

The Times of Their Lives: Phenomenological and Metaphorical Characteristics of Consumer Timestyles

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Timestyles are the customary ways in which people perceive and use time. We propose that individuals' timestyles can be categorized in terms of social, temporal, planning, and polychronic orientations. We examine timestyle in a phenomenological investigation of a sample of American women and identify five emergent symbolic metaphors for time (pressure cooker, map, mirror, river, and feast) that holistically encapsulate informants' multidimensional timestyles. We discuss the theoretical and substantive implications of our findings for understanding the role of timestyles in consumer behavior and in the ongoing conflicts that consumers experience in deciding what they should do with their discretionary time.

How do our timestyles relate to our behaviors as individuals, particularly as consumers? Some people constantly think of the future, plan their time meticulously, immerse themselves in one task at a time, and guard discretionary time as strictly their own. Others may prefer nostalgia, spontaneous actions, multiple tasks, and socially oriented events. Such habitual ways of perceiving and using time are intricately woven into the manner in which we exchange the resource of time for products and services—whether traveling in a group on a cruise ship in the Caribbean, browsing alone in an art gallery, or spending a Saturday afternoon bidding on eBay while talking on the phone with friends.

Prior consumer researchers have principally emphasized singular dimensions of timestyle. Some have discussed a past versus present or future orientation (e.g., Holbrook 1993), while others have investigated a monochronic versus

polychronic timestyle (e.g., Kaufman, Lane, and Lindquist 1991). However, as we show in this article, such focus on isolated facets has likely hindered the growth of more in-depth knowledge on timestyles and their interrelations with consumer behavior. By conceptualizing timestyle as a multidimensional yet holistic construct, more refined insights may be available on the nature of individuals' timestyles, the conflicts engendered by timestyles, and the strategies that are evoked to deal with such conflicts.

THE TIMESTYLE CONCEPT

Feldman and Hornik (1981) originated the term timestyle and suggested that the choice of daily activities constitute the locus of time's meaning to individuals. Hirschman (1987) hypothesized that perceptions of time are a function of a consumer's anticipation and experience. Researchers variously view time as a mental construction having only subjective meaning (Bergadaà 1990), as a social construction guided by cultural heritage (e.g., Hall 1983; Lewis and Weigert 1981), or as a dimension of behavior at cultural, interpersonal, and individual levels (McGrath and Kelly 1986). Hall (1983) and Zerubavel (1981) suggest that timestyles have both a perceptual and behavioral component, which is also the viewpoint we adopt here. We outline below four key dimensions of timestyle to establish the conceptual backdrop for our research (see also Cotte and Ratneshwar 2000).

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Social Orientation Dimension

People often approach and categorize units of time as either "time for me" or "time with (or for) others," and individuals can vary in the priority they accord to "self time" versus "others time" (Hall 1983; Manrai and Manrai 1995). The motivation to categorize a unit of time as with/for others can be either voluntary or obligatory (e.g., "this is time I *should* spend with my parents"). Our distinction between self time and others time is similar to Hirschman's (1987) idea of an intrinsic versus extrinsic time structure, and it is consistent with Bergadaà's (1990) notion that an individual's cognitive structure consists of personal time and environment time. Note that the social orientation dimension of timestyle is likely to be culture specific, since some cultures apparently lack a clear distinction between time alone and time with others (Briggs 1970).

Temporal Orientation Dimension

A second dimension of timestyle is the relative significance individuals attach to the past, present, or future. Prior researchers have named this dimension temporal orientation (Bergadaà 1990; Cottle 1976; Jones 1988), and it has often been tied to personality differences (Calabresi and Cohen 1968; Graham 1981; Philipp 1992). This is not to say, for example, that future-oriented individuals will only consider the importance of the future in their lives. Rather, this timestyle dimension simply helps to distinguish whether an individual typically looks back, or at the here and now, or at what is yet to unfold (Cottle 1976). Some researchers have argued that all humans must be at least partially future oriented to accomplish any behavior at all (Raynor and Entin 1983). Others have suggested that people can be primarily past oriented while functioning satisfactorily in their everyday lives (see Cottle 1976; Freire, Gorman, and Wessman 1980; Philipp 1992).

Planning Orientation Dimension

This dimension characterizes the manner in which people approach time management (Bond and Feather 1988; Calabresi and Cohen 1968). The two poles of this dimension are *analytic* (i.e., people who plan extensively and like to account for each minute of the day) and *spontaneous* (i.e., people who are reluctant to plan ahead and think of time in macro units). The former may plan their days in 15 min. or 30 min. intervals, captured in a notebook or some other type of time management device, while the latter may plan only at the level of things to do this week and rely more on their memory.

Polychronic Orientation Dimension

Finally, prior research indicates that people vary on a continuum from a monochronic or one-thing-at-a-time style to a polychronic, multitasking style (Feldman and Hornik 1981; Graham 1981; Hall 1983; Kaufman et al. 1991).

RESEARCH METHOD

Sample and Interview Procedure

The first author conducted long interviews with 22 women in the New England area. She interviewed 10 informants in the first phase of the research and 12 in a second phase. The informants were married and single women, without children, ranging in age from 23 to 35. We chose women without children because the literature shows that the presence of children in the home severely constrains the use of discretionary time (see, e.g., Hochschild 1997; Manrai and Manrai 1995; Philipp 1992; Robinson and Godbey 1997; Schor 1992).

We initially set out to study the consumption of leisure, but our informants frequently shifted their thoughts from leisure per se to talk in detail about the role and meaning of time as they experienced it in everyday life. We in turn put a more pointed focus on the question of time perception and time use as seen through an individual's lived experience, integrating our data with prior literature on time and timestyle. For the first phase of the research, the opening discussion began with the grand tour question, "When I say leisure time, what does that mean to you?" From there, the subsequent prompts most often emerged during the flow of the dialogue. In the second phase of interviews, the opening question was "Can you tell me about your last vacation?" When informants said something about time (e.g., "I'd rather be spontaneous" or "I'm such a planner"), these comments were probed to flesh out their timestyles and implicit time metaphors. The interviews ranged from 1 hr. to 1 hr. and 30 min. Our findings below combine the data from both phases of the research.

Interpretive Procedures and Organization of Findings

We first organized the emic findings to interpret each informant's timestyle. Then, at an etic level, we identified five symbolic metaphors for time that holistically describe informants' timestyles. These etic metaphors should be viewed as metathemes of time for our informants, and we use these metaphors in much the same way as Thompson, Pollio, and Locander (1994, p. 435), that is, to convey "a nexus of assumptions, concerns, values and meanings that systematically emerged throughout the interview dialogue."

The foundation metaphor for time in modern Western cultures is that "time is money" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). But our findings suggest that a much wider range of metaphors are needed to interpret the modes in which contemporary American women perceive and use time—especially so if one wishes to avoid simple and somewhat sterile dualisms, such as circularity versus linearity. Below, we characterize each of our five metaphors by prototypical timestyle dimensions to facilitate explanation, and we present several informants for whom a particular metaphor is currently dominant. Note that each metaphor is named so as to indicate

an individual's perspective on time as well as the process by which that perspective is created (see Schön 1993).

FINDINGS

Time Is a Pressure Cooker

A pressure cooker is a sealed vessel. It heats its contents slowly and unrelentingly, gradually increasing in pressure till the nature of its contents is altered. Similarly, time is a pressure cooker for some women. They want to make productive use of time, but ultimately they seem to be trapped inside time, unable to let out the steam as the pressure of time increases and changes who they are and how they live. Time has become an external force for these women, reified into the ways things are in nature, not something they can control to their liking.

The women who come under this metaphor are usually analytic planners, rigidly organizing the ingredients in the cooker. They tend to be other oriented on the social dimension of their timestyles, and so they have relatively more activities (and with multiple people) that need to be well planned. These women are also inclined to be very monochronic in their timestyles, which is an important part of why they always feel time pressured. As they stuff their time with diverse social activities, the pressure builds inexorably—competing demands for their discretionary time start to create conflict, yet they only want to deal with one thing at a time. We exemplify this metaphor with two informants, Randy and Doris.

Randy is a 28-year-old, newly married, elementary school teacher. She grew up in a wealthy family on the Atlantic coast with a socially active stay-at-home mom, and Randy herself is also socially very active. She proceeds through her daily activities methodically, one at a time, as she believes most of her peers do. She notes:

But that's just part of my personality though. I am just psychotic organized. Planned to the hilt. So I would wake up and open my eyes, and I would go, okay, here's exactly what I'm going to do. Like before I get out of bed I've decided whether I'm going to work out first, or garden first, or walk the dog first. . . . Hopefully most people do the same, and I'm not that bad. . . . [Later, when discussing a good "day off"] knowing me, I would have to get something accomplished. Cross something off my list 'cause I have a very hard time just doing nothing, you know what I mean? . . . There's a "have to" every day.

Randy often brings the word pressure into the conversation when she describes how she manages her discretionary time. She pencils in visits to her friends and even talks about "pressure friends" who force her into detailed planning. She describes the pressure of balancing her work tasks and social obligations. She talks about the pressure to make sure that she plans her time so that nothing falls apart. Her descriptions of her timestyle (and the timestyle of the members of her social group) are poignant, including describing herself

and her friends as "obsessive about keeping everything together," with a social life that is "work almost." Time is a giant pressure cooker for Randy, constraining and heating up her life activities, often in ways with which she is not comfortable.

A central life theme for Randy is one of keeping up appearances. Accordingly, she is perennially working on improving her home and her yard. But time use issues frequently crop up, since she perceives a major gap between the discretionary time available to her and what it would take to keep her life and the things around her perfect. She uses several stories of her friends to explain why she is so focused on what others think about her house. The following excerpt from Randy's interview also illustrates that modern American trends in increasing standards of cleanliness and neatness have affected consumer timestyles (Schor 1992).

I have some friends who, I was surprised, they'll know I'm coming over and I get there and there's like dishes in the sink and, like, I could never be like that. If I knew that friends were coming over, I just could not have dishes in the sink. . . . But then I have a friend, she has a 4-week-old baby, and her house is immaculate. And she has even told me that right now to her a shower is extravagant, you know, and she sleeps like 3 hours a night, and her house is immaculate so she's worse than me. I call it bad just because, I just feel like it's bad, I mean how obsessive we can be about keeping everything together?

When it comes to time management, Randy starts ruminating on her habits but quickly turns to a consideration of her friends' planning styles. She compares her highly planned life to her friends, some of whom are not "as bad as she is" in terms of forcing more and more activities ("ingredients") into the container of time. She thus questions her own timestyle and is concerned that it constrains her to a life of little or no spontaneity. She is beginning to realize that, once the pressure cooker is full and working, it is hard to add ingredients impulsively. In the following excerpt, as Randy describes her difficulty in meeting with old friends, she oscillates between planning and spontaneity in the manner noted by Zerubavel (1981). The excerpt also shows that Randy faces a distinct conflict between her social orientation and her planning style:

It would have been more fun to be spontaneous, although it is so hard to be spontaneous. What is the likelihood of her calling and me being available? I guess I don't like having things so scheduled so far in advance all the time. I feel like my whole life is scheduled. How am I supposed to be spontaneous?

In regard to their behavior as consumers, women like Randy are clearly influenced by the "time is a pressure cooker" metaphor and the conflict that typically accompanies it. To cope with the conflict that arises from having too

many things to do and wanting to do them one at a time, these women shop methodically, armed with lists, deadlines, and tasks. They also undertake long shopping expeditions, which likely create more stress than simple, uncomplicated errands. Thus, in Randy's case, shopping adds even more ingredients to the pressure cooker of time, and she uses her analytic planning style to determine the order and amount of ingredients to add. Even the route she follows between stores is well organized and planned in advance:

Randy: Oh God, I'm such a planner.

Interviewer: Okay, let's start with that. You've already said that when you wake up in the morning, it's all in your head?

Randy: Well, I have a calendar which would have the obligations, you know. . . . And then I have a list, you know, the day planner, day runner things, the leather bound things? That has my list, it's just the list of all the stuff that I could possibly do, that I need to get done. . . . Once the page gets full and I don't have room to add anything to the list, I rip that page out and on the next fresh page I'll add the things that haven't been crossed out. . . . If I'm going out shopping or on errands, like today on my way here, it was like, okay, drop off the videos and there's a copier in there and I have to make a copy of an insurance thing, so I'll drop off the videos, make a copy of the thing, then I'm going to go to the gas station that's on the way to the hardware. . . . Like I think all this out before I go. . . . I will schedule those, yeah, where they fit in, what route would be best.

Another informant whose timestyle falls under this metaphor is Doris, a 23-yr.-old, married, payroll clerk. She describes herself as a perfectionist who needs to organize everything—her planner, her desk at work, and even her own physical appearance. But this planning orientation, in conjunction with her busy social life and one-thing-at-a-time approach, creates considerable stress. As in other aspects of her life, she wants very much to change things:

I used to be very anal, and I'm trying not to be. [I'm] . . . not anal—just a perfectionist in general. Everything has to be neat and orderly and in line and done at certain times. . . . Yeah, I'm trying to get away from that a little bit. Not just in how things look but in how I look and just, everything, just how I set up my life. I'm trying to just relax a little. I don't want to spend my life; life is too short to just stress out about little minute details.

Like Randy, Doris is a highly analytic planner and a major consumer of time management tools. She buys day-timers, calendars, and list preparation stationery and covets more elaborate time management devices:

I have this little cheap planner that came in my calendar, it came with it. I hate it. I really want, I know what I want but I haven't been able to afford it. It's \$60, it's a little, it's a daytimer, the daytimer series. And I love them, but I haven't been able to afford it yet. 'Cause that's more organized, it

has the times, you know it has the weeks laid out right there. Mine's not like that.

In terms of how she shops, Doris shows many similarities to Randy and likewise experiences pressure and conflict on her day-long shopping expeditions:

Interviewer: Can you describe another time when you did something alone?

Doris: Shopping. I go shopping alone . . . when I go [to the mall] it's like a whole day excursion. I have like a 10-store list I have to visit up there, you know.

Interviewer: Is that leisure?

Doris: It depends. It depends. Um, it depends on how stressed out I am but if I have the time to go. If it's hot, it's air-conditioned, you know, it depends on a lot of factors. Depends if I'm already relaxed or not. When I'm relaxed it's fine. When I haven't had the chance to stop for the week and I just go shopping then it's stressful, trying to get everything done.

When it comes to her leisure time, Doris describes herself as loving bars and nightclubs. She talks about the gratification of being able to "be herself" when she goes out, something she believes she cannot do at work. She seems "enslaved by the weekend" (Rybczynski 1991), eagerly awaiting it, and she makes plans months in advance. She talks about not liking to be alone and crams her weekends with numerous social activities. In so doing, she consumes a variety of expensive services and goods—dance clubs, alcohol, and pretty dresses, to name a few—and she makes plans for more leisure spending as soon as she can get the money. For Doris, filling the pressure cooker of time to the brim with leisure activities has become a way of affirming her identity. But having a lot of fun in her leisure time (on her terms) requires a fair amount of money—so she hangs on to a job she is not particularly fond of. As Linder (1970) pointed out 30 yr. ago, in a prosperous society such as ours, Doris has a choice: she could have more leisure time but would have to curtail her consumption expenditure to get it. Doris recognizes this dilemma, but rather than creating more free time, she chooses to work and earn so that she can spend the money needed to fill her leisure time with social activities. Doris stays home—that is, she leaves a little empty space in time the pressure cooker—only when she runs out of money.

Interviewer: If you had a weekend free, is that a good thing?

Doris: Well sometimes, it's like I'm doing so much recently, it's kind of disappointing if I don't have something to do. . . . Well, it's just that I'm so used to going out. But it really comes down to a money thing a lot of the time. No, I really can't afford it and I should stay home so I kind of guilt myself into, like, getting a movie or something. If I could, I'd be out all the time.

Thus, perhaps fearing the specter of loneliness (i.e., empty time), Doris seems trapped in a culture of work and spend (Cross 1993). She may indeed have internalized the taken-for-granted assumptions of this culture to the point where she attempts to fill her weekends with expensive entertainment to help her get over work. Her timestyle, and the conflict that emerges from her timestyle, partially structure her life and her sense of who she is as an individual, just as her consumption behaviors and the outcomes of these behaviors help validate her timestyle.

In sum, for women who share this metaphor, time is a resource that potentially creates something of value (the desired meal), even as it steadily increases in pressure. Randy wants status and distinction, and when she packs her leisure time tight with social obligations as well as activities and consumption geared toward improving her home, she provides the ingredients that allow her to achieve these values. Similarly, for Doris, filling the pressure cooker of time with carefully planned social activities that require spending on, for example, clothing, beauty parlors, and make-up, enables her to avoid loneliness as well as express her real self. In both cases, the multiple dimensions of these women's timestyles (analytic planning, social orientation, and a monochronic orientation) work at cross purposes, trapping them inside time, creating increasing pressure and conflict for them to confront.

Time Is a Map

A map gives people a sense of direction, and it helps situate where they are now in relation to where they wish to go. The traveler must look at the map frequently for guidance and must maintain a certain minimum distance from it for a sense of perspective. In a like vein, time is a map for women who consciously strive to use time to get to a chosen goal in their lives. They consult time repeatedly: to set a path, to determine boundary markers (or limits) for their trip, and to reassure themselves that they have not veered off the path they have set for themselves. They keenly look forward to arriving at their destination, but they appreciate that a map is ignored only at a traveler's peril and hence see time as vital to their advancement. The time is a map metaphor is typically characterized by an analytic planning style and a future temporal orientation, often in conjunction with a polychronic orientation. We describe below two of our informants, Nancy and Jane, who fit this metaphor well.

Nancy is a 26-yr.-old professional. In the following excerpt, Nancy reveals her goal-directed and highly analytic planning style; in metaphorical terms, she is describing how she creates her map of time:

I have a to-do list. It's fairly, it's not regimented but it's pretty comprehensive. And I usually try to indicate which are the most important things to do that day. . . . So I have over-arching goals but then within that I have to-do lists that I maintain everyday so I know what needs to be done and when. . . . I sometimes try to get ahead so that today's list

is on the first page of my notepad, and then on the second page I'll have the stuff I need to do tomorrow. The stuff that I know I won't get to today but that needs to be done in the next day or two. . . . My husband and I are huge list people at home even. I have a calendar here, a desk calendar, and then I have a diary for home, which has a big memo page for a week. So I'll either put things down for specific days, what I need to do, or I'll put in on the memo page for the week.

Nancy therefore plans her time carefully, allocating time to various tasks and activities within her leisure and work schedules. In this sense, Nancy's analytic planning style resembles those of Randy and Doris. However, unlike the other two, Nancy has a polychronic orientation, hopping from one task to another and back again, sometimes sticking to her plans and sometimes not. These two dimensions of her timestyle—her planning orientation and her polychronic orientation—often clash with each other, thereby creating considerable anxiety:

Interviewer: Okay, you mentioned earlier that last night you ironed and watched a video at the same time. Do you find you do two things like that a lot? How about at work?

Nancy: It's just the way I am. There's a, there's a word for it, oh, you're a hopper. Hoppers are people that just sort of bounce around from thing to thing and that's really me. . . . I end up doing three or four things at a time. . . . sometimes I get really stressed out, which leads me to think that I really should start to focus on one thing at a time. . . . It's very hard because you get into the habit of bouncing around from thing to thing.

Nancy appears to be cognizant that the stress she experiences has its source in the ongoing conflict between her dominant timestyle dimensions. Notwithstanding this, it would seem that her anxiety is more fundamentally rooted in her internalizing the metaphor of time is a map. If Nancy did not have a clear sense of where she is at this point in time and where she wants to be in the future, then her timestyle might not create such conflict. But time is like a map for her, and she consults this map frequently to compare her actual travels with her planned itinerary and destinations. The result is a steady and disturbing awareness of discrepancies in how she utilizes her time.

Our data also suggest some interesting relationships between the time is a map metaphor and a person's consumer behavior. One that is particularly salient is that women like Nancy spend considerable effort in information search. Most travelers would not head into a wilderness without a detailed map; so, too, these women seek out a lot of information for carefully planning their leisure consumption. For example, both Nancy and Jane (profiled next) planned recent vacations after gathering a large amount of information through an intensive search on the Internet, calls to travel offices, brochures, books, and word of mouth.

Nancy: We really like B&Bs. . . . So we thought we might

find a nice one in either Vermont or upstate New York. There are plenty of them around the New England area, and then go up to Canada. . . . So basically we just looked around, we looked on the Internet, we looked in, got different brochures from different places, and we found this place in upstate that we really like and ultimately tried to reserve a room there and go up.

Interviewer: Did you talk to anyone else, or just the Web stuff?

Nancy: Most of the stuff we did through the Web. That's where we got most of the names and numbers. The association that we, that we ultimately booked the room through was sort of a tourist B&B association in the central upstate region.

Jane is 28 yr. old and married, and she manages a fast food outlet. She recently arranged to buy a franchise for herself, and she is busy setting up that business even as she works full time at her current job. She is also trying to finish a college degree as a part-time student. Jane comes across as extremely self-deprecating and as a person who is bent on self-improvement. She has recently taken classes on how to save money, how to cook, how to golf, and how to buy a house. For Jane, thinking of time as a map alleviates some of the anxiety she feels about where her life is headed and how she should live from day to day. She feels the need to write everything down and works through a detailed to-do list methodically everyday. She needs the guidance and direction of her lists for progress on her life projects:

And if I don't have one [a to-do list] every day at work I won't get the things done 'cause I'll walk around, I can't remember what I'm supposed to do next. I'm sort of clueless about that stuff, and I need to figure out lists ahead. So I have a to-do list that . . . when I'm at home I have a planner and I have what I should get done, what's important for me to get done for each day. When I get up I look at it to see what I have to get done.

It appears that Jane's future temporal orientation and her analytic planning style work in conjunction with her low self-esteem to cocreate for her the relevance of the "time is a map" metaphor. Time as a map both directs and limits her, helping her ascertain what she should and should not do. Like our other informants who seemed to have internalized this metaphor, she also frequently assesses her temporal progress. She looks at how she allocates her time when compared to how she should have, and she relies on the combination of her analytic planning style and future orientation to chart her journey on the map of time.

As we noted with Nancy, women who come under this metaphor invest considerable time and effort in information search in their behaviors as consumers. While Nancy prefers the Internet for search and comparison of alternatives, Jane and her husband expend a significant amount of their leisure time in inspecting products and comparison shopping. For example, they often spend Sundays driving to open houses so they can discuss features of homes they like or dislike

well in advance of their actually being able to purchase a house. They also consulted family, friends, and books for advice on how best to plan a trip to Disney World. For both Nancy and Jane and the other informants who personify the metaphor of time as a map, intensive information search allows them to map out their progress toward their consumption goals. This behavior meshes very well with their prototypical timestyle dimensions, namely, a future orientation combined with an analytic planning style.

Time Is a Mirror

A mirror reflects back an image of oneself. And just as some people glance at a mirror several times in a day for feedback on their appearance, people who exemplify this metaphor look at time as a means of self-reflection and personal assessment. They also strive continually to perform better in their time usage, thereby hoping to improve the image in the mirror. The time is a mirror metaphor is characterized by an analytic planning style, a polychronic orientation, and a past temporal orientation that offers a rear view of one's life accomplishments.

Gloria is a 23-yr.-old former university athlete and civil engineer, and she faces many time pressures. She is extremely organized and list oriented, and she uses multiple time management tools and devices to help her orchestrate her day and monitor her progress.

Once I get to work, then I usually make my timesheet for the day before, and I make my list of things to do for the day. . . . I have a notebook that I write in what I have to do today. Whether that means I get it done today or not, it just moves it from yesterday's list to today's list, and I just work from there all day. . . . I basically come up with a huge list in my mind on the way to work in the morning, but if I can get two or three of those things done a day, then I'm in good shape. . . . It's one of those black and white composition notebooks which is lined and each day is a new page. . . . The left side is for personal stuff that I have to get down and the right side is for work stuff. . . . Everyday is a new blank page. With highlighter. I'll highlight what I got done the day before and anything that's not highlighted I bring it over to the new day and then I highlight that I brought it over. . . . Each day is a different color.

Gloria apparently does not question her constant need to look in the mirror of time for self-validation. Instead, she simply works on her technique to better the view in the mirror. Schmookler (1993, p. 25) has argued that time management behaviors (e.g., how to plan, how much to plan) are driven by the nature of the American market system and that "the system, because of its biases and distortions, carries us to a destination chosen by the system and not by us." Similarly, Gloria never doubts the need to be an even better time manager; she has internalized the assumption that she needs to continually become more efficient in her use of time in order to succeed in life.

It is important to note that, in addition to being very analytically oriented in her timestyle, Gloria is also relatively more focused on the past. She dwells considerably on her life as it was 5 or 10 yr. before, and she tries to recreate traditions she grew up with. Thus, seeing her reflection in the mirror of time helps her remember her past and how she has changed over the years:

Interviewer: You've mentioned these momentous times that you can remember. Can you tell me about how much you remember things, how much time you spend remembering things?

Gloria: A lot. It's sort of how I explained feelings. I remember how it felt to have a BBQ with your whole family. I remember, um, how certain things that, yeah, I really enjoyed them then but I appreciate them so much more now because it was either a really neat place that I was at or really neat people that I was with or a really special time between me and [boyfriend] or something like that. So I remember, I guess, the whole emotional side of things or how things affected me or how I look back and see them, I guess.

Interviewer: How do you look back at those times?

Gloria: I take lots of pictures. I always have a camera with me, so that's one. So that shows me looking back at things but I have mental pictures, it's a lot, senses too, smelling or eating. I would have to say it's a lot of mental pictures and feelings. Like how I felt about the whole situation at the time. That brings back, it brings me back to that place I guess.

Gloria's looking back in the mirror of time through nostalgic reminiscences allows her to assess herself and her life. But Gloria's timestyle also suggests that she has fundamentally bought into the idea that every minute of the day should be treated as precious. This attitude manifests itself in her consumer behavior in several different ways. For example, Gloria makes heavy use of commercial services geared to her analytic and polychronic timestyle. She eats convenience foods in the morning at her desk at work so that she will not "waste time just sitting there eating breakfast." She also eats out for dinner frequently, often on the way home from work to save time. Gloria also minimizes the possibility that something could spoil the reflection in the mirror—her perception of whether she is putting her time to good use—by avoiding new or unfamiliar leisure activities. Instead, she favors activities she grew up doing, or activities that have become traditions for her. This risk averseness in time use translates into loyalty to a set of establishments and service providers that she knows and trusts. For example, Gloria returns repeatedly to restaurants that she likes, rarely venturing to try new ones. And on the rare occasions when she does try something new, she quickly decides whether to "stick with it" or eliminate it from future consideration:

Finding a place we really like. And, if we like something, we stick with it . . . we know what we like and we're not, we don't range. . . . [later] We try to figure out what kind of food we'll like. But if we find a place we like, it'll become

a tradition, and we'll stick with that place. . . . We have a pizza place that we like, and we always get the same thing, every single time. In a way we, we probably don't even know it, but we're trying to build our own tradition.

The time is a mirror metaphor also applies to Bonnie, a 26-yr.-old elementary school teacher. Throughout her interview, she mentions the desire to be organized and efficient, two important themes in her life. She sees herself as the responsible one in her household and attributes her success in this regard at least in part to her analytic planning orientation.

Bonnie: I come home, change, go to the gym, come home, and make dinner. . . . I do the same thing everyday, very structured.

Interviewer: Do you like it that way, very structured?

Bonnie: Well I do. I do the same thing everyday, very structured. . . . I like to know what I'm doing. I'm very structured in the classroom as well. . . . Everything that I do is very routinized and very structured for the kids. I guess I need it, otherwise I wouldn't do it.

A prominent life project for Bonnie is to succeed in her vocation as a teacher. She spends considerable effort preparing her classes, especially the supporting material, which she largely creates herself. She works her way through all her tasks in a polychronic manner, but sometimes she questions the wisdom of this behavior.

Interviewer: So when you have a lot of things to do?

Bonnie: I would probably start all of them. . . . I had a Master's class last semester, and I had two projects due at the same time, well, three with the final. And I was working on all of them at the same time, so it wasn't as if I finished one and then started the next, finished that, and started the next. I had them going like, all at the same time.

Interviewer: And do you like working that way?

Bonnie: Well, it's stressful. It just ends up that I work that way, I think. I think I've always been this way.

Bonnie conjectures that if she had more free time, she would feel she was not accomplishing enough (i.e., she would not like the reflection in the mirror). Like Gloria, Bonnie also often engages in nostalgic reminiscences and in the following excerpt talks about how her timestyle has been influenced by her mother:

Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit more about how your mom taught you guys?

Bonnie: Oh God. Um, every Saturday we had to get up, and we always had to make our bed, and our room had to be clean. She always had a routine. She wasn't mean about it, but it was just the way we always had to. . . . It was just the way we were brought up. . . . Always the same routine: the same things done the same time each week . . . some-

times I'm just like my mother. I mean my sister really makes fun of me 'cause everything has to be just perfect and clean and I pick up after everybody.

Just as Gloria checks the mirror of time to make sure that she uses time optimally, Bonnie uses the mirror of time to assess her accomplishments. For both Gloria and Bonnie, temporal conflicts emerge when their tendency to be past focused collides with their analytical planning orientation—when they look in the mirror and see that their use of time does not measure up to their exceptionally high expectations. It is interesting that there also appears to be a connection between the mirror metaphor and its literal counterpart in that the women who typify this metaphor are usually very concerned with their physical appearance. Bonnie is one example, dedicated to workout routines and exercising strenuously five or more times per week. Indeed, going to the gym is her main leisure activity, just as playing in a highly competitive volleyball league was the principal leisure activity for Gloria. Bonnie's proclivity for the gym poses a dilemma for her; she feels that working out is necessary, but she is apprehensive that it interferes with having more time for other leisure activities or even going to church on Sunday mornings.

But there's days when it's like, I like to go to the gym, but there's days when I really hate coming home at 8:00 at night and feeling like my day is ready to start already tomorrow. You know, and I have no time to myself besides. I feel like that's something I have to do, so it's not really time for myself to just sit around and do nothing. I'm not crazy about that all the time.

In sum, the mirror is ever present for women like Bonnie and Gloria, always reflecting back their use of time. They plan extensively, always trying to get better at planning, while at the same time they use multitasking to fit even more activities into their time. Just as a mirror offers a physical reflection that many women exert considerable effort trying to improve, so too does the symbolic mirror of time offer a reflection of one's use of time that, for some women, can always be improved. It would also seem that a dominant American cultural norm of self-improvement is evident in the women for whom this metaphor applies. A nuanced, multidimensional yet holistic, view of timestyle enables one to explore how this cultural norm gets played out in the domain of time use and how it ultimately influences consumption.

Time Is a River

When we are immersed in a river, the river flows all around us, simultaneously moving with us and moving us along with the current. We may not have too much power over where the river might take us, but we can either attempt to try and control our direction and journey in the river or we can simply float along and go with the flow. The women who personify this metaphor deal with time spontaneously and undertake

little or no planning. They are focused mainly on the present and not on the past or the future. For these women, time, like a river, is an immediate, encompassing sensation; they deal as best they can with the currents and eddies immediately around them, not what has been or what will be.

The metaphor applies to Sarah, a 23-yr.-old office administrator who commutes 4 hr. per day to her job in midtown Manhattan. Viewing time as an unpredictable river, Sarah tries not to foresee where the currents may take her:

I'd like to move into an apartment in New York so I don't have this commute. But I don't have any vision about what that's going to be like. I guess my personal philosophy seems to be, and has been for awhile, if you put too many, you know, if you go so far as to visualize things how they will be, then you can only be disappointed. So I try not to do much of that. . . . I guess I pretty much live day to day and not, I think, particularly in my past. . . . There's been so many expectations that just weren't met that it's just not worth, you know, expecting a lot.

Childhood for Sarah was a disruptive, painful time. Her family moved around the country a lot, her parents ultimately divorced, and her stepfather is an alcoholic. Perhaps as a result, she has become a quiet woman who prefers to spend time alone, who avoids thinking about the past, and who does not plan too far in the future because (in her experience) planning means disappointment. Sarah is thus drifting along in the currents of time, allowing it to transport her to destinations that may be less than desirable. She does not create the time needed to hunt for an apartment. Sarah also finds no time to make new friends at work or to visit old friends from college. She expresses sadness that she has so few social interactions and that, by default, she often ends up shopping with her mother simply because she has not planned anything else, and shopping will at least take her out of the house.

Approaching time as a river can certainly have less than positive consequences. In Sarah's case, time as a river leads her in a direction she is not sure she desires, and she experiences ambivalence and conflict in her spontaneous manner of dealing with time. However, just as immersion in a flowing river can be refreshing and liberating for some, so too time can symbolize unexpected pleasures and freedom from dry routine. This we demonstrate with a portrait of Eleanor, a 23-yr.-old physical therapist. For Eleanor, time as a river means the giddy joy of the unpredictable current—some activities are preferred to others simply because they are less planned.

Interviewer: You mentioned you like to be spontaneous. Can you tell me more about that?

Eleanor: I think my life is geared toward spontaneity, which I like. . . . Well, I enjoy being spontaneous and having the freedom to plan things spontaneously with people, and I think a lot of my friends, like I feel like, for example, like a friend

and I are thinking of planning going to [a local casino] next week. And that had to be planned for Thursday 'cause we had to plan for the third party also. But then [another friend] called me up the next day and said, "Hey, can you come over on Thursday night?" And that was more spontaneous than the other thing was, and I was more drawn to that. Part of it had to do with that, it was more spur of the moment, although it was still for Thursday, so it wasn't completely spur of the moment. Part of it had to do with that, that it didn't have to be structured.

Like Sarah, Eleanor is also present focused. However, this is not to avoid painful recollections of the past or to avoid disappointment in the future but simply to opportunistically enjoy each minute of each day, spontaneously, as it happens. Thus, the time is a river metaphor, typified by a spontaneous planning style and a present temporal orientation, can have both positive and negative ramifications. It can bring considerable pleasure, but it can also engender much regret and conflict when people realize they have drifted aimlessly with little sense of direction or control.

Eleanor's shopping behavior reflects her spontaneous time-style, as well as a desire to minimize the time taken by shopping. Short shopping trips are fun because the longer she shops, the more she must forgo other leisure activities. In this regard, she is very much like Sarah as well as other informants who come under this metaphor, thereby demonstrating that women who share the same underlying temporal metaphor can exhibit behavioral similarity even when they have fairly different personalities. In fact, the metaphor helps us to understand Eleanor's attitude toward shopping in comparison with other leisure activities. A river is constantly changing and shifting, never presenting itself the same way for very long. Eleanor enjoys variety in her leisure activities and grows tired of doing any one activity, especially shopping, for too long.

Interviewer: You said a workout would be leisure. What about something like shopping?

Eleanor: Not really. I don't think I consider it leisure time. I do enjoy some of it. . . . It's just that . . . like, I have a time limit. After an hour or an hour and a half, I'm just kind of drained. So it starts out being fun, but if I stay too long it ends up not being fun. You know, you could be doing something else more fun right then

The time is a river metaphor thus applies to women who live for the moment in every way, either by choice (Eleanor) or by default (Sarah). They resist planning and organization and do not ponder too much about where they are going or where they have been in relation to time. From a consumer behavior perspective, it is intriguing that these women typically do not patronize sports or clubs where activities are carefully scheduled. Also, for women covered by this temporal metaphor, shopping is mostly an unplanned, relatively unorganized, and often impulsive affair. Eleanor, for example, talked about buying groceries when she realized that she had run out of things, rather than in advance, or on a

regular schedule. Indeed, none of the women who come under this metaphor are avid shoppers, and they often resent the time used up in shopping. In the case of Eleanor, shopping feels like work and is therefore less enjoyable than spontaneous activities.

Time Is a Feast

For some women, time is like a banquet, a veritable feast to be enjoyed. These women approach time as a bountiful spread of the many positive choices open to them. Indeed, the word "feast" seems particularly apt because these women view time as offering more wonderful options than they could possibly eat. As we will see below, more than with any of the previous metaphors, a hedonic and variety-seeking consumption ethic motivates the notion of dealing with time as if it were a feast: time is perceived as something to be consumed, or taken advantage of, in the pursuit of sensory pleasure and gratification. The prototypical timestyle dimensions that define this metaphor are a present-focused temporal orientation combined with an analytic planning style. Metaphorically speaking, the feast must be enjoyed as the food is served (in the present, right now) but creating the feast, the many tasty food selections, requires careful advance planning.

A good example of this metaphor is Alice, a 29-yr.-old, married, group home director. She is a busy professional, holding two jobs and building a house with her husband. Alice states that she always tries to live for, in fact to devour, the moment. The present appears to be her preeminent focus. She thinks about the future now and then but is mainly influenced by incidents that have led her to adopt a more fatalistic stance. For example, her husband broke his back mountain biking, and she offered that incident as a reason why "you never know what will happen"—so one should enjoy the immediacy of today. Her sister conceived a child unexpectedly and out of wedlock, and Alice sees that as another example of the futility of being future oriented. Alice reiterated several times that her emphasis on the present is critical for her to enjoy life:

Interviewer: What would you say is the focus of your life right now?

Alice: Pretty much having fun. And making every day count and making sure that I feel satisfied every day. . . . Like, what are we going to have wonderful for dinner or what are we going to do that's fun today?

Alice engages in a variety of outdoor activities in her leisure time, and at various points, she has taken up sea kayaking, surfing, snowboarding, and other high-risk outdoor sports. She also desires experiences such as adventure travel; having noted earlier that she was never seen within her family as being as good as her sister, she speaks about how important it is to her to impress others by being "farthest and loudest."

We love to vacation. We've been to Hawaii, Japan. We've been to Korea, and we've biked the coast of California. We've

been to Florida, Wyoming, British Columbia; we went sea kayaking with killer whales there 4 years ago. We hope to go to Africa some day. . . . Ever since we've been together we always, every couple of years, we go some place crazy and have a good time for at least 3 weeks.

For Alice, it is important to live fully in the present, to seize and enjoy life and master whatever challenges it offers. Although Alice and Doris, whom we discussed earlier in relation to the pressure cooker metaphor, are similarly frenetic in their leisure behaviors, their underlying motivations seem different. While Doris strives to fill the pressure cooker to avoid emptiness and loneliness, Alice samples from a banquet table of what she sees as positive, self-affirming activities. She works hard and plays hard, pursuing more extreme leisure sports than most people do. Her orientation to the present also appears related to consumption decisions such as major vacation choices. However, Alice recognizes that she must plan ahead to get all the options into the feast, and so she approaches time management in an analytic fashion. In this sense, Alice is markedly different from Eleanor, who also is very present focused but who, as we saw earlier, craves spontaneity. Eleanor is not willing to plan ahead for her hedonistic pursuits, and she prefers to allow events to unfold. Alice, on the other hand, believes that a carefully planned feast will yield more bounty.

Alice: Even though we had planned the whole thing out way before we left, that place [vacation destination] just wasn't what we had planned for, what we expected.

Interviewer: Now how did you come up with that place?

Alice: We searched on the Internet, and we read a lot of books. That third place we had heard so much about. All the books I read said, oh, it's so remote, if you get a chance, stay for a night. . . . And the first place we went to we found that on the Internet.

Even Alice's everyday consumption patterns manifest the feast metaphor, in that her grocery choices often include fresh rather than prepackaged foods that allow her to cook for the here and now and to enjoy the immediacy of fresh products. But if there is nothing good in the house to eat, she has no qualms about heading out immediately to a restaurant for a delicious meal.

Alice: Like I try to have good fresh food so I can cook something great, not some canned crap. Having that helps to make it a really good day.

Interviewer: You said earlier "making every day count." How does a day become a good day or a bad day for you?

Alice: Like usually when I come home, even if it was kind of like a lousy day, usually it's like I just play with my dogs. . . . The dogs make me feel rich. And if we don't have anything good in the house, it will be like hey, let's go out to dinner, you know. And we'll do it. . . . I mean we don't really have any bad days.

Joan is a 26-yr.-old elementary school teacher. She talks about being concerned that perhaps she organizes her time too strictly, but then she points out that, if you want to enjoy life, you need to plan to ensure that you are making the best possible use of your time.

Saturday is that one window of opportunity, and it's like, what do you want to do with your Saturday? You have to really weigh, you have all these different options, to go see this person, or we could do this, or go here, do this or do that. Very carefully I make my choices about what we want to do in that small amount of free time. And I guess I try to have a variety of times with the two of us. For example, we're actually going skiing in a few weeks. I have never skied before but he skis a lot, so I'm going to learn how to ski.

More generally, in Joan's case the time is a feast metaphor reflects a broader life theme that might be called not wanting to miss a thing. In her childhood she was exposed to many cultural events and was taken to world famous museums, art galleries, and theatres. As an adult she has traveled extensively in Europe as well as the United States, and she prefers trips where she can have new and different cultural experiences rather than the same old routine.

Interviewer: Tell me more about looking for culture. Can you help me to understand what you look for?

Joan: Different experiences, I guess, between either theater, museums, that's what I did a lot when I was in London. . . . all kinds of different things. . . . In the United States, it's like everywhere you go everything is the same, like you're going to see McDonald's, or the Gap. The same kind of restaurants, the same kind of stores. There's no uniqueness, or authenticity. Everything is sort of mass produced, and it doesn't make anywhere different from anywhere else, really.

Alice and Joan, like the other women for whom this metaphor would seem appropriate, show consumption similarities in their preference for novel grocery products and fresh rather than convenience foods. When it comes to leisure time, these women seek out a generous variety of services and products (holiday packages, sports equipment, theater tickets, etc.). Certain timestyles thus seem connected to a desire for variety. And when people with these timestyles consume the diverse products and services they buy, they aim to devour their time as pleasurably as possible. For such individuals, time is neither a mirror to view the past nor a river to float in but a feast of essentials and delicacies to be consumed enthusiastically in the here and now.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Although prior literature has suggested that a person's timestyle can be characterized in terms of several different conceptual dimensions (e.g., social, temporal, planning, and polychronic orientations), nearly all researchers have treated these dimensions in isolation (see Cotte and Ratneshwar

2000 for a review). Our data not only reaffirm the importance and influences of all four different timestyle dimensions but also suggest that the nature and interactions of these dimensions are richer and more complex than previously recognized by consumer researchers. Further, these timestyle dimensions combine holistically with critical aspects of the individual's self to affect many everyday behaviors, including several in the leisure and product consumption domains. Our data hence indicate that, even within the bounded context of contemporary American culture, timestyles can vary significantly between individuals, as they negotiate their identities and sense of self (see Hall 1983). We also find that the confluence of timestyle dimensions can create intense conflict and major ongoing dilemmas for the individual.

Five symbolic metaphors for time emerged across our female informants. These metaphors serve as coalescing motifs that express the diverse interrelations among informants' timestyles, self-identities, and their sociocultural milieu. Thus, the pressure cooker metaphor symbolizes a timestyle of not only constant time pressure but also the molding and changing of the self—the ultimate product of the cooker. For example, the pressure generated by Randy's timestyle is causing a reevaluation of the person she has created and aspires to be. The metaphor of time as a river is characterized by a refusal to plan or to think about the future. Women who personify this metaphor spend their time spontaneously, but often they do not like the results after the fact. Such women despair at their current situation but do little to alter it. This sense of futility, in conjunction with a self-identity related to waste and regret, suggests a gloomy connotation to the metaphor. Nevertheless, this same metaphor has a very positive and active meaning for some of our other informants. These latter informants are acutely aware of the need to be impulsive and to enjoy life as it unfolds, and they are wary that precious time can wash past us in an insidious fashion. Their approach to time thus acts in conjunction with their buoyant personalities to keep afloat their desire to be free and spontaneous. As Rook (1987) pointed out, spontaneity and impulsive behavior can be very hedonically satisfying. Our data suggest that impulsive consumption behavior can extend beyond the consumption of products to include how one deals with time.

The metaphors of time as a feast and time as a pressure cooker relate to women who are similarly frenzied in their use of discretionary time. Still, the two differ in the underlying motivations. The time as a feast metaphor involves getting the most out of every moment while working on life projects that reaffirm one's sense of self (Mick and Buhl 1992). Conversely, the time as a pressure cooker metaphor is generally driven either by a heightened sense of social obligations or an inherent fear of loneliness. Our two other metaphors—time as a mirror and time as map—also reflect this interplay between timestyle, self, and day-to-day time use behaviors. These latter two metaphors also illustrate that some individuals view time as if it were an external object rather than as a natural phenomenon in their own lives.

Timestyle and Conflict

Previously, there has been little elaboration on the psychological conflicts people experience in perceiving and using time. Hall (1983) discusses the actual and potential conflicts arising between individuals with differing orientations to time, and to some extent he explores the potential conflict in the acculturation of one's timestyle. However, the conflict that may arise within a person when the multiple dimensions of timestyle push and pull the individual in different directions has been overlooked. Our findings indicate that timestyle is an arena of major self-negotiation such that intense conflict among timestyle dimensions can be dysfunctional. Some of our informants clearly articulated this battle of timestyle dimensions and its potential implications. They often choose to resolve timestyle conflicts by giving certain dimensions center stage and relegating other dimensions to the wings. These choices and the women's evaluations of how well they use their discretionary time appear to affect their self-esteem and sense of self-identity. For example, Doris wishes that she would not worry so much about being a perfectionist or being a compulsive planner, but more often than not, she does. Nancy is highly conscious of the stress of constantly juggling multiple tasks and wishes that she could take a more laid back, one thing at a time approach to life. Timestyle, for such women, appears to be a source of constant scrimmage and tension between the real and ideal selves.

Many women we spoke with, when discussing how they dealt with the use of their time, employed phrases that underscored the societal prevalence of an idealized timestyle in contemporary America. When discussing monochronic behavior, analytic planning, and future orientation, for example, our informants often used phrases like "I know I should do . . .," "I really should be more like . . .," and "I know it's better to be . . .," followed by phrases like "but it's just the way I am." These phrases were further signs of the numerous conflicts prompted in people's minds when the real self fights for prominence against a culturally mandated ideal self.

Timestyle and Consumer Behavior

Our data suggest that timestyles and temporal metaphors intertwine with consumption in several respects. For instance, they seem to be implicated in the types of consumption behaviors that Arnould and Price (2000) term as authenticating acts. People often consume products and services as a means of affirming uniqueness and individuality and/or revealing the true self. Similarly, some consumers (e.g., those who come under the metaphor of time as a feast) plan the use of their discretionary time as vital expressions of who they are as individuals. On the other hand, others (e.g., those who view time as a mirror) reflect frequently on their past as a way of constructing emerging, autobiographical self-narratives, in the manner portrayed by Arnould and Price. Arnould and Price also highlight the importance of authoritative consumption performances: events or displays undertaken collectively by the members of a community to

produce or refashion cultural traditions. We opine that the social dimension of timestyle and some time metaphors (e.g., time is a pressure cooker) may bear critically on the extent to which individuals engage in such community-level actions as a means of creating meaning in what otherwise could be highly fragmented societies.

More generally, it seems self-evident that consumers need to use the resource of time in order to purchase and consume virtually any product or service. And since our research indicates specific relationships between various time metaphors and patterns of time usage, it should be no surprise that these metaphors are also associated with individual differences in shopping and consumption behaviors. In this regard, four issues are particularly worth highlighting. First, we see very different attitudes and behaviors toward shopping and shopping trips across the metaphors, especially in relation to differences in planning orientation. Women for whom time is a pressure cooker treat shopping as a well-planned expedition. They often visit many stores on their shopping trip, and they follow lists and schedules. This can lead to an overly stressful, negative shopping experience, even as the pressure increases while accomplishing all the tasks on the shopping list. In contrast, shorter and more frequent shopping trips, often undertaken on impulse, are the hallmark of women for whom time is a river. Their spontaneity on the planning orientation dimension means they do not prefer a long immersion in any one task, particularly shopping, but undertake shopping when they need to, or on a whim.

Apart from shopping, the temporal metaphors are associated with differences in the consumption of leisure, food habits, and the expenditure of both time and money on keeping up appearances. In terms of leisure consumption, women falling under different temporal metaphors varied substantially in the amount of information search (from both personal and impersonal sources), advance planning, and extent of detailed planning they demonstrated. For example, those for whom time is like a map are very exacting in their advance scouting for leisure. Appreciably more than others, they consult the Internet, books, and other people's opinions before making leisure consumption decisions. They chart their way through their leisure time, and they try out new leisure experiences and destinations with a firm set of expectations of where the map will take them. In contrast, women for whom time is a mirror often pursue leisure activities and consumption that reflect the past. Rather than seeking out new leisure information, these women stay rooted in traditions and familiar leisure choices.

An interesting dichotomy also emerged in the domain of food habits. Women who approached time as a feast prefer fresh and novel ingredients. Such preferences seem motivated by strong hedonic and variety-seeking desires, in conjunction with a focus on the here and now. In contrast, the mirror metaphor, with its attendant drive to better one's self appearance in the use of time, leads women to more convenience food choices. Such women consume fast foods and

prepared foods and do not want to appear to be wasting time just cooking.

The fourth and final consumer behavior issue that we highlight also deals with keeping up appearances but in a more literal sense. Women for whom time is a pressure cooker prefer to spend time with others when it comes to the social orientation dimension of timestyle. Whether it is Randy's focus on house and garden or Doris's emphasis on clothing and makeup, the women under this metaphor are highly concerned about what others might think of them and their material possessions. This concern, in conjunction with the fact that they spend a lot of their leisure time in the company of others, ultimately leads them to spend both time and money on their presentation of self and home.

Culture Caveats Regarding Timestyle

Our approach to timestyle in this project is admittedly founded on a Western, developed-economy cultural perspective. Some researchers have pointed to societies whose temporal perspectives would not readily fit into any structured framework for timestyle, including the Navajo Indians and Australian Aboriginals (Graham 1981; Hall 1983). Even our decision as researchers to study timestyle and the exchange of time for goods and services could very well have been due to our own embedding in an increasingly time-scarce society (Hochschild 1997; Schor 1992).

It is also the case that Western conceptions of time and timestyles are a relatively recent phenomenon. Bluedorn and Denhardt (1988) provide a fascinating discussion of the history and evolution of the Western notion of time as something that is measured by a clock. Overall, then, although we believe that timestyle and its relationship to conflict and consumption are important themes for consumer research, we acknowledge that the relevance of this topic, and the conceptual categories we employ to discuss it, are bounded by our own cultural and historical context. That being said, the times and timestyles of our lives and their mutually shaping influences on consumer behavior appear to offer new and rich insights on consumption in contemporary life.

[Dawn Iacobucci served as editor for this article.]

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