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Toward a Broadened Theory of Preference Formation and the Diffusion of Innovations: Cases from Zinder Province, Niger Republic

ERIC J. ARNOULD*

The standard model for the diffusion of innovations in consumer behavior does not adequately account for the incorporation of novel items of non-local origin into the material culture inventory of Hausa-speaking peasants in Niger. A synthetic, culturally relative model composed of elements drawn from the standard diffusion paradigm, from world-systems theory, and from economic and symbolic anthropology provides a more satisfactory account of these processes. Analysis shows that novel goods provide a medium through which alternative paradigms of consumer behavior and reality contend. Among the Hausa, a premarket model, a Western market-mediated model, and an Islamic ethnonationalist model compete for consumer affiliation.

Economic anthropologists have long recognized the potent source of Third World cultural change that the evolving world market system represents (Barnett 1953; Sherry 1987b; Smith 1976). However, they reject the argument (e.g., Sender and Smith 1986) that the incorporation of Third World societies into the world market is an inexorable, linear process leading to homogeneity in consumer behavior and values.

It has been argued that Western consumer culture is transformed in Third World contexts by local interpretation of and resistance (both material and symbolic) to the incorporation process (Ennew, Hirst, and Tribe 1977; Gregory 1982; Voss 1987). World-systems analyses¹ show that African economies are well integrated into the world economy through production and exchange (Gutkind and Wallerstein 1976; Wallerstein 1976). Historically, however, incorporation has been marked by resistance to imposed economic relationships (Chevalier 1983; Suret-Canale 1977). My contention is that consumers in Niger now wage significant debate about incorporation into the world market and the cultural order it entails through consumption decisions rather than through production decisions (Schwimmer 1987; cf. Raynaut 1979).

Several themes are pursued in this article. First, it builds upon previously reported findings (Wallerstein and Arnould 1988)² to determine the causes of observed regularities in choice of favored objects, and the reasons for secular change in priority acquisition practices in an African context through time and

¹World-systems analysis refers to a large and diverse set of writings that share a global rather than a national level perspective. This scholarly tradition was inspired by Immanuel Wallerstein's seminal book, *The Modern World System*. Such analyses assume that the history of the modern world is the history of capitalist accumulation as a single, modern world system characterized by three interrelated structures: the structure of capitalist accumulation, the core nation/peripheral nation division of labor, and the state system. Three basic cyclical processes have been identified: long waves of economic growth and stagnation, long-term cycles of power distribution among core nations between periods of rivalry and hegemony, and alterations in the core-periphery control structure between colonial control and informal control. An additional set of developmental dynamics is constituted by three secular trends: the expansion of the size of the world system; the interrelated increases in proletarianization, commoditization, capital concentration; and the increase in mechanization. World-system analysts seek to document these continuities and to explain how they developed and how they are reproduced and altered around the world and across long stretches of time.

²Wallerstein and Arnould (1988) used surveys and photographs to explore the meaning and histories of favorite objects in two cultures. Data showed that favorite object attachment is conceptually and empirically distinct from the more general possessiveness component of materialism. This component has different salience and substantive meaning cross-culturally. These differences derive from differences in world view as well as in the way objects are used to define the self. The research also demonstrated that favorite object attachment is distinct from social linkages; that is, it represents a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, such linkages. Finally, research results raised the question of whether it is possible to abstract the meaning of materialism from particular cultural contexts.

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through the life cycle (as recommended by Gatignon and Robertson 1985).

Second, to broaden the theory of preference formation and the diffusion of innovations, ethnographic case materials from Zinder Province in the Niger Republic are presented. These materials provide a check on the construct validity or generality of standard propositions for diffusion research (Gatignon and Robertson 1985; Kirk and Miller 1986).

The ethnographic data derives from a culture that does not "believe there is a 'whole new me' to be discovered in untried consumer options" (McCracken 1988a, p. 127) and thus has no particular disposition to innovate. Analysis of the case material suggests elements of an improved, multicultural model for the diffusion of consumer innovations, and helps transform the metaphorical or descriptive mission of anthropology for consumer research into a paradigm building one (Sherry 1987a).

Third, this work seeks to contribute to the disciplinary goals of consumer behavior research in the development of a comparative science (ethnology) of consumption rather than merely one of buyer behavior (Belk 1987; Sherry 1986a, 1987a).³ As part of ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between anthropology and consumer research (e.g., Arnould and Wilk 1984; McCracken 1986, 1988a; Sherry 1983, 1986a, 1986b, 1987a, 1987b; Wilk forthcoming), this article provides a partial ethnography of consumption in Niger with special attention to an emergent research stream in both disciplines: the origins of demand for, and change in, the "standard package" of goods to which consumers aspire (Campbell 1987; McCracken 1988a; Riesman and Roseborough 1965). In the discussion, I suggest elements of a general model for innovation that links macromarketing phenomena with locally specified social processes.

Why should consumer behavior researchers bother to study consumer behavior among the poorest of the poor, such as consumers in Zinder Province, Niger? I suggest, paradoxically, that material poverty increases the opportunities to reorder, reconstruct, and resignify novel consumer goods (Mick 1986) of Western origin in light of local forms of class and status dynamics, and local systems of meaning. Therefore, Zinder is a good place to see how novel goods are used to make visible, and, at least temporarily stable, cultural categories (e.g., roles, statuses and occupations, stages in the life cycle, typologies, ideals, and so on; Douglas and Isherwood 1979), especially new categories

of culture associated with the invasion of a non-Western economy by Western consumer culture (Sherry 1987b). In other words, it provides a unique context for reconsidering models of consumer innovation.

INNOVATION AND DIFFUSION THEORY

Diffusion of innovations theory has provided a robust model that a number of social science disciplines have used to explain the spread of new ideas, practices, and goods (Barnett 1953; Brown 1981; Rogers 1962). Perhaps this productivity relates to the theory's ability to describe aggregate phenomena. Discussions of diffusion thereby avoid becoming embroiled in thorny questions of consumer rationality, as in theories of persuasion and purchase decisions.

A propositional inventory for new diffusion research recently has been developed by Gatignon and Robertson (1985). Although these authors embrace the diffusion of innovations perspective, they are critical, observing that the diffusion literature "reflects a lack of new insights and methods on the part of consumer behavior scholars" (p. 849), and that the literature "has been largely concerned with direct relationships and main effects" (p. 864). Some researchers have now begun to question the validity of these relationships (Midgely 1986). For example, in the applied anthropology of rural development, early enthusiasm about technology transfer (Barnett 1953) has given way to a greater appreciation of the complexity of the interaction of mediating variables in engineering changes in agricultural production systems. Second, Gatignon and Robertson add that "the assumptions underlying these models have not been adequately tested by consumer behavior researchers" (p. 864). Third, essential aspects of the innovation process, such as the adoption of multiple innovations, ascription of meaning to goods, the reasons for the generation of new wants, and the development of new consumption patterns have been neglected. In this research, therefore, an attempt was made to include features beyond the scope of the standard model and to critique some of the axioms underlying it.

Four ethnographic cases from Zinder, Niger facilitate evaluation of Gatignon and Robertson's propositions developed within six "diffusion concepts": the adoption process, personal influence and opinion leadership, the social system, the diffusion process, personal characteristics of innovators, and perceived characteristics of innovations. The ethnographic cases target several areas of theory and method building identified by Robertson and Gatignon. One area is in understanding the effects of specific consumption decisions on consumption system objectives and vice versa. A second focuses upon indirect (economic, cultural, and historical) antecedents and effects on innovations and their diffusion. A third examines the question of perceived innovation characteristics. The

³Researchers in international marketing and consumer behavior have generally abandoned consideration of consumer behavior in Third World contexts to anthropologists. Unfortunately, anthropologists tend to address economic issues and use methods outside the frame of interest of most marketing scientists (cf. Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf 1988; Hudson and Ozanne 1988; Hudson and Wadkins 1988; Sherry 1989). Furthermore, a systematic treatment of the marketing/anthropology interface is unavailable (Sherry 1987a).

cases describe innovation for new product (and cultural) categories rather than the products' existing "benefit profiles" (Gatignon and Robertson 1985, p. 863), thus highlighting discontinuous innovation processes. Discussion also moves beyond consideration of adoption decisions for a single good to adoption of associated groups of goods (McCracken's 1988a "Diderot unities"). Finally, data suggest that both innovation characteristics (relative advantage, compatibility, triability, observability, and complexity) and innovation types (a continuum from continuous to discontinuous) must be defined in culturally relative terms. Methodologically, the data concern observed and historical behaviors and their interpretation rather than cognitive processes and imputed decisions.

METHODS

Data for this study come from the author's fieldwork in Zinder Province of the Niger Republic. Centrally located in the arid African Sahel, Zinder's southern boundary forms the international frontier between Niger and Nigeria. Rainfed cereals production and pastoralism support the provincial economy.

Ethnographic data collection began in 1977 in several villages (Lepdo, Don Doukou, and Riga) and one urban neighborhood (Angoal Majema). Systematic fieldwork has provided data for accounts of historical developments in production systems, marketing, and household organization (Arnould 1981, 1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1985, 1986).

Recent papers appearing in the *Journal of Consumer Research* and elsewhere discuss the methods (Belk et al. 1988) and epistemological foundations of the ethnographic or "naturalistic" approach to data collection (Hudson and Ozanne 1988; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Sherry 1987a, 1987b). As these authors explain, multiple data sources (both quantitative and qualitative), constant working back and forth between hypotheses and reality tests of them, and intimate knowledge of a group's daily life earned through long-term participant observation provide internal validity checks on the data (Kirk and Miller 1986, pp. 24-25). As in any discipline, peer review provides external validity checks for published material.

For this study, formal interviews provided data about consumer behavior (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). In March 1986, the author and two Hausa native-speaker enumerators administered a questionnaire to 26 men and 20 women in the three villages. The rationale for selection of the villages is provided elsewhere (Arnould 1982). Individuals represent a 10 percent, stratified random sample of household heads and their spouses. Households were stratified by wealth. Household size, reflecting labor pool size and producer to consumer ratio, is used as a proxy indicator of wealth. This is common research practice in the

West African Sahel (e.g., Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger; see Koenig 1986).

The questionnaire probed attitudes about possession and sharing, decision-making for major purchases, prized possessions, and consumption behavior at major festivals. Originally developed for U.S. populations, the questionnaire was adapted to Niger's cultural and linguistic context. For example, questions keyed to the greater material wealth and personal mobility of Americans were dropped, while others keyed to distinctively American modes of social interaction were modified to reflect local practice. A native speaker in the Rural Animation Service (sic) familiar with survey research from previous collaboration helped translate the questionnaire.

Several other data sets supplement the formal interviews. One set includes interviews with about 800 consumers opportunistically sampled in 13 of Zinder's more than 70 weekly markets over a year-long period in 1978-1979 (Arnould 1985; Arnould and McCullough 1980). Another data set comprises household budgets collected in 1978-1979 with the same core sample of 1986 respondents. In the villages, budgets were collected biweekly for 10 months by local, resident data enumerators (Arnould 1982). Private cereals marketing channel members in the Hausa-speaking zone (Zinder and Maradi, Niger; Northern Nigeria) also were interviewed in October 1983 (Arnould 1983), and several dozen members of cooperative marketing channels were interviewed in December 1987 (Arnould 1987).⁴

Observations, oral histories, and informal discussions also supplement data from the quantitative survey instruments. Qualitative data collection in March 1986 focused on the origin and diffusion over the past 60 years of identifiable innovations in consumption goods. Items discussed ranged from cloth to iron bedsteads and from men's embroidered bonnets to women's much-prized, enameled tin ware.

It is from this data set that a series of ethnographic cases was constructed for this article. They are cases in the sense that all represent some subset of discrete consumer behaviors abstracted from the more general set of such behaviors, but they differ from conventional cases in marketing. They are told from the "emic" (Belk et al. 1988, p. 450) or consumers' point of view versus the marketing managers', and the style of presentation is sometimes indirect, layered, or discursive to catch the metaphorical richness of the material (Sherry 1986b). Each case nonetheless illustrates several features of the dynamic interplay between qualitative political-economic change, values, and demand. This qualitative data is marshaled in the discussion section to evaluate the theoretical or "construct" validity of Gatignon and Robertson's (1985)

⁴Ephemeral literature is on file in the Documentation Center of the Office of Arid Lands Studies at the University of Arizona in Tucson. It is available to qualified scholars on request.

propositions and to test whether their theoretical paradigm, as represented by the propositions, rightly accounts for data recorded in Zinder (Kirk and Miller 1986). This evaluation will be followed by a presentation of a broadened theory of preference formation and diffusion of innovations.

DATA

The first case describes the historical context for contemporary consumer behavior in Zinder. Discussion includes an interpretation of the consumer dynamics pertinent to the research purposes. Then, Cases 2 through 4 are presented. The latter are used to test more directly Gatignon and Robertson's propositions.

Case 1: Discontinuous Innovation in Consumption—The Great Transition

Data presented here illustrate the causes and consequences of a break in priority consumption patterns, normative change, the emergence of new opinion leaders with influence across product categories (as conventionally defined), and the reasons why goods transit social systems boundaries.

Patterns of Pre-Colonial Consumption. In the nineteenth century state of Zinder (or Damagaram), mass access to luxury goods was limited by macro-marketing factors: the narrow span of the market system, long channels, cumbersome media of exchange (cowrie shells, foreign coins, and slaves), and the absence of written accounting systems (Baier 1974, 1977). Long-distance trade with North Africa and the southern Hausa towns, artisanal production of export commodities (Arnould 1986; Baier 1974), and luxury consumption were monopolized by the urban warrior elite (*sarauta*) and their commercial agents (Baier 1974; Dunbar 1971; Salifou 1972). Thus, access to the circuits of exchange and consumption of luxury goods was obtained through essentially political connections (Douglas 1982).

The local military elite (*sarauta*) enforced sumptuary regulations on commoner (*talakawa*) consumption styles, especially for cloth and clothing. Informants explained that, for example, only elites might wear "beetle-wing" indigo cloth, hand-embroidered robes from Nigeria, or Meccan velour saddle accouterments. Although commoners might own slaves, large slave holding was limited to the *sarauta* and their principal clients. Firearms and horses were principally in noble hands. Commoners often wore only leather breechcloths and sometimes the family had only enough local homespun for a man's baggy breeches and his wife's breast and waist cloths. Rural folk wore sandals woven from palm fronds or made of rawhide. Gourd, leather, and wooden containers

were supplemented with the relative luxury of pottery cookware.

It was not uncommon for the elite to repress violations of sumptuary rules. An aged informant cited a case of confiscation of fancy clothing from his commoner father by the local canton chief one marketday many years earlier. In general, the relationships between elite economic "managers" and commoner producers within the pre-colonial state have been characterized as exploitative and class-like (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1975).

In the absence of a universal currency and with a penury of imported manufactures, the commoners lived in a virtually self-sufficient economy. Production and consumption processes were hardly differentiated (Meillassoux 1975). Rural economic specialization was limited to part-time, dry season activities, such as hunting, caravan trading, craftwork, and koranic study. Ephemeral dry season fairs constituted the rural marketplace. Most trade in mass consumer goods focused upon necessities, such as salt, iron tools, condiments, and cotton homespun.

Well into the twentieth century, senior men (elders) controlled the use of commoner household land, the labor of household members, and their products (Goddard 1973; Kohnert 1986). Other household members had little say in consumption decisions. Even as late as 1955, only male household heads disposed of any discretionary cash (Nicolas 1962). Typical of pre-colonial West Africa, kin group elders controlled the transfer of persons and marriage goods of local manufacture between intermarrying kin groups (Douglas 1967; Meillassoux 1975; Nicolas 1960).

As in many non-Western economies, personal worth (i.e., goodness) and wealth were measured by political and social control over wives, children, dependents, and slaves (*arzikin mutane*). Worth was realized through redistributive generosity. Mere possession of money, livestock, slaves, or other personal possessions was deemphasized in allocating social status (Hyde 1983; Kirk-Greene 1974).

Change in Consumption Patterns Under the Colonial Regime. After military penetration in 1899, the French colonial economic system unleashed enormous new demand for imported manufactures. In so doing, the very forms of consumption were transformed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In fact, changes in the local consumption system were implicit in the transition from the self-sufficient to the "extraverted" (Amin 1973), or outwardly-oriented, market economy (Kohnert 1986; Sherry 1987b) imposed by the colonial power (Amin 1973; Suret-Canale 1977). Scholars usually have treated this aspect of economic change as secondary to change in production and exchange (cf. Mintz 1977).

As early as 1920, Lebanese, and later French, merchants opened a limited market for peanuts in Southern Zinder (Collins 1974). Working on the basis of

liberal, mercantilist economic principles, merchants purchased peanuts from all comers without regard for traditional considerations of rank and status. Peanuts were exchanged for commercial script. At first, script could be converted only at company stores to percale cloth, soap, rubber shoes, and (unwanted) cigarettes.

Within 20 years, a dendritic network of peanut wholesaling markets had been created, where many goods were bought and sold, thereby fueling the subsequent development of a region-wide market system to service growing consumer demand (Arnould 1985; Collins 1974). Although this took place 50 years ago, contemporary informants could recall in precise detail the appearance of new varieties of rubber shoes (*hard'e*), plastic shoes (*dank'o*), and plastic shower sandals (*takadari, rasta*), and could display examples of successive currencies employed in these markets.

Around the "comptoirs" and military garrisons, new opinion leaders emerged as consumer role models. They consisted of a small group of merchants, clerks, merchant intermediaries, and their wives. Their status had a revolutionary new basis: differential access to money wealth (*arzikin kud'i*) and to metropolitan military power. Nothing could be more different from the traditional system of interlocking dependency relations that governed control over persons. Nonetheless, affiliation with the new colonial power brokers through traditional patron-client (*uban-gida/bará*) and intermediary (*wakili*) relationships remained the predominant local idiom for personal advancement.

The colonial administration's near obsession with revenue collection (Olivier de Sardan 1984; Salifou 1975) led to the imposition of a series of forced peanut cultivation and tax collection mechanisms after World War I. Two direct effects of these policies were to generalize peasant needs for cash and to promote individual cash crop production (Goddard 1973; Kohnert 1986). The unintended consequence was a parallel development of individualization of consumption decisions.

The growth of industry in the economies of the coastal colonies and its suppression in the interior colonies (Amin 1973) created a new inter-regional division of labor. In conjunction with the "push" of tax policy, this newly constituted regional economy created a "pull" for wage labor from interior colonial "labor reserves" like Zinder (Amin 1973). Wage labor provided young men with a new source of dry season employment outside of traditional networks of reciprocal obligations between kinspersons (Olivier de Sardan 1984).

By 1940, the combination of an expanded market system and increased money and goods in circulation provided the necessary initial conditions for ordinary individuals to make discretionary purchases of consumer goods on an unprecedented scale. However, one should not confuse new opportunities to consume with new propensities to consume. Following

are some of the sufficient conditions for fundamental changes in consumption style and the "standard package" of consumer goods.

Consumer goods may be thought of as highly redundant, conventional systems of communication used to mobilize others and transmit information about the nature of the social system and one's place in it (Douglas 1982; McCracken 1988a). Informants who first experienced markets unfettered by considerations of rank and status spoke of the exhilaration, excitement, and uncertainty with which the scales of the "comptoir" were initially approached. Although novel for Nigerien commoners, the dissociative consumption of Western manufactures widely connected with such pleasures (Hyde 1983; McCracken 1988a) promised quick accession to formerly elusive consumption ideals associated with the elite.

In Zinder, as in the Sahel generally, labor migration initially was fueled by the need for cash to pay taxes. Young men soon recognized its utility in obtaining bridewealth, especially cash and cloth (Amin 1974; Meillassoux 1975). Changes in the division of labor in agriculture, trade, and industry enabled young men to acquit themselves of their bridewealth requirements outside of the existing circuits of power and authority in which they were disadvantaged.

The longstanding desire of men dependent upon kingroup elders to free themselves from their dependent status was a powerful stimulus to participate in the newly liberalized economy (Meillassoux 1975). Such participation led, in turn, to a need to concretize the differentiation from the old community of consumption with new hedonic (Campbell 1987) material symbols, partaking both of old (e.g., robes) and new models (e.g., cigarettes) (Goody 1982; Hyde 1983). New material goods helped young people imagine the possibility of, and provided models for, a new, separate existence (McCracken 1988a). Wage labor contributed to the process of personalization of consumption decisions.

Given the communicative role of consumer goods, it becomes easy to see how the latent political and economic opposition between *sarauta* and *talakawa*, elders and dependents, provided the motivation for the latter to accede to the consumption trappings of the former (imported cloth and shoes). Cash transactions in the new, relatively free market system made this possible for the first time.

New forms of power and authority were enjoyed by the commercial and administrative elites created by the French. Their consumption trappings thus also became coveted, even necessary, objects to commoners seeking personal advantage through association with them. Informants provided examples of the influence of town-based elites across a broad range of product categories: clothing, shoes, hairstyles, house form (square adobe houses), furnishings (iron cots), food (wheat bread and lettuce), and condiments. In

the newly liberalized economic climate, all shared the attribute of being elite, metropolitan.

Since the 1940s, the new freedom to consume has contributed to a progressive, cyclical breakdown in indigenous systems of labor allocation and production, and the consumption ethic they implied (Arnould 1984a; Goddard 1973; Lubeck 1986; Raynaud 1976). Paradoxically, the alienation from the traditional norms of exchange and consumption planted the seeds of desire for exotic consumer goods capable of encoding new experiences (Hyde 1983; McCracken 1986; Mick 1986). However, once Zinder's premarket models of consumer behavior shattered under the colonial economy, there was no return (Bohannon 1967; Douglas 1967; Douglas and Isherwood 1979).

Case 1 demonstrates that consideration of macro-marketing, political-economic, and expressive variables contributes to an understanding of consumer innovation in societies moving toward market economies. Exploring the interplay of these variables offers a richer portrait of innovations in consumption than do conventional notions of associating modernization with economic "rationalization." In the following descriptive material, the unfolding results of this break with traditional consumption patterns are explored.

THE SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT OF INNOVATION AND DIFFUSION

The role Zinder's economy plays in the late twentieth century world economic system is to provide cheap labor and raw materials to more developed economies, especially Nigeria and France. As Zinder's economy became incorporated into this industrial world system, consumer behavior there underwent a qualitative transformation that was not a mere reflection of Western patterns of behavior. Some of the contextual and cultural factors influencing preference formation and innovation in consumer goods are described next.

Growth of Market-Mediated Exchange

General global trends—such as the intensification of commodity exchange relations (Arnould 1987) fostered by the increasingly powerful state (Timberlake 1985)—have an impact on Zinder's economic and social life. Entrenchment of cash crop production and wage labor has increased the volume and velocity of market-based exchanges and sped commoditization of previously gift-based relationships between extended kin groups (Raynaud 1979).

Accompanying processes of deepened social and economic differentiation within local society and expanded individual discretionary consumption are captured in household budget data. In 1955, mean value of household budgets in rural Zinder was only \$140 (Nicolas 1962). In 1978, 23 years later, mean

household budgets ranged from \$1,400 to \$4,300, a 10- to 40-fold increase (Arnould 1982).

Household expenditure patterns also have evolved markedly. In 1955, 70 percent of cash income was destined for tax payments. Of the remaining funds, only 19 percent was spent on clothing and adornment and 45 percent on gifts (primarily ceremonial prestations; Nicolas 1962, 1967; Raynaud 1973). By contrast, 1978–1979 tax payments in two villages fell to less than 2 percent of average household income (Arnould 1982). Items of personal adornment and housewares in both villages accounted for about 22 percent of expenditures while gifts accounted for 12 percent in one village and 34 percent in the other. Increased expenditures on food, especially foods prepared by kinswomen, reflected a novel commoditization of formerly commensual habits (Arnould 1982; Raynaud 1979). Women's consumption expenditures in some cases increased dramatically through heightened income from cash crops, livestock, crafts, and sales of prepared foods (Arnould 1982; Raynaud 1979).

Informants have relied increasingly on the marketplace as a source of goods and services. There were fewer than 20 markets in the region in 1910, but more than 70 in 1980. In 1978–1979, 61 percent of 316 consumers interviewed visited the market weekly. Most sold farm produce to finance their purchases. It was found in the same market study that consumers' purchases of food accounted for 60 percent of purchases. Crafts and gathered products, which are indicators of traditional economic activity, made up just 3 and 5 percent of purchases, respectively (Arnould and McCullough 1980).

Limitations on Market-Mediated Transactions

The survival of the contemporary peasant household is conditioned by sales and purchases (Arnould 1986; Bernstein and Campbell 1985; Chevalier 1983; Raynaud 1976). However, market-mediated discretionary expenditures for imported manufactures are still a minor part of economic life. In the 1978–1979 market study, manufactures made up just 16 percent of purchases.

Region-wide economic stagnation reinforces Zinder consumers' already routinized and overwhelmingly conservative purchase behavior. Data from the market study show that individuals buy prescribed goods at prescribed times. Cereals purchases, for example, fall heavily in the first third of the year when rural consumers have some money and seek to supplement household production with cheap purchases. Ideally, adults buy livestock either at harvest when cash reserves are highest or at the beginning of the rainy season, so the animals can be fattened for slaughter during the Id-el-Fitr festival some months later. On a weekly basis, the household head renews

the family's supply of condiments and sauce ingredients. Women's occasional purchases are for conventional items, such as extra clothing for themselves and their children and supplemental food (Crow and Henderson 1979).

The overall inventory of marketplace goods is conventional. According to 10 years of fieldnotes, it has varied little from place to place and year to year, despite the impact of seasonal and ecological differences between markets and central place effects (Arnould 1985). Furthermore, consumers are accustomed to visiting regularly one, rarely two, weekly marketplaces. Conventionality leads to rapid, nearly automatic, almost unconscious product knowledge. For example, I heard a woman reject tobacco flowers offered to her, saying she was so familiar with them that she could tell just by the smell if they were good. Consumers demonstrate similar behavior when purchasing bulk grain, hides, condiments, tools, and other local products.

Through time and with repetition and consistency in product presentation, the Zinder consumer builds up a store of almost tacit decision-making heuristics about products upon which purchase choices are based. Fidelity to conventional heuristics makes it difficult to elucidate conscious decision-making processes leading to individual purchase decisions.⁵ Recent controversial research suggests that mere exposure to consistent stimuli over time induces preference (Alba and Marmorstein 1987; Zajonc and Marcus 1982, 1985). Whether this is true, it seems logical that among illiterate consumers in a stagnant economy and in the virtual absence of advertising, simplified heuristics lead Zinder consumers to "simple repeat buying" (Jacoby and Kyner 1973) and consumption "inertia" (Neslin 1976).

Effects of Other Environmental Variables on Innovation

Economic underdevelopment, drought, and ecological deterioration frequently limit household consumption decisions in Zinder to those of obtaining food, clothing, and shelter. Households and individuals may at times liquidate their possessions to survive (Amin 1973; Franke and Chasin 1980; Salifou 1975; Watts 1983). These macroeconomic factors also structure innovation in consumption behavior in distinctive ways.

⁵Hausa grammar itself encodes a pattern of limited self-conscious intentionality of behavior in its verb forms. Future action is always expressed conditionally. In formal interviews, Zinderis resist investing their utterances with too much intentionality. After all, in such an uncertain environment who can comprehend the will of Alla? Thus, intentionality is deemphasized semantically as well. Active cognitive evaluation of objects through logico-deductive comparisons of attribute bundles is not a cultural given here as consumer behavior researchers working in the United States often imagine (cf. Belk 1985b). In Zinder, it is difficult to elicit even tacit knowledge of such traits.

First, searching for psychological well-being through discretionary consumption, which characterizes consumer behavior in the developed world (Campbell 1987), is constrained. A degree of object attachment and idiosyncratic consumption (Rook 1985) similar to that observed among American consumers would be a negative adaptation to Zinder's uncertain ecology and economy. (A statistical difference between U.S. and Zinder consumers in their degree of object attachment is reported in Wallendorf and Arnould 1988.)

Second, the most enduring assurance of biological and social reproduction and immediate personal security and well-being is still provided by networks of kinspersons (*dengi*) rather than the marketplace (Meillassoux 1975). It is for this reason, in part, that the most precious "commodity" often spontaneously identified by informants in the 1986 consumer survey was family. Indeed, part of the outpouring of marriage goods (see Case 2) seems to be an attempt to reassert the value of reproductive familial alliance against atomistic values (labor for personal profit and idiosyncratic consumption; Sherry 1987b) intrinsic to the global market economy.

Reliance upon the extended family network for labor and mutual aid (Smith 1985) is expressed in the tenacity of consumption behaviors that emphasize social integration and conformity. Consumption rituals that symbolize the connectedness of persons to one another are more common than those expressing difference. For example, baptisms, marriages, and funerals are always accompanied by the collection and redistribution of cash and kola nuts. Similarly, clothing circulates easily and casually among friends, and senior men aspire to own enough gowns to give some away (see Case 3), a gesture that the recipient might in turn repeat. Pious persons value the opportunity to give on major Islamic festivals. As one informant said, gifts bring joy and create the conditions for good relations between persons. When the concept of self is group-based rather than individual-based, gift-giving within the extended family may be seen as a form of giving to self and contributing to self-identity (Belk 1984).

Sociocentricity and consumer conformity is enacted through the reliance of senior consumers and women on consumer surrogates (male kinsmen) and so-called "market mavens"—*dillalai* and *wakili* (Feick and Price 1987; Solomon 1986). Women account for a considerable portion of "big ticket" discretionary consumption expenditures (e.g., iron beds, tapestries, livestock, and enamelware), but much of their purchase behavior is indirect. When they desire to buy something, they confide the purchase to a husband or younger man who then turns to the market maven for help in making an appropriate choice.

For "product evaluation," consumers often rely on family members and other experts, especially merchants (*yan kasuwa*) and intermediaries (*dillalai*),

who specialize in particular lines of goods. The tendency for successful merchants to frequent a small number of periodic markets regularly over many years reinforces trust (Arnould 1986).⁶ Hausa informants assume that market specialists will know at any given moment what informants call the prevailing mode of living (*zamani*) or style (*yayye*). Indeed, in these highly competitive, face-to-face markets (Arnould 1985), intermediaries must compile at least some "proactive" information, adjusting their messages to consumer income and lifestyle, to retain competitive advantage. Zinder's multitude of tailors provides an especially apt example of this process. Women very frequently entrust to them design decisions for clothes to be worn on affectively charged festive occasions. Some tailors express awareness of their prescriptive role in preference formation. Locally well-known merchant intermediaries, artisans, and especially tailors thus frequently arbitrate taste and, in a sense, act as opinion leaders.

Macroeconomic factors also help account for the deemphasis on purchase intentionality (which Western consumer researchers often assume is a universal trait—Belk 1985b, 1987) in the sociocentric rural communities of Zinder (Belk 1984). Notes from the 1986 consumer survey show that identification of upcoming "big ticket" expenditures poses difficulties for Hausa informants. A substantial minority of informants (13 percent) could identify no upcoming "big ticket" purchase. Of those who could, little more than one-third (35 percent) expressed certainty of purchase intent. More than one-third were waiting patiently for Alla to provide them the necessary resources. Most "big ticket" items identified represented conventional categories, such as livestock or marriage goods (see Case 2).

Impact on Diffusion

Contradictory tendencies in the development of markets and the behaviors and values they generate have been described. These factors channel the diffusion of innovations and restrict demand for novel goods. For example, old men and women were heavily represented among the 15 percent of the sample of 316 consumers who in 1978–1979 said they visited the marketplace infrequently. Such behavior is linked to fidelity to cultural conventions of modesty (*kumiya*), to the symbolic dangers associated with the market, and to the traditionally subordinate roles of old persons in consumption decisions.

Major purchases are rarely made without informing or consulting senior relatives, but the right of sur-

rogate consumers to make purchase decisions for others is taken for granted. Thus, consumer surrogates "play a role in determining actual goods purchased, as well as in defining the symbolic qualities of those goods" (Solomon 1986, p. 209). Through the efforts of marketplace "gate keepers," innovations more readily become a legitimate expression of community values (Solomon 1986, p. 209).

In trusting these "market mavens," consumers thus act in a way that runs counter to a "rational," choice-making model of consumer behavior. Cultivation of satisfactory personal relations with relatives, mavens, and other actors in the marketplace is more important than cutting the best deal. As informants in the tanning workshop disdainfully told me in 1978, "we are not like merchants," we do not know how much we make or spend. Compromise over minor distributive decisions in the interests of overall equity or fairness seems to influence norms and expectations of compliance (Corfman and Lehmann 1987).

A result of these artifacts of older behavioral models is a surprising lack of attention to and general ignorance of modern consumer goods among older consumers. Because the Hausa's sense of self, especially women's, is defined predominantly by doing (i.e., conforming to traditional role expectations; Callaway 1984) rather than by developing a strong, individual self-concept, such inattention is perhaps predictable (Belk 1984).

Against this normative background, whimsical, minor innovations in discretionary consumption that fall within a narrow range of recognized categories of goods (like McCracken's 1988a "Diderot unities") diffuse with extraordinary rapidity. For example, the girls' "disco" style blouse (featuring a quilted bodice insert) and the revived "meet you at the bank" men's bonnet style (featuring silhouettes of mosques) swept through Zinder's face-to-face consumption community in the wake of the 1984 drought.

Domestic, ceremonial, and agricultural cycles are superimposed at the weekly marketplace. Periodic markets regularly provide a dependable stage for the enactment of approved consumption behaviors and the cultivation of the self at every step in a consumer's life. Marketplaces are literal stages where almost ritual acts of social integration succeed in time and space through culturally constituted, repetitive, consumption gestures. Markets in Zinder serve primarily to legitimate preferences and socialize consumers to the available material culture inventory. Repetitive market transactions help maintain consistency between the "order of goods" and the "order of culture" (Sahlins 1976, p. 178), so to speak. They do this by routinizing consumer behavior.⁷

⁶Because written accounts and market information sources were rare, consumer surrogates (*wakili*) and intermediaries were common figures in pre-colonial Hausa market systems (Baier 1974). Thus, they do not represent "new channel members" as one consumer researcher maintains (Solomon 1986).

⁷These features of socioeconomic organization are reflected in the sociocentric and altruistic scores of Hausa informants to Likert scale-coded questions probing attitudes toward possessiveness and materialism (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). Object attach-

The following ethnographic case materials will show how other, particular cultural patterns inform consumption decisions, just as they inform production decisions, and influence qualitative changes in preference (Chevalier 1983). Furthermore, ethnographic evidence suggests that more than one paradigm of consumption competes for consumer affiliation.

CONTEMPORARY CASES OF PREFERENCE FORMATION AND DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS

In discussing the formation of preference, several consumption events recurred in informant commentary. Behaviors associated with these events are used to explore the dynamics of continuous innovations in contemporary consumption goods. Several of these events are associated with individual life crisis events (e.g., marriage, pilgrimage, baptism; Van Gennep 1960/orig. 1908) that entail transformations in personal status and perturb routine consumption behaviors. All of them are occasions during which the pervasive social dialectic of self differentiation and group integration (Weissner 1984) comes into focus. These events localize stochastic, cyclic, and/or secular changes in preference. For example, new socioeconomic oppositions between urban elites—both traditional (*sarauta*) and modern (*el hadj, yan birni, yan ikko, muce*, i.e., *monsieurs*)—and the rural masses (*talakawa*)—men and women, young and old, believers and non-believers—can be encoded in dress and other goods at these events. Thus, Zinder consumption rituals move hedonic meaning among goods, people, and the culturally constituted world (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; McCracken 1986). The key events include: marriage, dry-season wage labor migration, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Case materials associated with these events will be described and their implications will then be explored in the discussion.

Case 2: Continuous Innovation in Women's Marriage Goods

Examination of this case provides information about normative change and stability in innovation, systems boundaries, and opinion leadership. To broaden the propositional inventory, several neglected aspects of diffusion are examined: the role of consumer surrogates (Solomon 1986), the interaction between social structure, life cycle, and situational in-

fluence, and the role of affect in preference formation and the diffusion process. Of particular salience is a stylistic feature called "brilliance" (*miski*), which channels consumer demand for novelties.

A critical periodic consumption event that provides scope for expression and innovation of preferences is the marriage ceremony. Just as agricultural production dominates the brief four-month rainy season, social reproduction through marriage is a dominant focus of activity during the post-harvest period.

A typical rural marriage today often involves expenses well in excess of the annual per capita income (\$250). Three nine-meter lots of wax print cotton cloth, three pairs of plastic shower shoes, two scarves, a double, painted metal frame bed with brass poster ends, a straw mattress, a machine woven tapestry with a "Hindu" scene on it, a dozen assorted "JOY" and "Premier" brand toilet soaps, three bottles of perfume, three jars of scented petroleum jelly, two boxes of powder, rouge, eye pencil, pancake make-up, several lacquer necklaces and earrings, an inexpensive quartz watch, a dozen covered enamel dishes, a crude wooden cupboard to display them, assorted gourd bowls and spoons, and raw and cooked food comprise a realistic catalogue of the modern, rural marriage bridewealth (*kayan aure*) compiled from interview data.

Every rural Hausaphone groom's family gives goods like these to every bride's family (*kyauta*). All of these things have entered the inventory of Hausa domestic goods within the past 60 years, most having been introduced during the past 20. Beds, enamelware, and wall hangings have become objects of hoarding and the focus of competitive display behaviors not atypical of premarket consumption behaviors (the well-known potlatch—Drucker 1967; Pid-dock 1968—and the *kula*—Leach and Leach 1983—come to mind).

Complete explication of the reasons for selection of each and every good, the complicated history of their inclusion, and the exclusion of older, locally made analogues goes beyond the scope of the article. Limited analysis contributes, however, to explaining preference formation and evaluating Gatignon and Robertson's (1985) propositional inventory.

Social Structure, Life Cycle, and Situational Opinion Leadership. Women informants agreed about general contents of bridewealth, which constitutes an evolving, associated set of goods. Every set differs, however, because of changes in styles and the variety of actors who intervene in the selection process for marriage goods (Lavidge and Steiner 1961). Hausa consumers claim that first "awareness" of new marriage goods usually occurs when they visit the home of a kinsperson in town or when a townsperson (*amar-riya*) wears something new in the affectively charged atmosphere of a wedding or baptism. Through this association with a proximate reference group, the new

ment exists, but possessiveness and materialism in the conventional Western senses (Belk 1985a) are absent among rural consumers. As Belk (1984) points out, in self-sufficient, relatively unsegmented societies, possessions are less needed to cultivate a sense of self. One may conclude that a modern consumer culture is as yet not highly developed in Zinder.

marriage goods "naturally" become coveted objects of rural Hausa women.

Many women informants suggested that once an urban innovation has been identified, they feel a sense of compulsion about adopting it, providing the innovation helps their children stand out (*fishita yansu*) vis-à-vis other women's children. Such competitive display exemplifies the principle of quantity associated with premarket consumption and is conspicuous in Zinder women's accumulations of enamelware and weavings. Imitation of townsfolk meanwhile underscores their role as multiproduct opinion leaders, as previously mentioned. At the same time that urban innovations enter into traditional forms of status competition, like *fishita yansu*, and the constitution of bridewealth itself, they begin to distort them (cf. Gregory 1982). Paying cash for bridewealth has become a nearly intolerable burden in Zinder and persons at all levels of society complain about it.

Young country girls lack the experience, disposable income, and education to engage in highly deliberative decision-making strategies. In addition, they have little prospect for social mobility. Nevertheless, these girls play important roles in preference formation for new marriage goods. A formalized song and dance routine (*wak'a*) village girls often perform on moonlit evenings in the public square functions as a mechanism for conferring culturally appropriate meanings onto novel objects at a stage in the Zinder consumption process that might be loosely glossed as "product evaluation." Such rituals of meaning transference are very public and often mobilize all the unmarried village girls. Through sung exchanges of aphorisms and proverbs (*karan magana*), the groups' evaluation of the quality of recently exchanged marriage goods is made known. Families that fall short in providing a stylish assortment of marriage goods can be mercilessly ridiculed.

Older women and men admit the girls' judgments influence their own evaluations of alternative prospective selections of marriage goods. Insofar as exchange of marriage goods influences social standing and mobility, older consumers seem to be willing to pay a premium to increase the odds of making a good impression through ostentatious exchange of marriage goods (Solomon 1986). As it turns out, in addition to true innovations, "novel" goods are often simply new styles (*sabuwar yayye*) or imported versions of familiar crafts purchased for the brides' mothers years earlier (e.g., enamelware for gourd containers, metal for palm rib beds, wax print cloth for homespun, plastic shower shoes for leather sandals, LED display watches for silver bracelets).

This partial, symbolic homology between older goods and modern manufactures is multivocalic. It reduces the social structural risk involved in allowing young girls to influence purchase decisions. But at the same time, manufactures symbolize the groom's family's ability to buy, thus indicating a trend toward

self-identification through having rather than doing. Use of manufactures also underscores a social status distinction between have and have-not households and fuels the trend toward heightened cash-mediated consumption of bridewealth (Wilk forthcoming).

The purchase decision for marriage goods is usually made by a male consumer surrogate rather than the ultimate consumer. Thus, a different set of actors intervenes in purchase decisions than in evaluations. Close male kinsmen may purchase the bed, mortar, and cookpots, while other kinspeople may provide other pots, cloth, shoes, and cosmetics. Adult men rarely possess detailed knowledge of women's preferences, and their primary consumption goals differ from those of the women and girls in this context. Competitive display is featured in the purchase decisions of marriage sponsors, but male buyers entrusted with the group's cash are also price sensitive, and this factor enters decisively into final purchase decisions. Thus, while arbitrating taste, women and girls do not make final choices. Solomon and Douglas (1985) contend that consumers entering new roles with unfamiliar demands commonly rely on authoritarian guidance to reduce role uncertainty and social risk. Senior kinsmen acting as consumer surrogates play this role in Zinder. The strategy outlined here is neither explicit nor consciously available to Hausa consumers.

Innovative consumption roles of young girls are inscribed in tradition. The brief premarital period just prior to puberty is typically the only period in their lives when Hausa girls are considered to be somewhat free from strict convention and may act spontaneously (Callaway 1984). The Zinder girls' preferences are a source of influence in the choice of marriage goods, and a similar influence has been observed among U.S. consumers (Corfman and Lehmann 1987). They are able to be influential because parents are committed to positive affective relations with the marriage age child and with future affines, who are a source of reciprocal aid. These rural consumers' continued emphasis on stable, cooperative unions in a climate of rapid economic change fosters a tolerance for novel whims by both the bride's and groom's families. Young girls thus exercise a kind of ephemeral, but powerful collective opinion leadership or consumption gatekeeping in decisions regarding marriage goods.

Affective Conditioning. Hausa women become familiar with novel products in the affectively charged atmosphere of bridewealth displays and through casual participation in the selection and consumption of marriage goods. From earliest childhood through their own marriages and those of their sisters and children, women gain familiarity with the standard package of marriage goods and underlying choice heuristics. Although women may not purchase goods for a given marriage, they are familiar with both novel and

standard goods and are in a position to influence the purchase decision.

When asked about the attributes that lead to particular choices among the marriage goods previously listed, their usual response is merely that the object is *k'yau*, good or fine. It is difficult to elicit more differentiated attributes from them. But if a Hausa woman is uncertain about the appropriate trousseau to provide or simply cannot decide among similar products, her female peers are always there to help her choose. The habit of making fine cultural distinctions among similar products, an historical legacy of the capitalist consumer culture in the West (Campbell 1987; McCracken 1988a; Mukerji 1983), has not yet been assimilated by Hausa consumers. Familiarity and frequency of stimulus exposure may thus breed object category acceptance in an affectively charged, albeit nonbrand choice, context (Alba and Marmorstein 1987).

The association between whimsy, spontaneity, and stage in life cycle of unmarried women allows novel, discretionary consumption goods to be given a place among similar, culturally significant women's goods (*kayan mata*). Inexpensive quartz watches have no place in Hausa life, but they take their "natural" place among the set of objects of adornment (*kayan ado*) suitable for giving in marriage.

Why innovate? As Hyde (1983) remarks, sometimes we need to act upon our disconnection from key reference groups, times when bonds become strictures. The severely circumscribed world of Hausa women places a priority on building relationships through conforming behaviors (Callaway 1984). In this context, the "excitement of commodities" through the cultivation of marriage goods may evoke "other possibilities, other selves." Cultivation of these goods permits both girls and women, however vicariously, to taste the possibility of alienation and personal differentiation, if only briefly (Hyde 1983; McCracken 1988a). Diversification of marriage goods then, in a severely circumscribed social context, enriches the sense of self and enlivens competition for personal and familial prestige.

Aesthetic Preference and Style. The aesthetic value "brilliance" (*miski*) provides one stylistic bridge between old and new goods. Brilliance is a behavioral and stylistically preferred attribute that is used spontaneously to describe numerous items in the Hausa material culture inventory, especially those associated with marriage. The attribute provides an aesthetic link between elite nineteenth century consumption goods (e.g., beetle-wing indigo cloth and polished damask) and recently introduced ones (e.g., cheap velveteen, the enamel and glassware, *tangarai*, women use to decorate their homes and to compete for prestige, *k'amiya*, the mirrors used on iron beds, lacquered earrings and necklaces, and so on). Significantly, the term for brilliance is also used

to describe the face of the bridegroom and is connoted in the name of an embroidered men's bonnet that bears this name, *fuskar amariya*. Key items in the trousseau—mirrored bedsteads, cloth hangings, and especially enamelware—have brilliance.

Goods possessing brilliance, whether materially useless quartz watches or useful enamel bowls, can be integrated into the category of women's goods without any upsetting of the Hausa aesthetic order. However, women's desire for possessions with this attribute is a source of intrahousehold conflict, which upsets the social order. Indeed, the problem for Hausa consumers of marriage goods is that traditional mechanisms of status competition and aesthetic preference for items of bridewealth continue to engage consumers, but within a drastically altered global economic climate. Today's free markets reward the thirst for novelty with more novelty ad nauseam (Campbell 1987). Players in the marriage game have become trapped in an escalating, inflationary cycle of expenditure that the rural poor can ill afford and that even the Nigerian state has sought unsuccessfully to suppress.

Case 3: Labor Migration and Continuous Innovation in Men's Goods

Analysis of innovations in men's wear and other goods in Zinder allows evaluation of the validity of Gatignon and Robertson's propositions dealing with normative change, systems objectives and boundaries, and opinion leadership. Here again, neglected relationships between social structure and innovation are explored.

Before French colonization, young peasant men stood in an economically dependent relationship (Arnould 1984a; Goddard 1973; Hill 1972) to their fathers and elder male kinsmen. They had no well-defined role to play in the consumption process. But as mentioned in Case 1, cash crop production and labor migration provided opportunities for greater independence in production and consumption decisions.

In the villages studied, regular migration to the cities of Nigeria is a pervasive behavior (Arnould 1984a) stimulated by global processes: the increased occupational heterogeneity of the urban centers of Northern Nigeria, the deepening of market-mediated exchange behaviors, and the erosion of interhousehold reciprocal aid networks (Timberlake 1985; Wilk forthcoming). Recurrent Sahelian drought has given urgent added impetus to this movement. Due to traditional indeterminacy generally regarding young men's role in production and consumption processes (Meillasoux 1975), the goods they bring back from labor migration have perhaps the greatest potential to create ruptures in social structure and the symbolic system of preferences (Gregory 1982; Schwimmer 1987).

Research in non-Western settings has identified wage labor migration as a modern life crisis event and

a conduit for the introduction of novel consumer goods (Gregory 1982). In Zinder, village migrants most frequently report bringing urban clothing, cigarettes, and radios back to the village community, but labor migration also has influenced house form and furnishings. Recently built houses are square rather than round, with arched gateways, tin roofs, and mirrors embedded in exterior compound walls. Inside younger men's houses are cheap four-color posters from Nigeria featuring "Hindu" scenes, African heads of state, Nigeria's military rulers (captioned "our national heritage"), naked girls (captioned "I'm black and proud"), and the like.

As discussed in Case 1, clothing style figures prominently in discontinuous innovation for novel Western goods. Today, young men often wear second-hand, Western-style shirts and pants, "small clothes" (*k'ank'enen kaya*). These styles stand in symbolic opposition to the traditionally styled long shirt, baggy pants, embroidered cap, and gown (*manyan kaya*) preferred by the rich and the elderly. Western clothes reference migrants' town-based experience of the wage labor economy, and they also contribute to a new sense of generational identity. Young men say such clothes signal their availability for flirtation and play with young women.

However, older men are wont to claim that if they had the resources, they would buy as many of the traditionally styled gowns as possible, even hundreds of them. Of course, such gowns only became easily available to rural commoners with the liberalization of peanut markets in the first decades of this century, and gowns perhaps remind them of that period of older men's relatively greater authority within the household. Like women's enamelware, senior men's gowns seem to be objects of "personal cultivation," attendance to which enhances the sense of self (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981).

Stylistic innovations in embroidery styles permeate widely. Older men like to imitate the embroidery patterns on particularly fine gowns, especially if perceived to be an urban innovation. Men's frequent attendance at markets and life crisis events (e.g., marriages and baptisms) during the dry season provides them opportunities to view and evaluate innovative gown styles. Older men would like to accumulate gowns both to emulate the rich Kano (Nigeria) merchants who, some say, fly weekly to Mecca, and to be able to give some away. To explain the latter behavior, older men say they value the pleasure of clothing a friend in a fine gown that others would then see and admire. Such values conform to pre-colonial ideals of personal worth and wealth (see Case 1). At the same time that many senior men admire and would like to imitate innovative embroidery designs on traditional gowns, they ruefully admit they are now obliged to settle for restyled Western clothes for everyday use. They prefer *manyan kaya*, but they say they have no choice. Young men who go on labor migration bring

them back Western clothes which they, poor *tala-kawa* without money, are compelled to wear.

This assimilation of an alternate clothing style among old and young men mediates the tension caused by new forms of social differentiation based on material wealth. This differentiation endangers the old domestic relations of production and exchange (Meillassoux 1975) and causes intergenerational tension over disposition of household labor, remittances, land, and other resources (Arnould 1984a, 1986; Goddard 1973; Kohnert 1986; Raynaut 1976). Alternate Western styles for both young and old men minimize direct comparison between the two symbolic "registers," thereby denying the objective economic competition for resources between generations and serving as a damper for intergenerational jealousy.

Migration to Lagos, Ibadan, or nearby Kano, Nigeria, has provoked dramatic changes in the system of male preferences, but the influence is unsystematic. Symbolically, Nigeria is an ambiguous source of goods. Urban entree is often through participation in anti-Western, ascetic, popular Islamic movements rooted in the tradition of itinerant Islamic scholarship (Hodgkin 1977; Lubeck 1985, 1986). Furthermore, economic stagnation in the urban centers and the economic and social suffering endured by the unskilled Nigerien laborers reinforces the economic value of, and the goods and values associated with, rural social networks.

Because Nigeria is an ambiguous symbolic source, goods associated with Nigeria provoke ambivalence among rural Nigerien Hausa. Some cigarette smokers, for example, employ costly, non-Western treatments for their equally costly, cosmopolitan addiction when they return to the rural context. This ritual of dispossession involves ingestion of "erasures," i.e., a mixture of water and the ink used to write special verses from the Koran (cf. El-Tom 1985). When such innovations are coupled with the traditional status ambiguities endured by these young men in the urban as well as rural areas, it makes for chaotic innovations in product categories. The novel goods that young men introduce reference an external cultural construction of the world. Young peasants still do not control factors of production, possess much cash, and are not perceived as opinion leaders. In this sense, young men's potentially potent innovations are thereby neutralized and deprived of systematic impact for good or for ill.

Other oppositions are expressed through innovations in male fashion. Young men educated in the French-inspired school system usually leave the village community where stylistic opposition between social statuses encodes an age-linked, and therefore temporary, imbalance in control over resources. In town, this stylistic opposition is transformed into a more permanent clash between classes with differential access to capital: merchant and bureaucratic

elites versus urban laborers and rural peasantry (Olivier de Sardan 1984).

Upwardly aspirant young men dependent for career advancement upon the clientilism characteristic of the Nigerien state bureaucracy (Olivier de Sardan 1984) are quick to affect the "functionary suit" and the motor scooter, among other trappings. Wearing functionary suits symbolizes wage earning and connotes an external, cosmopolitan pattern of alliance and allegiances, one that links the urban Nigerien with France, the Western market economy, and consumer culture in general. Even in the remote village of Riga, teachers (invariably referred to as monsieur) conspicuously sport pens, radios, and flashlights in addition to their functionary suits to mark their differential status from that of farmers.

Rural peasants recognize that bureaucratic styles (e.g., clothes, cars, televisions) symbolize a rupture with the economy and values of the rural community. Young farmers' city clothes are quickly reduced to the familiar tatters by peasant work, but desk work preserves the clothes of the bureaucrats. Nowadays, peasants often refer to black Nigerien bureaucrats as *anasara*—this word denotes "whiteman" and its root meaning is "Christian." One village chief summed up the rural perspective on this urban/rural cleavage: "At first the whites taught the blacks. Now the whites have returned to their country, and the blacks in town, they have become whites." From an analytic, world-systems perspective, rural adoption of cosmopolitan styles may be part of a broader pattern of implantation of common, international elite standards of operation and consumption within a global economy (Galtung 1981, p. 112).

Case 4: The Hajj and the Invention of Tradition Through Innovation

This case speaks to a number of Gatignon and Robertson's propositions, primarily those focusing on systems objectives and boundaries, opinion leadership and influence, cosmopolitan influence, and normative change.

The impact of the pilgrimage or hajj to Mecca on preference formation cannot be overestimated. Analysis of the rapid twentieth century growth of Islamic practice and belief at the expense of animist belief in Zinder is beyond the scope of this article. Lubeck (1985, 1986) has shown how the growth of popular Islam in this region is a response to secular economic trends that have shattered the noncapitalist economy and the social assumptions stemming from it. The rise of Islamic ethnonationalism in the Hausa region is a kind of consumer counter-revolution that self-consciously rejects Western modes of consumption and Western goods. Peace, air travel, and increased incomes have fueled an enormous increase in the number of pilgrims going to Mecca. The hajj represents a culminating point in the life of a Muslim in

Niger, bringing him (rarely her) closer, in the imagination at least, to Alla. In the absence of effective technological means of intervention over an uncertain world, religious pilgrimage also offers the hope of receiving grace (*lada*), which will deliver the pilgrim from his/her worldly travails. Returned pilgrims enjoy enormous respect.

The range of goods that informants report as originating—truly or apocryphally—in Mecca is astonishing. They constitute a real, if diverse, new "product category." Included are *zanar bukar*, the renowned embroidered Hausa bonnets, without which men feel "naked" and which are necessary to a suit of *manyan kaya*. Also included are wooden prayer beads made from *Spondias*, *sp.* trees (*danya*), said to have sprung up from the horns of the ram that the angel substituted for Abraham's son Isaac. Additional Meccan goods include perfume, white skull caps, copies of the Koran and religious books, both authentic and cheap print reproductions of "Palestinian" prayer shawls, pottery forms (Arnould 1984b), velour, and the metal tea pots employed in ritual ablutions.

Anything from Mecca possesses superior worth for Zinder's consumers. Furthermore, goods brought back from the holy place share a significance beyond that of mere souvenirs (*zigeygey*). This value, "grace," has become, in consumption terms, a hedonic attribute pervading preference formation and channeling the diffusion of innovations among pious senior men and women. Unlike Western goods tainted by the market, grace imbues Meccan goods with immediate and unquestionable value to hajj and practicing lay Muslims alike. Thus, copies of the Koran and other religious books are among the most treasured of rural males' possessions (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). Such goods diffuse with great rapidity through the community of practicing Muslims, and a thriving industry has emerged in Northern Nigeria to serve the market for manufactured "Meccan" goods.

Consumption of pilgrimage goods serves multiple ends. Because the hajj are a respected minority, such goods serve as icons of personal status differentiation. The pilgrimage completes the obligations of the Muslim to his/her religion, so consumption of such goods serves as much a social purpose as a religious one. Indeed, all who can obtain these goods as charity (*sadaka*) from returning pilgrims can participate in the grace obtained on hajj. At the same time, as emblems of status, Meccan skullcaps and prayer shawls are prominently displayed at public ceremonies like baptisms, marriages, and funerals. Moreover, possession of the Koran, like other male possessions, seems to express a desire for control over nature and society (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988).

The spread of popular Islam and increased participation in the hajj has stimulated demand for "consumption" of the mosque itself. Incredible as it may seem, wealthy merchants occasionally donate mosques costing billions of West African francs to lo-

cal communities and pay for them in cash, thereby getting credit for an act of religious charity and in some sense justifying the mercantile practices that make it possible. In other cases, cohesive village communities may also undertake construction, thereby affirming "cultural hegemony" (Schwimmer 1987)⁸ of the broader community of Islam over the lifestyle of the local community. Participants see it as community enhancing rather than merely self-enhancing.

The hajj, and Islam in general, is congruent with rural life experience and pre-colonial class structure, but not with Western consumer ideology. Note that Islamic theodicy stresses no criteria for salvation other than adherence to the five pillars of Islam, including injunctions to charity and self-denial. Also, Islamic law condemns usury and emphasizes use rights rather than personal appropriation of property (Levy 1933). Notions crucial to modern Western consumer behavior—such as progressive change, freedom of choice, personal evolution, even salvation through personal creativity, and constitution of the self through interaction with objects (Campbell 1987)—are deemphasized in Nigerien Islam as they were in pre-Islamic Hausa culture. Meccan goods encode these differences in values.

Fidelity to Islam and the adoption of its material trappings may be seen as a process of invention of neotraditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) reinforcing patriarchal intellectual, moral, and political leadership. Clerics, merchants, the "embourgeoisied" former nobility, and senior men in general rely on the trappings of Islam to reinforce their prestige and legitimize prerogatives and activities threatened by the growth of the free market. Big merchants, for example, are almost invariably referred to as pilgrims (*elhaji*), regardless of whether they have made the pilgrimage.

⁸Hegemony, used here in an ideological sense, refers to the existence of a prevailing world-view system of ethics or values that is usually guaranteed by persons occupying certain official statuses. Its "overt form is a system of ideological messages" through political apparatuses (Schwimmer 1987, p. 90), like the "the little red book" of official truth in China during the cultural revolution and like Islam in post-revolutionary Iran. Hegemony is based ultimately on force, but it is far more than raw power. It is "the capacity to have an ideology accepted and reproduced by subordinate groups" (Schwimmer 1987, p. 90); the endless and often fruitless striving after the "American dream" by working class Americans is an example. McCracken (1988a, p. 132) points out that goods do more than merely exhibit cultural categories and principles.

(Goods) are indeed very like an advertisement. They seek not only to describe but also to persuade. When culture appears in objects, it seeks to make itself appear inevitable, as the only sensible terms in which anyone can constitute their world. Culture uses objects to convince. . . . It is in this capacity that the meaning in goods assumes a hegemonic significance.

Hegemony is never complete; prophetic and revival movements are a common form of oppositional counter-hegemony. The millenarian tradition of prophecy in the Sahel is one form of permanent, implicit, resistance ideology that has emerged time and again to challenge state powers in West Africa (Hodgkin 1977).

The patriarchal model of society is threatened by alternative consumption patterns accessed by young migrants and even women. But, the generic, Western consumer goods preferred overwhelmingly by young men and women and the construction of reality these goods represent are countered by male pilgrims' Meccan goods, which appropriate and authenticate patriarchal values and older notions of personal worth (cf. Ranger 1983).

DISCUSSION

Gatignon and Robertson (1985) have presented a set of constructs for use in new diffusion research (see Table 1). The ethnographic case materials previously presented in this article permit evaluation of the construct validity of a number of their propositions. Some of the propositions about aggregate consumption behavior hold up in Niger; others require reformulation to reduce ethnocentrism. Table 2 summarizes only the revised propositions, omitting both those propositions in Gatignon and Robertson's schema that stand up to the ethnographic data, and those inapplicable to a Third World context such as Zinder. Because the following discussion of the revised propositions does not explicate the origin of demand for new goods or the particular consumer behaviors in Niger that influence the types of goods selected, a further discussion about broadening the standard paradigm of diffusion and innovation is then provided.

Evaluating the Construct Validity of the Propositional Inventory

Adoption Process. The illustrations of Zinder consumers' adoption of marriage and Meccan goods suggest that these consumers almost immediately adopt particular objects (e.g., marriage goods with "brilliance" or a pilgrim's gift), drastically compressing the so-called awareness and evaluation stages of adoption. Although this stage is compressed (e.g., a marriage good selected based on an influential decision-maker seeing an item with "brilliance," or a positive comment during the affectively charged *wak'a*), evaluation may occur without much cognitive processing. A demand effect overwhelms learning requirements for innovations of symbolic or aesthetic merit in a context marked by a strong conventional structure of values and rapid qualitative social change. Some conditions associated with both the hierarchy-of-effects adoption model and the low involvement adoption model are present (high social imitation, multi-person adoption decisions, low switching costs, and low learning requirements), and others absent. For this reason, Proposition 1 should be revised.

Proposition 2, which is tautological, should be adapted to economies strongly marked by reciprocal and redistributive gift relations (Hyde 1983), such as that of Zinder. The availability of cheap cloth (Case 1) facilitates fulfillment of the household head's obligations to his dependents, and Meccan "souvenirs" (Case 4) facilitate fulfillment of the pilgrim's obligations to his/her religious peers. Both are thus rapidly adopted. Application of Revised Proposition 2 is limited though, and other propositions may hold when goods are instrumental in defining new social groups (Case 3; Wilk forthcoming). (See Revised Propositions 3 and 10 in Table 2.)

Case materials concerning innovations in marriage, migration, and Meccan goods suggest Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 3 must be reformulated. Innovations may "fit" competing consumption paradigms associated with alternate views of society. For example, young wage laborers have as little use for prayer shawls as pious merchants have for functionary costumes.

Proposition 4 must be reformulated because media penetration is low in Zinder. At least 80 percent of the people are illiterate in the Roman alphabet. In any case, there is no Hausa language newspaper in Niger. Radio ownership is occasional (Crow and Henderson 1979), and TV ownership limited to a few wealthy urbanites. In Zinder, personalized, experiential sources of information about novel products operate almost exclusively. Hence, Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 4 is scarcely applicable to this innovation context.

Personal Influence and Opinion Leadership. The Zinder case materials identify several groups of persons wielding influence over the diffusion process: urban merchants and administrators, young girls, labor migrants, pilgrims, foreign Islamic elites, and local market mavens and consumer surrogates. This suggests that Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 5 is inadequate for this context, given that personal influence was associated with low involvement adoption of marriage, Meccan, and migration goods.

Behavior of the Zinder consumer sample did not permit an evaluation of Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 6. However, all of the cases support Proposition 7 in revised form. Revised Proposition 6 (see Table 2) helps explain the deepening of the market for men's gowns and embroidered caps; that is, it illustrates a case in which a consumption behavior is perpetuated when information from a negatively perceived source is negatively persuasive. Revised Proposition 7 addresses Cases 2, 3, and 4, which illustrate conditions under which information seeking may be high in a Third World context.

Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 8 is also inadequate to account for behavior in Zinder and must be revised. In Zinder, the effect of normative influence depends upon the type of good and the consumption context. Thus, association with the catego-

ries of women's marriage goods or Meccan goods leads to rapid diffusion of all sorts of objects. In the former case, a competitive norm facilitates adoption of innovations, such as women's adoption of quartz watches. In the latter case, the need for normative stability leads men to adopt goods associated with a world religion and populist movement (i.e., Islam).

Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 9 cannot be addressed here. The data from Cases 1 and 4 are generally supportive of Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 10. They suggest that normative influence can operate to speed innovations among social segments (e.g., commoners and dependents) in opposition to the consumption behaviors of negatively evaluated reference groups (e.g., traditional and modern elites).

The case materials are particularly rich in information about opinion leadership (Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 11; see corresponding Revised Proposition 9 in Table 2). The principal finding is that opinion leadership varies within product category by consumption context and stage in the adoption process (Case 2). Contextual material showed how opinion leadership may also be consistent across apparently different product categories (Cases 1 and 2).

Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 12 is supported as it stands. Case materials draw attention to the interplay of homophilous and heterophilous influence (Gatignon and Robertson 1985) and the situational influence of some leaders (such as young girls) over the course of the decision-making process. Heterophilous information across systems boundaries over time proved critical to diffusion in Cases 1, 3, and 4. Homophilous influence via consumer surrogates can influence speed of adoption across a range of goods. Homophilous influences also speed adoption among later adopters of marriage goods.

The Social System. Case material supports Gatignon and Robertson's Propositions 13 through 15 (see corresponding Revised Propositions 10 and 11 in Table 2). However, the "compatibility" of innovations with social system values is not always obvious when competing consumption paradigms are operating (see Proposition 13 in Table 1). Thus, the researcher must first determine the operative social systems values regarding a given good before developing hypotheses about its potential adoption width and depth. Furthermore, following McCracken (1988a), these data suggest a dialectical relationship between normative change and the penetration of innovations rather than a simple cause and effect relationship (see Proposition 14 in Table 1). Revised Propositions 10 and 11 are needed to capture qualitative changes in the way goods are used to enhance self-concept when market-mediated social differentiation transforms a pre-capitalist economy (Belk 1984). Gatignon and Robertson's Propositions 16 and 17 are not applicable here and are therefore omitted from discussion.

TABLE 1
PROPOSITIONAL INVENTORY FOR NEW DIFFUSION RESEARCH

Diffusion concept	Propositions
The adoption process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The hierarchy-of-effects adoption model is to be expected under conditions of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. High consumer learning requirements; b. High innovation costs or high switching costs; c. High social imitation; and d. A multiperson adoption decision within the family or organization. The low involvement adoption model is to be expected under conditions of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> e. Low consumer learning requirements; f. Low innovation costs or low switching costs; and g. Low social imitation. 2. The maximum diffusion potential for the product increases with the width and depth of adoption. 3. The adoption of an innovation depends on its fit within the existing consumption system and its ability to compete with scarce resources to achieve a position in the consumer's priority acquisition pattern. 4. The less the level of cognitive processing, the greater the impact of advertising and other impersonal market sources throughout the adoption process.
Personal influence and opinion leadership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Personal influence is operative mainly under a hierarchy-of-effects adoption process. 6. When personal influence is operative, it is most pronounced at later stages of the adoption process. 7. Personal influence has the most impact under information-seeking conditions and the least under information-giving conditions. 8. Consumers who are highly dependent upon normative influence (conformity intention) will be slower to adopt. 9. Personal influence may be of a verbal or visual form. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The impact of visual influence increases with the information content that can be visually communicated for a particular product category. b. Visual influence is likely to have greater impact at awareness, whereas verbal influence is likely to have greater influence at evaluation. 10. Negative personal influence has greater persuasive impact than positive personal influence, assuming a credible source and consistent information content. 11. Opinion leader traits vary by product category. 12. Homophilous influence is more common, but heterophilous influences beyond the boundaries of the social system are common among innovators. There is a point of optimal heterophily that maximizes the effectiveness of personal influence.
The social system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. The diffusion rate and the maximum penetration level are positively related to the innovation's compatibility with social system values. 14. The maximum level of penetration of the innovation social system is affected by normative change. 15. The more homogeneous the social system, the faster the diffusion rate and the higher the maximum penetration level. 16. The spatial pattern of diffusion is determined by a hierarchy effect when the market and infrastructure factors controlling the availability of the new product are dominant and is determined by a neighborhood effect when the terrestrial or social factors are dominant. 17. The sequence of countries adopting an innovation is dominated by a hierarchical pattern.
The diffusion process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. The diffusion process tends to follow a sigmoid pattern under conditions of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The operation of personal influence; b. A learning hierarchical process of adoption; c. High innovation costs or high switching costs; d. Unimodal distribution of initial beliefs toward the innovation within the social system; and e. High uncertainty. An exponential curve is expected under conditions of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A relative lack of personal influence; b. A low involvement process of adoption; c. Low uncertainty; d. Low innovation or switching costs; and e. A uniform pattern of initial beliefs within the social system. 19. Marketing expenditures affect the rate of diffusion and the maximum penetration level but not the pattern of diffusion. 20. The greater the sensitivity of the marketing program to the changing characteristics of segments at different stages of the diffusion process, the faster the rate of diffusion and the greater the penetration level. 21. The expected speed of diffusion increases with the average time of active information dissemination within the social system, which is heightened by the level of mass media expenditures. 22. The greater the level of competitive activity, the faster the rate of diffusion and the higher the maximum penetration level, if products are similar. However, the larger the number of competing technologies, the lower the rate of diffusion.

TABLE 1—(Continued)

Diffusion concept	Propositions
Personal characteristics: innovators	<p>23. Variables most likely to characterize innovators are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Income; b. Education; c. Age; d. Social mobility; e. Attitude toward risk; f. Social participation; and g. Opinion leadership. <p>24. New product innovators will be drawn from the heavy users of other products within the product category.</p> <p>25. Consumers with better-developed schemas need less cognitive effort for innovation comprehension and evaluation and so are more likely to adopt early.</p> <p>26. The greater the individual propensity to use information from the mass media or from sources external to the immediate social system, the earlier the adoption.</p>
Perceived innovation characteristics	<p>27. Innovation characteristics affect speed of diffusion. Relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, and observability are positively related, and complexity and perceived risk are negatively related.</p> <p>28. The speed of diffusion of technological innovations depends on the consumer's ability to develop new knowledge and new patterns of experience.</p> <p>29. Related knowledge and experience of an innovation are associated with a faster rate of adoption.</p>

NOTE: From Gatignon and Robertson 1985, pp. 851–853.

The Diffusion Process. The diffusion process in Zinder resembles a low cognition, “low involvement” model at the individual level, so Gatignon and Robertson’s Proposition 18 needs revision (see corresponding Revised Proposition 12 in Table 2). Instead of the schema of individual awareness, knowledge, attitude formation, trial, and adoption alleged to describe Western consumer decision-making, diffusion in Zinder typically begins with group awareness and familiarity, often followed by surrogate evaluation and trial, and then group adoption. Because values often intervene decisively at the moment of awareness (Meccan and marriage goods), social imitation is high and personal influence operates very powerfully on a local scale to mold preference. Social imitation and personal influence are not linked to a high degree of rationalistic information seeking among individual purchasers, as Gatignon and Robertson hypothesized. On the contrary, they are linked to legitimization of evolving preferences and to integrative social behaviors. High normative influence does not inhibit rapid diffusion of incremental innovations conceptually linked to previous acquisitions (McCracken’s 1988a “Diderot principle”).

A pro-innovation bias leads Gatignon and Robertson to omit a number of possible propositional relationships from consideration. For example, Gatignon and Robertson’s Propositions 19–22 lack any consideration of income effects. Consumption of fancy beds, woven tapestries, and other items employed in women’s competitive display behaviors (*fishita yansu*, Case 2) and Meccan goods would expand if incomes permitted (see Revised Proposition 13 in Table 2).

Gatignon and Robertson’s Propositions 19 through 22 are of limited applicability to the case materials presented here, given the virtual absence of proactive marketing programs. Nonetheless, according to these propositions, a number of characteristics of Zinder’s market system should speed innovation. Zinder’s markets are highly competitive with many vendors selling similar, if not identical, products (see Proposition 22 in Table 1) (Arnould 1985; Arnould and McCullough 1980). Multi-stranded personal relationships between long-time marketers and consumers often increase the sensitivity of the former to changing characteristics of the latter (see Proposition 20 in Table 1). Market mavens and consumer surrogates act to speed the diffusion of minor consumption innovations (see Proposition 21 in Table 1 and the corresponding Revised Proposition 14 in Table 2).

Personal Characteristics: Innovators. Innovator characteristics enumerated in Gatignon and Robertson’s Proposition 23 are salient, but do not covary consistently in Zinder. In Case 1, higher income and a favorable attitude toward risk apparently channeled peanut income into innovative clothing styles in the early twentieth century. However, higher education, social mobility, and higher social participation do not characterize the peasantry as a whole. Similarly, in the specific case of marriage goods (Case 2), youth and social participation covary; but in the case of the adoption of urban clothing style, (Case 3) youth and social participation appear to be inversely related. Moreover, mobility is an important variable in Cases 2, 3, and 4, but it is youth and mobility that covary with innovation in Cases 2 and 3 (marriage goods and

TABLE 2
SUMMARY OF REVISED PROPOSITIONS FOR NEW DIFFUSION RESEARCH

Diffusion concept	Propositions
The adoption process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An adoption model for consumer goods in marginal Third World contexts includes low cognitive processing of alternatives, high social imitation, high affect, but low self-conscious involvement. 2. In economies marginal to the global market economy, the speed of adoption is correlated with its potential to fulfill preexisting reciprocal and redistributive obligations. 3. The adoption of an innovation depends on its competitive ability to encode information about the adopter's construction of social reality to achieve a position in the consumer's priority acquisition pattern. 4. The lower the amount of cognitive processing, the greater the impact of personalized marketing sources and normative influence throughout the adoption process.
Personal influence and opinion leadership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Where interpersonal relationships are subject to highly codified norms, personal influence is operative in all phases of the adoption process. 6. Innovations that threaten the material or symbolic bases of distinctive local social relations, will be actively resisted regardless of source (Voss 1987, p. 126). 7. When familiar goods no longer adequately encode the range of personal experiences, information seeking about novel goods will be great. 8. The speed of innovation among consumers who are highly dependent upon normative influence will be positively correlated with perceived comparative social advantage and strength of reference group identification, and inversely correlated with "switching costs." 9. Opinion leader traits vary by consumption context and stage in the adoption process.
The social system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. As market-mediated differentiation of social segments accelerates, consumption symbolism and the rate of adoption of innovative goods among new segments will increase. 11. As market-mediated differentiation of social segments accelerates, competitive, collective redistributive and reciprocal alliance building activities speed the adoption of innovations in consumer goods.
The diffusion process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. The diffusion process in Third World contexts may follow an exponential curve under conditions of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Operation of personal influence; b. Low involvement; c. Uniform pattern of beliefs within the social system; d. Low switching costs; and e. Low uncertainty. 13. Speed of adoption is inversely correlated with the per capita income of a given market segment. 14. Diffusion speed increases with the time of active visual and word-of-mouth information dissemination within the social system.
Personal characteristics: innovators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Speed of innovation depends upon perceived compatibility of the meaning of innovations with the expressive needs of the individual.
Perceived innovation characteristics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. The greater an innovation's ability to encode shared novel experience, the faster the rate of innovation.

urban clothing), whereas it is mobility and seniority that covary with innovation in Case 4 (Meccan goods). The point is that where competing consumer paradigms co-exist, the significance of these variables is context rather than product dependent. For that reason, Proposition 23 is omitted from the revised paradigm. The data are not germane to an evaluation of Proposition 24.

The case materials do not support the construct validity of Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 25. In fact, well-developed cognitive schemas may be irrelevant to early innovation in contexts of rapid change in the consumer environment and material culture inventory. However, Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 26 has been adapted (see corresponding Revised Proposition 15 in Table 2) to a context in which speed of innovation is dependent upon a product's usefulness as a form of self-expression versus the

individual's likelihood of using an external information source, such as the mass media.

Perceived Innovation Characteristics. When considering the validity of Gatignon and Robertson's Proposition 27, case materials show how compatibility, relative advantage, complexity, and risk are culturally constituted categories. Thus, products highly compatible with local systems of meaning and belief, such as Meccan goods, may be judged compatible even with limited instrumental efficacy. Data from Niger supports formulation of a substitute Proposition 16 (see Table 2), which incorporates semiotic and political characteristics of innovations into the paradigm (e.g., adopting a supralocal vision of society). This proposition is based upon the rapid spread of imported cloth (Case 1), enamelware and other marriage goods (Case 2), men's clothing styles (Case 3), and Meccan goods (Case 4).

Summary. It is important that consumer researchers acknowledge competing paradigms of product innovation and diffusion, and the revised propositions provide evidence for different models. However, the preceding discussion explains little about the key phenomena of interest, the origin of the basis of demand for goods. In the following discussion, I suggest that demand in Zinder derives from three competing models of consumer culture (Douglas 1982; Firat 1987; Sherry 1987a, 1987b; Voss 1987). This competition is based upon competing political-economic processes (Chevalier 1983; Gutkind and Wallerstein 1976; Lubeck 1985; Schwimmer 1987) brought into relief through the consumption of material goods.

Toward a Broadened Theory of Preference Formation and the Diffusion of Innovations

Constituent elements of three competing models of consumer culture have already been developed in the cases. One is a local model, the second is a Western model, and the third is an Islamic ethno-nationalist model. Here, these emic paradigms and their significance for a broadened theory of the diffusion of innovations are developed more fully.

Local Models of Demand. Inclusion of even the most remote tribal societies into systems of production and exchange orchestrated by Euro-American economies is one of the most remarkable features of the twentieth century (Wolf 1982; Worsley 1984). The standard economists' account of this incorporation is as follows (Sender and Smith 1986, p. 68).

(The) critical initial transformation was the process whereby food, and, later, processed food became commodities. Later, domestic markets for a very wide range of consumer and producer goods expanded dramatically as a result of the rising incomes associated with the growth of wage labour and the development of commodity forms of production. It was also noted that a significant part of this growing demand was met by imports.

This account simply restates the sufficient conditions of the consumer revolution in the West (Mukerji 1983), but it does not explain the development of a new propensity to consume. The principal factors were the entry of foreign imports and the introduction of cash-generating mechanisms to pay for them. The development of markets for food was a subsequent phenomenon.

To capture the way in which a propensity toward innovation in consumption diffuses into premarket economies, a delineation of the general features of premarket consumption is necessary. Consumption behavior in pre-market societies can be characterized by the following features (Appadurai 1986; Belk 1984; Campbell 1987; Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Hyde 1983; Goody 1982; Polanyi 1968; Uchendu 1967):

- emphasis is on what is done with objects rather than on having objects;
- objects are evaluated in terms of their congealed social history or their worth, not their economic value;
- consumption goals emphasize making, breaking, or redefining social relationships;
- consumption "pleasures" are essentially discrete, often recurrent, non-object based, and standardized events;
- there are no substitutes for key consumption goods;
- a standard package of goods satisfies consumer demand;
- access to and demand for most commodities is limited and regulated by linkage to social positions and roles;
- longing for goods, dissatisfaction with possessions, and dispossession in favor of novel goods is uncommon;
- prescribed gift-giving rules limit accumulation and innovation in consumption;
- goods circulate within discrete spheres of exchange;
- formal exchanges often lead to consumption behaviors promoting status equality;
- low volume and velocity characterizes the movement of consumption goods;
- elites multiply the quantity and frequency of consumption, but rarely the kinds of goods consumed;
- unique consumption goods are the province of elites and are always restricted in number by the necessity to convey shared meaning to non-elites.

Incorporation of premarket economies into the global economy has inevitably entailed the increased availability of European consumer goods. Sometimes this has posed insoluble dilemmas for premarket societies because of accompanying cultural baggage far removed from their premarket set of characteristics. For example, traders and missionaries introduced more productive, but socially worthless steel axes to many groups in Australia, New Guinea, and the Amazon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This overthrow of their "periodic table" of material culture and the social construction of reality it encoded often entailed virtual ethnocide (Metrax 1959; Sharp 1968). In Africa, more sophisticated economic systems characterized by consumption spheres separated by age, gender, and social status likewise collapsed under the dissolving influence of cash money (Bohannon 1967; Bohannon and Bohannon 1968; Douglas 1968).

In some cases, new goods enliven non-Western social life, and these societies make elaborate efforts to

redefine the meaning of goods; the Northwest Coast potlatch (cf. Nicolas 1967 for a Nigerien parallel), Melanesian cargo cults (Gregory 1982; Schwimmer 1987), and Philippine pig feasts (Voss 1987) provide apt examples of new goods enlivening traditional practices. Conventional models of demand fail to take into account the qualitative particularities of the uses of goods in premarket economies and cannot easily explain such differences in outcome.

Given the variability in outcomes of the diffusion of Western consumer goods into premarket economies, both the sequence and explanation of the process provided in the standard economists' accounts appear mechanistic and unsatisfactory. For example, the utilitarian characterization of the diffusion of discontinuous innovations in consumer goods to African economies fails because of its implicit reliance on an "innateness" theory of demand. That is, once the social structural constraints on demand typical of premarket economies are removed, it is assumed that the innate human disposition to consume will fuel virtually insatiable demand for novel products. Yet, if consumption varies qualitatively between particular systems of production and exchange, each system will necessarily obey its own logic in coping with novel goods (Godelier 1972; Goody 1982; Sahlins 1972). Thus, one cannot assume that the Hausa in Zinder are becoming more Western just because they now eat salad or smoke Marlboros just as Sherry and Camargo (1987) remark about the Japanese.

The innateness model for the diffusion of innovations poses other insurmountable problems. If individual consumer desires emanate from preformed, inherited inclinations, how can change in consumer preferences be understood? In addition, how can the innateness view square with the rational model of consumer behavior?⁹ There is a tendency in economics and marketing to interpret ceaseless longing for the novel as a universally innate characteristic. However, the historical (Campbell 1987) and anthropological literature suggests that this insatiability is not a cultural universal and that consumption styles in the closed, holistic societies of traditional anthropological interest usually specify a relatively fixed notion of wants.¹⁰ Constant innovation in product class

⁹The idea that demand springs from human beings possessing some innate disposition to use goods to order and make sense of reality seems well founded (Appadurai 1986; Baudrillard 1968; Belk 1984; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Sahlins 1976). Comparative cultural analyses of object attachment (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988; Weissner 1984) show that individuals' preferences are linked to deep-seated values. At the same time, such analyses demonstrate that the nature and degree of possessiveness varies with age, sex, and cultural background (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981) and across cultures (Belk 1984; Sherry and Camargo 1987).

¹⁰In most of the well-studied cases in economic anthropology, such as the kula (Leach and Leach 1983), the classical potlatch (Drucker 1967; Piddock 1968), the Latin American cargo systems (Cancian 1965), the East African pastoral cattle economies (Gold-

is an artifact of Western economy and culture that dates back to eighteenth-century Europe.

The innateness argument and theories of the diffusion of innovations that are implicitly based upon it are not powerful. They do not explain the reasons for the great increase in consumption of Western goods marked by the onset of the colonial period, the initial penetration of exotic Western goods, or the genesis of demand, nor do these theories account for the selectivity of consumer demand for exotic goods and the agents of changing patterns of demand. Mintz's (1977, p. 65) key question remains.

Precisely how demand "arises," precisely how supply "stimulates" demand even while filling it—and yielding a profit besides; precisely how "demand" is transformed into the ritual of daily necessity and even into the image of daily decency.

World-systems theory (Wallerstein 1976), which has been little mined by students of consumer behavior, takes strong exception to the uniformitarian assumptions inherent in the standard positivist explanations for the desire for goods (Fullerton 1987, p. 103). This burgeoning body of theory has shown that while all societies have been brought inside the orbit of the Western economy, many Third World societies can best be understood as complex composites of capitalist and precapitalist economies in which human behavior is informed by the logic of both (Hollist and Rosenau 1981).

The case materials and discussion of the social context for consumer behavior in Zinder suggest the operation of a culturally particular "world order" consumption model that contributes to the explanation of some innovative consumer behaviors. Examples of the interaction of variables in ways particular to the diffusion of innovations in the Nigerien context were provided. More importantly, ethnographic details indicate that some market segments consume in ways that are consistent with the general features of a premarket society, albeit sometimes using new products to do so. The impact of (1) sociocentric values such as generosity and shame (*kumiya*), (2) aesthetic preferences such as brilliance, (3) competitive consumer behaviors in composing brides' trousseaux, and (4) consumer surrogates' role in channeling demand suggests that the diffusion of Western innovations in Niger still partially obeys the logic of a premarket consumption model.

Prattis (1987, pp. 33–34) accounts for the continuing salience of the premarket paradigm for consumers in Zinder and other marginal societies as follows.

Traditional values and structures . . . provide a level of meaning and support which in the context of the expansion of capitalist economics becomes part of the

schmidt 1969), and the multisectoral African agricultural economies (Bohannon and Bohannon 1968; Douglas 1967, 1982), exchanges involved a relatively fixed set of conventionally agreed upon items.

population's means of adaptation to a situation of uncertainty and disadvantage. . . . Continual gift giving, borrowing and mutual aid within wide networks of kin and neighbours together with subsistence production sets up networks of multiple economic dependencies which are in fact the best way to cope with persisting uncertain poverty and economic disadvantage . . . the cultural value system provides a measure of worth and gratification that is not to be found in the provision of the market economy.

Models of innovative consumer behavior and buyer behavior must come to terms with enduring local "world order logics" rather than assuming Third World consumers are becoming simply more cosmopolitan.

Consumer Behavior in the West. The role of market-mediated transactions and exotic manufactures in social life is growing in Niger. Data indicate that westernization of consumption continues. In part, what seems to be taking place is "the implantation of a higher, international level of common standards of operating and living" (Galtung 1981, p. 112). According to Galtung (1981, pp. 113–114), the transfer of new technology and manufactured goods is

at the same time a transfer of a hidden social code, the social cosmology behind that technology . . . this transfer effects a more effective Westernization of the world than would colonialism and neocolonialism. . . . As this complex grows, . . . it is important politically because it will homogenize world elites, making them increasingly similar to each other both within and between countries and thereby increasing the grip they have on each other through channels of interaction.

Case 3 data are directly relevant to the proposition that a complex of Western consumer values to which only a select few have direct access accompanies the adoption of Western manufactures. Indeed, rural farmers' encounter with elite behavior has led them intuitively to this same view. When they term members of Niger's national elite *nasarai*, white men, they essentially are saying that the elites' consumption patterns entail a world view at odds with their own. There can be little doubt that the egocentric thirst for novelty among rural migrants for functionary suits, cigarettes, radios, cassettes, motor scooters, and LED watches reflects the urban elites' tastes for these and other more elaborate Western goods. Elite demand, in turn, is fueled by a world market culture that thrives on demand for the "good life" patterned on Western consumption models and is part of a global change in consumer attitude.

A Eurocentric argument is insufficient for explaining changing consumption practice. At the macro-marketing level, the search for new markets by metropolitan capital (Firat 1987) lies behind Zinder's consumer revolution. Firat (1987, p. 261) contends that

inherent in global market structure is a tendency for consumption patterns to become similar.

The more products are bought and consumed individually and privately by consumers, the more markets will grow and expand, whereas collective and public consumption would limit this expansion. In order to enter all facets of life to expand markets, products will have to substitute more and more human labor in the household and elsewhere; thus, the trend toward passive consumption. The economies of scale, mass production technology, and mass market exchange require standardization and satisfaction of socialized (or common) needs. Furthermore, expansion of markets requires that production be removed from households to organized productive systems [like bureaucracies]; thus the trend toward alienated consumption.

Firat thus suggests that innovative consumption along Western models of demand is driven by structural macromarketing factors rather than innate psychological dispositions. Some consumers thus embrace new self-centered consumption patterns; others reject them. A number of labor migrants in Zinder commented unfavorably upon the personalization and privatization of consumption among their urban patrons in Nigeria. They spoke of their patrons' shocking failure to extend even token hospitality to migrants during the Moslem thanksgiving celebration.

At the microcosmic level, dramatic increases in social differentiation and the need for material symbols to encode them are part of the process (Belk 1984). Campbell's (1987) hedonistic model of modern consumerism provides useful explanations. Campbell extends analysis of the evolution of the Protestant ethic from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, where Weber left it, into the twentieth century. He contends that modern Western consumer behavior and imitative parallels among Third World elites is modeled primarily on rebellious, self-centered, Romantic idealism, not on stern, Calvinist utilitarianism.

The concept of consumption as a self-directed and creative process involving cultural ideals, novelty seeking, emotion, and symbols rather than pure utility seems to describe all consumer behavior better than the rationalistic model (Belk 1987; Hirschman 1980, 1981; Holbrook 1982; Peterson, Hoyer, and Wilson 1986). Certainly, every upwardly aspiring Nigerien intuitively that consumption is a complex game in pursuit of power and wealth (Schwimmer 1987) and not primarily a utilitarian transaction. Adopting the imagined trappings of the Western consumer, the Nigerian seeks to enter the community of the supranational elite, if only temporarily or only in his or her imagination. Among many elite Nigerien consumers, emulation of imagined Western consumer behavior through goods encoding new experiences and aspirations prevails as part of their search for legitimacy of

new roles within a global division of labor in a global economy.

Premarket and Western emulationist consumption models alone do not account for the range of innovations in consumption in Zinder. Veblenesque theory assumes that culture is monolithic, yet Nigerien consumers clearly seek association with radically different reference groups. They operate under at least two competing models of consumer culture. Further, emulationist models assume that all consumers are committed to aggressive conspicuous consumption; that is, they are assumed to have an overwhelming desire to get the better of their peers. However, evidence for conforming, integrative innovations in consumption in Zinder for non-Western products (Meccan goods)—like evidence for inner-directed, hedonic consumption in the West (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982)—undermines these assumptions. Consideration of a third template for consumer behavior that emphasizes ascetic values provides another emic model for consumption behaviors. Together the three models provide the dynamic that drives innovation in consumer behavior in Zinder.

Popular Islam

World-systems theorists suggest that the global economy is alive with tensions, that opposing “world order designs” such as capitalism, socialism, Muslim fundamentalism, and the like compete for hegemony inside Third World countries at the same time that global markets extend their boundaries (Hollist and Rosenau 1981). Contention between such designs varies with the prevailing political and economic climate, and is likely to be more acute when, as currently, exchange is less highly controlled politically (République du Niger 1987) and when less rigid control of peripheral economies is exercised by the Euro-American core of the world economy (Timberlake 1985).

Local premarket models of consumption and Western market-based models may be thought of as a dialectic (Fullerton 1987, p. 108), with the popular Islamic model of consumption comprising a creative, syncretic response. Indeed, the popular Islamic model shares the transnational, egalitarian appeal of the Western market-based model and notions of the collective self-reliant community of the local premarket model (Alker 1981, p. 96, 98). The culmination of Islamic jihad in the early nineteenth century in the Hausa region was a series of Islamic states including Zinder (or Damagaram; Dunbar 1971). For a century, these states operated outside the capitalist world economy. They comprised a cultural periphery to core Islamic states in North Africa and were linked to these states and Europe through long-distance trade (Baier 1974, 1977). The ecological barrier of the Sahara ensured that the Hausa states preserved their dis-

tinctive organization, thereby allowing them to maintain economic and political independence.

Economic contact via trans-Saharan trade and increased participation in the hajj to Mecca integrated elite society into the larger Islamic culture and civilization that had been combating European economic expansion for centuries. Twentieth century transportation and regional peace accelerated integration into Islam, setting the stage for a reactive Muslim ethnonationalism that has emerged from the invasion of the colonial forces and from the later development of a secular, dependent state in Niger (Amin 1973; Lubeck 1986; Olivier de Sardan 1984).

Capitalism in Zinder and neighboring Northern Nigeria did not evolve from a decline in feudalism as it did in the West, but rather was inserted into this premarket economy largely through trade (Amin 1973; Arnould 1984b, 1986; Shenton and Lennihan 1981). The resulting society reflects the tensions of two distinct, even antithetical, political economies (Lubeck 1986).

An import substitution industry in Northern Nigeria has created an urban working class composed largely of rural migrants of commoner (*talakawa*) status and an elite class of bureaucrats and merchants (Kentor 1985). Meanwhile, Islamic revivalists have created a Muslim ethnonationalist identity built upon the millenarian, reformist tradition within the Hausa states (Lubeck 1986; Nicolas 1969), and composed largely of elements marginal to the mainstream of both rural and urban communities: youths, unemployed migrants, and seasonal, migrant koranic students (Lubeck 1986; Nicolas 1969). Given the material and status deprivation of the bulk of these two populations, urban disorder, and the generalized social misery of the lower classes, the pull of a reform movement in the shared Sahelian tradition of Islamic utopianism is comprehensible (Hodgkin 1977). Expansion of the grip of the national elite—which has adopted state policies, social goals, and consumption style from the French (Olivier de Sardan 1984; Sali-fou 1975; Spittler 1979)—over the rural peasantry encourages its spread. Migrant members of the communities studied in Niger were involved in this movement, and a number were killed in its brutal suppression.

The Islamic revival movement reached a modern apotheosis in the Maitatsine movement that shook Northern Nigeria in the early 1980s (Lubeck 1985). Maitatsine damned all those who enjoyed Western consumer goods and instructed his followers to avoid them. Accumulation of money was rejected. Antagonism toward merchants was a consistent theme, and marketplaces were “liberated” by rioters. Popular Islamic beliefs assert the moral superiority of the material deprivation experienced by the poor. Itinerant koranic students, and by extension the entire *talakawa* from which they come, are thus sanctioned to view their poverty as moral validation in the face of

inordinate elite consumption of Western-origin goods (Lubeck 1985).¹¹

What strikes the consumer researcher is the way in which the movement against materialism actually channels demand for those novel goods that give expression to the inner-directed, antimaterialist, and ascetic values cherished by the movement. The rapid adoption of goods associated with the pilgrimage to Mecca reported here is a case in point. Further, copies of the Koran and other religious texts (especially new, innovative ones written in Hausa), prayer shawls, rosaries, plastic prayer mats, and the like are among the most cherished possessions of rural Hausa men (Wallerdorf and Arnould 1988). Wealthy merchants, who clearly perceive that the legitimacy of their rapacious activities (Arnould 1986; Shenton and Lennihan 1981) is at risk, seek peace with the clergy and status with the pious laity through repeated pilgrimages and by constructing and furnishing enormous mosques at great cost.

Innovation in goods associated with Islam enriches our model of the diffusion of innovations in the Third World. For rich merchants, it illustrates an essentially "defensive form" of conspicuous consumption in which the predominant concern is to maintain one's status. Poor commoners, however, seem to be motivated to innovate, as Veblen and Campbell suggest, by aspiring toward an ideal lifestyle. In this model of consumption, individuals achieve status goals through innovation of Meccan goods rather than imitation of Western goods, and consumption is used to negotiate the criteria (secular/sacred) employed in defining status in situations (most) where there is no single high status model.

A General Model of Preference Formation and the Diffusion of Innovation

Discussion has so far focused on emic models of the diffusion of innovation in Niger. There is, however, an etic model that should be integrated into the diffusion of innovations paradigm. This is not a complete model of preference formation, still less of purchase behavior, and is restricted to constructs that may yet be developed into a broadened theory of the diffusion of innovations.

The key to consumer innovations lies in explicating the fundamental social processes of individual differentiation, comparison, and social integration as reflected in goods that people cultivate (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Miller 1987; Weisner 1984). Styles may be spoon-fed to consumers by advertising (Ewen 1976) or introduced and imitated in public and private consumption rituals (Hebidge

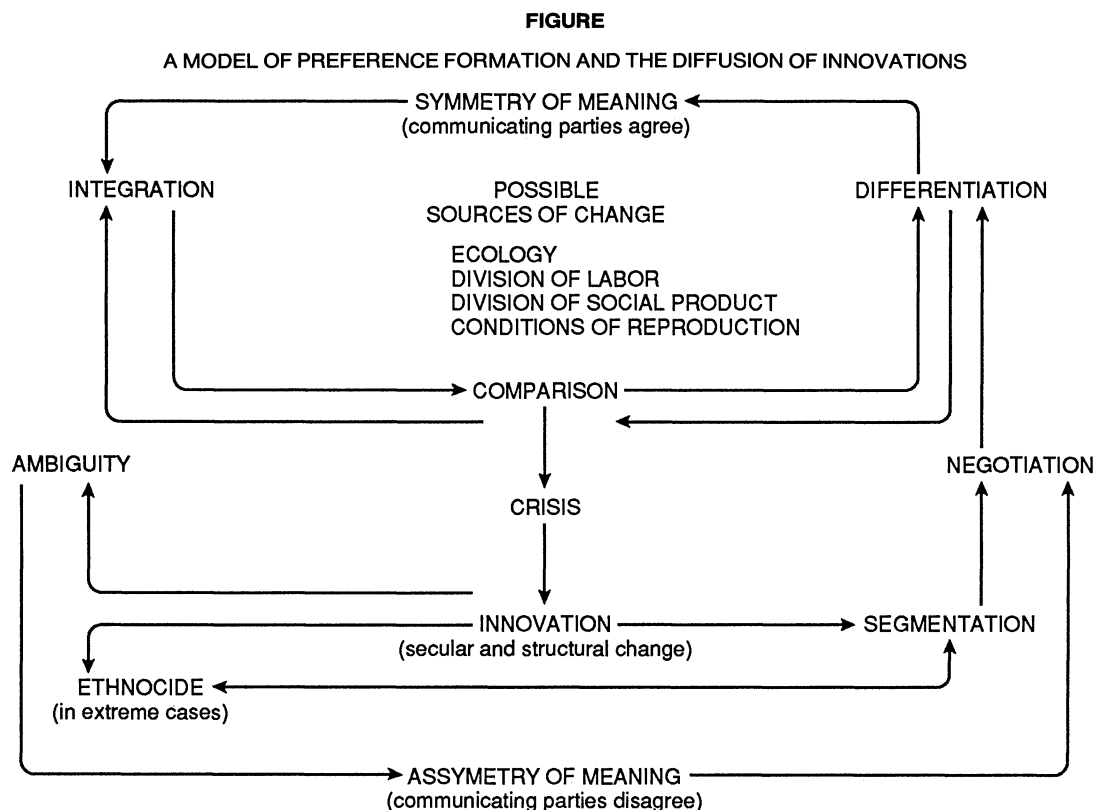
1979; McCracken 1988a, 1988b; Rook 1985). I have drawn attention to comparative, integrative, and differentiating behaviors in the ethnographic cases. The shared values and structural variants—brilliance, grace, the household, and patriarchy—expressed in novel and familiar objects are used as tools in basic social strategies of affiliation, differentiation, and the negotiation of boundaries between status groups and individuals. Shared stylistic preferences provide a relatively stable source of models of consumption. Through consumption, individuals broadcast their cultural identities through time and space, modifying their inventory of consumption goals with changes in their social, economical, political, and ecological status. Meaning is expressed, modified, and transferred to new products and product categories, and ultimately drained from some objects as conditions change (McCracken 1986).

Dramatic changes in the context of consumption, such as have occurred in the Third World, provoke profound symbolic dissonance in consumption styles. Mode of production, division of labor, household organization, political relations, systems of gift exchange, religious affiliation, and so on, are modified, often overnight, by forces beyond local control. Innovation in the consumption goods through which people define reality ensues.

In general, the process of innovation in consumption may be diagrammed as in the Figure. Self-definition is predicated on a shared system of integration, comparison, and differentiation that defines objects and gives them their symbolic power. When a social system is characterized by the hegemony of a system of values, ethics, and meaning, symmetry of meaning prevails. Given the redundancy of nonlinguistic systems of meaning, such systems of material culture may nonetheless allow for stochastic change. However, changes in ecology, division of labor or social product, the conditions of social reproduction, and the like cause disagreements about the legitimacy of status and roles, the use of prestige goods, and the nature of the good life. This provokes a crisis whereby familiar objects may then develop ambiguous or unattractive meanings. Novel relationships may also lack means of material expression, fostering ambiguity and even anomie.

Consumers innovate when there is persistent conflict over meanings, and at the point in the social structure where such conflicts occur. They may look outside existing systems for novel objects with meanings and social roles that can be negotiated to express new social and political realities. New meanings can be negotiated through consumption rituals. New goods serve groups and individuals with the means to "identify with" and "differentiate from" others, but can also create distinct new reference groups (market segments). The assignment of meanings to foreign objects is always predicated on a system that regulates

¹¹The Islamic reformist movement is reminiscent in content, if distinct in idiom, of the Populist and utopian trade union movements in nineteenth-century America as described by Hudson and Wadkins (1988).



the assignment of meanings to all objects within a given cultural context.

Consumers debate the worth of goods through consumption rituals (e.g., possession, exchange, grooming, divestment; McCracken 1986). Where symmetry emerges about the new meanings encoded, novel goods enter the material culture inventory. If no consensus emerges, further negotiation results in continued consumption, with outcomes ranging from the cases of ethnocide mentioned previously to market segmentation. Market segmentation produces groups such as "youth," urban elites, and Islamic fundamentalists, each with their own subsystem of meaning and self-definition enshrined in consumer goods. Innovation does not necessarily persist continuously, but it does persist when qualitative changes in economy and social structure continue.

CONCLUSIONS

To account for innovation in consumption behavior in the marginal African society of Niger, new theoretical elements have been incorporated into the standard diffusion of innovations paradigm. The data and the theory modification contribute to a broader, comparative science of consumer behavior.

First, analyses of Nigerien data demonstrate the need to reconstrue the constructs employed in diffusion of innovations research for non-Western cultural

contexts. Preference formation for object categories may follow diffusion patterns distinct from observed patterns of mere purchase decisions (Reilly and Wallendorf 1987; Sherry and Camargo 1987; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983). Purchase intentionality itself may be limited. Object attachment, possessiveness, and purchase are not necessarily connected (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). Alternate models of consumer choice contend for hegemony. Even the market system is distinctive from the global market economy (Arnould 1985). Innateness and emulationist theories underlying the standard diffusion of innovations model are shown to be ethnocentric, thereby lacking explanatory power in alternate contexts.

Second, the data from Zinder support the view that affect, repetition, and association may stimulate preference without the intervention of rational evaluations of utility. Affect, concretized in certain stylistic features like "brilliance" and "grace," plays a major role in preference formation and choice in a context informed by highly normative value constructs, limited self-conscious cognitive processing for product attributes, and personalized, face-to-face interactions (cf. Allen and Madden 1985; e.g., Bierley, McSweeney, and Vannieuwkerk 1985; Tsal 1985; Zajonc and Marcus 1982).

Third, historically informed, contextual analysis identifies the dynamic, culturally particular emic model of culture, which provides the boundary pa-

rameters for the inexhaustible play of individually elaborated variations in consumption style (Arnould and Wilk 1984; Fullerton 1987; McCracken 1986; Mick 1986; Rook 1985; Weissner 1984). Emic theories of innovative consumption in Zinder reveal an attempt to (1) accommodate a new division of labor with the household while reasserting patriarchy (Case 3 concerning migration); (2) stabilize the essential reproductive unit, the household, while encompassing change in women's horizons (Case 2 concerning marriage goods); (3) reconcile hegemonic great traditions (Islam versus Western values) entailing alternate constructions of consumer choice (Firat 1987) and competing paradigms of consumer satisfaction; and (4) minimize environmental risk, both natural and economic.

Fourth, materials presented highlight the neglected role of demand in facilitating the initial spread of market-mediated exchange in the Sahel. Innovations in consumption played a decisive role in structuring economic change in the colonial era. Innovation also provided a vehicle to express new political oppositions through apparently conservative idioms like the hajj. New goods also provide ways to express preexistent cleavages between groups (young and old, male and female) whose content has been altered by qualitative economic change.

Fifth, an emergent ethic theory of innovation and diffusion of new consumer behavior has been proposed. The key to a cross-cultural understanding of innovation in consumer behavior lies in explicating the fundamental social processes of differentiation, comparison, and social integration of the self as reflected in the goods that people cultivate. In systems undergoing far-reaching, qualitative economic change, the search for material symbols of these processes broadens to include novel and even bizarre goods.

By systematic study of particular macro-economic, social structural, political, and cultural variables, the processes of preference formation, innovation, and the diffusion of innovations can be elucidated. Campbell (1987) and his predecessors (McKendrick et al. 1982; Mukerji 1983; Williams 1982) have provided a historically sound and culturally informed base for such analyses of Western consumption. This analysis of one small-scale social setting of the kind in which anthropologists commonly specialize makes another beginning.

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