PRODUCTION, MARKETING AND CONSUMPTION:
A SOCIOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF MASS ORIENTED BUSINESS
STRATEGIES

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i

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ii

ABSTRACT

PRODUCTION, MARKETING AND CONSUMPTION:

A SOCIOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF MASS ORIENTED BUSINESS

STRATEGIES

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This thesis analyzes the marketing activities of the companies in the consumer

society of today and their social impacts on the consumption habits of individuals.

The creation of a social environment with the mass oriented marketing activities of

the producers and the association of individuals with the products that they or others consume are studied. The perception of the products as symbols of social status or their utilization to have distinction from others are analyzed. Throughout this thesis, the question of how brands are socially accepted and appreciated were addressed within the frame of the analysis of the mass oriented marketing activities of producers. Under these activities how the new consumer stereotypes are artificially created are criticized. This thesis also seeks to answer the question of how the social image of the brands and logos reach beyond the product sphere and used as a medium for creating social, cultural and individual identifications.

ÖZ

ÜRETÝM, PAZARLAMA ve TÜKETÝM

KÝTLESEL ÝÞLETME STRATEJÝLERÝNÝN SOSYOLOJÝK ELESTÝRÝSÝ

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Bu çalýþma, þirketlerin pazarlama faaliyetlerini ve bu faaliyetlerin, günümüz tüketim toplumunda, bireylerin tüketim alýþkanlýklarý üzerindeki toplumsal etkisini incelemiºtir. Üreticilerin kitlesel pazarlama faaliyetleri, bireylerin ürünlerle bütünleþtiði bir toplumsal ortam yaratmasý ve ürünlerin toplumsal statü veya baþkalarýndan farklýlaþma sembolleri olarak kullanýlmasý tartýþýlmýþdýr. Tezin

içeriğinde markaların nasıl toplumsal olarak benimsendiği kitlesel pazarlama stratejilerinin analizi çerçevesinde yapılmıştır. Bu faaliyetlerin yeni tüketici stereotipleri oluşturmaya başlaması ve bu stereotiplerin pazarlamacılar tarafından yapay olarak yaratılması incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma, ayrıca markaların ve logoların toplum içerisinde nasıl 'toplumsal imaj' sağlama kaynağı olarak kullanıldığını ve ürünün kendi ürün özellikleri çerçevesini aşıp nasıl yeni kültürel, toplumsal ve bireysel kimlik tanımları yarattığını incelemiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kültürel, toplumsal ve bireysel kimlik, kitlesel pazarlama

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Date: Signature:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"I consume, therefore I am" is the derived form of René Descartes' famous "I think therefore I am". It was used by the contemporary sociologist Baudrillard, who tried to capture the nature of today's society within this phrase (Jean Baudrillard, 1997:13).

Both Descartes' as well as Baudrillard's statement deal with the issue of how individuals view themselves, or how they define themselves. Descartes' citation reflects the 16th century spirit, where a number of individuals called the humanists liberated themselves of the ever-present doctrines of the Catholic Church, which had been monopolizing knowledge and had forbidden critical thinking for centuries. In the Renaissance period, people started to think on their own, instead of believing what others had thought for them. This spiritual liberation had created a new sense of self-confidence among a number of people and philosophy and sciences were flourishing. Being able to think rationally was seen by Descartes and his contemporaries as being a major part of them; put differently, they identified themselves by their own thinking. In Baudrillard's sentence, on the other hand, the verb *think* has been replaced by the verb *consume*, and following the logic from above, we could say that nowadays people define themselves mostly by what they consume. This raises the question of how such a fundamental change in the perception of individuals' identities has come about.

One of the keys to answer this question lies in the fact that today's economy is oriented towards consumers, i.e. producers produce according to what consumers need. Secondly, it seems to be a common phenomenon that people associate products that they or others consume with certain characteristics. This means that products are seen as symbols, for instance of status or of distinction from others. Such an association cannot be explained by looking at the product alone; it is because these products have "artificially" received an image through the mediation of marketers, who are in the constant attempt to sell their company's product. The creation of an image is a major pre-condition to sell a product, and marketers conceive a number of business-strategies in order to achieve this.

So to sum this up, it can be said that producers, marketers, and consumers are in a relation of interdependence, which is exemplified in the figure below.

PRODUCTION

MARKETING   **CONSUMPTION**
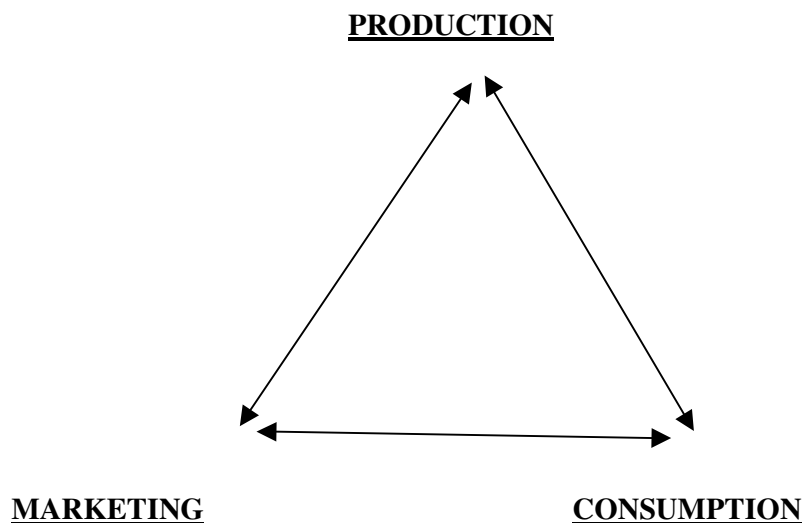
Figure 1: The triangle of Production, Marketing and Consumption

In today's consumer society, companies' *production* strategies have to be formed according to the consumers' needs. The identification of these needs is achieved through various *marketing* activities. Therefore, it can be said that marketing represents the bridge between production and *consumption*, which influence each other mutually.

The postulation of the interrelation between consumers, marketers and producers forms the background of this thesis, the aim of which is to analyze the interrelation between the producers and the consumers. Within this framework, I have tried to develop a socio-economic study, which attempts to establish a connection between a sociological perspective and business environment.

The production-marketing-consumption interrelation came into existence in the early 1950s, when companies began to orient their activities towards consumers. It was at this period that marketing was born; specific strategies were adopted. These strategies aim at identifying the consumers' needs as a first step, and as a second step the production strategies are made to satisfy these needs. This proves that production is affected by consumption. This study focuses on the marketing strategies that companies adopt, which nowadays cannot only be defined from a business perspective, but which should also be considered from a *sociological* perspective. The sociological perspective in this thesis criticizes various mass-oriented marketing activities and their role in influencing the *consumption habits*, the *lifestyle*, and sometimes even the perception of the *social, cultural or individual identity* of individuals. Although the triangle presented above involves the perspective of both,

3

namely the companies and the consumers, I will mainly focus on the producers' perspective, in order to analyze how and in what ways the marketing activities may create social change.

In order to be able to criticize such business activities, as a first step, a theoretical background needs to be created. This is done in the *first part* of this thesis, including Chapter Two to Chapter Four.

The present society is often characterized as being a 'the consumer society'. It is historically formed on the basis of the transformation from a product-based economy to a consumer-based economy. What are the stages of this socio-economic transformation? This is one of the important questions to be addressed. As a first step, in Chapter Two, I will explain how this transformation came about, starting with the early beginnings of commerce, in relation to the development of capitalism. The important point to be analyzed in this chapter is how the relations between the producer and the consumer have changed throughout time, taking into account major historical, cultural and technological developments. The emphasis on changing producer and consumer roles will be placed in more recent history, i.e. between the early 20th Century and the early 21st Century. This was a period when both the volume and the quality of production drastically increased, reaching its first peak in the era of Henry Ford's assembly lines. In this chapter, the concept of 'competitiveness', which in the consumer society of today forms one of a company's main assets is analyzed as well.

The new relations between producers and consumers, as well as the necessity for companies to be competitive, are taken as the departing point of the following chapter, which offers a thorough explanation of the *marketing concept*. Some of the questions which I will try to answer are: What is the main function of marketing? What sort of means are there to determine the consumers' needs? How do marketers find out which consumer group is most likely to have this need, and is therefore going to buy their company's product? Do multi-national corporations always adopt the same strategies as they try to sell their products in different countries? The focus of this chapter will be the role of marketing as being the bridge between the producers and the consumers. Here, the marketers' role of establishing the communication between them will be addressed, stressing the key role of advertisements in the communication process. A part on the historical change in marketing orientations serves to complete Chapter Two.

Transmitting the producer's message to the targeted consumer is done through the media. In Chapter Three, the role of the media, but of TV in particular, to transmit this message via advertisements is analyzed. I will equally stress the fact that in advertisements, consumers often meet with the products for the first time, and that their first impression depends mainly on symbols, signs and language.

Chapter Four deals with important sociological consumption theories, such as Veblen's *emulation theory* or Simmel's *trickle down theory*. Bourdieu's and Baudrillard's perspectives will be discussed with equal weight. In this chapter, the concept of consumption will be discussed, focusing on its social significance in the

21st Century. I will also address the effects of the globalising economy on the consumption habits of individuals.

The *second part* of the thesis which is the part of the Social Impacts of Producer's Activities of Chapter Four, stands as a critical comment of the marketing activities explained in the first part. In more concrete terms, I will criticize the social effects of mass-oriented marketing. For instance, such strategies can change the perception of an individual's social and cultural and individual identities. I will equally point out that business strategies can change individual's lifestyles. In this context I will refer to food consumption.

Furthermore, the role of advertisement in the construction and transmission of images, signs, and brands will be analyzed from a critical perspective. Questions like how advertisers use and change language for making the first confrontation between the product and the consumer as "seducing" for the consumer as possible, will be studied in this chapter. Next to language, the psychological aspect will also be discussed: taking Maslow's hierarchy of needs diagram as a model, I will explain how advertisement tries to lead individuals to believe that the purchase of a certain product will satisfy a particular need, like the need for being accepted by others. In addition, impacts of advertisements on the formation of stereotypes will be analyzed.

Furthermore, it will be argued that the brands and logos created by marketers for establishing brand distinction and brand loyalty often reach beyond the product sphere by entering into public spheres of individuals' every day life. This will be

shown by the examples of branded clothing, certain changes in common language, and by companies' sponsoring and funding activities.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL FORMATION OF CONSUMER SOCIETY

This chapter begins with a brief history of commerce, the early formation of industrial society, and concludes with a historical analysis of the formation of the consumer society of today. In this chapter, the primary aim is to examine the social impact of economic and technological changes beginning from the early 20th Century to the early 21st Century.

Early commerce was initiated by the *barter economy,* which was a system of exchange in which the goods were exchanged with goods, i.e. there was not a common medium of exchange that was utilized in commercial transactions. This situation changed when people started using "money", which became the universal medium of exchange. As a consequence, the price of the goods started to be equalized with a certain amount of money.

Early merchandising began in the Fifteenth Century, in European cities situated along the Mediterranean coasts. Venice for example, was one of the major commerce centers of the world trade. To become the world's most powerful economy meant that a nation had to be in the possession of the trading routes. For that era, navigation played a significant role for the transportation of goods from one country to the other. Thus the Portuguese King Philip IV claimed, "Sea power is more important to the ruler of Spain than to any other prince" (Braudel, 1985:48). Philip IV was trying

to transfer the capital from Madrid to Lisbon, for it was only by the sea power that a single community could be created out of so many provinces, so far apart from each other. For instance, the discovery of the American continent by America Vespuci (1492), could have made Portugal the first country in the world economy. However, Portugal could not live up this status for very long since it had less export (only wine) than the other European countries - such as England:

> If trade between England and Portugal in Ricardo's time was such that the former was selling cloth and other industrial products and the latter wine, then Portugal was in the primary and therefore inferior sector" (Braudel, 1985:54).

England became the world's largest economy, and it remained uncontested by other nations. According to some historians, France had missed the chance of individual transformation and of successfully challenging England for the leadership of Europe, because of the upheavals due to the French Revolution and during the time of the Empire. It is argued that this was a major lost opportunity.

After these historical changes during the early 19th Century, it is the Industrial Revolution which represents the major transformation in the history of the world economy, bringing improvements in technology of great impact. Since this study does not stand as a detailed analysis of the Industrial Revolution, one could briefly put the economic and political aspects of this area into the following metaphor: when the English people were inventing the steam engine, they were building a comfortable armchair for the 'English Lords', who were at the time the rulers of the world.

9

The mechanization brought with the industrial revolution initiated the replacement of the labour force with machines. Machines started being used instead of labour force. Mechanized production has created the division of labor separating it into skilled and unskilled labour. Marglin defines the stages in world economy as beginning with the 'master-journeyman-apprentice hierarchy' (Marglin, 1974:35). Hierarchy is vertical; the apprentice becomes a journeyman, the journeyman becomes a master. In this artisanal sector, goods are manufactured only with the labour of the artisans. However, with the mechanization in this sector, the value of the labour loses its value against the productivity of machines. Since mechanization replaces labour, we can speak of a 'dehumanization of labour force' (Ritzer, 1996:50). With the instauration of mechanized labour the employers downsize the number of their workers. In this economic situation of a major change in production, the only thing the worker can do is to have a specialization in order to be considered as skilled. The major asset of the labour is his skills which has a value in the labour market. With Taylorism, labour was divided into two, namely manual and mental work.

What Karl Marx has discussed in his book titled *Das Kapital* was to work on the industrialization period of English textile sector in order to observe the effects of the Industrial Revolution within the frame of historical capitalism (Marx, 1867). In other words, the decades after the industrial revolution can be named as the years of the early formation of capitalism. The improvements in technology and the mechanization of the factories opens the way for a new mode of production. The newly built production lines immediately increase the production volume of the factories.

The industrial revolution shifted the economy from rural handicraft to urban machine driven manufacturing. The production capacity of the factories increased with the technologically improved machines. The entrepreneurs began to produce high amounts of goods in a short period of time. These improvements in the production process result in increasing output leading the entrepreneurs to renovate their marketing strategies in attempt to expand their business targets to new markets.

Another phenomenon occurring in the aftermath of the industrial revolution is that not only the production amount of the factories increased but also the number of entrepreneurs increase. The market also changed its structure, it had extended to global scale from many different local markets. In the late 19th century, the local firms began to produce for the global market as well. Thus for instance, England has became the major textile producer, while Italy became the major cereal and wheat producer country in the world. The increase in the volume of production brought about by technological improvements, created new types of production with a high supply. In the mid-1940s, Henry Ford initiated the Fordist type of intensive production in his Ford Motor Companies (FMC), which was named as "mass production". However, there were not many producers yet in the economy, meaning there was insufficient competition in the market. Henry Ford in one of his speech, has claimed "You can buy any color of Ford Cars as long as it is black" (Assael, 1992:320). Because, at that time FMC only produced cars of the same color, which was black. Customers had no chance to purchase a Ford car other than a black one. It was the suppliers who were holding the 'power' and who were dominating the

market. Customers had no influence on the product and could not affect the flow of the market. The prices, the quantity, the quality of the goods and services were all determined by the performance of the suppliers. The modern era of Fordism can be described as an *oligopoly* (an economic situation in the market where there are only two or three corporations dominating the whole market) or even as a *monopoly* (an economic situation in the market where there is only one corporation dominating the whole market) in the automobile sector.

The mass production, meaning the rapid increase in supply, is aimed at creating high demands in order to equalize the supply-demand curves. In the optimum point, the supply and demand curves intersect, i.e., the quantity of the supplied output and the demanded quantity coincide. At this intersection point, the price of the output is determined as well. Only after the other entrepreneurs enter the market, competition occurs and this changes the structure of the global market. Firstly, the newly established firms begin to compete in local markets. The competition in the market, forces the firms to renovate their marketing strategies to reach their target consumers. In that sense, we may define 'marketing' itself as a medium for competition.

The economy was production oriented until the early 50's. This situation was replaced with customer orientation, in which the producers began to make their production plans according to consumer needs. This gave birth to the *marketing concept* which is composed of business activities aiming to identify and satisfy needs of consumers. The production process began to take place only after the identification of consumer needs. It can be said that the communication between the

producer and the consumer is satisfied by the medium of marketing activities. This study in general aims to search how this medium, which is marketing, is utilized by the competitors, and how the targeted population is socially affected by this medium, and also how the other competitors in the market are affected by the marketing activities of others.

Darwin develops the idea of "survival of the fittest", meaning that organisms in order to survive have to learn to either live in harmony with the challenging conditions of nature, or fight against the power of nature. He means that those who fit and satisfy the conditions that nature requires them to fulfill will continue to live, and those who do not have no chance in order to survive. It is the same in the field of economic competition. There are basic rules and conditions which newcomers either have to obey or else they are to modify their strategies according to the business environment. Only by learning how to compete for economic survival, they may continue their existence in the market. In this struggle, the medium of competition are the marketing tools used by the firms. As Gilles Deleuze stated, "The marketing is the soul of the corporations" (Deleuze, 1990: 3). Marketing via the utilization of the communication vehicles and marketing strategies as a whole, result in an increase in the sales and therefore in the profitability of the firms. Today, in the international global economy the firms not only compete with the local firms but they also have to compete with giant multinational firms as well. Unless the local industrial producers have sufficient financial resources to preserve their market share in the global market, they will not even have a chance to survive in the local market. Although globalization seems to create an environment of liberal economy having no borders

of international commerce, and creating same opportunities for all producers, this is not true for the companies in developing countries. The local companies in some sectors may lose their competition power against the marketing efforts of MNCs although they compete in their home market. In today's consumer society, the capacity of being competitive is the major asset for the companies. Today, the production based economy is replaced with the consumer based economy, meaning that the basic business aim is to satisfy the needs of the consumers. This is done through the usage of marketing tools like advertisements. A company's success lies in its sales increases both in local and international markets. For success, the brand has to be known and appreciated by consumers. In other words, this is the creation of a *brand loyalty*. The *brand image* can be created with the marketing efforts of the companies. However, brand loyalty can only be achieved by consumer satisfaction after they have utilized it. It is the brand loyalty which helps the company to keep its market share constant or even enlarge it, which brings the long term business success for the company. Both in the local and in global market, marketing stands as the only means which provides the communication between the producer and the consumer.

CHAPTER 3

IMPORTANT ISSUES IN MARKETING, MEDIA
AND ADVERTISEMENT

This chapter is composed of the definition of basic issues in marketing and the utilization of the media by the marketers in advertising their products and services in the market. A profit-oriented company, whose primary goal consists in selling its products and services, has to carefully identify the consumers' needs before producing a product to be presented to the market. Therefore, marketing managers implement some market research, e.g. they conduct so called focus group interviews or surveys with a small group of consumers. The next step consists in determining which sort of group of consumers has what types of needs. This group is named the *target market*, which is a market segment that the company tries to reach with its products and services (Assael, 1992: 9).

After the identification of both the consumer need and the target market, the company should find appropriate means of satisfying the established needs, i.e., suitable marketing strategies have to be conceived. In this chapter, the cultural and social interrelations between the marketers and the consumers will be studied. After explaining some of the basic marketing principles and strategies, the perspective will be broadened to the consumer's side: important aspects which influence their buying decision process will be covered.

3.1. The Marketing Environment

The target market is formed under the influence of the marketing environment, an environment composed of influences and trends *outside* the firm and which affect the company's ability to meet the customer need. These influences include competition, economy, technology, ecology, government regulations, and demographic, as well as cultural and life-style trends (Assael: 13). Under the cultural environment we can also observe subcultural influences, which are composed of factors like regionalism, the national origin, as well as the religious and ethnic identity of consumers.

Marketers need to track any changes occurring in these spheres and create their marketing strategies according to the needs existing in a particular environment. Their major concerns are to develop a strategic plan for the company's growth to ensure that new products develop, to position their products to the targeted market segments, and to manage, price, advertise, and distribute these products, as well as to control all marketing operations (Assael: 143).

In the consumer society of today, the marketing environment is divided into two fields; the *domestic* and the *international* environment. In a domestic environment it is the local market which the marketers focus on, while in an international environment the marketing strategy is structured according to the varying peculiarities of the countries in question.

16

Most companies implement the so-called *adaptive strategies* for the domestic environment, which are oriented towards *differing* consumer needs, cultural norms, trade regulations, economic and political conditions, and competitors on a country-by-country basis. In the international environment the marketing strategy utilized is called *standardization,* which is based on the assumption that certain products have universal appeal and which are thus composed of global strategies transcending foreign markets.

The so-called *patterned standardization* is a strategy carrying the features of both domestic and international strategies. In a patterned standardization, global marketing strategies are adopted but at the same time, executives present in the local markets are allowed to vary the implementation of marketing strategies according to the national traits and customs in these local markets. A business slogan that is becoming increasingly popular among companies summarizes the concept of the *patterned standardization*: "Be global, act local" (Assael: 144).

3.2. Systems of Marketing
3.2.1. Marketing Information, Communication and Distribution

Establishing systems of marketing which enable marketers to introduce their products and services to the consumers, is another important marketing process. Three such systems need to be distinguished: (1) a *marketing information system* allowing the management to determine what products to offer to meet the consumer needs; (2) a *communication system* destined to inform consumers of the new products and to influence them to buy these products; and (3) a *distribution system*

17

ensuring that the consumer receives the product he wants, at the time and place of his or her choice.

The marketing information system identifies the marketing opportunities, the test products and strategies, and evaluates the consumer responses. Three resources form the background of the collected information: the above mentioned marketing environment, the marketing organization, and marketing research agencies.

The marketing communication process is based on three types of organizations: the *marketing organization*, *advertising agencies*, and the *mass communication media* (Assael: 556). The marketing organization is generally charged with the development and the positioning of a product. It is also the segment of a company that pays for the communication process. The company and its advertising agency develop a campaign to inform and influence the consumer. For more effective communication they also develop an overall "communications mix" which can be composed of direct mailings, in-store displays, sales promotions, public relations, and of a media plan that might involve advertisements on TV or on the radio, as well as magazine and newspaper advertisements.

Lastly, the distribution system is formed by networks *called channels of distribution* with the help of which the marketing organizations can distribute the products to their consumers (Assael :18).

3.2.2. The Four Ps in Marketing

In order to influence the consumer to buy the new product and services, effective marketing also means relying on a mixture of marketing strategies. This mix is referred to as "The Four Ps of Marketing", standing for product, promotion, place, and price.

The *product component* of the marketing mix ensures that the product characteristics are in some way or other beneficial to the consumer. The ability of the product to satisfy the consumer's needs is communicated by the *promotional component* through activities such as advertising, personal selling, and sales promotions. The *place, or distribution component* ensures that the product is distributed to the right place at the right time to meet the consumer's needs. Attractiveness of a product or a service is also influenced by its price. The *price component* takes account of this by making sure that the product is priced at a level on which both the consumer and the producer agree.

3.2.3 The Keyrole of Advertisements

In the consumer society of today, advertisements represent an effective promotional component of the four Ps in marketing:

> Marketers may be spending more money on sales promotions than advertising, but advertising is still the mainstay of a company's communication strategy, informing the consumer about product benefits and keeping the product visible over time (Assael: 586).

Though the mass media the company's message can be communicated to a large public. There are four major types of advertising utilized by marketing specialists: *product advertising*, *corporate advertising, cooperative advertising,* and *brand advertising*. In this thesis, since I deal with multinational corporations in the context of globalization, I will concentrate mainly on the discussion of brand advertising.

Product advertising is designed to attract new users by stimulating a *primary demand*, e.g., a demand for a general product category. On French TV, for instance, advertisements for mustard are shown; in Germany milk is promoted in the same way. *Corporate advertising* is used in advertising the corporate name as well as the brands. Advertisements of this type are designed to encourage consumers to patronize the firm, to establish a corporate identity or to state a company's position on an issue of public importance. *Co-operative advertising* is brand-related advertising in which manufacturers offer retailers allowances to advertise their brands (Assael: 588).

The main goals of *brand advertising* are "reminding" the consumer of the existence of a particular brand in the midst of other competing brands, as well as increasing its market share. In other words, to improve sales figures marketers primarily aim at attracting the users of competitive brands. Put in psychological terms, as opposed to product advertising, brand advertising tries to stimulate a *selective demand*, that is, the demand for a particular brand instead of any other random brand. To illustrate this type, let us take the example of a TV advertisement for mayonnaise. A jar labeled "ordinary mayonnaise" is contrasted with "Brand X mayonnaise" to suggest

to the consumer that the ordinary kind is heavy and tasteless while brand x is much creamier and yet lighter than any of the others and that they should therefore change their consumption habits by purchasing "brand x". While 'the other brands" remain unnamed in advertisements like these, there are campaigns in which the advertised brand x is overtly compared with "brand y" and in which the disadvantages of the latter relative to the advertised brand are cited. Naming a competitor and challenging him openly remains illegal in most countries, including Turkey. In the USA however, it was made legal in 1972 because it is considered to be part of the right to free speech (Assael: 599). The "advertising campaign wars" led among McDonalds and Burger King, or Pepsi and Coca Cola, respectively, are just two of the most famous examples.

Most advertisements do not directly compare the advertised brand to competitor brands, yet the major goal remains the same: to create *brand loyalty* among consumers. We speak of *brand loyalty*, if due to repeated satisfaction with a certain product the customer commits him or herself to the same brand and continues buying it.

3.3. Different Marketing Orientations

The environmental factors that primarily influence today's marketers are the consumers and the competitors. This has not always been the case, and during the past hundred years marketing orientations have undergone striking changes.

In the early 1900s, marketing was oriented towards production, i.e. firms focused primarily on production efficiency and product availability, with little regard for the needs of consumers. Ford's message to consumers that they could buy their automobiles any color "as long as it is black" perfectly illustrates the concept of *production orientation*. This orientation is most likely to succeed in a seller's market, in which demand exceeds supply. In these conditions, the manufacturer does not have to be concerned with selling the product and focuses on increasing production through improvements in manufacturing capabilities.

After the Great Depression of the 1930s, many companies shifted from a *production orientation* to a *sales orientation*. There was a surplus of goods and therefore the aim was to sell what the companies had made rather than to make what they could potentially sell based considering consumer needs.

Then, in the mid-1950s, following World War II, the enormous demand for consumer goods had been met. As a result, consumers became more selective in their purchases. Their behavior created an economy in which supply exceeded demand. Consumers had plenty of purchasing power, yet were not buying. This was a new situation to which some marketers reacted by continuing to be sales oriented. Other companies knew better and reacted by developing a greater diversity of products directed to segments of customers with similar needs. They became *customer oriented*. It is in this economic and market situation that "the marketing" concept was created. It is the "philosophy that marketing strategies must be based on known customer needs" (Assael: 23).

In the 1970s, marketers realized that *customer orientation* was not sufficient but that on top of that, strategies were needed in order to compete with rivaling companies- marketing became *competitor oriented*. In today's consumer society, the major two marketing orientations cover both, *customer orientation and competitor orientation*. Introduced in the 1980s, it makes up the so-called strategic marketing concept, i.e., 'the firm must satisfy customer needs while sustaining a competitive advantage to ensure long term profitability" (Assael: 23).

3.4. Market Segments

As already mentioned, the products and the services are introduced to the market after the target market has been identified and selected. In this process, called *segmentation*, the market is divided into groups of consumers according to their varying peculiarities. Segmentation allows marketers to better focus on consumer needs. It promotes new products, and helps marketers to develop an effective marketing mix.

There are three levels of market segmentation: *micro marketing*, *segmented marketing,* and *mass marketing* (Assael: 322). These three levels show the size of the target population. While marketers focus on individual consumers in "micro marketing", in "mass marketing" they target the wide population. The *segmented marketing* positioned between these extremes, serves to satisfy the varying needs of

the consumers. How do marketers identify the markets segments? There are three approaches that can be adopted:

The so-called *benefit segmentation* identifies segments by what consumers want. Let's take an example of the snack food market. Marketers segment according to whether consumers seek low calories, good tasting, or low price above all. *Behavioral segmentation* segments by what consumers do. Questions like what brands do customers buy and how often do they do so, or whether they prefer a certain product category (e.g. do they prefer sweet snacks to salty snacks) are to be asked in this segmentation process. *Segmenting by consumer characteristics* identifies segments by demographic, regional, life style, or personality characteristics. In demographic segmentation, there are several categories like income, age, sex, and ethnic origin. Following the example of snack food, in *personality characteristics* marketing research aims at determining whether people are price oriented, controlled or uncontrolled in their eating habits among others.

It is interesting to note that in *life style segmentation* marketers classify consumers into three different groups: strivers, achievers, and traditionalists. *Strivers* are composed of the consumer population having a global life style like the young adults who lead active lives and are frequently under stress. Their consumption patterns show a preference to consume the type of products by which they can gain instant gratification. The *achievers* are the ones who give importance to status and quality in their consumption preferences. Lastly, the *traditionalists* stand as a resistant consumer group against the change and who prefer buying familiar products (Assael:

342). The above definitions try to frame the marketing activities of the producers who are in the aim of satisfying consumer needs. In the following part, I will discuss the consumer side in the market, which is composed of the consumer environment.

3.5. The Consumer Personality and Environment

As has already been hinted at in the previous chapter, consumers' buying decisions are to a great extent dependent on their own personality characteristics. Consumer personalities can be analyzed in several theories. *Psychoanalytic theory* stresses the unconscious nature of personality as a result of childhood conflicts. *Self-concept (or self-image) theory* holds that individuals have a concept of themselves based on who they think they are (actual self) and who they would like to be (ideal self). *Trait theory* states that personality is composed of a number of measurable traits which are important to producers because they describe "general response predisposition" towards products, such as compulsiveness, aggressiveness, sociability, dominance, and stability (Assael: 269).

Consumer behavior does not depend on personality alone. The *consumer environment* represents another influence on consumption patterns. In a broader sense, *culture* stands as the major source of influence. It must be understood in this context as "the widely shared norms and values learned from society and leading to common patterns of behaviors" (Assael: 270). It is further sub-divided into subcultural and cross-cultural influences.

On a micro level, there is the *social class environment* representing "broad consumer groupings according to their degree of prestige and power in the society" (Assael: 275). Prestige and power are defined by income, occupation, and education. A person's reference group and his or her family represent the smallest environmental segment.

3.6. The Media and Advertisement

After explaining the basic concepts in marketing, now the focus will be how the communication between the marketer and the consumers is satisfied. The theoretical core in this study is constructed on the utilization of the media by the marketers through which they communicate with their consumers. The business world and the field of sociology converge through the medium of media. The image of a product, the brand, and how it is presented in the market determines the success of the sales of that product. In the pre-purchasing period the consumers have obtained the information about the product only by its presentation through the advertisements. Regardless of the usage, the quality or other features of the product, the consumer is at first influenced only by its image in the advertisements. Before the consumers meet with the product, the advertisements create the first impression in the minds of the consumers. This impression affects the consumer's buying decisions. Franck Cochoy says, "The brands, the packaging and the advertisements are the efficient tools for transforming the client into consumer" (Cochoy, 1999:39).

The advertisements can create an interest towards a product. This interest forms a pre-image in the consumer mind which is persuasive in the process of consumer decision making. Even in some cases, although the consumers do not need that product, under the influence of the advertisements, they are directed to purchase it. As Marcuse said, 'the advertisements generate false needs" (Solomon, 1992:83).

The suppliers attempt to create a demand for their already produced goods and services. The suppliers aim to raise the demand side by the advertisements created and broadcasted by utilizing of all 'media vehicles' ranging from radio to Internet (Bennett). By using the media vehicles, the corporations create the brands of their products and services. Once you have achieved the brand loyalty for your products, it will get easier for the firms to sell their products in the long-term as well with optimal marketing expenditures.

In consumerism, marketing and advertisements have social effects on the consumption patterns of individuals. It can be said that the marketing power of corporations play a significant role in the formation of the world of consumerism. In this environment where the marketers can have some persuasive effects on the consumer behavior, by some advertisement campaigns and promotion activities even a product or service, which is not beneficial and useful for the targeted customer for that time period, can become a 'must' for that consumer.

Today advertisements play a significant role in creating a consumer culture in the society. In the consumer society of today, Baudrillard by focusing on consumer-based economy mainly claims that

> Not the production itself but the product, the brand, the sign and the image of the end product are the base stones in creating diversification among the firms (Baudrillard, 1983:68).

With this claim of Baudrillard, it can be said that the marketing in the era of post-industrial society stands as the major mean of competition. Today, every entrepreneur can produce similar products with similar qualities, but what makes one more competitive and advantageous in the market than others is its success in marketing activities.

In the consumer society of today, the consumers not only buy the products but also gain a social status through the products they consume. Jean Castaréde, in his book of *Le Luxe*, claims that "We do not buy the object but the sign" (Castaréde, 1992:5).

Roland Barthes claimed that advertisements, fashion, popular culture, and mass media are interrelated and are the major dynamics of consumer society (Barthes, 1993:130). The post-structuralists, semiological and deconstructive theoreticians focus their attention on language, representation and the importance of discourses, images, codes and culture in the sphere of everyday life. According to Kellner Baudrillard, who was deeply influenced by the 'semiological revolution', in his book *Jean Baudrillard*, stated;

> Baudrillard seems to suggest that individuals are so caught up in a world of commodity signs, media spectacles, representations and simulation that there is no longer any access to a 'real' which is itself presented as an effect of the code or system. (Kellner, 1989:83).

28

Every consumer item has been carefully designed in order to represent certain features or values. The colors and shapes of goods symbolize a value as an attributed representative of some features of the product. For instance, the design of a perfume bottle may be used as a representative of the target consumer – being male or female or else being young adult or adult. This is mainly the terrain of the science of semiotics. The 'signs' attributed to the products affect the consumers, to the extent that they influence the consumers' choice of purchase.

The importance of the meaning formed by signs create a social environment in which the product itself is valued according to the social meaning attributed to that product by the society rather than its utilitarian features. This tendency may influence the individuals to consume the products which are widely accepted by the majority. In other words, individuals have a tendency to choose the product that is popular or consumed by the mass population.

Frederick Jameson argues that 'advertisement not only replicates the social movement, but also has in large measure assisted at its creation.' (Jameson, 1984:9) This statement of Jameson explains the formation of 'consumer culture'. The consumer culture named as 'mass culture' is an attempt to homogenize the consumption habits of individuals. The homogenization of consumer types creates a collective consumption behavior.

Gramsci clearly defines this as, "the collective consciousness or common sense is unordered and inconsistent although directed by dominant ideology" (Mouffe, 1979:190). For Gramsci, the dominant ideology for our times is consumerism and its particular strength may derive from the fact that it helps to order the unordered elements of the collective consciousness (Mouffe, 1979:191).

In the construction of the "Global Village" (McLuhan, 1962) the structure and the features of advertising are considered as crucial for the success of presentation of the product in the market. Advertising should represent the breadth of popular culture. Advertisement should imitate the basic elements of everyday life as seen in the scenarios of some advertisements which are based on clearly routine activities. Primary notion in any advertising communication theory is the requirement of an audience. The *sender* and the *receiver* must use the same language, and at the same level. For instance, music is a common factor in advertising: setting the mood and tone, attracting the ear, and reinforcing the theme are the requirements of success. The traditional result of advertising has been 'to purchase' but post-modern advertising desires more: there should be a continuous relationship with the audience. As Jugenheimer claims:

> The sale is no longer the end result of an advertising campaign; instead, it is the beginning of a mutually beneficial relationship, wherein both the seller-advertiser and the buyer-audience benefit, at least potentially." (Cross, 1996:45).

The major consumer center is 'the city' itself. As Castells argues, " the city is to consumption what the factory is to production" (Castells, 2000:7). The city can be the land of media with its several the TV channels and hundreds of radio stations, cinemas, and billboards and with squatters for promotion activities. For the

utilization of the TV as a media vehicle for transferring the encoded message in the form of advertisements aiming to reach to the targeted consumer, Viallon mentions the advantages of the TV and says, "Everyone is capable of understanding the message given on TV because it is simple"(Viallon, 1996:5). He also adds that, "the television is the opium of the people"(Viallon, 1996:6).

Galbraith saw *advertising* and *emulation* as the two dependent sources of desire of consumers which work across the society, operating both on those who could afford to buy the product and those who could not. With reference to the words of Galbraith, it can be said that this notion of '*emulation*' encourages individuals to consume the products that are advertised on the TV also verifying that if it is purchased by the reference group in his/her environment (Cross, 1996:51). This phenomenon is analyzed in detail in the following pages.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF CONSUMPTION AND

THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF PRODUCER ACTIVITIES

This chapter deals with the concept of consumption, patterns of consumption, the social group influence on consumption patterns and continues with the analysis of the social impacts of producer activities. The theoretical frame is based on the 'pecuniary emulation theory' of Veblen (1899), the 'trickle down theory' of Simmel (1904), and the 'distinction analysis' of Bourdieu (1984).

4.1. The Sociological Theories of Consumption

The theoretical background of consumption in this paper is formed by the studies of Veblen. I often refer to other contemporary sociologists but it is mainly the theories of Veblen on consumption that have inspired me to write this paper. On the whole it can be said that the importance of consumption in sociology began to be discussed during the late 19th century with the studies of Veblen. These years that made almost a century till his death did not tear out his studies, on the contrary, his theory of 'conspicuous consumption' still preserves its significance. The technological developments and the expansion of communication have changed and are still changing the whole world with regards to economic, social, and cultural aspects. Globalization, post-industrialism, and post-capitalism are all affected by

consumption patterns of individuals in the 20th and continues to affect in the 21st Century as well.

The studies of Veblen introduced the concept of consumption as a field of study in the literature on sociology. Consumption has become one of the major areas of sociology in the late 20th Century. Veblen postulated that individuals' consumption habits outreach the individual sphere by taking on a larger, that is a social significance.

Veblen studied the acquisition patterns of the consumption habits of the individuals. He compared the purchasing habits of single individuals with the purchasing habits of the "others". He found out that, while purchasing goods or services, people tended to acquire those which their neighbors, friends, and the "others" had purchased. In a way, we can say that they imitate the purchasing habits of the "others" and aim at being more prestigious than their neighbors by acquiring the same type of goods with the same but preferably with a better quality. Veblen believes that the motive underlying this type of behavior and of the consecutive ownership is "emulation", i.e. , wishing to copy others. He termed this situation as "pecuniary emulation" which can be explained as a "consumption pattern" that serve as a "wealth indicator". In Veblen's words,

> As fast as a person makes new acquisitions, becomes accustomed to the resulting new standard of wealth, the new standard forthwith ceases to afford appreciably greater satisfaction than the earlier standard did. The tendency in any case is constantly to make the present pecuniary standard the point of departure for a fresh increase of wealth; and this in turn gives rise to a new standard of sufficiency and a new pecuniary classification of one's self as compared with one's neighbors (Veblen, 1899:38).

Veblen focuses his attention on environmental influences and their effects on the consumption habits of the single individual and he exemplified the environmental influences as *neighborhood effects*. If you have wealth, you can consume more and live a luxurious life. The *wealthy people'*s consumption behaviour is defined as *luxuries consumption* meaning that they aim to preserve their already achieved social and economic status in the society. This is true for the consumption model of "leisure class" [in which the upper class members have luxurious and waste consumption] (Veblen, 1899). This consumption of luxurious and valuable goods is termed "conspicuous consumption" by Veblen. He argues that, "the conspicuous consumption of valuable goods is a means of reputability to the gentlemen of leisure" (Veblen, 1899:64).

Veblen continues by saying that "in order to be reputable, consumption must be wasteful" (Veblen, 1899:77). Veblen had emphasized that the prices which made products and services unaffordable to others lay at the heart of *conspicuous consumption* and *consumption waste*. This special case theorem developed by Alligham and Morishima (1973) and Kalman (1968) who attempted to accommodate the fact that high prices can be seen as a positive product attribute (Mason, 1998:125). For this theory, the consumption of luxurious products such as consumption of cars, expensive clothing, expensive restaurants are all regarded as high priced products and services providing social prestige and reputability to the individuals.

Mason agrees with Veblen however he emphasizes the product functionality, arguing that its potential to bring prestige is what influences individuals in their buying decisions:

> [...] the rise in disposable incomes, however, coupled with an ever increasing emphasis on the status of symbolism of products, meant a sign. Proportion of customer purchases were made for social rather than for purely utilitarian reasons (Mason, 1998:107).

He emphasized the importance of signs gained with the product itself not with their utilities. Baudrillard has claimed that consumption is not only the satisfaction of the needs of individuals, but to meet their *desires*. In the following pages related with the advertisements this transformation of *need* into *desire* will be discussed in further.

For Baudriallard, "the consumption patterns of the peculiar individuals create an "identity feeling" for them. The clothing style, the style of dining and the brands of goods used are the primary features of class differentiation for the individuals in post-modern era" (Baudriallard, 1997:83).

For having an individual style of consumption, the individual has to choose a model for him/her to take a reference group in forming his/her consumption preferences. The reference group as already been discussed in the theories of Veblen represents as a model to be influenced by or for emulation. On the other hand, Bourdieu defines the reference group as 'leading group'. He states that,

> The dialectic of downclassing and upclassing which underlies a whole set of social processes presupposes and entails that all the groups concerned run in the same direction, toward the same objectives, the

same properties, those which are designated by the leading group and which, by definition are unavailable to the groups following, since whatever these properties may be intrinsically they are modified and qualified by their distinctive rarity and will no longer be what they are once they are multiplied are made available to groups lower down (Bourdieu, 1984:163).

At the beginning of the 20th Century, George Simmel, in his analysis of fashion, has modeled 'the trickle down theory" in which the subordinate groups are influenced by upper layer groups in consumption of fashionable goods. Simmel defines 'fashion' as a social institution allowing individuals to follow others as well as marking oneself off from them as a member of a particular class or group. Simmel's analysis of fashion and the conspicuous consumption of the leisure class have many similarities with that of Veblen's.

The commodification of products and the logic of transnational production and marketing are partly based on 'standardization'. After 'the standardization' and the 'homogenization' of the whole globe is completed by the marketing efforts of MNCs, they will achieve their aim to sell their products to all consumers in the global consumer market, without any change in their marketing strategies. With the assistance of the global media, in our case the advertising sector, the corporations sell their products in the 'global village' even more easily. We cannot generalize the marketing strategies of the MNCs as relying only standardization, they also have localized marketing activities which diversify their product line in order to widen their market to different target groups. The main aim, as it already been claimed, for the marketer is to identify and satisfy the needs of the consumers and have their production plans accordingly.

In the 21st century, consumption can be seen as a mirror image of production. On the other hand, Yasuzama sees the life style quite rightly mirrored in the consumption package (Mason, 1998:18). This relation between consumption and the life style of individuals will be discussed in the following pages related with analyzing the social impacts of producer activities. Bourdieu works on consumer society formation and its impacts on the social life of individuals in society. He argues that social life can be conceived as a multidimensional status game in which people draw on three different types of resources: economic (financial), cultural capital (distinctive tastes, skills and knowledge), and social capital (relationships, organization affiliations and networks). The notion of taste is an important aspect of reproducing class differences. Consumers' tastes depend on cultural capital; family upbringing and formal education as well as economic resources. Higher strata in the hierarchy use their superior taste to create a 'distinction' from the peasants, and to distance themselves from those 'inferior tastes'. The feelings, thinking, and acting through a certain social psychological structure with respect to the individual cultural capital forms the 'habitus' (consumption, tastes and practices) of the individuals (Bourdieu, 1984:52).

Bourdieu claims that these capitals of individuals can be divided into two groups, as inherited capital and acquired capital. Inherited capital is the social origin that the individuals have and which is passed from parents to children. The social origin includes national, ethnic and religious identities that individuals can be firstly classified by when they were born into a society. Thus Bourdieu calls social origin as

inherited capital. On the other hand, educational capital and cultural capital are acquired capitals, i.e. that people begin to gain them after their birth. Cultural capital keeps the cultural features and sociological peculiarities of the society that the individual was born. This means that the acquisition of cultural capital begins with birth. On the other hand, educational capital as its name implies is gained when the individuals begin to have an education (Bourdieu, 1984:161).

These roles are achieved in different environments and they change with respect to the individuals' changing social environment. These social identities and roles are formed according to the social origin, the ethnic peculiarities, national identities, and gender of the individual and even by to the consumption habits of the individuals. In fact, society and social relations as the sources give these identities to the individuals. However, there are other identities received by the individuals' personal abilities and backgrounds. For instance, professional identities are achieved through the with educational and business backgrounds of the individuals. Keeping these identities in mind, the overall pile constitutes the 'I', w ho is the player of social roles in our everyday life. This individualism and the construction formed and practiced in the world of consumer society, put forward an 'identity" and "social class identity typology". The consumption habits of the individuals are among the critical determinants of a social group characteristics may create some subcultures with reference to differing consumption preferences, may create social prestige, and may also be seen as a means to distinguish oneself from others. In some cases we can say that the consumption preferences of individuals may create social mobility in the society. For instance, two people having the same income may not be in the same

class since, they spend their money on different activities. Bourdieu in his book of *Distinction*, summarizes the social critique of the judgement of the taste of the individuals (Bourdieu, 1984). It can be said the changing consumption patterns of individuals create a transformation in the society resulting in the replacement of the homo economicus with homo sociologicus structure. In this social structure, the marketer and the consumer influence each other mutually. If the marketing strategies are influenced by the consumers, this brings a success to the corporation since they satisfy the needs of the consumers meaning that they are increasing their sales volume. On the other hand if the consumer is influenced by the marketer who will benefit from it ?

4.2. The Social Impacts of Producer Activities

In the first part of the thesis, the focus lay on the *impact of marketing strategies on consumption*, and on the interrelation between the marketer and the consumer in the age of consumer society. As a first step, the historical development of the consumer society within the frame of the changing technological and economic environments was discussed. Next, the business activities of the marketers were defined and their strategies and the systems of marketing were analyzed. Let us briefly summarize the main points. Marketing has been defined as 'the activities for identifying and satisfying consumer needs.' (Assael: 4). To identify the needs of the consumers, the marketer analyses the market by conducting market research through surveys and questionnaires, since the consumer needs are hidden in the market, and the aim of the marketer is to find them out.

After determining the needs, companies have to generate their production plans in order to produce the needed products and services to satisfy the consumer. The business activities up to here belong to the *production stage*, in other words, producing according to the consumer needs. In the next stage, it is the time for the already created product or service to meet with the consumer. How will this creation be presented in the market? How will the consumers know about it? What are the benefits of consuming that product? What is 'new' about this product or service in comparison to other products present in the market, and why else should the consumer prefer to buy it? These are some of the fundamental questions that the marketer should answer before introducing his/her product or service on the market. The answers of these questions lie in the *communication* between marketer and the consumer. The marketer should explain the answers of these questions to the consumers in order to persuade them to consume their product or services.

This communication can only be achieved by the medium of marketing channels. In this thesis although there exist many means of communication, I focus on the analysis of only the advertisements, which stands as 'the mainstay of a company's communication strategy" (Assael: 586). In order to present their advertisements the marketers utilize the media because the media satisfy the relationship between the consumer and the marketer, making it possible for marketers to communicate their message to the consumer. Thus, we are again returning to the triangle concept of production, marketing and consumption explained in the first part. *Producers* stands as the main source of this marketing system, the consumers are the social group

which is influenced by their activities and are led to *consumption*. The *marketers* for their part stand as a bridge which connects the producer and the consumer.

All of the concepts and activities, which have been discussed up to this part, were looked at from the perspective of the producers: from the formation of early merchandising up to the capitalism, over the marketing strategies and the systems that are formed in the consumer society of today up to the creation of advertisements. In other words, up to now I have tried to answer the question of what exactly the producers do in order to market their product or service in the market.

In this chapter however, the perspective will be changed to the consumer side. How the consumers and their consumer behavior are influenced by the producers will be addressed here. In other words, this part stands as the social analysis of the marketing activities of the producers and their impacts on the individuals. The consumers are influenced by many environmental factors, which can be social, economical, political, or cultural. These are all environmental variables in the society and are always changing and influencing each other. This creates an interdependent dynamic social environment. First, it has to be said that the primary social impact of the producer activities was the creation of the consumer society, which, as it has been discussed before, began during the early 1970s when companies' marketing orientation shifted to away from production and sales to competitors and consumers.

4. 2. 1. Influence on Consumers' Lifestyles

> Throughout the 20th century, capitalism has consistently raised the average standard of living and also extended the commodity form into previously uncommodified areas of social life (Lee, *Consumer Culture Reborn-the cultural politics of consumption* cited in Warde :191).

When Lee talks about the "uncommodified areas of social life", she is referring to the social, cultural and lifestyle peculiarities of individuals. In the following pages, I will try to illustrate how marketing strategies influence, or even change the lifestyle of individuals. This influence stands as an example of the "commodification" of social life.

Consumption patterns play a significant role in the life of individuals. Today, with the varying consumption patterns, individuals can be classified into different social groups. Yasuzama emphasizes the relationship between the consumption habits and the lifestyle of individuals saying that "Lifestyle quite rightly mirrored in the consumption package" (Yasuzama cited in Baudet & van der Meulen, 1982: 18). This means that in the consumer society of today, the lifestyles of individuals can be analyzed by looking at their consumption preferences. In the age of consumer society, companies are consumer-oriented, i.e., they produce according to the needs of the consumers. However, companies' marketing efforts have different social impacts on the consumers, because rather than simply affecting individuals' consumption patterns, it is their lifestyles that are influenced and may be changed by the marketing activities.

A simple example is the *mobile phone*. It used to be considered a luxury good. With the advertisements and other promotional activities of the marketers, the sales figures

of mobile phones have been constantly rising. Naturally, with it came the expansion

in the usage of the mobile phones: now almost everybody has a mobile phone, from

adolescents up to people of older generations. The producer have made the mobile

phone a mass product and it can be said that having and using a mobile phone is

more than a need now, maybe stands as a 'must'. In other words, mobile phone

producers have not only created a new means of communication, but with it they

created a new manner of communication, a new consumption habit in individuals'

everyday life.

In another example, which is more related to the cultural peculiarities of individuals,

it can be observed that marketing activities may create a cultural change in the life of

individuals. For instance, *food* is a significant means of cultural expression and is

often used to comment on contemporary culture (Warde, 1997: 22). However, the

social significance of food has been changing in the context of globalization, and has

different social effects for different social groups. Fischler has found that there are

two different paradoxical effects on individuals:

> a) a wider range of foods [is now available on the market], including
> exotic ones, and for fewer constraints, seasonal or other; but at the
> same time,
> b) [there is] a process of homogenisation of foods consumed
> throughout the industrial world, and at a loss of specificity (if not
> identity). Food items tend to become largely identical from one
> country to the other, from one supermarket shelf to another (Fischler
> *Food Habits, Social Change and the Nature/Culture Dilemma*, cited
> in Warde, 1997 :31).

In general, it can be claimed that food culture is affected by social contacts,

traditions, and in today's consumer society it is affected by mass marketing. In

traditional cuisine, food culture differs according to national, ethnic and regional

peculiarities. Jeuffe, however, has classified food for most of the cultures into: "cultural superfoods", "prestige foods", "body image foods", "sympathetic magic foods" and "physiologic group foods" (Jeuffe, cited in Beardsworth & Keil, 1997: 55) Under the influence of globalization, there is not only the national, regional and ethnic cuisine, but also the globalised mass food culture. McDonald's burgers and Coca Cola, which are only two of the universal brands that are manufactured and marketed on the international food market, symbolize "the extension of common taste across continental boundaries" (Warde, 1997: 17).

On the other hand, not only the products but also the *food preparation culture* has changed in the consumer society of today. A study of meal preparation patterns within households in the American community of Tyneside reported that:

> Some 94 % of meals involved less than 10 min. preparation time, and 51 % no time at all. 61 % of all meals involved no cooking time and only 7 % more than 20 min. cooking time" (Ritson & Hutchins, *The Consumption Revolution,* cited in Warde: 127).

This change shows us that there is major social impacts of the producer activities on food culture: food preparation time is taking less and less time, which indicates a rising consumption of already prepared food or a rising tendency for people to eat outside their homes.

The marketing activities of McDonald's fast food restaurants have led to the creation of a term called "McDonaldisation". It is defined as "the process by which the principles of the fast food restaurants are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world" (Ritzer, 1998: 99, my own

translation). This concept stands as an example for the social impacts of producer activities influencing the social life of individuals.

According to Ritzer the success of McDonald's lies in four principles; efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control.

> Efficiency is an optimum meaning to achieve a given set of ends. Calculability is an emphasis on the things that can be counted, calculated and quantified. Predictability is the assurance of a standardized process and product that can be replicated in different settings. Control is the minimization of cost, uncertainty and inefficiency through the use of workman technologies (Ritzer, 1998: 52).

The "easiness" in acces sibility of the McDonald's restaurants is another feature of *McDonaldisation.* They are mostly set up in gas stations, in schools, in railway stations and in airports, that is, in environments where consumers do not stay for a long time and are therefore willing to eat fast food. The product itself has to be easy to be consumed as well, for instance, the fried chickens of McDonald's are produced in a small form – one bite- so that the consumers can eat them while they are driving a car, for example. Their apple pie, too, is prepared in a practical size. This shows the 'efficiency' principle of McDonald's restaurants because, the consumers may do several activities at the same time. Ritzer exemplifies this concept of efficiency as below:

> There are televisions in most of the fitness centers. The individuals can make sports, watch TV and in some cases listen to a book which is recorded in the same time. All of these facilities are also present in the environment that McDonald's create as well (Ritzer, 1998: 96).

McDonald's, one could say, promotes a life -style that is oriented towards the saving of time while reducing the duration of a meal.

The design of McDonald's restaurants makes clear that the main consumer target group are the children. McDonald's create d some McDonald's characters like Ronald McDonald's and some other McDonald's toys to attract the kids. In having playgrounds inside and outside the restaurant, and in offering to organise children's birthday parties in a separate room of the restaurant represents an alternative for playing and meeting with friends.

The 'size', meaning the quantity of the products consumed in McDonald's is another feature to be discussed. It is part of the restaurant's standardized strategy that the cashier's first questi on after the ordering is if the client wants to have a bigger size. The price difference between a menu and a big size menu is not much, and in most cases the consumer is willing to buy the big one. In this marketing strategy, the consumer is led to consume more: with *McDonaldisation* a major change in food consumption has been created.

4.2.2. The Perception of Identity

A person's identity is made up of a social, a cultural, and an individual component. Baudrillard's sentence 'I consume therefore I am' ex plains the influence of consumption on the social, cultural and individual identity of a person, because consumption even provides his/her social existence.

According to Bourdieu individuals have a social capital consisting of three components: *social origin*, *cultural* and *educational capital*. Social origin is *inherited* capital, while the cultural and the educational capital are *achieved*. The cultural

capital is formed by the cultural features and the sociological peculiarities of the society in which the individual lives (Bourdieu, 1984: 12).

In the world of consumerism, in which the producers have an impact on the creation of a 'mass culture', individuals are faced with two different cultures. One is the *local culture* they acquired and continue to acquire in their social environment. The other one is global *mass culture*. Mass culture means that individuals share the same cultural values and norms, regardless of differences due to their social origin. The individual has therefore two cultural alternatives for shaping his or her identity, a dynamic and life-long process. By comparing the local culture and 'the mass culture', people have to chose a model, which is going to be more dominant than the other in shaping their cultural identity. The identity formation is influenced by the cultural model they refer to. For instance, the citizens of developing countries may take developed nations' consumption culture as a model:

> […] in the developing countries it is perceived that if the consumers purchase and consume the products of the First World countries, this habit of consumption represents a sign showing the level of development of the citizens of the Third World (Sklair, 1998: 53).

As a consequence, it can be said that the marketing activities of the producers in developed countries may even have some effects on the individual's cultural identity formation in developing countries.

When we narrow our perspective from macro to micro level, different consumption habits may satisfy a *social prestige* for individuals in society. For instance,

consuming luxury goods has always been used for showing a high economic status of certain individuals:

> the consumption pattern create an 'identity feeling, the style of dining, the brands of the consumed goods represents the primary features of class differentiation for the society of the post modern era (Baudrillard, 1997: 45).

The sociological aspect of consumption can be studied with regards to the satisfaction of two different needs. The first one is the need to be accepted by the others, and the second one is the need to different from the others. These two needs exclude each other, creating a conflict in consumers buying decisions. In order to be 'distinct' individuals should have to change their consumption preferences, for example by consuming 'new' products before the others buy them, too. This results in continuous consumption for the ones who wants to distinct. It is like the operation of the *perpetuum mobile* in physics, a device that once set in motion, maintains this motion definitely. This structure of the market, which initiates continuous consumption, again benefits the producers. As Tunstall claims:

> the never-ending triumph of consumerism is that the wants become synonymous with needs, which means creation of a social environment composed of permanent consumers (Tunstall, cited in Storey, 1996: 23).

4.2.3. The Force of Advertisements, Logos, and Brands

As we have seen in the first part of this thesis, one of the characteristics of consumerism lies in the generally high number of products available on the market, but also in an abundance of similar products. Since as a result, it is not always easy for consumers to decide what to buy, producers must distinguish their product from those of competing companies. Often this distinction lies in a difference simply

based on image. This image is both created and brought across to the consumer by the help of advertisements, logos and brand names.

In this part, advertisements, logos and brands will be looked at from a critical perspective. After commenting on the functioning of advertisement, we will look at the impacts logos and brands can have on spheres of life that reach far beyond the product they represent.

4.2.3.1. Advertisement or The Seduction of Consumers

Advertising relies on the principle that people are more likely to desire what they see than what they do not see. In other words, if they are not informed about the existence of a new product they will not look for it. The same can hold true for products already on the market: seeing and listening to someone open a bottle of cola on TV can make a person want to drink a cola, too. Thus, we can say that advertising creates artificial needs in consumers, and depending on their personality or on their environment people may be "seduced" to satisfy this need by buying the advertised product.

To achieve the "seduction" of the consumer, advertisement uses a number of means to gain the attention of the targeted audience: images, signs and sound, and especially language play an important role. The image of a product necessary for its distinction can be created through words for instance, which are used to name the brand or in a short and meaningful publicity slogan. In the advertising business there seem to be few limits for creativity as long as the words suggest to the consumer that the product

that is advertised "becomes necessary ('you need this'), desirable ('this is what you desire'), missing ('you still lack this'), and it becomes something that is good ('for you')" (Falk, cited in Cross, 1996: 52). For this purpose, even notions that do not exist in reality can be put into words. One of Coca Colas slogans, for instance, is 'the pleasure of thirst"- feelings like thirst or hunger though, are nothing in which people normally take pleasure. Falk speaks of 'the naming of the nameless" in this context (Falk, cited in Cross, 1996:41).

In his book *Advertising and Culture*, Cross talks about advertisers' ability to influence people by playing with language:

> Advertising has always played language games; its own special game is connotation, raising stakes on words to enlarge their suggestiveness by shifting contexts or making new equations (metaphors) or changing their spelling (neologism). In deed, advertising's game is to turn language into logo, not logos, into glamour, not grammar moving it out of the national to the non-proposition of the figural, the visual, where images like those of our dreams can take command of consciousness to promote that great big marketplace dream of material happiness [...] (Cross, 1996: 54).

In addition to the multiple ways to *take command of [people's] consciousness* by using language, another aspect is brought forward in Cross's statement: Advertisements have the power to suggest ideas that are not the people's ideas in the first place, and that are false ideas. The idea that consumption in general generates happiness is therefore named the *marketplace dream*. Strongly connected with this is the idea that when people consume a particular product they can satisfy needs, such as achieving status and distinction. Needs like these are called part of the *ego needs*. They are part of a needs classification which was created by Maslow. I refer to Maslow's hierarchy of needs diagram as a model in order to explain the producers'

marketing activities. The diagram is composed of five stages, from lower level to higher level needs (see below).

Lower level needs 1) *Physiological Needs*: Water, sleep, food.

2) *Safety Needs*: Security, shelter, and protection.

3) *Social Needs*: Love, friendship and acceptance.

Higher level needs 4) *Ego Needs*: Prestige, success

5) *Self-Actualization Need*: Self-fulfillment.

According to Maslow, only when individuals have satisfied the needs of a lower level they will try to satisfy those of higher upper level. The marketers use their marketing activities to suggest to the consumers that they can satisfy these needs by purchasing their products (Assael, 1992: 261).

In many advertisements for example, marketers appeal to individuals' ego and self-actualization needs. Ego needs, which are also known as *esteem needs* can be divided into two levels. The lower level can be summed up as the need for the respect of others, including needs of status, recognition, attention or reputation. The higher level esteem needs involve needs for confidence, competence, achievement, independence and freedom, which can be summed up as giving a person self-respect. Self-actualization "involve the continuous desire to fulfill potentials", like beau ty, uniqueness, perfection, or self-sufficiency (Boeree, 1998: 4).

Many companies produce goods that satisfy individuals' lower level needs, however in their advertisements they often present the product as being able to satisfy individuals' higher needs, like ego or self-actualization. Take for instance branded clothing. Clothing is a physiological need, but in many advertisements it is represented as a means of distinction, which is part of the higher level needs.

The media in general, but maybe TV and advertising in particular, also promote existing stereotypes through the portrayal of people and their relations with the others. This can cover for instance *group stereotypes* (e.g., the perfect family, the rebellious teenagers) or *gender stereotypes* (women raise children, are always concerned with their beauty; men are rational and strong, highly-qualified jobs are restricted to men etc). The characters shown on TV are part of already existing stereotypes in society, which are taken up by marketers when they decide on the targeted group and are turned into ideals in order increase the probability of selling their products or of creating brand loyalty. This approach enables marketers to reach a wide consumer group. It may provoke two processes in the minds of the targeted audience. First, they can easily identify with the portrayed consumers, and second, since these consumers have been idealized, they want to follow their examples because it again appeals to their wish for emotional happiness.

There are companies who break with certain stereotypes in their advertisements. This may certainly reflect ongoing changes in society, but I am arguing that this is again part of a profit-oriented marketing strategy, a different one. In the example of a Turkish detergent brand advertised on TV, the classical gender roles are given up by

showing a group of men who are doing the washing in their family instead of their wives, who have traditionally been charged with this. What happens is that this detergent brand becomes distinct from other brands in the minds of the consumers- a good pre-condition for selling the product has been established.

4.2.3.2. When Brands and Logos Reach Beyond the Product Sphere

To sell products on a long-term basis, producers, as we have seen, want to create brand loyalty among consumers. For the consumers to be able to easily identify a product belonging to a particular brand, a logo needs to be created. However, quite often the logos gain more importance over the actual product and sometimes even find their way into completely different domains, like language, culture or sports and even charity.

To illustrate the first phenomenon, lets take the example of the fashion market. There, logos become so dominant that certain consumers buy clothing for the brand and its logo alone. As Naomie Klein puts it in *No Logo,*

> Over the past decade and a half LOGOS have grown so dominant they have essentially transformed the clothing on which they appear into empty carriers of the brands they represent. The metaphorical alligator (Lacoste!), in other words , has risen up and swallowed the literal shirt (Klein, 2001: 28).

There are several reasons for such consumer behavior. One could be that the image of this brand as portrayed in advertisement is an image the consumers identify with (actual self), or that they want to have themselves (ideal self). Another reason could be that the brand represents a certain social status, or is widely worn among a

particular consumer group. In order to gain status, or belong to the group (satisfaction of ego needs), people therefore buy the brand in question.

The tendency to consume certain brands in order to be accepted by others, seems to be a phenomenon particularly common among adolescent consumers. Some advertisers even make direct use of teenagers preoccupation with peer acceptance: In a French clothing store for teenage girls, spots are shown in loops, in which a teenager boy shows little interest in his girlfriend and does not want to kiss her because she is not wearing the right clothes. He becomes loving though as she buys the store brand. Advertisements like these clearly raise a number of questions of ethics in business.

The cult about brands and logos seems to reach its extreme in developing countries like Turkey, where there is a large black market selling imitated Western brands. In addition to the psychological impact certain logos can have on the consumers mind, there is another phenomenon showing the force of brands: the language used in advertisements is sometimes taken up by consumers for every day communication, and can sometimes even cause certain linguistic changes in a language.

An example can be given where people sometimes describe objects no longer with reference to the natural object, as in color adjectives like *sky blue* or *aubergine red*, but with reference to a popular brand, as the case of the word "barbie pink" shows. Another example is when people use publicity slogans in everyday communication with friends or family. For instance in a certain situation, people are reminded of a similar situation from a TV advertisement by words or phrases that their communication partners are using, and to create a humoristic situation, they answer with the advertising slogan. Phenomena like these show that advertising is publicly

known. Since the others know the product or the brand advertisement in question, they know what "barbie pink" looks like, or they correctly understand the slogan and the signification as well.

The above examples are part of popular language, i.e., they can only be used in rather informal situations. There are also cases however, where brand names enter common language. Take for instance words like "Kleenex", "Band-aid" or "Scotch tape", which are all names of specific brands that became so popular that they are now used as names for the product category: "Kleenex" for 'soft tissue paper that is used as a handkerchief', "Band-aid" for 'sticky plaster used to cover small cuts', or "Scotch Tape" for the class of 'transparent sticky tape' (Collin s Cobuild English Language Dictionary). The same phenomenon exists in other languages as well. In Turkey, for instance, people use "Sana" to refer to 'magerine' or "Selpak" when they speak about tissue paper. The fact that these words formerly used just for the particular brand, are entered in a dictionary again shows the power of brands: they have even become part of the language norm.

A last aspect to illustrate that brands do not simply stay within the domain of the product they represent is brought up with the issue of sponsorship. It is the public relations department of a company that is responsible for sponsoring cultural events. Sponsoring can be part of a business strategy, i.e., its purpose is to keep up or raise the market shares of the company's brand. As Klein writes:

> Companies like Nike, Polo and Tommy Hilfiger no longer simply branded their own products but, by sponsoring cultural events they branded outside culture as well! It was not a matter of 'adding value' to the culture but about thirst ily soaking up cultural ideas and iconography (symbols) that their brands could reflect through sponsorship in […] culture, in other words, would add value to their brand (Klein, 2001: 29).

Other areas of public life to which firms provide funding are sports, film, art, and even education or charity. Once again, I will would like to cite the example of McDonald's who have a foundation called Ronald McDonald House Charity, which supports children's hospitals by setting up free Ronald McDonald Houses (rooms) for visitors. What is the purpose of such funding? One, by entering into a hospital, the company enters into another sphere of life (it is already present in advertisements on TV, billboards, in shopping centers or in airports) and can once more "remind" customers of its existence with its logo that cannot be mistaken. We can thus say that an activity like this helps creating or keeping up brand loyalty. What is more though, the Ronald McDonald Houses serve to seduce consumers because it is suggested to them that McDonald's is a nice organization that is even concerned with the emotional well-being of families. If a child has to stay in hospital over night, away from its family, this can be a difficult and even painful experience for both, children and parents. It can therefore be positive for McDonald's image, that thanks to their efforts the whole family can stay together despite the child's hospitalization. Here, too the ethics of this business strategy could be discussed, and it might not be surprising that some hospitals reject this financial donation project, as was the case in Purpan Hospital, Toulouse, France (*Le Monde*, march 6th 2003).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this study, the interrelations between the business environment and the society were analyzed. Within this frame, I conclude that the marketing activities of the corporations can bring about changes in individuals' consumption habits, and sometimes even have significant social effects on the formation of 'social, individual and cultural identity'. As can be seen throughout this paper, in the consumer society, individuals are led to believe that they may gain social prestige and even social status with respect to their consumption preferences. Keeping this in mind, and with reference to sociologists like Baudrillard and Bourdieu, even the 'images and signs' of the products may play a crucial role in the social judgement of individuals.

This study began with the analysis of the formation of consumer society in its historical background, showing us how the social interaction between the producer and the consumer have changed over time. Throughout the history, international trade and with it intercultural exchange, technological improvements have been leading to a social and economic restructuring of the world. This restructuring process had reached a first climax in the era of the Industrial Revolution, continued up to the Information Technology Revolution of the late Twentieth Century, and is still continuing up to today.

In this study, the focus was placed on the interrelations between the marketing and the consumer environment, emphasizing the question of how the marketing activities affect the consumers.

Marketing has become the major role player in the construction of consumer society, since it provides the communication between the consumers and the producers. Marketers first identify and then try to satisfy consumer needs. For the need identification they use the scientific methods of social group interviews, questionnaires, and other field research methods to collect data. For the satisfaction of these needs, they create their production strategies according to their findings, and then they have to market the product successfully. For the corporations, successful marketing represents the only means to achieve a higher market share. In this marketing effort of the corporations, signs, images, and logos have to be designed to create a brand that is attractive for the consumers and distinguishable from competitors brands. This shows that nowadays, marketers have to combine two orientations: customer and competitor orientation.

In the parts related to marketing, and especially in the ones related to advertisement, the social significance of such brand formation was analyzed in detail. This study sometimes shaped itself in the form of a sociological critique, at other times a psychological perspective was adopted. Analyzing socio-economic change, studying advertising rhetoric as well as the interdependency of society and technology were other objectives in this context.

Throughout this thesis, questions of how brands are socially accepted and appreciated were addressed. For example, I pointed out that images and logos sometimes gain importance over the actual product. In some cases brands, in connection with the efforts of marketers, can change certain consumption habits of individuals, going as far as affecting their life style, which I have found out to be another of the social effects of marketing activities. In an attempt to survive on the market, producers continue identifying consumer needs which due to the marketers' efforts "seduce" individuals to be 'permanent consumers'.

We have also seen that brands and logos enter public spheres in the form of funding and sponsorship. This "reaching beyond the product" serves mainly to establish or to keep up a corporate image, and thus to create brand loyalty. In this context I also addressed problems of business ethics.

That certain advertising and promotional activities are subconsciously "digested", is illustrated by the common habit of asking for a 'Selpak' instead of a 'handkerchief', or of automatically saying "yes" if a cashier asks if one wants a bigger size menu.

Throughout this study, the reasoning of the research question has placed itself on a macro rather than a micro level. This was mainly due to the fact that the cultural, social and individual identities are always interwoven. The interdisciplinary structure of the social sciences is equally reflected in this work, leading to a rather global approach. So on the one hand, these two conditions do reflect a part of social reality,

and since I have tried to analyse "identity formation", it seems justified to have used a broader perspective. On the other hand, future studies focusing on a specific subject in this field could be implemented in order to give a more detailed analysis of the problems and the questions raised in this work.

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