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A consumer culture theory perspective of the marketplace: An integrative review and agenda for research

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Abstract

In the last decades, the focus of studies on consumer behavior has changed from the individual to the group. Classical theories based on economic utility are insufficient to understand this phenomenon. Therefore, a new theoretical and postmodern approach seems necessary. Despite the increasing popularity of consumption communities, the investigation in the field is still dispersed. This study represents one first attempt to synthesize findings on the topic, in light of the consumer culture theory (CCT) tradition. CCT provides a useful framework to understand the social, cultural, experiential, and symbolic aspects of consumption. In this paper, we perform a systematic literature review on consumption communities. We also suggest an agenda for future research on the topic, consisting of its emerging themes and a set of propositions of study.

KEYWORDS
brand communities, CCT, consumer culture theory, consumption communities, marketplace cultures, systematic literature review

1 | INTRODUCTION

In 2005, Arnould and Thompson coined the term consumer culture theory (hereafter named CCT), a newly founded research tradition which sought to investigate the sociocultural, experiential, and symbolic aspects of consumption (Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018). CCT is associated with postmodernism and relates to the fields of consumer research and marketing (Skandalis et al., 2016). According to Arnould and Thompson (2018), CCT is multidisciplinary and divided into "four key, interrelated theoretical dimensions" (p. 17), each comprising a set of questions and propositions: (1) *consumer identity projects*; (2) *marketplace cultures*; (3) *the sociohistorical patterning of consumption*; and (4) *mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretative strategies.*

One of the most widely studied theoretical dimensions is *marketplace cultures*. The marketplace cultures dimension concerns consumers' interactions within the marketplace. The marketplace offers commodities and symbolic resources, from which consumers build their own identity. Subsequently, consumers engage with communities of shared consumption interests, thus, creating a collective identity (Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018). Hence, the study of the marketplace is related to the study of consumer groups (Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018), or consumption communities. Nowadays marketplace cultures are becoming even more important since consumers are assuming an active stance in the marketplace (Goulding et al., 2013), and online interactions are changing the nature of these communities (see, e.g., Sloan et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2019).

Despite the increasing popularity of consumption communities, the investigation in the field is still dispersed and scarce. This study represents one first attempt to synthesize findings on the topic. We started by searching for literature reviews on similar and adjacent areas. We concluded that, so far, no other study has attempted to synthesize the existing literature on consumption communities under the shed of CCT. Even though recent reviews apply a CCT perspective to address the social and cultural aspects of consumption (e.g., Schau & Akaka, 2020; Waqas et al., 2021), they are mainly focused on consumer experiences and value creation. Furthermore, we identified some literature reviews specifically addressing brand

communities (e.g., Hook et al., 2018; Kamboj & Rahman, 2017). These studies, in general, sought to understand consumers' participation, their motivations and marketing consequences. However, the fast development of technology has been changing the nature and characteristics of consumers' interactions tremendously. The online environment offers room for building narratives between reality and fantasy, which provides more freedom for the enactment of self-selected identities (Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010). It also enables individuals to connect with people with whom they would probably never meet in real life (Shukla & Drennan, 2018). This phenomenon has mostly been studied in relation to brand communities (e.g., Arnould & Thompson, 2018; Pai & Tsai, 2016; Shukla & Drennan, 2018). However, online also offers the possibility for individuals to engage simultaneously with diverse consumption objects and interests (Weijo et al., 2014), at different levels of intensity, developing different types of ties (Husemann et al., 2015). Therefore, a community can evolve in different ways and sometimes independently from the object, brand, or supplier that initially inspired it. Online spaces or communities are examples of manifestations of consumer culture. The classical theories based on economic utility are insufficient to explain this phenomenon (Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010). A new theoretical and postmodern approach seems necessary. This paper attempts to fulfil this research gap by performing a systematic literature review on consumption communities, under the lens of CCT. CCT is an appropriate perspective to study consumption communities since it sheds light on the processes of identity construction and transformation and on the development of social linkages using marketplace resources, which can be material or symbolic (Arnould & Thompson, 2018). In the endeavor, we followed the structure and the guidelines of a theory-based literature review, according to Gilal et al. (2019).

The paper is structured as follows. First, we present a historical overview of CCT, following other authors (e.g., Lim, 2020; Rosado-Serrano et al., 2018). Afterward, we present the review methodology, which is mostly inspired by the works of Kahiya (2018) and Gilal et al. (2019), and to less extent, in some other studies (e.g., Paul, 2019; Paul & Benito, 2018). Following the review methodology, we present the bibliometric profile of the articles (i.e., publication outlets and citations). Then, we analyze the selected article sample.

We discuss concepts, typologies, antecedents, consequences, mediators/moderators, and methodologies. We conclude with a research agenda for future studies, consisting of its emerging themes and a set of propositions of study; and we present the limitations of the investigation.

2 | HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CCT

There are different interpretations as to the exact historical roots of CCT (see Figure 1). The most widely accepted version sees the 1980's expansion of consumer research and its growth outside of the merely rational aspects of consumption as the starting point. For example, Malter et al. (2020) consider the expansion of consumer research into different areas in the 1980s and place CCT as a humanistic approach within this evolution. Tadajewski (2006), on the contrary, sees motivation research as the actual root of CCT research. He traces the development of CCT from the 1930s until how we know it today. Tadajewski (2010) argues that the frontiers of CCT are not something new, but rather inherited from previous critical marketing studies.

Though the historical origins of CCT are still under debate it still struggles to achieve legitimacy as an independent research field. The recent popularity of CCT is the result of 15 years of trying to establish the boundaries of the research domain, which is not just a subfield of Marketing. The main research efforts in the field with the proliferation of academic studies is something that started only in 2009. Four years after the publication of Arnould and Thompson's (2005) article on CCT. Cova et al. (2009), in their study, suggest associating CCT with other research traditions, such as Service Dominant Logic (SDL), to increase CCT's academic legitimacy. Coskuner-Balli (2013) defends CCT legitimacy by exploring different practices through which CCT can gain social and cultural legitimacy: (1) mobilizing cultural myths; (2) code-switching; (3) creating market resources; and (4) community building. Bode and Østergaard (2013) link CCT legitimacy to forms of discourse, by equilibrating radical with less radical discourses. A theoretical reflection on the status of CCT research is also offered by Cova et al. (2013), who focus on the perspective of how communism can help rethink Consumer Culture
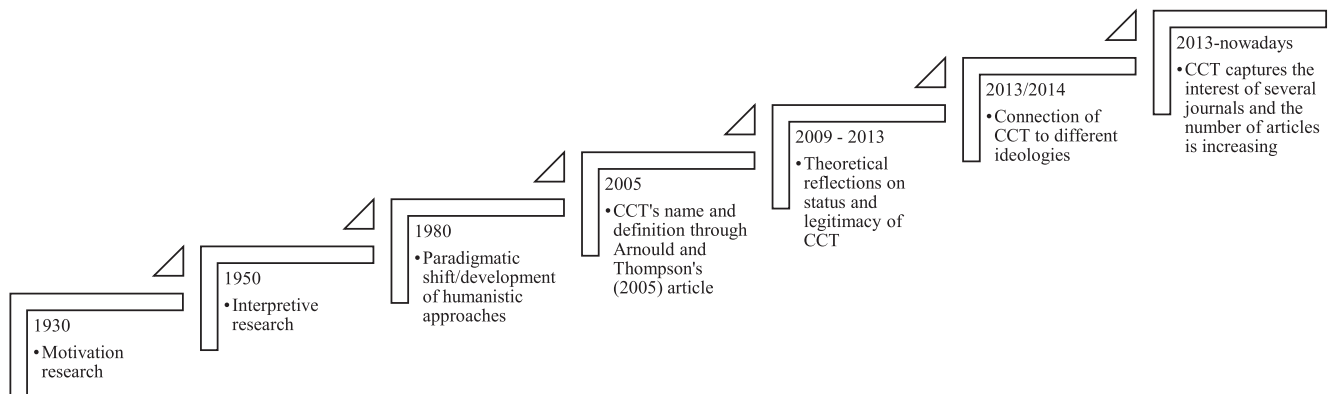

FIGURE 1 Historical overview of CCT

Theory. Fitchett et al. (2014), on the contrary, connect CCT to neo-liberalism and, particularly, to the ideas of myth and ideology.

The development of CCT as a legitimate research tradition has been the focus of extensive debate in literature. Nevertheless, and because of its constant refinement, CCT has been enjoying an increasing popularity. This popularity is in terms of both capturing the interest of top journals (Malter et al., 2020) and the number of published articles.

3 | REVIEW METHODOLOGY

As recommended by other authors (e.g., Gilal et al., in press; Hao et al., 2019; Kahiya, 2018), we first developed a set of specific research questions that guided the study:

1. How can we define CCT and how does it contribute to the literature on consumption communities?
2. What type of consumption communities are described in the literature so far?
3. What theories have been used in parallel with CCT?
4. What independent, dependent, mediating, and moderating variables have been used under CCT perspective?
5. What contexts have been studied?
6. What countries have been studied in the CCT literature?
7. What kind of research methods have been used?

This paper seeks to answer these questions by linking the development and legitimacy of CCT to the development of consumption communities and by demonstrating how these two concepts overlap. We followed a theory-based review. Theory-based reviews advance the literature on a specific topic by applying a given theory to a subject area or field (Paul & Criado, 2020). For instance, Gilal et al. (in press) apply a theory-based review to explore the role of organismic integration theory (OIT) in marketing science.

The review methodology used consisted of two main steps according to Kahiya (2018). First, we identified the search terms and the databases to be accessed. Second, we defined the criteria for eligibility and exclusion of articles (see Figure 2).

3.1 | Research terms and journal selection criteria

We started with an identification of the search terms. We used a combination of any search term with the term "consumer culture theory" since we intended to explore consumption communities from this theoretical view. First, we looked for substitutes for "consumption communities." The search terms we selected, combined with consumer culture theory, were: "brand communities," "consumer tribes," "consumption/consumer communities," "online/virtual communities," and "online/virtual brand communities." We applied these search terms through the search engines of Scopus

and Web of Science to look for peer-reviewed journal articles. These databases and process were also used in previous systematic reviews (e.g., Kumar et al., 2020; Randhawa et al., 2016). As CCT is a multidisciplinary topic that crosses different fields of research (e.g., sociology and anthropology), these two databases were deemed adequate. Scopus and Web of Science are broad, diverse, and multidisciplinary, and offer a large sample of highly reputable publications.

As the first criteria, we only selected articles written in the English language and ranging from 2005 to 2020. We selected this period because CCT received its name in 2005 (see Arnould & Thompson, 2005). We followed other systematic literature reviews, which also present a limited study period (Paul & Mas, 2019; Rosado-Serrano et al., 2018). More specifically, a systematic literature review should encompass, at least, 10 years of research in the field (Paul & Criado, 2020). Since we cover 15 years of research on the topic, our selection satisfies this criterion. We also confronted the search results of the two databases—Scopus and Web of Science—and refined our search to only include articles on the subject areas of "Business, Management and Accounting," "Social Sciences," and "Psychology," as suggested by Kamboj and Rahman (2017). After this initial phase, we could identify 154 peer-reviewed journal articles of interest for our research (see Figure 2).

To refine our initial selection of the articles to be further analyzed, we used the classification attributed by the Academic Journal Guide of the Association of Business Schools (ABS) and the Scimago Journal Rank, because they represent highly reputable, recognized worldwide, journal rank lists. The ABS ranking for article selection is also applied in other studies (e.g., Paul, 2019; Paul & Benito, 2018; Paul & Singh, 2017). We wanted to include in our selection outstanding articles comprising significant CCT-related research. Thus, we retrieved journals either ranked 3 or above in the ABS Academic Journal Guide or in the first two quartiles (Q1/Q2) of Scimago Journal Rank. With these criteria, we selected high-level publication outlets, and also retained useful articles with significant CCT contributions, from journals that were not in the ABS list. Additionally, we followed Askegaard's (2015) recommendations regarding the publication outlets with important contributions from CCT authors. After the application of these criteria, we retrieved 146 articles.

3.2 | Inclusion criteria using keywords and other conditions

Following Paul and Criado (2020), we searched for specific keywords not only in the title, abstract, or list of keywords, but also in the full text. The keywords we included were: "consumer culture theory/CCT"; "brand communities"; "consumer tribes"; "neo-tribes"; "consumption/consumer communities; online/virtual communities." This procedure allowed us to exclude 68 more articles and retrieve 78 (see Figure 2). Finally, according to Kahiya (2018), we also set another further criterion for article inclusion. This criterion stated that, at least, one of the following conditions had to be verified:
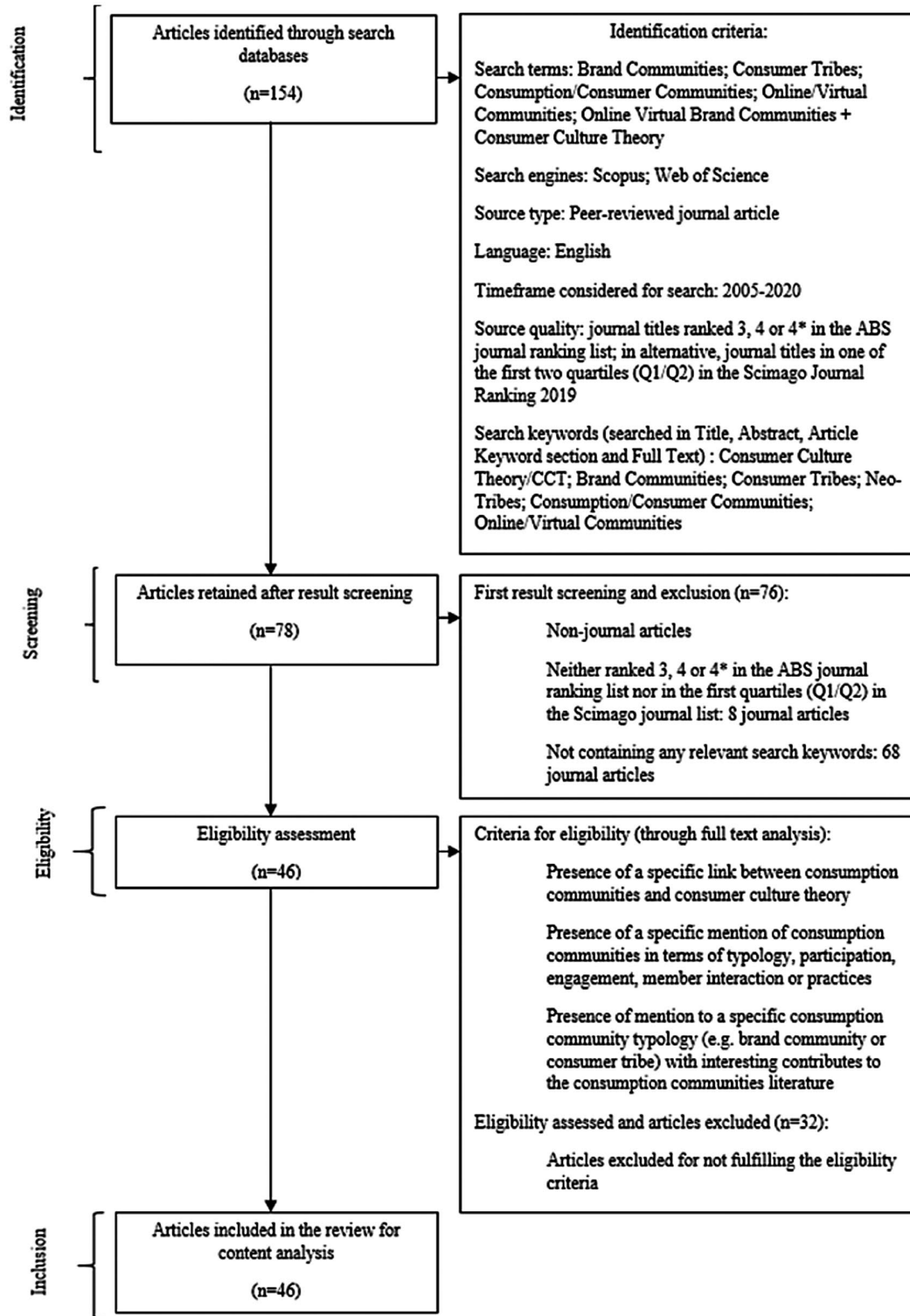
FIGURE 2 Review methodology

1. An existing link between consumption communities and consumer culture theory;
2. Consumption community was the focal construct;
3. The text had to mention a specific typology of consumption community (e.g., brand community or consumer tribe) but with interesting contributes to the consumption communities' literature.

After the application of the criteria above, we arrived at a final sample of 46 articles (see Figure 2). This final sample includes 15 articles not specifically focusing on consumption communities, but instead on specific typologies of consumption communities, such as brand communities and consumer tribes. We confirmed there is a scarcity of studies concerning exclusively consumption

communities and their contribution to the literature is still in the beginning. Moreover, as to the best of our knowledge no other systematic review has focused specifically on consumption communities, we compared our final sample with the samples of other two systematic reviews on brand communities (Hook et al., 2018; Kamboj & Rahman, 2017). This procedure was according to Kahiya's (2018) recommendation. We found out that Hook et al. (2018) use a very similar sample for detailed analysis, comprising 41 articles; and Kamboj and Rahman (2017) analyze 113 articles. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that there are many more publications on brand communities than those strictly focusing on consumption communities. Finally, as a systematic literature review can use a sample of 40–50 articles (Paul & Criado, 2020), our sample also fulfils this criterion.

4 | BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Our bibliometric analysis consisted of the identification of publication outlets, citations, publishing trends, and contexts (e.g., countries, research settings) from our article sample. Following Hao

et al. (2019), Kahiya (2018), and Paul and Singh (2017), we created a list with the distribution of articles per journal—the publication outlets (see Table 1). Our list followed a design similar to Rosado-Serrano et al. (2018). The final list of 46 journal articles spreads across 24 different journals. We reviewed articles from at least 10–20 different journals to avoid biased selection criteria (Paul & Criado, 2020). The journals with the largest number of publications are the *European Journal of Marketing* (n = 5), the *Journal of Business Research* (n = 5), and *Consumption, Markets and Culture* (n = 5). In particular, we emphasize that one of the journals covering a large number of publications is a representative journal for CCT-related research.

To assess scholarly work on the topic, we followed Hao et al. (2019). We used the software Publish or Perish (POP) (Harzing, 2007) to analyze the global number of citations and the partials per year of each article. The number of citations per year was used to control the age of an article. Following other authors (e.g., Kahiya, 2018; Lim et al., 2021), we established a top 10 of the most cited articles (see Table 2). We concluded that Schau et al. (2009) is the most influential article, both in terms of the global number of citations (n = 2672) and citations per year (242.91). We also noted

TABLE 1 Publication outlets

Journal	Articles	References
British Food Journal	1	Cronin and McCarthy (2011)
Consumption Markets and Culture	5	Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2010), Denegri-Knott and Molesworth (2010), Podoshen et al. (2018), O'Sullivan (2009), Moraes et al. (2010)
European Journal of Marketing	5	Ruiz et al. (2020), Goulding et al. (2013), Skandalis et al. (2016), O'Sullivan and Richardson (2020), Agrawal and Ramachandran (2017)
European Sport Management Quarterly	2	Kolyperas et al. (2019), Hedlund (2014)
Information and Management	2	Shukla and Drennan (2018), Pai and Tsai (2016)
Journal of Brand Management	2	Wilson (2011), Hook et al. (2018)
Journal of Business Research	5	Weijo et al. (2019), Gordon et al. (2015), Healy and McDonagh (2013), Weijo et al. (2014), Black and Veloutsou (2017)
Journal of Consumer Culture	1	Ulusoy and Fırat (2018)
Journal of Consumer Research	2	Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007), Seregina and Weijo (2017)
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management	1	Aung and Sha (2016)
Journal of Industrial Ecology	1	Catulli et al. (2017)
Journal of Interactive Marketing	1	de Almeida et al. (2018).
Journal of Macromarketing	1	Sinclair (2016)
Journal of Marketing	1	Schau et al. (2009)
Journal of Marketing Management	3	Thomas (2018), O'Sullivan (2016), Harwood and Garry (2010)
Journal of Public Policy and Marketing	1	De Vincenzo and Scammon (2015)
Journal of Strategic Marketing	1	Kolyperas and Sparks (2018)
Marketing Theory	3	Mamali et al. (2018), Sinclair and Dolan (2015), Podoshen et al. (2014)
Qualitative Market Research	3	Algesheimer and Gurău (2008), Sloan et al. (2015), Kamboj and Rahman (2017)
Qualitative Sociology	1	Brown (2011)
Service Industries Journal	1	Tsiotsou (2016)
Sociology	1	Cole (2018)
Sustainability (Switzerland)	1	Zhang et al. (2019)
Young Consumers	1	Samala and Katkam (2019)
Total	46	

TABLE 2 Citation analysis

Rank	Author(s)	Total citations	Rank	Author(s)	Citations/ year
1	Schau et al. (2009)	2672	1	Schau et al. (2009)	242,91
2	Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007)	474	2	Black and Veloutsou (2017)	48
3	Denegri-Knott and Molesworth (2010)	221	3	Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007)	36,46
4	Goulding et al. (2013)	205	4	Goulding et al. (2013)	29,29
5	Healy and McDonagh (2013)	175	5	Healy and McDonagh (2013)	25
6	Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2010)	147	6	Denegri-Knott and Molesworth (2010)	22,1
7	Black and Veloutsou (2017)	144	7	Seregina and Weijo (2017)	18,33
8	Moraes et al. (2010)	84	8	Kolyperas et al. (2019)	18
9	Weijo et al. (2014)	71	9	Pai and Tsai (2016)	15,5
10	Hedlund (2014)	67	10	Hook et al. (2018)	15

Note: These academic citations were retrieved from online sources through the software of Publish or Perish (Harzing, 2007).

that although Black and Veloutsou (2017) has a substantially lower number of citations (*n* = 144) than Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007) (*n* = 474), in terms of citations per year, they are ranked second. Denegri-Knott and Molesworth (2010) ranks third in terms of global citations (*n* = 221), but the article, only ranked sixth in terms of average citations per year (22.1), is less cited than the more recent articles of Goulding et al. (2013), with an average citation per year of 29.2, and Healy and McDonagh (2013), with an average citation per year of 25.0.

4.1 | Publication trends and contexts

Since our research focuses on studying consumption communities under the theoretical lens of CCT, we started by analyzing the articles in the final sample (*n* = 46) that specifically mention the topic of consumer culture theory. We looked for the keywords "CCT" or "consumer culture theory" in the title, abstract, and text body of the papers. As performed by other systematic reviews (e.g., Canabal & White, 2008; Jamali & Karam, 2018; Paul & Singh, 2017), we divided the study into three periods of time: 2005–2010, 2011–2015, and 2016–2020 that represent three publishing trends (see Figure 3). Seven articles from our sample were published between 2005 and 2010, four of them focusing on "consumer culture theory" or "CCT." The scarcity of articles for this period can be explained by the fact that the CCT literature was at an early stage. Between 2011 and 2015, the number of articles in top academic journals (i.e., journals with a high impact factor, ranked 3 or above in the ABS journal quality list, or Q1/Q2 in the Scimago journal ranking list) doubled to 14. Ten of these 14 articles relate to CCT. In the most recent period, 25 articles (11 of them related to consumer culture theory) reached top academic journals. As these numbers demonstrate, CCT and
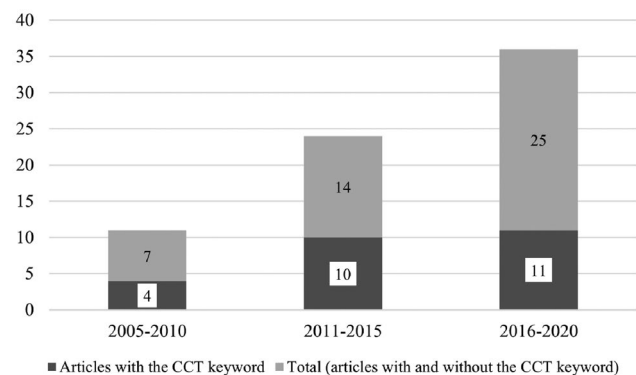

FIGURE 3 Publishing trends

consumption communities are increasingly garnering the interest of the academic community and are starting to be seen as related topics. Moreover, there is a growing interest in studying consumption communities as new related topics and methods are gaining popularity. However, we could also infer from our 2016 to 2020 sample that there are still many articles that do not analyze consumption communities in light of CCT. In this study, we explore how these and other topics can benefit from a CCT theoretical perspective.

According to other authors (e.g., Gilal et al., in press; Kahiya, 2018; Paul & Benito, 2018; Paul & Singh, 2017), we also explored the countries of study and the specific research contexts in which the studies were applied (see Tables 3 and 4). Our table followed a similar design to Chen et al. (2021). We can see that most studies on-site take place in the United Kingdom (*n* = 8) and United States (*n* = 8). Countries such as China (*n* = 1), Nicaragua (*n* = 1), Brazil (*n* = 1), Taiwan (*n* = 1), and India (*n* = 1) represent rare exceptions of countries not located in Europe and North America with study contributions to the field. Notwithstanding, Nicaragua is only mentioned in one of

TABLE 3 Research country

Country	# of studies	Exemplary references
Finland	3	Seregina and Weijo (2017), Ruiz et al. (2020), Weijo et al. (2014)
United Kingdom	8	Mamali et al. (2018), Shukla and Drennan (2018)
Several (online)	5	Healy and McDonagh (2013), Weijo et al. (2019), Cole (2018), Moraes et al. (2010)
Australia	2	Gordon et al. (2015), Sloan et al. (2015)
United States	8	O'Sullivan (2016), Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007), Podoshen et al. (2018)
Ireland	5	O'Sullivan and Richardson (2020), Sinclair and Dolan (2015), Sinclair (2016)
Netherlands	1	O'Sullivan (2016)
Brazil	1	de Almeida et al. (2018)
Taiwan	1	Pai and Tsai (2016)
India	1	Agrawal and Ramachandran (2017)
Canada	2	Aung and Sha (2016), Podoshen et al. (2018)
Norway	2	Podoshen et al. (2018), Podoshen et al. (2014)
Switzerland	1	Podoshen et al. (2014)
Nicaragua	1	Brown (2011)
France	2	Kolyperas and Sparks (2018), Thomas (2018)
China	1	Zhang et al. (2019)
Greece	1	Skandalis et al. (2016)
Spain	1	Thomas (2018)
Germany	1	Thomas (2018)
Italy	1	Thomas (2018)
Non-disclosed	5	Samala and Katkam (2019), Catulli et al. (2017), De Vincenzo and Scammon (2015)

TABLE 4 Research context

Research context	# of studies	Exemplary references
Arts (salsa-dancing and arts center)	2	Ruiz et al. (2020), Mamali et al. (2018)
Sports	6	Healy and McDonagh (2013)
Music	9	Wilson (2011), O'Sullivan (2009), Weijo et al. (2014)
Zipcar and Harley Davidson Fashion brands	2	Samala and Katkam (2019), Catulli et al. (2017)
Hobbies	5	Goulding et al. (2013), O'Sullivan (2016), de Almeida et al. (2018)
New consumption communities (online)	1	Moraes et al. (2010)
Online platforms Cruise liner forum	2	Pai and Tsai (2016), Sloan et al. (2015)
CSA farms	1	Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007)
Fair-Trade	1	Brown (2011)
Anti-brand events	1	Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2010)
Wind power suppliers	1	De Vincenzo and Scammon (2015)
Fashion	1	Aung and Sha (2016)
Political associations	1	Black and Veloutsou (2017)
Various virtual communities	5	Agrawal and Ramachandran (2017), Zhang et al. (2019), Schau et al. (2009)

the studies as part of a research taking place mostly in the United States. Besides, several studies focus on online/virtual communities and platforms ($n = 8$). This result is consistent with the increasing popularity of netnography. The studies also cover a wide range of contexts, such as: music-related communities ($n = 9$), sports ($n = 6$), and hobbies ($n = 5$).

5 | REVIEW OF STUDIES

In the final paper list, we started by analyzing the main perspectives regarding the connection between CCT and consumption communities, following the narrative approach of Hao et al. (2019). Then, we scrutinized the main theories and concepts and finalized with an exploration of the main antecedents, consequences, mediators, and moderators of consumer behavior in the context of consumption communities, according to Kahiya (2018).

CCT explores the noneconomic aspects of consumption, such as interaction, engagement, and consumer satisfaction (Kolyperas & Sparks, 2018); and, more broadly, the wider social, cultural, and political contexts and patterns of consumption (O'Sullivan, 2009; Sinclair, 2016). It also provides the theoretical frameworks to analyze how consumers identify themselves with a culture and community, the underlying values in consumption and the respective implications for producers and marketers. CCT manifests itself in micro-groups of consumers who come together in the enactment of cultural worlds and share common consumption interests (Cronin & McCarthy, 2011). CCT offers room for practices to accomplish identity objectives (Catulli et al., 2017). It addresses value co-creation activities (Schau et al., 2009) and assumes that consumers nowadays take an active stance in the marketplace as value cocreators (Goulding et al., 2013). Moreover, it is appropriate to explore experience-seeking, which leads consumers to engage with brands on social media and establish ties with fellows, firms, and brands (Samala & Katkam, 2019). However, not all consumption communities are nurtured around utopian ideals and prioritize a sense of community. Dystopian consumption communities also exist. Unlike what happens with utopian consumer spaces, where diversity is widely embraced, the dystopian scene promotes racial segmentation and there is a predisposition for discrimination and/or separation instead of equality. These differences can be understood under the domain of the CCT perspective (Podoshen et al., 2014).

Regarding methodology, CCT embraces methodological pluralism (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). However, the most popular method is ethnography and, more recently, netnography. Algesheimer and Gurău (2008), for instance, discuss the usefulness of ethnographic methods, popular to CCT approaches, in understanding the dynamics of consumption within the sociohistorical frame of globalization and market capitalism, and thus, on generating theoretical and practical insights into marketing practice.

5.1 | Typologies of consumption communities

Consumption communities can assume different typologies and sizes. For instance, small group consumption communities (SGCCs) and large group consumption communities (LGCCs) (Agrawal & Ramachandran, 2017). With this study, we hope to contribute to CCT literature with an improved understanding of the typologies of consumption communities, which constitutes a research gap in the literature (Gordon et al., 2015). We depart from Goulding et al.'s (2013) study, which is an attempt to categorize the existing types of consumption

communities: subcultures of consumption, brand communities, and consumer tribes. Furthermore, we compare and contrast the defining characteristics with previous studies (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019).

Subcultures of consumption can be defined as an escape to the oppressive consumer culture (Ulusoy & Firat, 2018), held together by temporary consumption experiences and activities (Goulding et al., 2013; Ulusoy & Firat, 2018). Schau et al. (2009) conceptualize brand communities as subsets of commercially mediated collectives, focused on a brand (Goulding et al., 2013) and linked to its possessive attachment and ownership (Catulli et al., 2017; Healy & McDonagh, 2013). They are characterized by shared rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility toward other members (Goulding et al., 2013). Brand communities are distinguished through names or symbols and consumers make use of them to develop values and practices (Catulli et al., 2017). Online brand communities can be of two subtypes: firm-sponsored (FS) and user-generated (UG) (Sloan et al., 2015). A consumer tribe is a wider concept, of fluid, ephemeral, and mobile communities, which encompasses different products, services, experiences, and activities (Aung & Sha, 2016; Goulding et al., 2013; Ruiz et al., 2020). The main characteristics of consumer tribes are multiplicity, playfulness, transience, and entrepreneurialism. Multiplicity means that membership to a consumer tribe does not preclude membership to other tribes. The playfulness aspect of consumer tribes is related to the ability to play with different marketplace assemblages. They can be deconstructed and reassembled, as there is no long-term moral responsibility. Transience reflects their ephemerality, as they disappear once combinations of resources are altered. Finally, entrepreneurialism is related to the possibilities that tribes offer for entrepreneurial behavior (Goulding et al., 2013).

Recently, researchers have introduced a fourth type of consumption community: lifestyle consumption community (LCC). An LCC is neither based around a brand nor a marginalized subculture (Närvänen et al., 2013; cit. in Gordon et al., 2015). An LCC focuses on a lifestyle and reports to a hierarchy which is based on skill and knowledge (Gordon et al., 2015). Another type of hybrid consumption community are consumer constructed organizations (CCOs). According to Mamali et al. (2018), CCOs are positioned between consumer tribes and market demands, as a result of the marketization of consumer tribes. Consumption communities can also focus on shared feelings or principles toward certain practices or consequences of consumption, instead of a particular consumption object. This is the case of new consumption communities (NCCs) and principle-based consumption communities. NCCs are developed around feelings and beliefs of people that question market practices (Moraes et al., 2010). Principle-based consumption communities are formed by consumers that share principles and engage in environmentally conscious practices (De Vincenzo & Scammon, 2015).

5.2 | Concepts and theories

According to other systematic reviews (e.g., Lim et al., 2021; Paul & Benito, 2018; Paul & Singh, 2017), we seek to synthesize the use of

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Concept/theory	Articles	References
CCT	10	Gordon et al. (2015), Catulli et al. (2017), Denegri-Knott and Molesworth (2010), de Almeida et al. (2018), Healy and Mcdonagh (2013), Tsiotsou (2016), Kolyperas and Sparks (2018), Kolyperas et al. (2019), Podoshen et al. (2014), Podoshen et al. (2018)
Psychological sense of community/Self-help	2	De Vincenzo and Scammon (2015), O'Sullivan and Richardson (2020)
Consumption community (benefits, costs, markets of community, and shared rituals)	5	Goulding et al. (2013), Agrawal and Ramachandran (2017), Mamali et al. (2018), Weijo et al. (2014), Cronin and McCarthy (2011)
Social practice theory	2	Schau et al. (2009), Seregina and Weijo (2017)
Co-creation	2	Thomas (2018), Black and Veloutsou (2017)
Coping strategies	1	Weijo et al. (2019)
Service-Dominant Logic (SDL)	5	Hedlund (2014), Healy and Mcdonagh (2013), Tsiotsou (2016), Kolyperas and Sparks (2018), Kolyperas et al. (2019)
Ownership	1	Harwood and Garry (2010)
Consumer engagement	4	Samala and Katkam (2019), Wilson (2011), de Almeida et al. (2018), Thomas (2018)
Use value	1	Cole (2018)
Theory of reasoned action	1	Aung and Sha (2016)
Consumption experiences	5	Podoshen et al. (2014), Podoshen et al. (2018), Skandalis et al. (2016), O'Sullivan (2009), O'Sullivan (2016)
Structuration theory	1	Algesheimer and Gurău (2008)
Figurational theory/sociology	2	Sinclair (2016), Sinclair and Dolan (2015)
Social network theory	1	Shukla and Drennan (2018)
Social capital theory	1	Zhang et al. (2019)
Social exchange theory	2	Sloan et al. (2015), Pai and Tsai (2016)
New social movement theory Consumer resistance Co-optation theory Interaction ritual chains	4	Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2010), Moraes et al. (2010), Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007), Brown (2011)
Subcultural fragmentation Assemblage thinking	2	Ulusoy and Fırat (2018), Ruiz et al. (2020)

different theoretical concepts and perspectives to explain consumption behavior in a communal consumption context. We centered our analysis on consumption communities from a CCT perspective. Nonetheless, we also included other concepts and theories that emerged from the review of our selection of articles on consumption communities. Table 5 provides a summary of the main theories and concepts that the authors of the selected articles used to address consumption communities. This table was inspired by Rosado-Serrano's et al. (2018) study.

Consumption communities can grow and become more formal organizations, such as CCOs (Mamali et al., 2018). They can also be created out of shared behaviors that generate a sense of community among consumers (De Vincenzo & Scammon, 2015). They have specific rituals, practices, and community markers (e.g., Cronin & McCarthy, 2011; Schau et al., 2009), as well as benefits and costs of participation (Agrawal & Ramachandran, 2017). Their development

is the result of a process of value co-creation, in which different actors cocreate the community (Schau et al., 2009). Value co-creation is approached in the literature from a Service Dominant View (SDL) perspective or a combination of CCT and SDL perspectives (e.g., Healy & Mcdonagh, 2013; Kolyperas & Sparks, 2018). SDL helps in the identification of the key actors in the value co-creation process. Through CCT it is possible to further understand the role of these actors in the value co-creation activities (Kolyperas & Sparks, 2018). Consumers can cocreate value with companies in product design and manufacturing or post-product manipulations (Harwood & Garry, 2010). Besides, through shared rituals and traditions, consumers cocreate identity, beyond the traditionally accepted dyads of consumer and brand (Black & Veloutsou, 2017). Consumer interactions are also expected to generate engagement, particularly between members and a brand (e.g., de Almeida et al., 2018; Samala & Katkam, 2019). Engagement varies in

context and intensity (de Almeida et al., 2018). Notwithstanding, brand transgressions can undermine co-creative and engagement efforts, which can be solved through coping strategies (Weijo et al., 2019).

Consumption communities are conditioned by the dichotomy between micro- and macro-context. Algesheimer and Gurău (2008) address this question through structuration theory. Apart from their role in gathering consumption interests, consumption communities can become self-help support groups (O'Sullivan & Richardson, 2020). They create specific mechanisms for the regulation of interactions, through use-value of consumption (Cole, 2018), aggression management (Sinclair & Dolan, 2015), and practices to overcome practical challenges, such as instrumental costs (Seregina & Weijo, 2017). However, consumer behavior in a consumption community is not necessarily linear. For instance, consumers can elaborate on the implications and consequences of their behavior, as stated by the theory of reasoned action (Aung & Sha, 2016). Besides, as demonstrated by CCT-inspired research, they do not always seek inherently positive, mimetic experiences (O'Sullivan, 2016; Podoshen et al., 2014, 2018). Consumers can show behaviors that oppose the values and principles of the brand or other consumption object that inspired the community. For instance, anti-brand communities consist of consumers that share a dislike for a brand (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010). Apart from hatred, the literature has also focused on alternative discourses, such as new consumption communities (Moraes et al., 2010) and consumer responses to corporate co-optation, in which companies commodify countercultural opposition (Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007). Consumers are mobilized to these alternatives through rituals and emotions (Brown, 2011). Moreover, the postmodern condition imposes juxtapositions or paradoxes. These paradoxes are reflected in consumption experiences, at an individual or tribal level (Skandalis et al., 2016). Thus, subcultures of consumption and consumer tribes are mostly fragmented (Ulusoy & Firat, 2018) and ephemeral (Ruiz et al., 2020). The existing literature focuses on understanding these paradoxes and the factors that lead to fragmentation (Skandalis et al., 2016; Ulusoy & Firat, 2018). Additionally, it uses assemblage theory to demonstrate how consumer tribes reconnect (Ruiz et al., 2020).

More recently, online interactions, which eliminate traditional geographical boundaries (Shukla & Drennan, 2018) and differentiate from physical brand communities (Hook et al., 2018), appeal for the need to rethink former studies (Weijo et al., 2014). For that reason, the authors use social network theory, which sees individuals as embedded in networks of social interaction, to address virtual purchase behavior. Theories also demonstrate that knowledge-sharing is reciprocal (Pai & Tsai, 2016), equally important for user-generated and firm-sponsored communities (Sloan et al., 2015), and culturally influenced (Zhang et al., 2019). Finally, CCT is also used to address new forms of interaction, such as digital virtual consumption, which consists of imaginative consumption in a virtual world (Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010).

In line with the systematic review procedures by Kahiya (2018), we scrutinized literature, looking for antecedents, consequences, mediators, and moderators of consumer behavior in the context of consumption communities. While some naturally emerged, others are the result of our critical assessment of selected papers (see Figure 4).

5.2.1 | Antecedents and consequences

Hook et al. (2018) discuss five categories of antecedents (self-related, social-related, information-related, entertainment-related, and technology-related) and three categories of consequences (brand-related, brand community-related, and social-related) of participation in brand communities.

According to Wilson (2011), Hip-hop and brands are used synergistically to generate social capital and consumer engagement. On the contrary, engagement with a broad array of products, services, and brands determines the engagement with consumer tribes (Goulding et al., 2013). Therefore, product ownership conditions community participation (Catulli et al., 2017). However, communities do not always need to focus on physical elements. Consumers also participate in communities to avoid loneliness (O'Sullivan & Richardson, 2020) or due to a sense of community (De Vincenzo & Scammon, 2015; Moraes et al., 2010), combined with socially conscious consumption practices (De Vincenzo & Scammon, 2015). Furthermore, the literature explores anti-brand community participation through three practices: counterfactual thinking, discursive storytelling, and non-compulsory observation (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010). The maintenance of a community is influenced by shared rituals (e.g., eating (Cronin & McCarthy, 2011)) and knowledge-sharing among its members. Pai and Tsai (2016) present social, hedonic, and utilitarian community factors as antecedents to knowledge-sharing in online communities. Brown (2011) presents rituals and emotions as antecedents to consumer mobilization.

Regarding the consequences of community participation, subcultural antagonism and identity politics are responsible for fragmentation into and within subcultures, because of consumers' quest for development of distinct identities (Ulusoy & Fırat, 2018). Consumer tribes have an ephemeral nature, but they can reconstitute again after being dispersed. Their constitution, dispersion, and reconstitution depend on the own characteristics of members and the dynamics that emerge from their participation in the tribe (Ruiz et al., 2020). Moreover, Weijo et al. (2014) propose increasing delocalization as a consequence of online interactions. Online interactions are also responsible for developing new subjectivities and markets, such as digital virtual consumption (Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010). Identity co-creation can be idealized as a result of the co-creative process (Black & Veloutsou, 2017).

With regards to the macro-context of consumption, Gordon et al. (2015) present sociocultural issues, as a consequence of problem gambling attached to lifestyle consumption communities. Harwood and Garry (2010) explore how the postproduction experience redefines the boundaries of product ownership. Growing instrumental costs, faced by cosplayers in their experience, also influence their involvement with the community (Seregina & Weijo, 2017). Consumption communities do not always lead to the expected results. Consumers can interact with brand communities to seek experiences outside the realms of brand offerings that may even pose issues to the institutional brand image. For instance, this can lead to the creation

Antecedents

Ownership or attachment to brands, products, services Loneliness Sense of community Rituals and emotions	Wilson (2011); Goulding, Shankar and Canniford (2013); Catulli, Cook and Potter (2017); Moraes, Szmigin and Carrigan (2010); De Vincenzo and Scammon (2015); O'Sullivan and Richardson (2020); Brown (2011); Cronin and McCarthy (2011)
Social, hedonic, and utilitarian community factors	Pai and Tsai (2016)
Anti-brand community participation: counterfactual thinking, discursive storytelling and non-compulsory observation	Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2010)
Five categories of antecedents	Hook, Baxter and Kulczynski (2018)
Social attributes, psychological attributes, hedonic attributes and functional attributes	Kamboj and Rahman (2017)

Consequences

Dynamics of ephemerality	Ruiz, Penaloza and Holmqvist (2020)
Subcultural antagonism and identity politics	Ulusoy and Fırat (2018)
Increasing delocalization and individualism Online interactions	Weijo, Hietanen and Mattila (2014) Denegri-Knott and Molesworth (2010)
Identity co-creation Non-mimetic experience Paradoxes	Black and Veloutsou (2017) O'Sullivan (2016) Skandalis, Byrom and Banister (2016)
Sociocultural problems	Gordon, Gurrieri and Chapman (2015); Harwood and Garry (2010); Seregina and Weijo (2017)
Brand-related, brand community-related, and social-related Brand loyalty, brand commitment, branding co-creation, brand recommendation, word of mouth, brand purchase, brand trust, brand community commitment, repurchase intention, purchase intention, affective commitment, brand image and constructive complaint of the brand	Hook, Baxter and Kulczynski (2018) Kamboj and Rahman (2017)

Mediators/moderators

Contextual triggers and individual drivers	de Almeida, Scaraboto, dos Santos Fleck and Dalmoro (2018); Pai and Tsai (2016); Zhang, Zhu and Wang (2019)
Knowledge-sharing	Sloan, Bodey and Gyrd-Jones (2015)
Group (collective) and individual-level variables	Shukla and Drennan (2018); O'Sullivan (2009)
Customer-brand engagement Coping strategies	Samala and Katkam (2019) Weijo, Bean and Rintamäki (2019)
Feelings of membership and participation in rituals and traditions Benefits and costs	Hedlund (2014) Agrawal and Ramachandran (2017)
Historical meaning, tribal logics, rituals and socialization processes, value-in-subcultural-context, and the co-construction/co-destruction of context Practices Five behavioural categories	Tsiotsou (2016) Schau, Muñiz and Arnould (2009) Thomas (2018)
Fans and their co-creative roles	Kolyperas and Sparks (2018); Kolyperas, Maglaras and Sparks (2019); Healy and McDonagh (2013)
Sociocultural issues	(Aung and Sha (2016); Cronin and McCarthy (2011); Sinclair and Dolan (2015); Podoshen, Andrzejewski, Wallin, and Venkatesh (2018); Podoshen, Venkatesh and Jin (2014); Algesheimer and Gurău (2008); Sinclair (2016); Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007); Cole (2018)
Balance between market and consumer tribes	Mamali, Nuttall and Shankar (2018)
Mutual agreement, accommodation, informational value, perceived social value, perceived goal instrumentality, needs fulfillment, influence and shared emotional connection, skills and brand community identification, brand trust	Kamboj and Rahman (2017)
Community type, the length of membership, trust, perceived attitude, interaction preference, brand knowledge and community size	Kamboj and Rahman (2017)

FIGURE 4 Antecedents, consequences, and mediators/moderators [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

of the nonmimetic experience of branded carnival (O'Sullivan, 2016). Finally, Skandalis et al. (2016) propose the existence of paradoxes in consumption experiences, such as individualism/tribalism, and its sub-paradoxes (realism/fantasy, in control/out of control, essential/unimportant, and freedom/constraint) because of consumption community participation.

5.2.2 | Mediators and moderators

The feeling of membership and adherence to rituals and traditions drive participation in consumption communities (Hedlund, 2014). Yet, benefits and costs moderate this participation (Agrawal & Ramachandran, 2017). There are several antecedents (e.g., social

attributes, psychological attributes, hedonic attributes, and functional attributes), mediators (e.g., mutual agreement and accommodation, informational value and perceived social value, perceived goal instrumentality, needs fulfilment, influence and shared emotional connection, skills and brand community identification, and brand trust), moderators (e.g., community type, the length of membership, trust, perceived attitude, interaction preference, brand knowledge, and community size), and consequences (e.g., brand loyalty, brand commitment, branding co-creation, brand recommendation, word of mouth, brand purchase, brand trust, brand community commitment, repurchase intention, purchase intention, affective commitment, brand image, and constructive criticism) that help frame participation in online communities (Kamboj & Rahman, 2017).

Contextual triggers (e.g., market-specific practices, marketplace shifts, and sociotechnical advancements) and individual drivers (e.g., relevant skills and expertise, entrepreneurial vision, and personal commitment) are antecedents of deepening engagement in an online community and, thus, mediators of the relationship between participation and engagement (de Almeida et al., 2018). Pai and Tsai (2016) also present individual and contextual factors as moderators of knowledge-sharing. Furthermore, in the Chinese culture, pan-family consciousness is a mediator of the relationship between social capital and knowledge-sharing in virtual brand communities (Zhang et al., 2019). Knowledge-sharing, in turn, is a moderator of prepurchase decision making, trust-building, and sharing brand experiences (Sloan et al., 2015). Virtual purchase behavior is also influenced by group-level and individual-level (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) variables (Shukla & Drennan, 2018). Customer–brand engagement (CBE) is a mediator of the relationship between brand community participation and brand loyalty (Samala & Katkam, 2019). However, brand relationships can also assume a negative side. Thus, coping strategies in dealing with brand transgressions moderate brand–customer relationships (Weijo et al., 2019).

Moreover, mediating aspects of consumer experiences are widely studied in the literature. O'Sullivan (2009) uses individual and collective aspects to frame the consumer experience in the context of a symphony orchestra audience. Tsiotsou (2016) proposes five factors as moderators of the sport experience: historical meaning, tribal logics, rituals and socialization processes, value-in-subcultural-context, and the co-construction/co-destruction of context. Schau et al. (2009) identify 12 common practices as drivers of collective value creation: welcoming, empathizing, governing, evangelizing, justifying, staking, milestoning, badging, documenting, grooming, customizing, and commoditizing. Authors also address the role of fans in the co-creation processes, which is not limited to event participation, but also construction, organization, and consumption (Kolyperas & Sparks, 2018). Fans can assume one of the three following types: assimilators, adaptors, and authenticators (Kolyperas et al., 2019). Thomas (2018) classifies consumers' co-creative perspectives into five categories: defectors, rejecters, absorbers, moralizers, and repenters. Moreover, consumer roles of voice, loyalty, exit, twist, entry, nonentry, and reentry moderate the relationships between the different actors involved in value co-creation (Healy & McDonagh, 2013).

Regarding a macro-context analysis, Aung and Sha (2016) explore how changing gender roles and household consumption practices shape cultural manifestations for clothing consumption. Sinclair and Dolan (2015) consider that control influences subcultural participation in the context of heavy metal. Abjection and dystopia, in particular contexts such as black metal, also mediate the relationship between acceptable and unacceptable behavior and shape relationships between consumers and producers and with the marketplace (Podoshen et al., 2014, 2018). Algesheimer and Gurău (2008) propose that cultural levels have an impact on consumer experience and the evolution of consumption trends. The dichotomy between micro- and macro-contexts in consumption is also assessed by Sinclair (2016) with figurational theory as a moderator. Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007) explore how political ideologies influence the alignment of actions and perceptions by CSA farmers and consumers. Use-value is a moderator in the consumption of mass commodities, in the context of craft consumers (Cole, 2018). Moreover, consumer constructed organizations (CCOs) are an imbalance between consumer tribes and the market and, thus, CCOs can be considered as a moderator of the relationships between both (Mamali et al., 2018).

6 | RESEARCH METHODS

For the review on methods, we followed previous systematic reviews (e.g., Paul & Benito, 2018; Rosado-Serrano et al., 2018). To synthesize the information, we created a table similar to Chen et al. (2021) (see Table 6). Qualitative studies, the most widely used in consumer research (Jamali & Karam, 2018), were predominant in our article sample. Among the qualitative methods, the most popular were interviews ($n = 23$) and netnography ($n = 14$). The methods used in 10 of the articles in the sample combine netnography and interviews. Moreover, ethnography ($n = 12$) and participant observation ($n = 16$) were widely used. Different interview types appeared, such as semi-structured, long, and in-depth interviews. Other qualitative research methods considered were case studies ($n = 2$) and focus groups ($n = 2$). With regards to quantitative methods, only five articles applied a survey methodology with a structural equation modeling. We can infer from these data that most articles connecting CCT and consumption communities apply a qualitative approach, mostly through (n)ethnographies and interviews.

Most of the articles report the use of primary data ($n = 39$). This can be explained by the popularity of netnography and in-depth interviews as the main methods for data collection. Almost half of these 39 articles ($n = 13$) present a combination of both primary and secondary data. In most cases, this combination stems from the application of netnographic methods. Netnography consists of a wide variety of data collection and creation methods, which generally starts with the analysis of existing data (i.e., secondary data). Sometimes, netnography uses primary data gathered through intentional interaction with social media sites or online forums (Kozinets, 2019). Some authors reported the analysis of secondary sources such as supplementary web sites or advertising material (e.g., brochures) combined with ethnography (e.g., Harwood & Garry, 2010; Moraes

Research method	# of articles	Exemplary references
Observation	16	O'Sullivan (2009), Pai and Tsai (2016), Podoshen et al., 2014)
Interview	23	Weijo et al. (2014), Gordon et al. (2015), Agrawal and Ramachandran (2017)
Ethnography	12	Ruiz et al. (2020), Moraes et al. (2010), Brown (2011)
Netnography	14	Healy and McDonagh (2013), Cole (2018), Sloan et al. (2015)
Case studies	2	Catulli et al. (2017), Kolyperas et al. (2019)
Focus groups	2	O'Sullivan (2009), Thomas (2018)
Surveys + Structural equation modeling (SEM)	5	Samala and Katkam (2019), Hedlund (2014), Zhang et al. (2019)

TABLE 6 Methods

et al., 2010). Finally, among the articles analyzed, only two of them used exclusively secondary data sources. In both cases, the secondary sources correspond to case studies.

7 | FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

Another important contribution and originality of the study is related to the application of consumer culture theory tradition to critically analyze research on consumption communities. CCT provides a useful framework to understand the social, cultural, experiential, and symbolic aspects of consumption. In this endeavor, we suggest an agenda for future research on the topic, consisting of its emerging themes and propositions to be tested in future studies. Next, we present the main themes in the literature (Dabić et al., 2020) concerning consumption communities and CCT.

7.1 | Common themes in the literature on consumption communities

Recent literature seeks to understand consumption communities from a dynamic perspective, that is, how they fragment and reinvent themselves. In their fragmentation, subcultures generate a subcultural mosaic (Ulusoy & Firat, 2018). Consumer tribes can also dismantle, but they can reconstitute through an assemblage of elements (Ruiz et al., 2020). Although it is relevant to understand how consumption communities disappear and how they can be brought back to life, we note a scarcity of studies on this topic. In our sample, only one study focuses specifically on consumer tribes, whereas another one concerns subcultures. Thus, to the best of our knowledge, there is not an integrative framework to understand the dynamics of all types of consumption communities.

The connection between micro- and macro-contexts affects consumption and market exchanges (Algesheimer & Gurău, 2008; Tsiotsou, 2016). An example is the study of Aung and Sha (2016) which explores fashion consumption among gay professionals, due to changes in gender roles and household consumption practices. Findings offer

ground for understanding communities as nonhomogeneous in consumer research. Catulli et al. (2017), for instance, explore the emergence of Product Service Systems (PSS). PSS can be defined as systems that facilitate collaborative consumption of products and services (e.g., Uber or Zipcar). The consumption of PSS raises new questions for investigation regarding consumer needs and identity (Catulli et al., 2017). On the contrary, Cronin and McCarthy (2011) investigate the importance of a social ritual (i.e., eating) within the subcultural barriers. O'Sullivan and Richardson (2020) consider how self-help, as a feminine value, has been understudied in consumption community membership. Authors also explore the role of practices in overcoming growing costs (Seregina & Weijo, 2017) and of "over-commodification" through their community interaction (Cole, 2018). We can conclude that although these studies do not attempt to synthesize all sociocultural aspects and characteristics that may impact consumption communities, they shed light on aspects that link micro- and macro-contexts.

Technological developments have conducted to new forms of interaction (Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010) and knowledge-sharing (Sloan et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2019). Regarding new forms of interaction, Denegri-Knott and Molesworth (2010) explore consumer practices across digital virtual spaces. The digital virtual space replicates consumption-like experiences in a digital world (e.g., in videogames). Hence, consumer behavior takes place across digital, virtual, and digital virtual spaces. Consumers possess social capital, which comprises their relationships, connections, and shared meanings in social networks. These components influence their sharing of knowledge with others. This relationship can be mediated by cultural factors. For instance, in China, family like feelings moderate the relationship between social capital and knowledge-sharing (Zhang et al., 2019). Knowledge-sharing in online communities leads to trust-building, experience sharing, and encouragement of sense of community (Sloan et al., 2015). It is also linked to perceived member support, enjoyment, and community informativeness (Pai & Tsai, 2016). The academic literature is prolific in studies that address online interactions and knowledge-sharing. However, we can identify two research gaps: 1) most studies focus exclusively on online brand communities; 2) knowledge-sharing is linked to cultural aspects, a topic which is only addressed, in our sample, by Zhang et al. (2019).

The literature also shows that consumption can assume dystopic contours (Podoshen et al., 2014), or portray aspects of abjection (Podoshen et al., 2018). Moreover, consumers can create nonmimetic experiences out of their regular brand experience (O'Sullivan). Other authors mention the tension between the esthetic (private) and the collective (social) part of the experience as audience; and the individualism/tribalism paradoxes, which generate ambiguity in the evaluation of consumption experiences (O'Sullivan, 2009; Skandalis et al., 2016). In sum, current understandings of behavior in consumption communities as linear are not accurate and we need to interpret them as marketplace paradoxes.

Literature on consumption community types has been extended, beyond brand communities (the most addressed in the literature), to new forms as lifestyle consumption communities (LCCs), consumer constructed organizations (CCOs) (Gordon et al., 2015; Mamali et al., 2018), principle-based and new consumption communities (De Vincenzo & Scammon, 2015; Moraes et al., 2010). Results indicate that categorization and typologies of consumption communities are currently topics of interest in the academic literature.

Other studies have addressed imperfections and failures in the marketplace. For example, Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2010) introduce the concept of anti-brand community, as an antithesis to the behavior of brand communities. Consumers also create practices based on socially responsible consumption principles, which can be seen as countervailing market responses (De Vincenzo & Scammon, 2015; Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007). Indeed, groups of consumers involved in socially responsible consumption can develop feelings of belonging to a community without adhering to anti-discourses (Moraes et al., 2010). However, even consumers of socially responsible products can assume different consumption patterns (Brown, 2011). These studies show a gap in the understanding of countervailing consumption communities, which are not necessarily constructed around targeted hatred. Moreover, the type of consumers who adhere to countervailing movements are also understudied.

Antecedents and consequences of online brand community participation are addressed in previous systematic reviews, by Hook et al. (2018) and Kamboj and Rahman (2017). Other authors explore the development of membership and participation in fan consumption communities (Hedlund, 2014); the benefits and costs of participating in small versus large group consumption communities (Agrawal & Ramachandran, 2017); and the motivations for deeper engagement with a brand community (de Almeida et al., 2018; Samala & Katkam, 2019). Even though studies in the last 3 years focused essentially on motivations for consumer participation and engagement in an online environment, most of them address brand communities. Thus, we conclude that membership and participation in consumption communities, as a whole, still need to be further explored.

Schau et al. (2009) propose a set of 12 practices across brand communities that should be used to create value. Thomas (2018) presents a cross-cultural perspective on the process of value co-creation. Kolyperas and Sparks (2018) and Kolyperas et al. (2019) explore the co-creative roles of fans in sports communities. Healy and McDonagh (2013) investigate the roles of online interactions through virtual communities on value co-creation of an online football fan forum. Black and Veloutsou (2017) extend the concept of value co-creation to include the co-creation of identity, in aspects of brand, consumer, and brand community. Also, Harwood and Garry (2010) problematize value co-creation and the extent to which it can blur boundaries of ownership. We conclude that value co-creation is highly valued in the context of participation. Additionally, we could identify the following gaps: (1) research on value co-creation is mostly connected to brand communities in the context of sports, which is difficult to generalize to other types of consumption communities; (2) research needs to explore how transgressions and ownership influence value co-creation in other contexts.

7.2 | Theoretical propositions

Inspired by previous systematic reviews (e.g., Gilal et al., in press; Kumar et al., 2020; Paul, 2019), we formulate a set of propositions of study, which constitute directions for future research (see Table 7).

According to Levy (1959), marketplace goods are symbols embedded in personal and social meaning. Symbols connect to a certain lifestyle, social status, and gender differences. The marketplace provides a wide array of material and symbolic resources, from which consumers construct their identities and create social links (Arnould & Thompson, 2018). Moreover, based on the literature, we can conclude that consumption communities can be created: (1) through a particular brand/consumption interest; (2) through a hybridization of market and tribal characteristics; and (3) through psychological effects. Thus, studying the symbolism of marketplace resources can help in understanding why and how communities are created and creatively used for identity and sociality purposes. For instance, Thompson and Arsel (2004; cit. in Cronin & McCarthy, 2011) demonstrate that food can serve as a symbolic mechanism for the creation of community and identity in a group. Communities can also be analyzed at a psychological level as the result of a feeling of communal attachment to other individuals (De Vincenzo & Scammon, 2015). Besides, the distinction between real and imaginary consumption experiences becomes blurred. For instance, videogames allow consumers to build their identity through the consumption of virtual goods that they do not possess in real life (Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010). Thus, consumption and the sense of community are also inherently linked to the symbolism of real versus imagined communities, and real versus virtual spaces. However, the meanings and values associated with signs or symbols are more important than the symbols themselves (Akaka et al., 2015). Since CCT seeks to understand the symbolic aspects of consumption, it is the ideal theoretical perspective to fully capture the symbolic meaning of reality, fantasy and "in-between," both for the concept of community and the concept of consumption. Thus, we propose that future studies should address the symbolic aspects of consumption and provide a better understanding of them in light of CCT:

> **P1:** Symbolic aspects, under the lens of CCT, influence the creation of a consumption community.

TABLE 7 Theoretical propositions

Proposition	Research gap addressed
P1: Symbolic aspects, under the lens of CCT, influence the creation of a consumption community	Better understanding of the symbolic aspects of consumption communities
P2: The development of a consumption community involves value co-creation processes that can be understood and generalized under the lens of CCT	Better understanding of value co-creation processes
P3: CCT can provide explanation on the dynamics of consumer engagement and consumer's motivations to actively participate in the online community	Better understanding of community engagement and disengagement processes
	Leveraging an understanding of dynamic consumption communities
P4: CCT offers ground to understand and generalize the impact of contextual micro- and macro-level factors in forming and shaping consumption communities	Synthesis of micro- and macro-contexts that affect consumption
	Understanding of countervailing consumption communities
P5: The combination of different research methods (e.g., netnography, Big Data, neuromarketing, chronic disposition, and situational priming) offers ground to understand and influence the development of consumption communities	Understanding of the different research methods

The development of a community has been commonly approached in the literature as a value co-creation process (e.g., Healy & Mcdonagh, 2013; Kolyperas & Sparks, 2018). Value co-creation involves an exchange between firm and customer, which can represent a particular or a repeated interaction, and a positive or negative experience. Hence, it is important to analyze the phenomenological and contextual aspects of value co-creation. CCT plays a role in explaining these firm-customer exchanges since it moves from the individual-firm level to the level of interaction that occurs among different consumers in a particular subculture (Akaka et al., 2015). As supported by Schau et al. (2009), value co-creation occurs inside consumer collectives or consumption communities. However, most of the articles focus on brand communities and the perspective of co-creation of brand meanings (Waqas et al., 2021). We suggest that value co-creation occurs inside other consumption community types, not particularly associated with a brand. Thus, meanings associated with other consumption objects can be captured under this perspective as well. Besides, although CCT is useful in addressing value co-creation, it has been understudied. For instance, in their review, Waqas et al. (2021) found only three articles using a CCT perspective to address customer experiences based on firm-produced stimuli for the co-creation of meanings. We suggest, therefore, that future studies should broaden the studies on consumption communities under the paradigm of value co-creation:

> **P2:** The development of a consumption community involves value co-creation processes that can be understood and generalized under the lens of CCT.

Results also indicate the importance of engagement as a driver for consumption communities. However, most of the studies on the role of engagement in online community development focus on brand

communities (e.g., Samala & Katkam, 2019; Thomas, 2018). Thus, an analysis of how and why consumers engage with other consumption community types is necessary. CCT can provide researchers with an important framework, through marketplace cultures, to understand and frame this phenomenon. Moreover, the motivations of consumers in creating and maintaining a community have been understudied. Previous studies mostly address the consumer's role in value co-creation in sports contexts (e.g., Healy & McDonagh, 2013; Kolyperas et al., 2019), generally concerning brand communities. Since CCT offers ground to interpret the consumer's interactions with the marketplace, it seems to be a useful tool to address consumers' participation types and their motivations to keep active with consumption communities over time.

The marketplace is embedded in consumption paradoxes, such as individualism/tribalism and work/play (de Almeida et al., 2018; Skandalis et al., 2016). We believe that CCT can facilitate the understanding of the underlying paradoxes of consumption. This understanding is useful in explaining why and how consumers engage and disengage, participate, or cease participation in consumption communities; and even why they engage in anti- or alternative discourses. Thus, future studies could use a CCT perspective to understand the paradoxical aspects of consumption community participation and engagement. We posit:

> **P3:** CCT can provide explanation on the dynamics of consumer engagement and consumer's motivations to actively participate in the online community.

Another topic that emerged from the literature review is how consumer experience is influenced by context-based factors. These factors, which are out of firm and consumer control, can include

competition (at a micro-level), politics or the economy (at a macro-level) (Waqas et al., 2021). The studies in consumer behavior use to focus, in general, on traditional theoretical approaches, such as microeconomic theory and cognitive psychology that are not able to fully capture the factors that influence consumption experiences (Waqas et al., 2021). Since CCT approaches consumption from a sociocultural level (Catulli et al., 2017; Gordon et al., 2015), it has the advantage to capture both the micro and macro aspects of consumption communities. Moreover, CCT focuses on the role of consumers in shaping their own consumption experiences (Waqas et al., 2021). Therefore, it can provide a better understanding of distinct consumption practices, such as those related to abjection and dystopic consumption (Podoshen et al., 2014, 2018), which are different from regular consumption experiences. Hence, CCT can help uncover the contextual factors that shape consumption community creation and development.

Consumption has mostly been focused on providing enchanting experiences. However, there is the need to look beyond the positive, mimetic assumptions of consumption. We suggest studying different contexts in which nonmimetic consumption experiences occur and further investigate social undesirable modalities (O'Sullivan, 2016). This could include research into the similarities and differences between brand communities and anti-brand communities (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010), coping practices in brand transgressions (Weijo et al., 2019), nonmimetic consumer experiences (O'Sullivan, 2016), and abjection/dystopic consumption (Podoshen et al., 2014, 2018). In particular, Podoshen et al. (2014) recognize the need to further explore examples of other dystopian consumption contexts. To understand these specific contexts, we need to move beyond traditional approaches to understand marketplace opposition. We enhance the importance of distinguishing between opposition to and alternative discourses of consumption. In other words, we support that CCT can encompass the study of the contextual factors that influence consumption, and that can be either uncontrollable or solely controlled by the consumer:

> **P4**: CCT offers ground to understand and generalize the impact of contextual micro- and macro-level factors in forming and shaping consumption communities.

Finally, different authors start to recognize the value of netnography as a tool to gain rapid access to information. Besides, empirical validation of new research methods is necessary as the nature of interactions change (Algesheimer & Gurău, 2008), particularly since the online world is characterized by blurred physical, digital, and biological boundaries (Krafft et al., 2020). We suggest that future studies could use a combination of netnography, which is more focused on online forums and communities, with other, more wide-reaching methods for collecting primary and secondary research data. For instance, several authors begin to deploy methods to analyze Big Data, that is, large volumes of diverse information that can be obtained at a high velocity. Big Data Analytics, as the process of converting Big Data into valuable insights, consist of mechanisms that can be based

on text, speech, web, network, and mobile (De Luca et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2019). Neuromarketing is another such method and one that is particularly useful in detecting hidden information in consumer behavior through recording brain activity (Lim, 2018). Chronic disposition refers to orientations based on knowledge, or knowledge structures, which are likely to influence an individual's acquisition or management of information. Situational priming is the use of these knowledge structures to influence outcomes (Lim, 2015). Netnographic methods are useful in understanding specific online communities. However, to complement the knowledge of these communities, in an ever-changing online environment, the use of other methods seems necessary. In this sense, Big Data, neuromarketing, chronic disposition and situational priming lead to new possibilities in understanding how to manage online communities and how we can influence their development. Hence, we propose:

> **P5:** The combination of different research methods (e.g., netnography, Big Data, neuromarketing, chronic disposition, and situational priming) offers ground to understand and influence the development of consumption communities.

7.3 | Study limitations

One of the main limitations of this study is the size of the final sample of articles used in the systematic literature review. The selection process resulted in a final sample of 46 studies. Since we limited the search to specific keywords and journal ranks, we may have lost track of other potentially interesting articles in the context of consumption communities, which could contribute with further insights to the discussed topics. A large sample of papers could contribute to achieve theoretical saturation. Another limitation relates to the newness of the research field which still lacks research maturity and solid contributions. Most of the findings in the literature are still at an exploratory level. We further note that the existing studies do not make a clear delimitation of the existing consumption typologies, with rare exceptions (e.g., Goulding et al., 2013).

8 | CONCLUSION

We sought to demonstrate that consumption communities are places of cultural creation and transformation. They are dynamic and self-administered, which can be successfully explored under CCT. We drew on seven specific research questions to address the literature on consumption communities. Regarding the first question, we analyzed the main definitions and explored how CCT connects to the concept of consumption communities. We also analyzed different conceptions of communities in the literature and noted that the categorization of consumption communities is still an ongoing project and open to unexpected forms of communities. In terms of methods, research contexts, and theories,

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most of the studies in the literature follow qualitative methodologies, with wide application of ethnography and netnography. The researched communities are diverse; however, countries of study are predominantly in European and North American. We show how a diverse array of theories has been applied to consumption community studies, in which we stress the use of CCT perspectives. Finally, we provide an agenda for future research, composed of five main propositions and other directions of investigation that we hope will inspire researchers in the field.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest that could be perceived as prejudicing the impartiality of the research reported.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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