

**O BRAVE NEW WORLD, THAT HAS SUCH PRODUCTS IN IT!
AN APPROACH TOWARDS THE TREND OF A NEW SOPHISTICATED LEBENSREFORM IN
GERMANY AS A CUSTOMERS' PHILOSOPHY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES
FOR MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT**

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Citation:

KÖNIG J.C.L.; WIEDMANN K.-P., "O Brave New World, that Has Such Products in It! An Approach towards the Trend of a New Sophisticated Lebensreform in Germany as a Customers' Philosophy and Its Consequences for Marketing and Management" (advanced abstract), Proceedings International Marketing Trends Conference 2015.

Keywords:

Counter culture, Consumer Culture, Cultural Approaches, Cultural Spheres, Cultural Capital, Cultural Values, Economic Sociology

Abstract:

Counter cultures play not only a strong role in human history, they also shape markets and consumption habits. Regarding contemporary counter culture in Germany, we observed how the movement is linked to branding and consumption habits. Our study aims to present that the movement is following typical rules of a social phenomenon, which is today also enhanced with a consumer culture.

In our paper, we observe the phenomenon of counter culture and its ability to influence and sometimes change societies on the example of the Renaissance and Romanticism first. On the dimensions of Weber's cultural dimensions (spheres), we show how counter movements effect stances of an era. By challenging the approach with Bourdieu's theories on capital and habitus, we were also able to prove counter movements on their class affiliation, ideals and values, and eventually consumption habits.

On the example of German *Lebensreform*, we describe a counterculture with a rather gentle influence on an era in general but with strong effects and branching development on the long run. Even more, this culture very much enclosed specific consumption as part of the movement. In the last section of this paper, we draw a line from original *Lebensreform* to the contemporary phenomenon of a sophisticated new *Lebensreform* that shapes parts of German cultural society, its consumption habits, and its brands and products.

While the theoretical background opens both a broader understanding of counter culture consumption and a deeper understanding why and how it is linked to cultural spheres and beliefs, precise data upon consumers of the described counter movement are missing. Also, the dimension of aesthetic seems to play a significant role, which we do not understand completely yet, even more as it comes to implications for designing counter culture brands and products.

Nevertheless, our study comes to the conclusion, that large mega brand companies as well as retailer chains are excluded from the counter culture consumption market. This opens possibilities for small ownership brands and retail shops.

As original values, our study combines Weber's cultural spheres with the idea of both counter culture movements in general and sophisticated counter consumption in contemporary Germany. The dimensions and typical patterns found offer the possibility to understand the phenomenon from a new cultural and social perspective, building the background for further quantitative and qualitative studies.

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