideological camp (decisions and actions), and then compare what they see with their values, beliefs and notions of truth. Daily life either resonates (makes sense) or not.
Consumer Educators Need to Discover and Own Ideological Underpinnings

“Which ideologies and paradigms are informing my practice as a consumer educator?”

- Dominant Ideological Camp
- Emergent Ideological Camp
## Table 1 Comparison of Dominant and Contending Ideological Camps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominant Ideological Camp</th>
<th>Contending Ideological Camp</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Patriarchy</td>
<td>A. Humanist and feminist (society of equals)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Economic neoliberalism</td>
<td>B. People-focused development, sustainable networks and livelihoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Political Conservatism</td>
<td>C. Participatory democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Social Darwinism</td>
<td>D. Egalitarianism, pluralism and diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Capitalism</td>
<td>E. Mindful markets and other forms of people and eco-centered economies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Corporate led Globalization</td>
<td>F. Localization and bottom-up globalization, led by civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Consumerism</td>
<td>G. Alternative forms of consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Postmodernism (especially popular culture and deconstructive)</td>
<td>H. Dialecticism (plus narrative, constructive and liberationist postmodernism)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendant Dominant Paradigms</th>
<th>Attendant Contending Paradigms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Newtonianism</td>
<td>1. New sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Materialism and Industrialism</td>
<td>2. Living systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Positivism</td>
<td>3. Narrative and interpretive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reductionism</td>
<td>5. Contextual holism and dialectical critical science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Transmissional and Transactional</td>
<td>6. Transformational and emancipatory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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DOMINANT VALUES:
Competition
Scarcity
Efficiency
Transactions
Win/lose
Profits and wealth
Individualism
Self-interest
Control and mastery

CONTENDING VALUES:
Cooperation
Abundance mentality
Efficacy
Transformations
Moving ahead together
People and nature
Community/relationships
Mutual interest
Stewardship
DOMINANT RESPECTS:
Linear fragmentation
Facts over values
Certainty, control and balance
Categories and specializations
Quick fixes
Machine and clock metaphors

CONTENDING RESPECTS:
Relationships and holism
Values and facts
Chaos, context and emergence
Patterns, structures and processes
Temporal fixes
Life metaphors (living systems)
# Consumer Education viewed from Two Ideological Camps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominant, Conventional Map of Consumer Education</th>
<th>Contending, Emergent Map of Consumer Education</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>consumer rights (individual rights)</td>
<td>consumer social responsibility (human responsibilities while consuming)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer self-interest</td>
<td>mutual, citizen interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer education</td>
<td>global education and consumer citizenship education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer protection (from self and business)</td>
<td>Majority world citizens’ protection from Northern consumption; also protect Northern consumers from oppression in consumer society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sustainable economic development</td>
<td>sustainable human and social development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classical economic theory</td>
<td>feminist, ecological, behavioral and developmental economy theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>business as BIG business (Trans-national corporations (TNCs))</td>
<td>business as small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as TNCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer decision making</td>
<td>ethical and moral consumer decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal economy</td>
<td>informal economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>production</td>
<td>reproduction and care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financial security</td>
<td>human security of self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capitalism (corporate, globalized managed or government managed “Western” capitalism)</td>
<td>non-Western versions of capitalism; capitalism that reclaims the commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumerism</td>
<td>ethical, participatory, sustainable consumerism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer society and culture</td>
<td>culture of peace in a consumer society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business accountability (Corporate Social Responsibility)</td>
<td>consumer accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>growth, profit, and master</td>
<td>sustainability, stewardship and peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer issues</td>
<td>social justice and human rights arising from excessive consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer socialization</td>
<td>socialization to be global citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free market economy</td>
<td>mindful markets, living economies and covenants of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corporate-led globalization</td>
<td>bottom-up globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer policy</td>
<td>other policy areas that affect consumption like trade, foreign affairs, military and fiscal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer movement</td>
<td>consumer movement aligned with civil society movement for justice and solidarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>violence in some products we consume</td>
<td>consumerism as a form of structural violence (system is organized so that people are marginalized, oppressed, exploited, and disadvantaged)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer empowerment (have product and service information, know their rights, lots of market competition)</td>
<td>help people find their inner power (me-power) and social potential to challenge the status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economic development</td>
<td>human and social development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as progress indicator</td>
<td>Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) and Human Development Index (HDI) as progress indicators</td>
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<tr>
<td>patriarchy</td>
<td>beyond Patriarchy to include humanism, feminism, even fraternity (society of equality)</td>
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<tr>
<td>value neutral</td>
<td>value rich and dependent on values</td>
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<tr>
<td>scarcity mentality (not enough to go around)</td>
<td>abundance mentality (have to be creative in using what we have to find synergy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>static systems thinking (mechanistic)</td>
<td>living systems thinking (holistic, integral)</td>
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<tr>
<td>draws heavily on scientific paradigm and empirical method for research and policy work</td>
<td>draws on other ways of knowing, in addition to the scientific method, for scholarly and policy work (includes spirituality and sacred)</td>
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</table>
Little Evidence of Ideological Tension...
we seem to be happy in our camp...

McGregor’s 2007 Decade Review of the *International Journal of Consumer Studies*
• Nearly all of the consumer research studies were couched in the dominant ideologies and paradigms (empirical, positivistic scholarship)
• Only 3 authors out of 900 used words from the emergent ideologies and paradigms (narrative, interpretative, phenomenological)
• Only 5 papers out of 380 even contained the words *ideology* or *paradigm*
• Only in the last three years have any papers augmented the conventional approach to consumer education with citizenship, global and sustainability perspectives – this constitutes the beginning of a paradigm shift.

• Special mention for the work of the Consumer Citizenship Network – a powerful example that consumer educators’ World Views have POWER to empower beyond conventional...
• Marsden and Littler (1999) claim that past adherence to the dominant camp has left us with a legacy - the habit of observing consumer processes in their isolation, detached from the whole vast interconnections of things, thus producing a narrow-mindedness of what it means to do consumer-related research, and by association consumer education initiatives.

• **Consumer educators need to ask themselves if they are satisfied with the curricula they create from the ideological camp they inhabit.**
Lowe et al (2004) created the notion of mapping paradigms to facilitate these conversations about how ideologies and paradigms inform scholarly discourse. They call for a healthy respect for patterns and processes emerging in a constant state of flux, chaos (order emerging) and change. Despite the currents and tensions caused by this perpetual movement, we have to be able to cross back and forth from one campground to the other, so can keep talking to each other!
Paradigmapping provides a useful picture of how past thinking has shaped contributions to the field of consumer education.

More importantly, these new maps help us understand where consumer education can go in the future. They truly help us become mindful of how we frame consumer education, and the resultant type of consumers that are socialized through our consumer education initiatives.