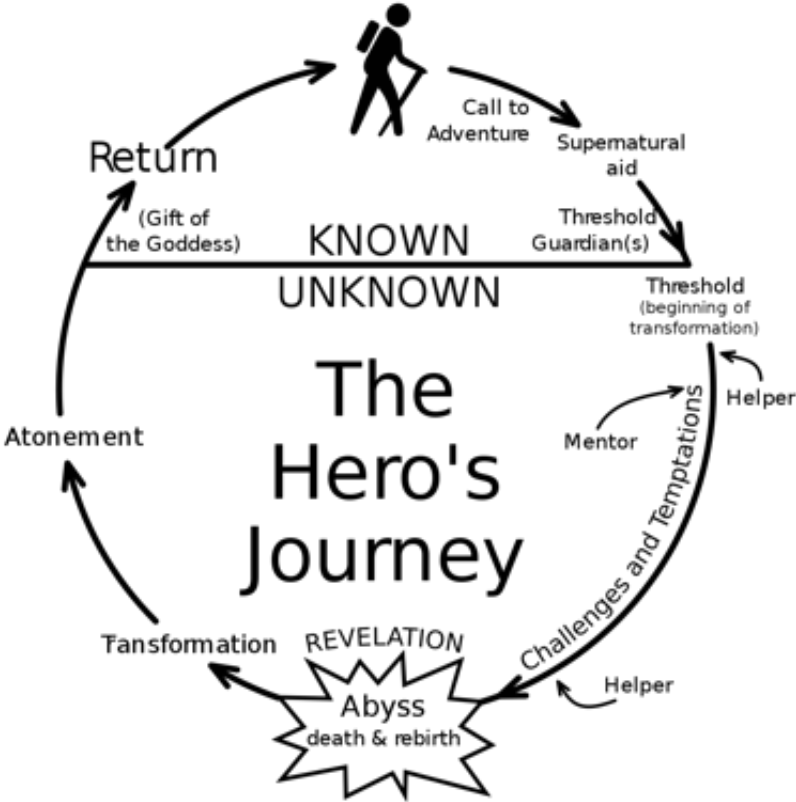# Designing Concept Visuals
in Consumer Culture Research
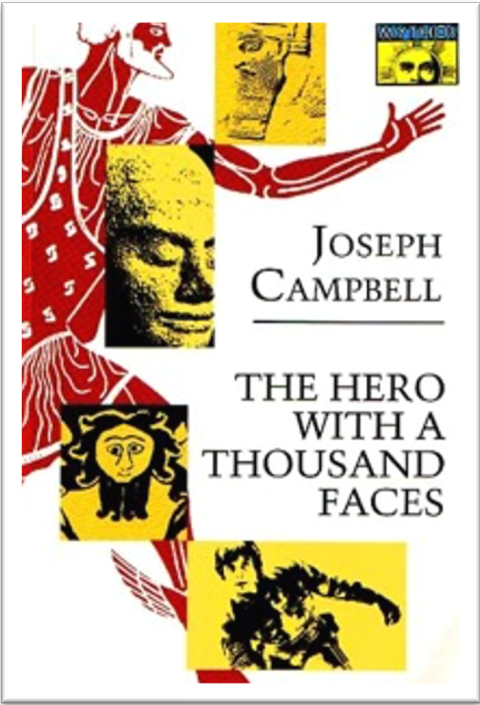
Markus Giesler

Schulich School of Business
York University

Download these slides at mgiesler.com

Awesome and inspiring (for me personally)…

helps sell

Concept Visual

A visual summary of your research story that can inform, inspire, orient, and expand your paper's readership.

FAQs

Frequent Student Questions

1. What's the difference between a concept and a roadmap visual?

2. Everyone talks about visuals. But do I even need one in my paper?

3. Are there basic templates for concept visuals in our field?

4. How do I position the consumer/consumption in my visual?

**1. What's the difference between a
concept visual and an outline visual?**

Outline Visuals (OV)
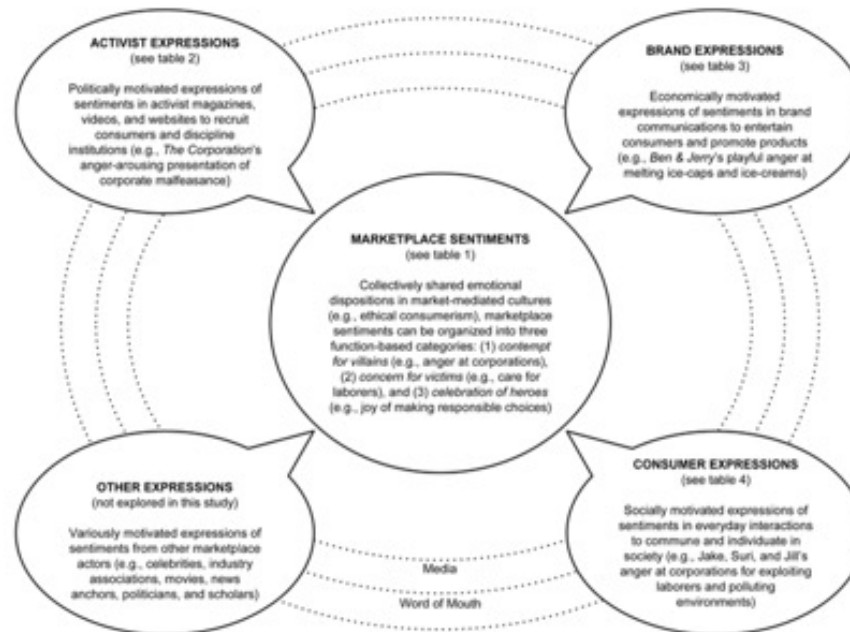aka "roadmap models" organize your findings section

vs.

Concept Visuals (CV)
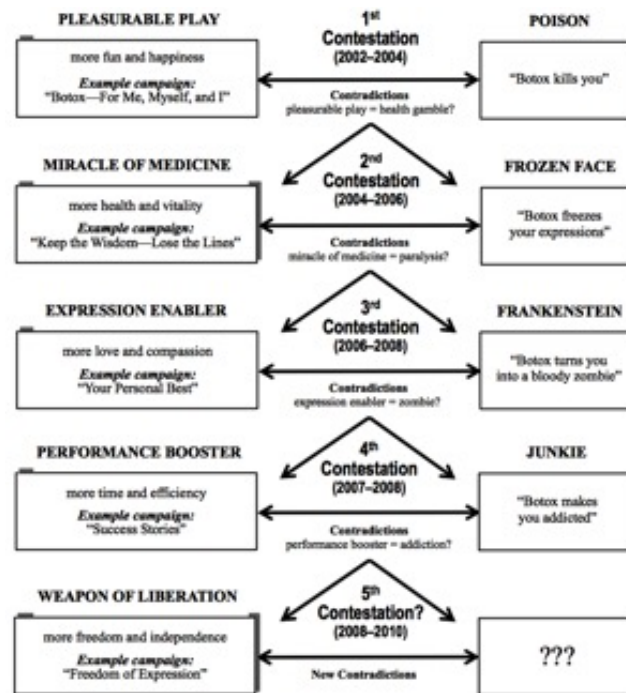aka "conceptual models" illustrate your theorization

NOTE: A CV can also serve as an OV,
e.g., Ustuner and Holt (2007), JCR

Outline Visual Ex. 1: A Visual Outline of the Study's Findings

Gopaldas 2014, JCR

Outline Visual Ex. 2: The Evolution of Botox Cosmetic's Brand Image (2002-2010)

Giesler 2012, JM

Because OVs are typically functions of CVs, let's focus on how we can build CVs.

2. Do I even need a concept visual?

Do I have a theorization?

YES

Does my theorization lend itself to a visual?

NO

NO — YES

No CV　　**I'm not so sure.**　　**Yes, CV**

Would a CV help me organize my thinking?　　　　**Did the AE/reviewers ask me to create a CV?**

YES　　　　NO　　　　NO　　　　YES

Make a visual but don't include it in the paper.　　　　**No CV**　　　　**Yes, CV**
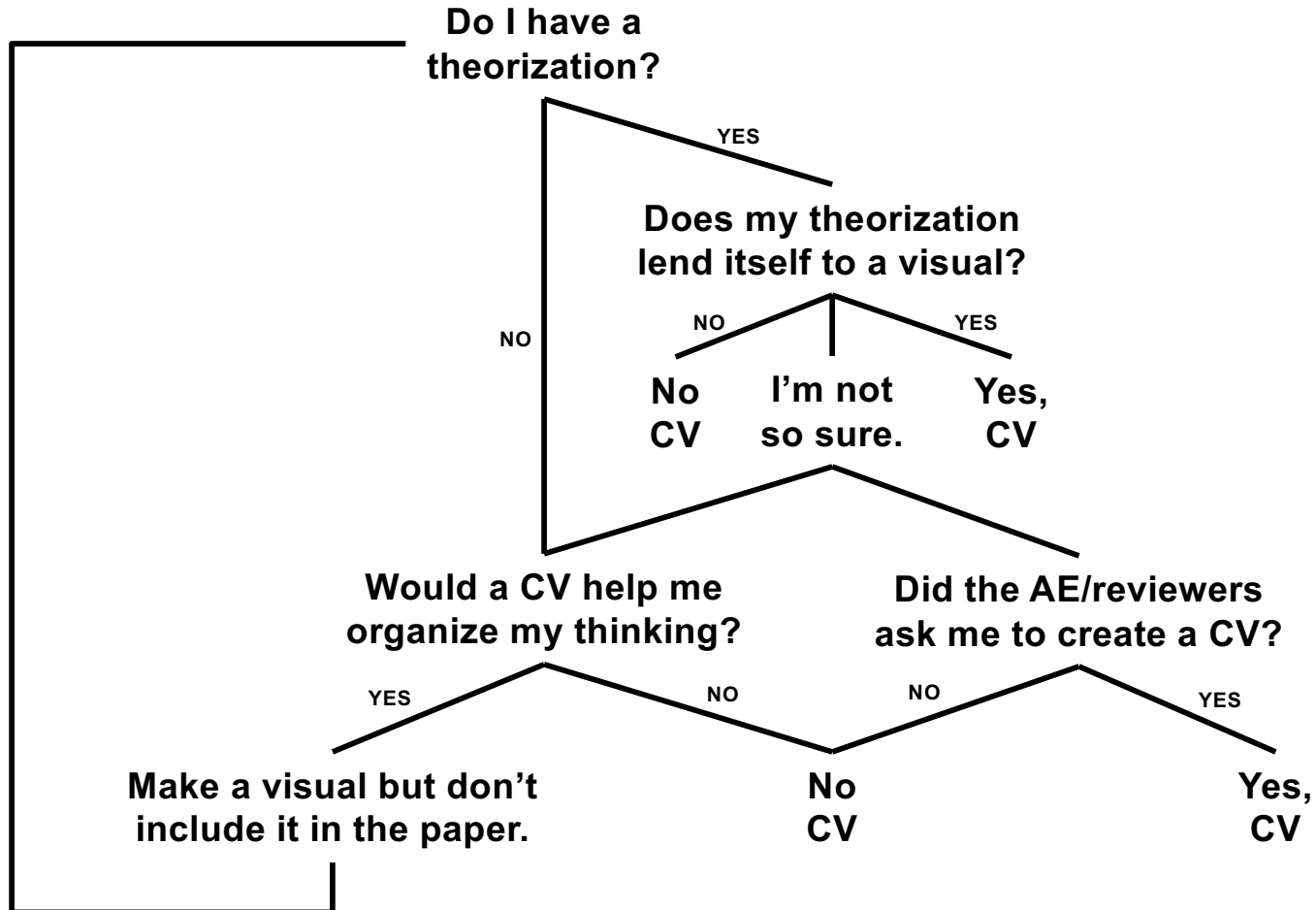
3. Are there CV templates or genres?

To answer this question, I analyzed concept visuals in the last 28 years of culturally oriented consumer research publications in JCR, JM, JMR, CMC, and Marketing Theory.

A. CV Dimension Development
B. Basic CV Template Overview

What causes what?

———————

How do things unfold over time?

D1: Variance vs. Process-Based Theorizing

What causes what?

How do things unfold over time?

VARIANCE THEORY

Explaining strategic change through a variance model

Attributes of
• Top management focus
• Inter-departmental cooperation
• Reward systems

→ Y Extent of Market Orientation

$Y = f\{x1, ..., xn\}$

e.g., Kirca, Jayachandran, and Bearden (2005)

PROCESS THEORY

Explaining strategic change through a process model

Reality 1

• Events
• Activities
• Choices

Reality 2

t0 ————→ tn

e.g., Gebhardt, Carpenter, and Sherry (2006)

More on Variance vs. Process-Based Theorizing
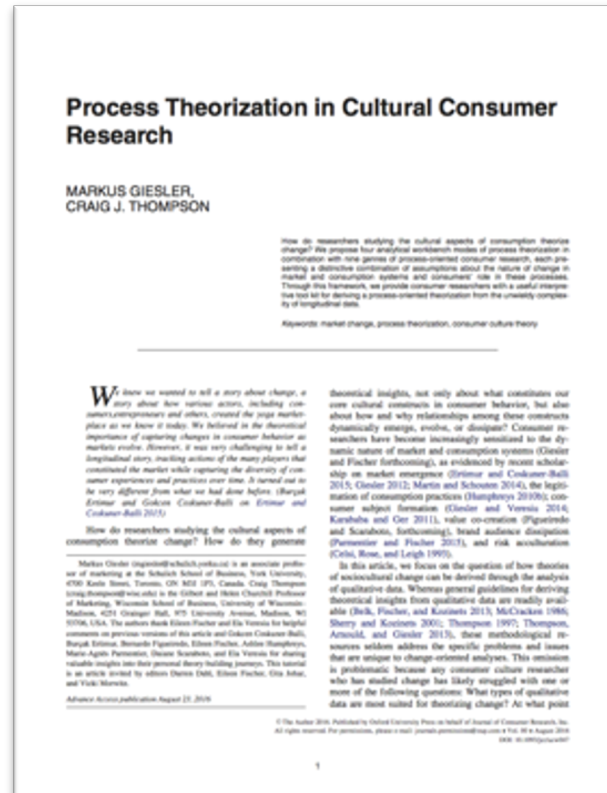
Download at mgiesler.com/research

One level of analysis?

————————

Multiple levels of analysis?

D2: One vs. Multiple Levels of Analysis
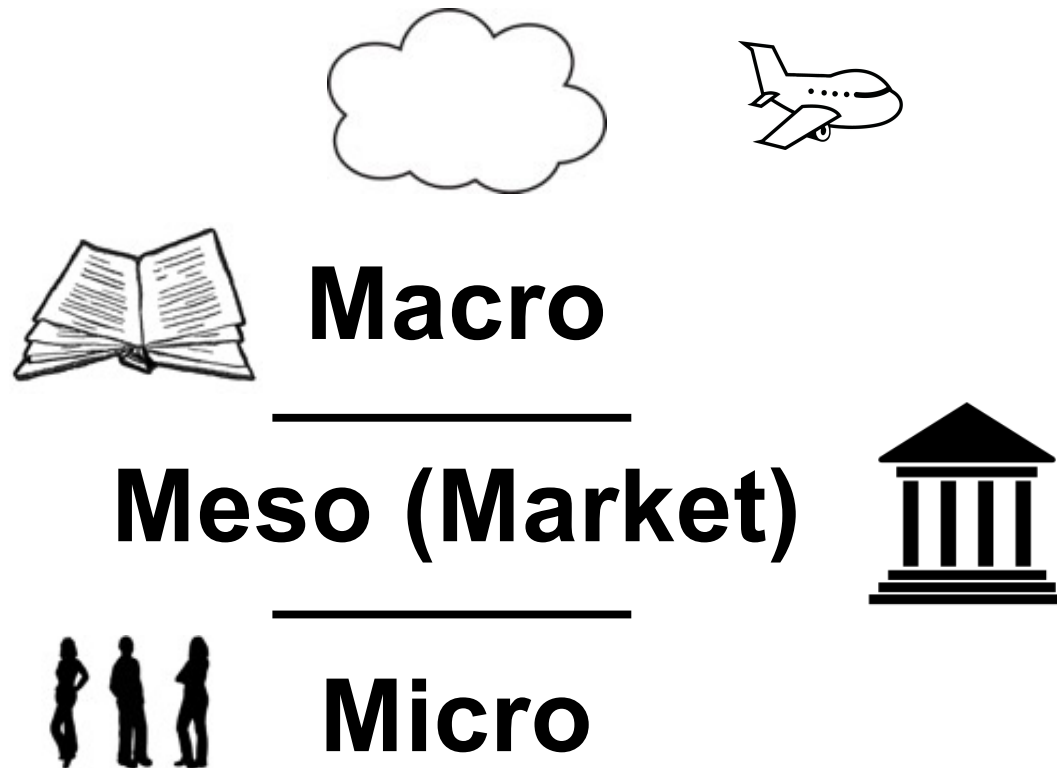
Macro
_____

Meso (Market)
_____

Micro

Concept Visuals: Four Basic Templates

Variance-Based   **Process-Based**

Intra-Level

Cross-Level
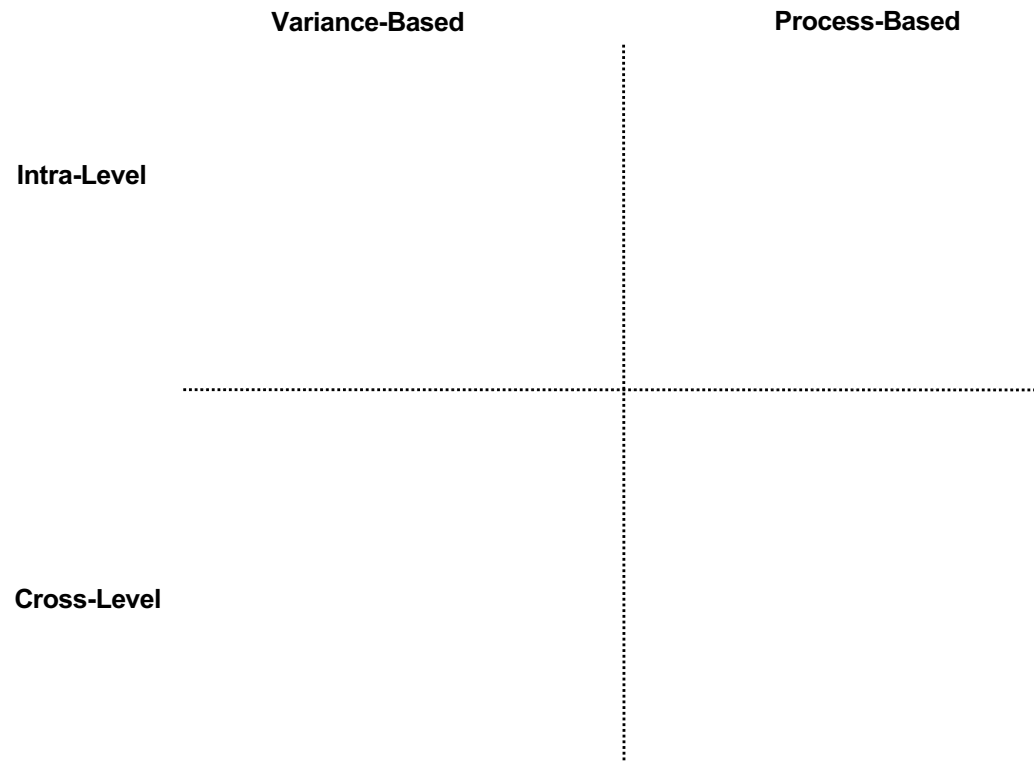
Concept Visuals: Four Basic Templates
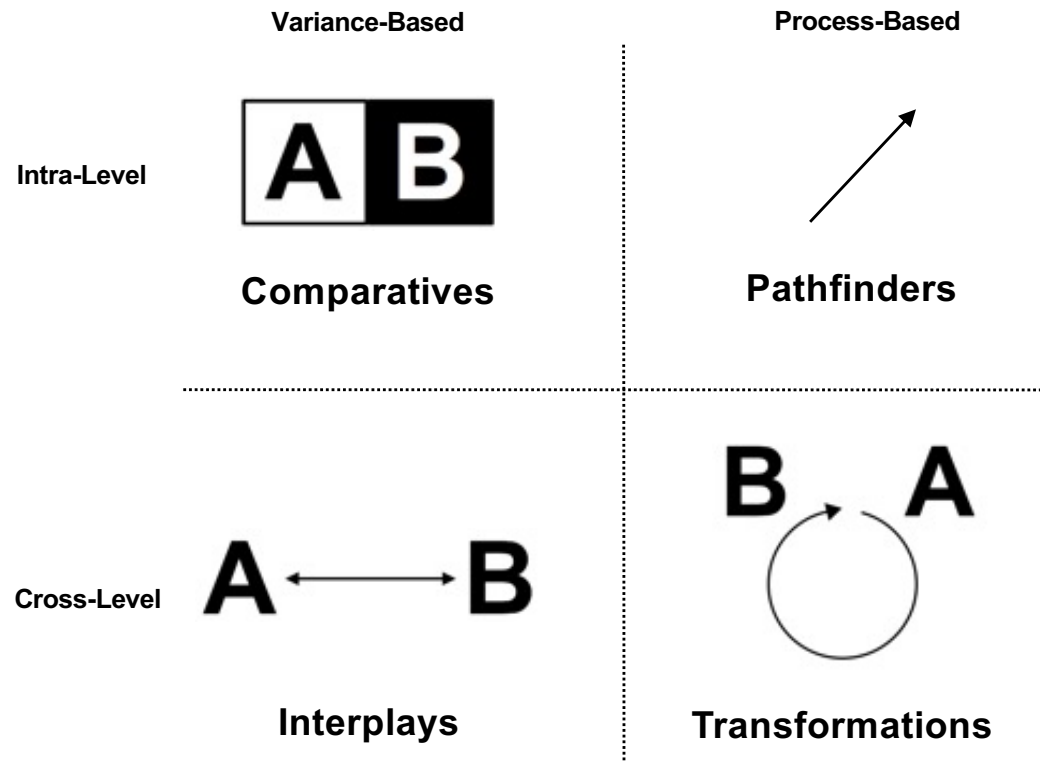
Ask Yourself

Where does the consumer/ consumption live in the visual?

What's the first thing you see or the first message you take away?

What role did the visual play in organizing the authors' thoughts?

AB

Comparatives

Impact of Cultural Discourses on Cognitive Elements of Goal Striving

	Culturally pervasive discourse		
	Scientific rationalism	Self-management	Fatalism
Appraisals:			
Self-efficacy	Perceived self-efficacy eclipsed by perceived efficacy of technology	Strong conviction of self-efficacy across process	Evaluation depends on whether trial is seen as willed by fate
Action/outcome expectations	Expectations of each trial generally positive	Expectations of each trial conservative	Expectations vary across trials
Affect toward means	Disciplined	Detached	Positive when trials endorsed by fate
Action planning:			
Plan completeness	Embrace one technique at a time based on recommendations of experts	Embrace multiple techniques at once; have a "Plan B"	Embrace one trial at a time based on perception of what higher power endorses
Plan specificity	Escalation/change dictated by experts	Escalation/change dictated by self	Few specific plans
Novelty	Viewed as beyond bounds of rationality	Embraced/sought after	Embrace if signals from higher power so indicate
Goal maintenance:			
Protect/maintain goal	Maintain within rational bounds	Flexible about subgoals	Maintain goal if perceived as will of fate
Revise goal	Revise within rational bounds	Revise so long as parenthood will result	Revise if perceived as will of fate
Abandon goal	Abandon if continuing seems irrational	Not supported	Abandon if perceived as will of fate: then count blessings

Fischer, Otnes, and Tuncay 2007, JCR

AB

Comparatives

Relationships between Liquid and Solid Consumption

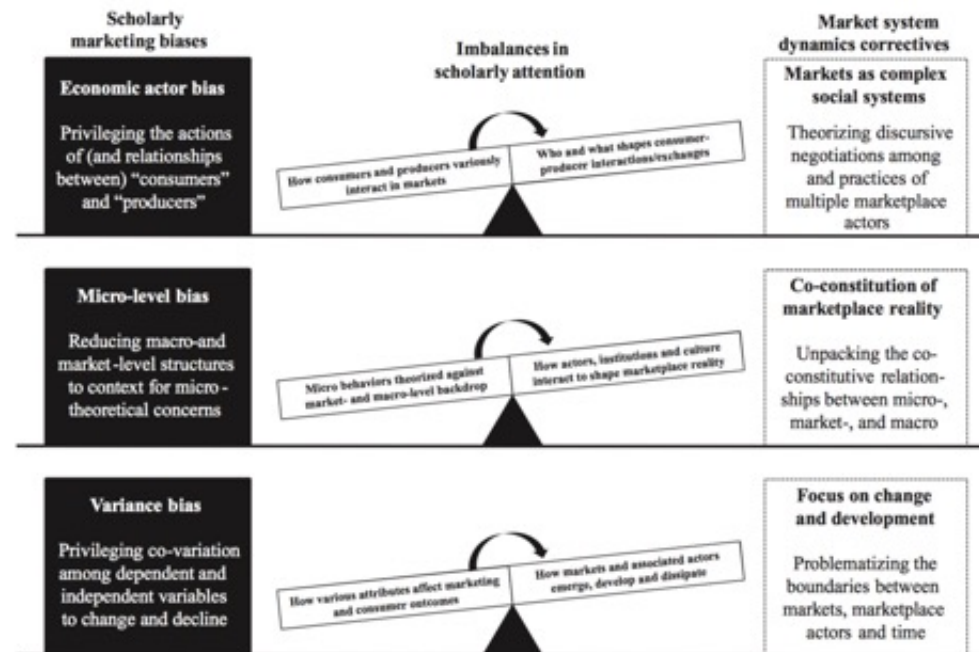|	Liquid Consumption	Solid Consumption
Consumer identity	• Low relevance to the self (Bardhi and Eckhardt 2012)	• High relevance to the self (Belk 1988)
Nature of social relationships	Commoditized and monetized relationships • Brand publics (Arvidsson and Caliandro 2016) • Social media (Zwick and Bradshaw 2016)	Noncommoditized social relationships • Brand community (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001)
Accessibility to mobility networks	High accessibility • Global nomads (Bardhi et al. 2012) • Global cities (Sassen 2005)	Low accessibility • Isolated towns and rural areas
Nature of precarity	Professional precarity • Cultural creatives (McWilliams 2015) • Gig economy prosumers (Ritzer and Rey 2016)	Economic precarity • Downward mobility (Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013) • Greek economic crisis (Chatzidakis 2017)

Bardhi and Eckhardt 2017, JCR

Market System Dynamics as a Corrective to Three Salient Scholarly Marketing Biases

Scholarly marketing biases	Imbalances in scholarly attention	Market system dynamics correctives
Economic actor bias Privileging the actions of (and relationships between) "consumers" and "producers"	How consumers and producers variously interact in markets / Who and what shapes consumer-producer interactions/exchanges	**Markets as complex social systems** Theorizing discursive negotiations among and practices of multiple marketplace actors
Micro-level bias Reducing macro-and market-level structures to context for micro-theoretical concerns	Micro behaviors theorized against market- and macro-level backdrop / How actors, institutions and culture interact to shape marketplace reality	**Co-constitution of marketplace reality** Unpacking the co-constitutive relationships between micro-, market-, and macro
Variance bias Privileging co-variation among dependent and independent variables to change and decline	How various attributes affect marketing and consumer outcomes / How markets and associated actors emerge, develop and dissipate	**Focus on change and development** Problematizing the boundaries between markets, marketplace actors and time

Giesler and Fischer 2016, MT
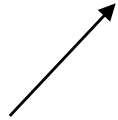
How to design

A B

Comparatives

Pick categories of X (X=discourses, practices, etc.) for comparison

Pick two or more structuring dimensions

Pick a takeaway message: contrast, continuum, balance, imbalance, etc.
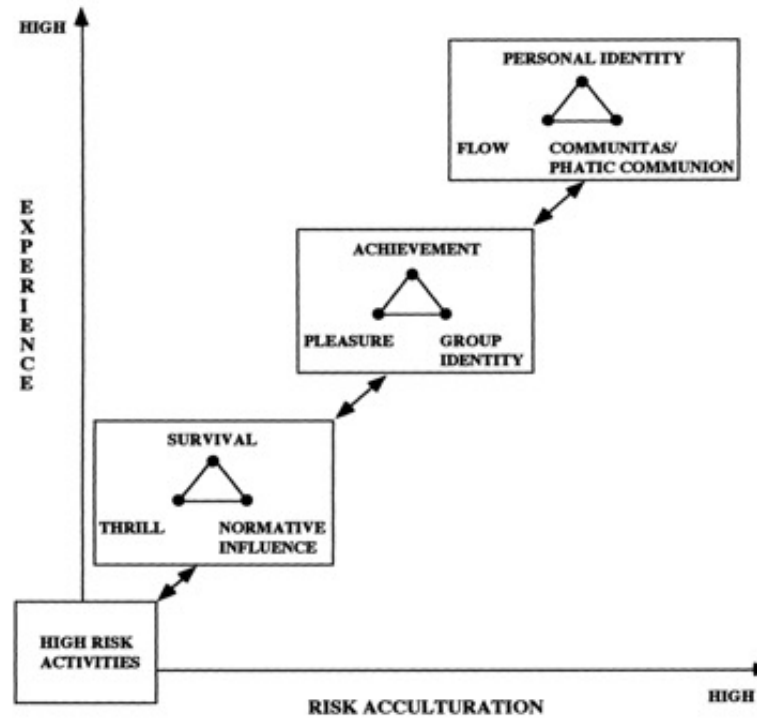
Visual elements: tables, 2-by-2, 2-by-3, arrows, etc.

Pathfinders

The Evolution of Motives for High-Risk Consumption
in Relation to Risk Acculturation and Experience

Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993, JCR
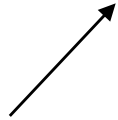
Pathfinders

Legitimation Stages and Framing Strategies
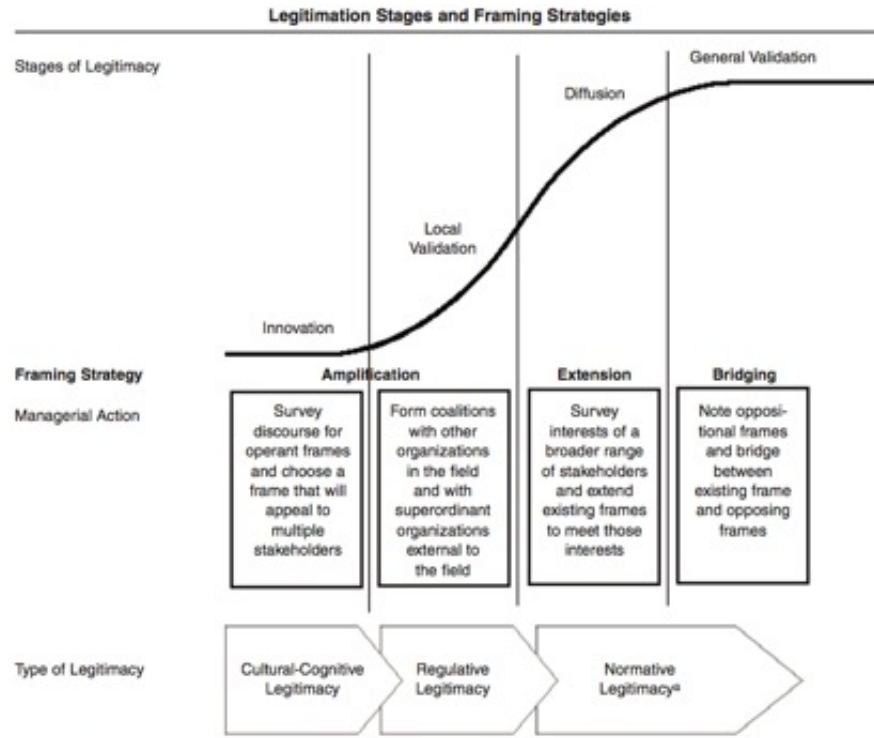
Humphreys 2010, JM

How to design

Pathfinders

**Pick your focal construct
(e.g., legitimacy, risk experience)**

**Pick dimensions, and stages/phases
that shape your focal construct over time**

**Pick a takeaway message: growth,
decline, stagnation, variation, etc.**

**Visual elements:
2D, 3D graphs, boxes, arrows, etc.**

A ⟷ **B**

Interplays

**The Process of Collective Value
Creation in Brand Communities**

Social Networking
•Welcoming
•Empathizing
•Governing

Community Engagement
•Documenting
•Badging
•Milestoning
•Staking

Impression Management
•Evangelizing
•Justifying

Brand Use
•Customizing
•Grooming
•Commoditizing

Value
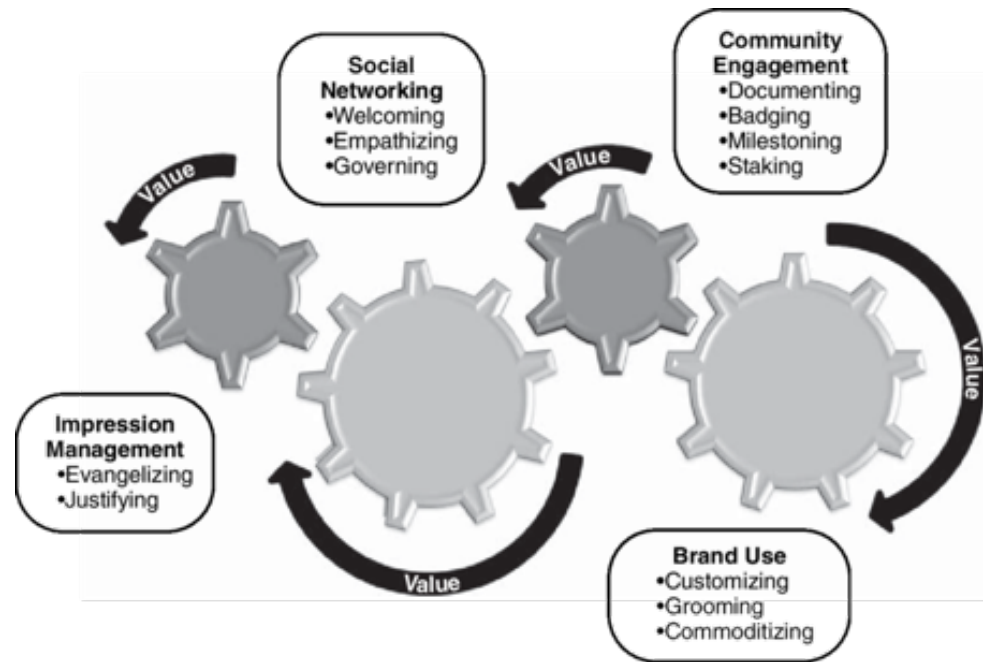
Schau, Muniz, and Arnould 2009, JM

A ←——→ **B**

Interplays

The Ideological Field of Technology:
A Semiotic Square
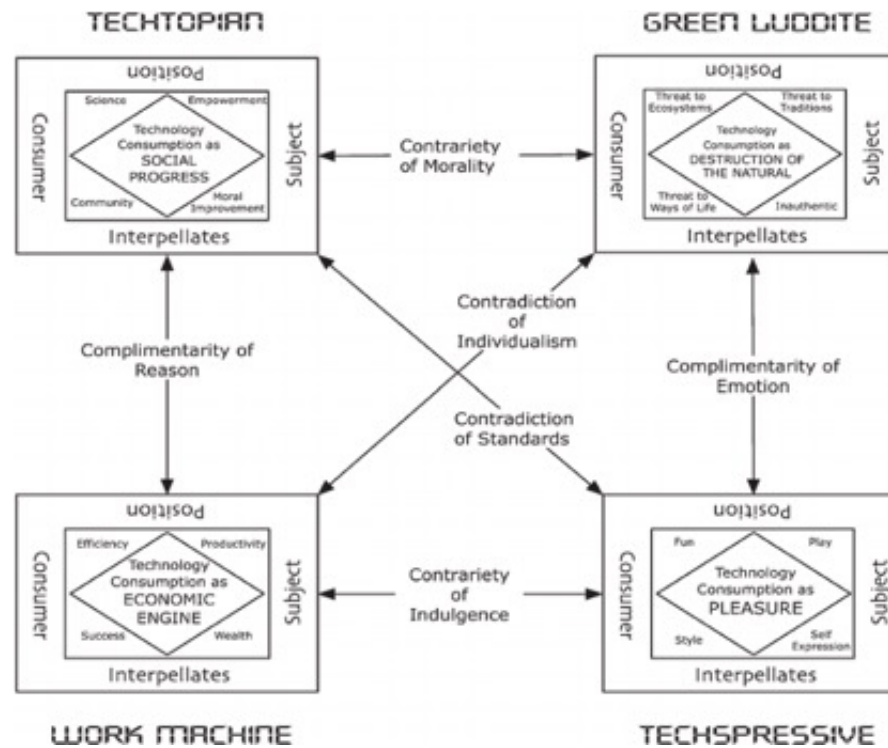
Kozinets 2007, JCR

A ⟷ **B**

Interplays

Hegemonic Memory Making

Moralistic nostalgia frame

Socialist goal/charge · Capitalist goal/charge
Guaranteed Labor ⟷ **Labor Efficiency**
"West is cut-throat." *Ideological Contradiction* "East is inefficient."

HEROES OF LABOR
Honest, industrious worker idyll past vs.
cold, managerialist capitalist present

Carnivalesque nostalgia frame

Socialist goal/charge · Capitalist goal/charge
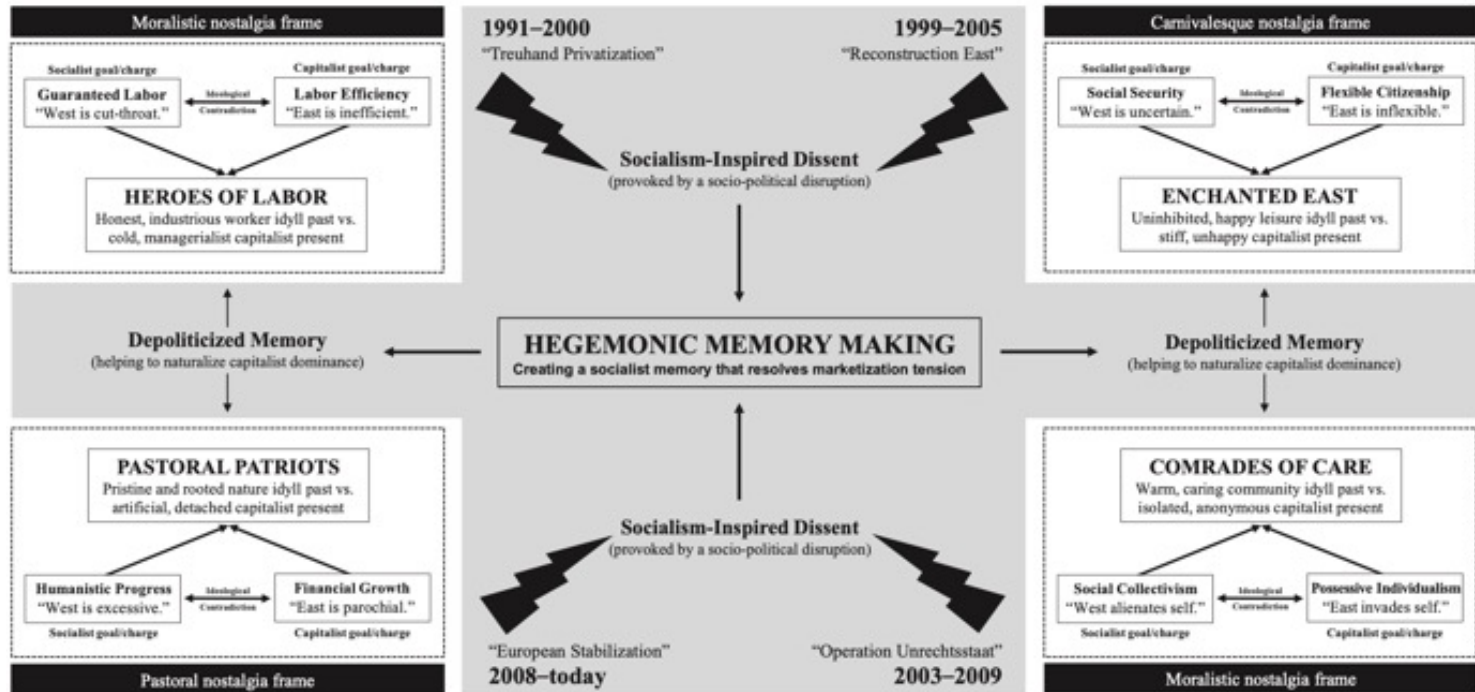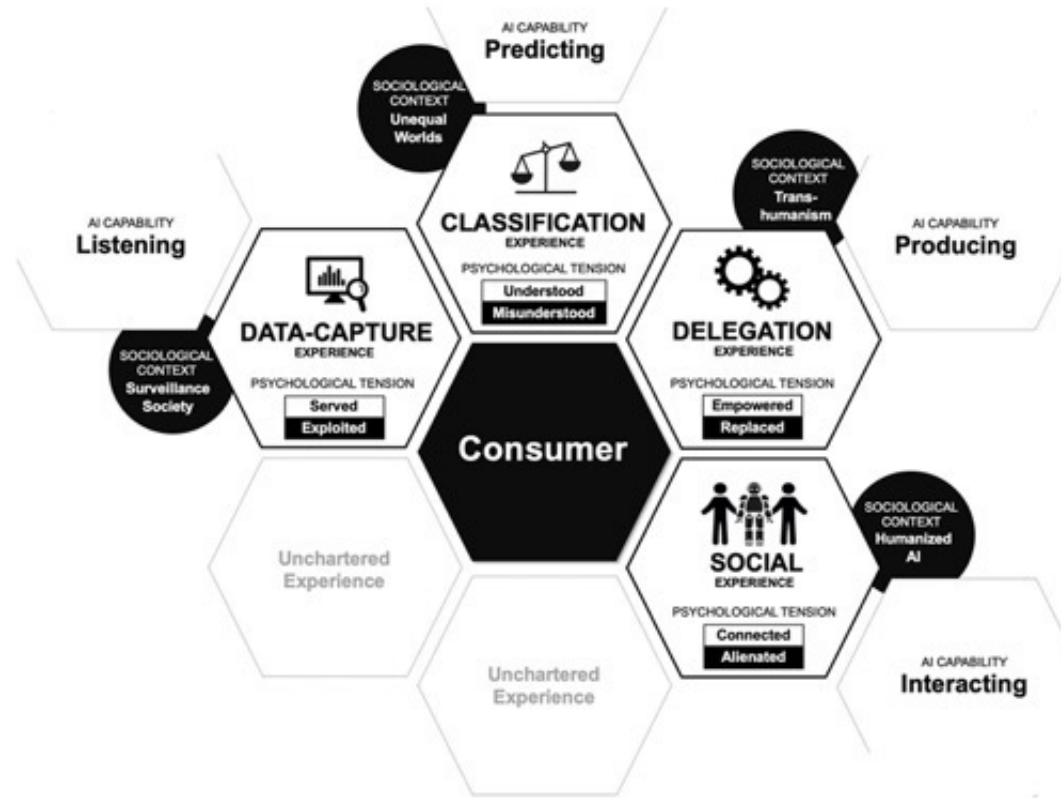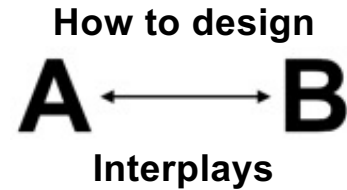**Social Security** ⟷ **Flexible Citizenship**
"West is uncertain." *Ideological Contradiction* "East is inflexible."

ENCHANTED EAST
Uninhibited, happy leisure idyll past vs.
stiff, unhappy capitalist present

1991–2000
"Treuhand Privatization"

1999–2005
"Reconstruction East"

Socialism-Inspired Dissent
(provoked by a socio-political disruption)

Depoliticized Memory
(helping to naturalize capitalist dominance)

HEGEMONIC MEMORY MAKING
Creating a socialist memory that resolves marketization tension

Depoliticized Memory
(helping to naturalize capitalist dominance)

PASTORAL PATRIOTS
Pristine and rooted nature idyll past vs.
artificial, detached capitalist present

Humanistic Progress ⟷ **Financial Growth**
"West is excessive." *Ideological Contradiction* "East is parochial."
Socialist goal/charge · Capitalist goal/charge

Pastoral nostalgia frame

Socialism-Inspired Dissent
(provoked by a socio-political disruption)

"European Stabilization"
2008–today

"Operation Unrechtsstaat"
2003–2009

COMRADES OF CARE
Warm, caring community idyll past vs.
isolated, anonymous capitalist present

Social Collectivism ⟷ **Possessive Individualism**
"West alienates self." *Ideological Contradiction* "East invades self."
Socialist goal/charge · Capitalist goal/charge

Moralistic nostalgia frame

Brunk, Giesler, and Hartmann 2018, JCR

A ⟷ B

Interplays

The Consumer AI Experience

Puntoni, Reczek, Giesler, and Botti 2020

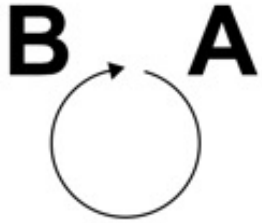**How to design**

A ←——→ B

Interplays

**Pick cross-level categories
(e.g., scripts, discourses, institutions,
practices, identities, etc.)**

**Establish types and directions of
(relationships among) categories**

**Takeaway message: spanning field,
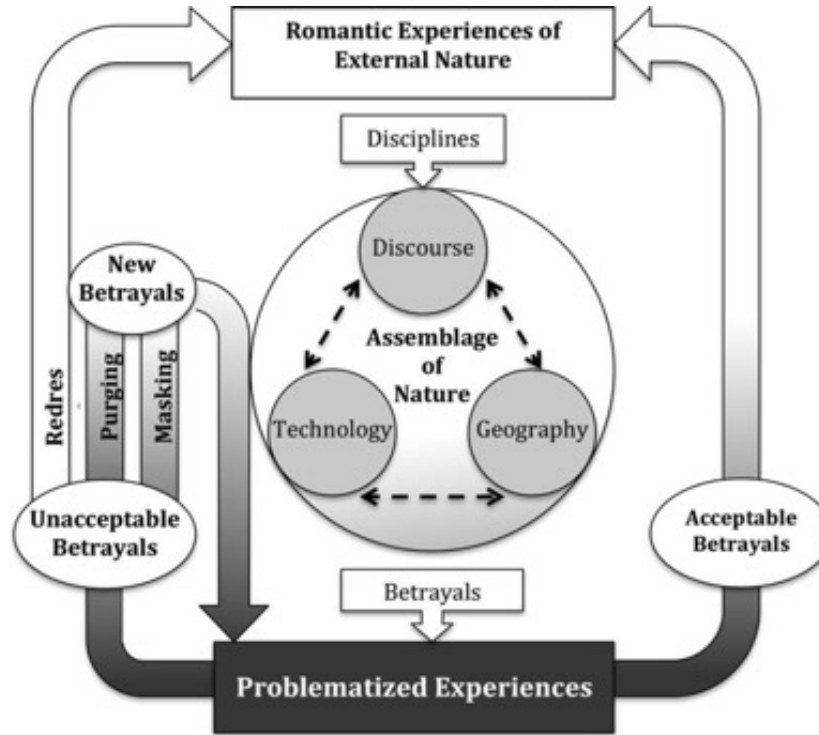tension/contradiction, interaction etc.**

**Visual elements:
bubbles, gearwheels, semiotic
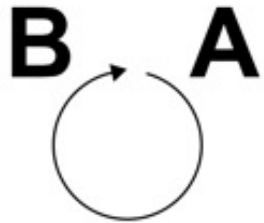squares, contrasts, etc.**

B ↻ **A**

Transformations

**A Process Model of Assembling
Nature for Romantic Consumption**

Romantic Experiences of
External Nature

Disciplines

Discourse

Assemblage
of
Nature

Technology   Geography

New
Betrayals

Redres   Purging   Masking

Unacceptable
Betrayals

Acceptable
Betrayals

Betrayals

Problematized Experiences

Canniford and Shankar 2012, JCR

B → **A**

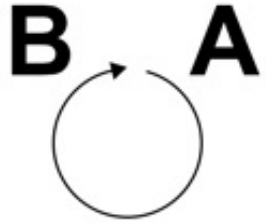**Transformations**

**Consumer Responsibilization
as a Governmental Process**
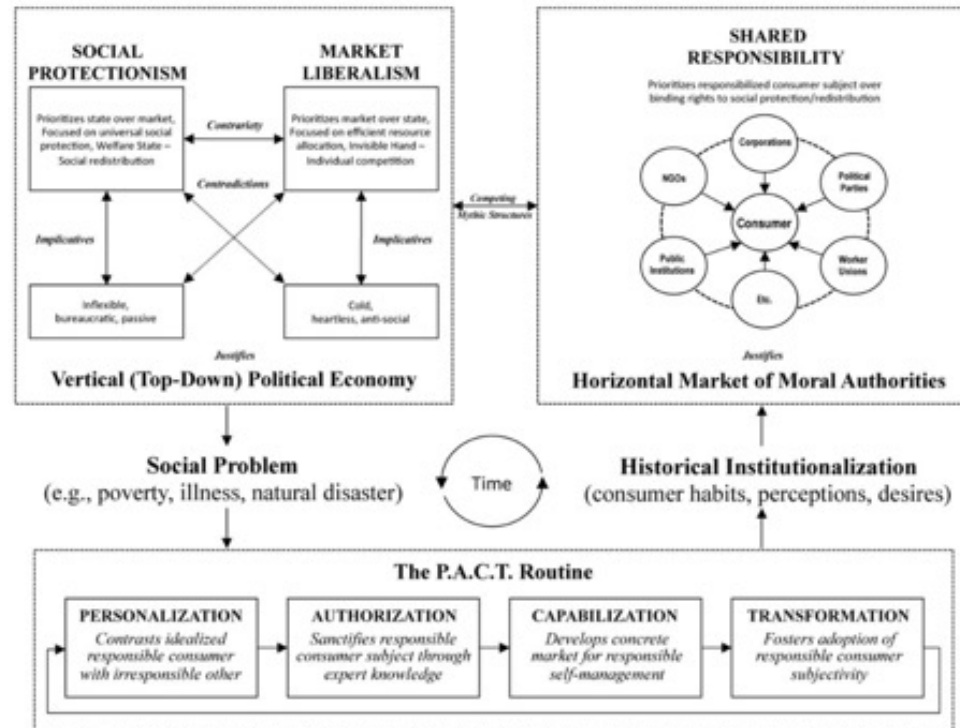
Giesler and Veresiu 2014, JCR

B → A

Transformations

Market-Mediated Multiculturation

NEOLIBERAL IDEOLOGY OF MULTICULTURALISM

ENVISIONING
POLITICAL SPHERE

Politicians imagining the
ideal citizen-type

EXEMPLIFYING
MARKET RESEARCH SPHERE

Researchers modeling
concrete role identities

ETHNIC CONSUMER SUBJECTIVITY
Immigrant & indigene
consumer behavior,
choices, identity
projects

EMBODYING
CONSUMPTION SPHERE

Indigenes & immigrants
adopting proposed identity

EQUIPPING
MARKETPLACE SPHERE

Retailers providing suitable
market offerings

Veresiu and Giesler 2018, JCR

B → **A**
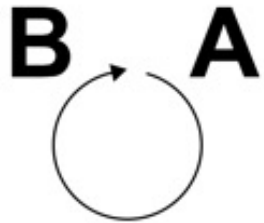
Transformations

**Misalignment of Practice Elements
Causes Drag or Rush**

5) Cultural under-standings | 1) Material Set-Up
4) Teleo-affective Structure | 2) Bodily Routines and Skills
3) Rules

5) Cultural under-standings | 1) Material Set-Up
4) Teleo-affective Structure | 2) Bodily Routines and Skills
3) Rules

5) Cultural under-standings | 1) Material Set-Up
4) Teleo-affective Structure | 2) Bodily Routines and Skills
3) Rules

Performing the practice evokes experienced temporality t^exp

Aligned Performance
Optimal timeflow when all elements aligned

Example outcomes

Security, relaxation, enjoyment

Misaligned Performance
Misaligned element speeding up timeflow, causing rush

Stress, fear, frustration

Misaligned Performance
Misaligned element slowing down timeflow, causing drag

Boredom, lack of interest, lack of patience

Woermann and Rokka 2015, JCR

How to design

B **A**
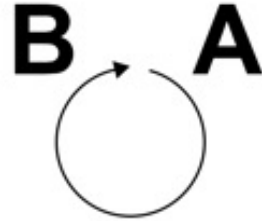
Transformations

Pick focal transformation (e.g., timeflow, nature experience, consumer responsibilization)
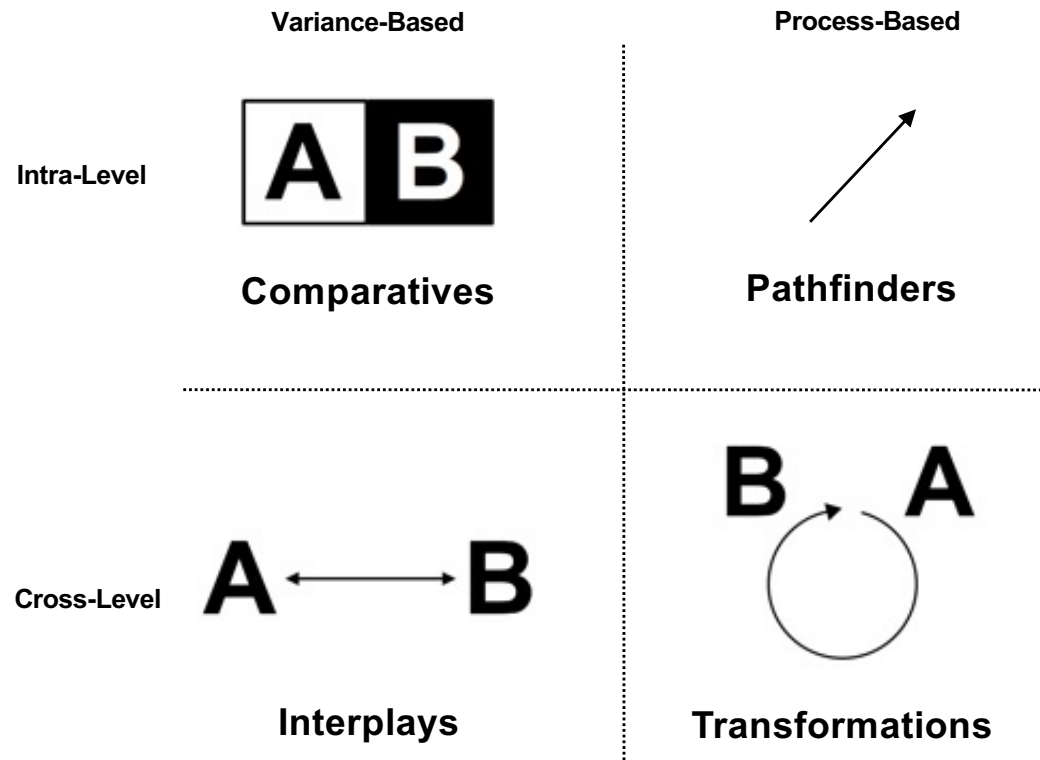
Create a sense of change-over-time by assembling co-constitutive relations among shaping constructs sequentially (e.g., (counter-)clock, left-to-right)

Pick a takeaway message: continuity/ discontinuity, topological shifting, etc.

Visual elements: circles!, semiotic squares, arrows, boxes, etc.

Concept Visuals: Four Basic Templates

Variance-Based

Process-Based

Intra-Level

Comparatives

Pathfinders

Cross-Level

Interplays

Transformations

Exercise: Create a Concept Visual

What broader CV template did I draw inspiration from for my CV?

Where does the consumer/ consumption live in my CV?

What's the very first thing I wanted the observer to see/take away?

Slides at: mgiesler.com

Let's all create…

Informative, transformative, captivating, cultural consumer visuals of stability and change.