

# Conspicuous consumption and consumer society



I will try to describe what a consumer society is and explain why people today shop for more than just life's essentials. Three social scientists - Zygmunt Bauman, Thorstein Veblen and Warren Susman - all have differing opinions when it comes to consumer choice and why we shop, so I'll be putting forward all four concepts: 'seduced' and 'repressed', 'conspicuous consumption' and 'performing-self'. I'll also discuss supermarket power and domination and question whether they're a force for the good or for bad. Lastly, I'll raise the issue of sustainability and question whether a consumer society can even last.

A consumer society is a society in which people define themselves and others by what they consume as well as by what their jobs are (Hetherington, 2009, p. 19). Thirty years ago when society was an industrialised society, people were defined by their jobs alone. Today people are keen to be seen as more than a 'mechanic' or a 'teacher', and they achieve this by displaying their personal taste and individuality through the consumption of material things; this is done by the clothes they buy and wear, the music they listen to or the material objects they surround themselves with. A consumer society is not just about the consumption of goods, it's also about the consumption of services I will try to describe what a consumer society is and explain why people today shop for more than just life's essentials. Three social scientists -Zygmunt Bauman, Thorstein Veblen and Warren Susman - all have differing opinions when it comes to consumer choice and why we shop, so I'll be putting forward all four concepts: 'seduced' and 'repressed', 'conspicuous consumption' and 'performing-self'. I'll also discuss supermarket power and domination and question

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