

Tma1



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Essay plan 1. Introduction. Define consumer society. Mention key things about concepts of the seduced and the repressed. Describe the concepts.

2. Consuming uses and how do we see shopping. 3. What is Bauman's theory explaining and not mentioning. 4. First department stores similarities to now day supermarkets and shops.

Mention some of the ways they seduce us. 5. How big our choice is becoming with growing supermarkets.

6. The negative side of supermarkets opening on our streets. 7. Talking about the reasons why big retailers can sell cheap goods that small shops can't compete. 8. Mention how unsustainable is our society with this excessive consuming. 9.

Conclusion. Discuss the role of the concepts of the seduced and the repressed for understanding the place of consumption in contemporary consumer society. Consumption and contemporary consumer society
Consumer society is society where shopping for material goods matters as much as how we earn our living. This society is believed to be shaped by how people relate to things that they buy and use. Bauman's (1988), theory claims that it's possible to divide contemporary consumer society in to two parts. The first one is The Seduced and oppositional the Repressed.

Seduced " the members of society who, using Bauman's words, are able to participate in this consumer society because of their financial and social circumstances. (Making Social Lives p 25) That is mainly people with high or medium income and people who are highly valued within this society.

Repressed- people who are not able to take part in consumer society activities for any financial, physical or mental reasons. In other words, people who are not consuming effectively. This includes people on low wages, unemployed, those in insecure employment, disabled, old people, racial minorities and others. (Chapter 1. p 25) The key thing about the Consumer Society is that people can change from one group to other for multiple times during their lifetime depending to their changing circumstances rather than in Industrial Society. And in this assignment I will discuss what role these two concepts actually play in Contemporary Consumer Society by looking at consumption and things involved in it.

A consumer society suggests that people not only consume for life's necessities but also for pleasure, fun, to be part of a group, to fit in certain crowd of people, to look different and to send messages to others about themselves. Bauman believes that people are more seduced by what things that they purchase means: by impression that it makes by having it. Either its certain lifestyle or status, or both of them. (Chapter 1. p 35) Take designer sunglasses for example. They are practical, but because it is expensive designer item, it's been purchased not for actual usefulness but as a fashion item. These kinds of items are mainly purchased to impress others or to be part of group and is a good example to support Bauman's suggestion.

But it's arguable statement, because there are still enough people who use the consumption to make their lives easier by buying high quality things (which often are made by well known brand) that they can rely on. For example clothes, technology, food. The theory of Seduced and Repressed

explains how and by what criteria people is divided in consumer society but it doesn't offer the answer to who and how has the power to divide us.

It doesn't say anything about the big supermarkets, big brand names and advertising. The first thing I would like to mention in this side of consumption is the first department stores. They had played big role in shaping the consumer society as it is today. The first department store sold the illusion of luxury and availability, to middle class people and made a safe environment for women to shop.

(Chapter 1. p 40) The supermarkets now are following a very similar pattern where the price, the place, variation to give people choice, creation of illusion of something are crucial tools to seduce us. Some of the ways: * Big brand names hiring popular celebrities to advertise their product. In this way they get thru to buyer and seduce them by creating illusion of celebrities lifestyle and looks trout having the product. Its widely used method and, judging from demand and popularity of product, it works. For example brands like Nike using well known sport stars in advertising. * Big supermarket price wars. Comparing their prices and claiming that they are the cheapest.

For example supermarkets Asda and Tesco's. * Supermarkets and shopping malls creating safe parking for families with cars close to shop (nobody likes to look for parking place and even pay for it.) * Placing shops where they are easy accessible. * Having wide range of products under the same roof for busy people and families who might not have the time to go around many shops. The supermarkets understand what we want and they

use their understanding to become more powerful. They make us believe that they are making our life??™s easier and our shopping cheaper. So there doesn??™t seem to be any reason to not support the development of the big supermarkets because they are offering positive-sum domination. Well selling supermarkets and satisfied customers.

On the other hand, how big becomes our choice with leading supermarkets like Tesco??™s that already has over a third of all grocery sells in the UK And how real is this choice (news. bbc. co.

uk, 17 April 2007) The supermarkets are cause of both seduction and repression. With increasing big retailer market share, it is believed by many people, that it??™s killing the independent shops. The official statistics for Scotland show that in the six years between 1998-2004 around 600 small businesses, from butchers to greengrocers and bakers, had actually gone out of business. (news. bbc. co.

uk, 17 April 2007) It could be to blame for town centres becoming empty with only few remaining shops. The situation can affect local economy. From the other hand, when big retailers move in to area, they are employing local people so the unemployment is not as big issue in this case. When it comes to question, how leading supermarkets are able to offer goods for such a low price that small shops are not able to compete, is when suppliers come in to the picture. By having such a big Market power they also gain The Buyer power. This means that they are able to knock the price down of the favourable supplier by buying big amount??™s and ability to offer stable and regular demand. As well as positive-sum it??™s also as zero-sum power.

The negative side is that suppliers can be forced to sell the product for lower price than preferred and this is the issue that affects those employed by suppliers- the little workers (often abroad) and immigrants in UK. It might be one of the causes of growing immigration and unemployment in the UK. A lot of UK people are better off receiving benefits than doing such a low paid work. And the immigrants are willing to work because their pay is often lower in their own country. This is showing an example of supermarket power to repress and seduce. The next point to consider is how sustainable are we in this supermarket ruled society. The answer is that not very. Availability, choice and risen life level has seduced us in shopping like never before.

All the offers, markets tricks, low prices are making us buy more than we actually need. Therefore the amount of rubbish and wastage is growing. In short period of time the environmental unsustainability in terms of global footprint had grown from 0 % to 40%. (p 116) That means that we are using up 40% more of nature resources that environment can supply every year. In conclusion, after discussing these concepts in use, it's clear that consumption has a crucial place in contemporary consumer society.

We all shop and many of us are employed by big supermarket and shop chains - the big players, that has the power to seduce and repress. It's shaping our economy as well as people shopping habits and the way they see consumption without them necessarily realising it. Furthermore, consumption often makes our social life and dictates who does and who doesn't fit in.

And most of people prefer to be part of society. Our need to be part of something is basic of consumer society. Word count: 1, 237References: The Open University. Making Social Lives, chapter 1.

Kevin Hetherington, 2009. The Open University. Making Social Lives, chapter 2.

John Allen, 2009. The Open University. Making Social Lives, chapter 3.

Vivienne Brown, 2009. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/glasgow_and_west/6562917.stm, (Accessed 17 April 2007)

Self reflection The things that I found interesting about this assignment were seeing my, and other people shopping habits, from different side that I haven't thought about before. And discovering that ordinary people don't have us much of control in to shaping our society as we like to think. The difficult thing was to put my ideas on to paper. I found it hard to decide what material was the most relevant to question.