



QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FOR MANAGERS

AGENDA

1. Guest lecture from Hannu Uotila
2. Discussing the specifics of qualitative research in business

Ethnography as Storytelling Craft

Fast circulation of insights

- Revelatory incidents
- Temporality
- Granular detail
- Emotionality

Julien Cayla & Eric Arnould

Ethnographic Stories for Market Learning

Although ethnography has become a popular research approach in many organizations, major gaps exist in the field's understanding of the way it operates in the corporate world, particularly in how ethnography facilitates market learning. Drawing from extensive fieldwork in the world of commercial ethnography, the authors describe how ethnographic stories give executives a unique means of understanding market realities. By working through the rich details of ethnographic stories infused with the tensions, contradictions, and emotions of people's everyday lives, executives are better able to grasp the complexity of consumer cultures. Overall, this research should help managers leverage the catalytic effects of ethnographic storytelling in their efforts to learn about and understand market contexts.

Keywords: ethnography, market research, market learning, narrative, storytelling

We went to these different homes and we felt part of the family by the time we left. We cooked with them, ate with them. That aspect of it was pretty amazing, because you are used to your own home life, and an almost tunnel-vision of your experiences and then just to see how different families interact and the impact of the product.... It was amazing.... I was taken aback with how welcoming people were; it showed me that everybody has a story,... and the exciting part of ethnography is really finding out that story or what makes them tick, truly understanding why they're doing what they're doing. (Kelly, innovation manager, major appliances company)

In putting together the film, there's always the discussion of how we put it together—*what kind of story do we tell? It has to fit with the insights that I find, but there's some sort of a narrative that we want to find....* So it typically has this narrative structure of beginning and end, and *we have to create that if it's not naturally there.* (Malcolm, vice president, advertising agency, emphasis added)

I am very careful with my clients *never to show the raw footage that I record, because it doesn't say anything*, because it's just a clip of people doing stuff, and it's like, where's the insight here? Where's the connection here? *The connection only comes when you edit it down into a story or sequence, which summarizes in some way the phenomena.* (Rick, ethnographer)

When we show the film, the client says [lowered voice] “Oh, I went to that ethnography, that’s my person. That’s my person, and I was there.” So there’s a real strong sense of identification—they are excited, and they buy into it, and they believe it even more. So, somehow, the truth, they have experienced it, they have seen it again and then they have the power—the client—to tell their other people about it, and validate it. (Malcolm, vice president, advertising agency)

I feel like the personas are just kind of a way for us to ground everybody in the room so that we’re ... looking at and talking about the same person. And they all have ... their own little narrative. So you kind of get to know a little bit about them and who they are, kind of what their goals [are] and they would be likely or not likely to be interested in. (Coby, senior user researcher, American Bank)

We use them when we're talking about things. Our business partners and people outside of the groups know "Philippe" and "Jane" and "Harry" and "Sue." ... They're the experience anchors. Basically, the designers sit down with the personas and the lines of business and us. And we kind of walk through what they're thinking about and look at it from the perspective of the different personas. (Coby, senior user researcher, American Bank)

In the last four or five years, I've seen a real battle between R&D [research and development] and marketing. It's about usage on the one hand and about image and advertising on the other. It's a bit of a caricature, but they can't seem to agree on things... The R&D guys are all engineers and we really amuse them. What we bring back to them is really funny for them. The team is made up of technical guys, chemists, biologists, [mechanics]. And we tell them stories about families and refrigerators. That's quite amusing for them. And now they have some kind of proof. So when marketing tells them, "No, it should be like this," they can say, "Well, hang on, we have this report that shows that..." So we have a stake in the internal power relationships of a company. (Pierre, ethnographer, ethnographic research company)


A person wearing a dark, hooded jacket and carrying a bright blue bag is walking on a city sidewalk. In the background, there is a black metal fence, a white car, and a building with windows. A blue sign with a bicycle symbol and a speed limit sign are also visible. The scene is set in an urban environment.

THE BIG PICTURE

What is people's relationship to money?

TABLE 2
Ethnographic Stories and their Organizational Outcomes

Sector	Plot	Narrative Properties	Marketing Outcomes	Organizational Outcomes
Banking	Consumers are sleeping with their mobile phones, sometimes tucked into their pillows. They begin their day checking their work e-mails on their phone and end their day with their phone. [American Bank]	Temporal: a detailed account of the way people use their phones throughout the day	New value proposition for mobile banking around convenience	Revised market understanding: a new understanding of mobile phone usage
Furniture	Russian homes are often one-bedroom flats where wooden furniture is covered rather than exposed. [Upstate Care]	Granular: a better understanding of the way furniture is used in Russian homes	Revised assessment of market potential	Revised understanding of people's relationships to wooden furniture in various cultures
Spirits	Rugby league fans in New South Wales use the British Spirits brand icon as a kind of voodoo doll, a profane object symbolizing an outsider. [British Spirits]	Granular: a detailed description of tribal memberships and the role of brands in sustaining tribal identities Revelatory incident: rugby league fans using British Spirits' mascot as a voodoo doll	New sponsorship strategy focusing on local rugby league teams	Revised market understanding: a better understanding of the lack of sales uptake in specific Australian areas where the brand is perceived as an outsider
Health care	Patients who are pushed around an emergency room feel anxious and powerless. [California hospital]	Emotional: evokes the various emotions a person experiences when admitted to an emergency room	New hospital design to provide patient information; new protocol for admission and information delivery	Organizational empathy: understanding the hospital from the patient's perspective



Almost any business problem can be framed as a phenomenon. The trick is to shift your perspective from inside out (how the business perceives the problem) to outside in (how customers perceive it). For example:

BUSINESS PROBLEM

How can our bank reduce churn?

PHENOMENON

How do our customers experience banking, and why are they leaving?

BUSINESS PROBLEM

How can we create a premium offering in coffee?

PHENOMENON

What is a good coffee experience?

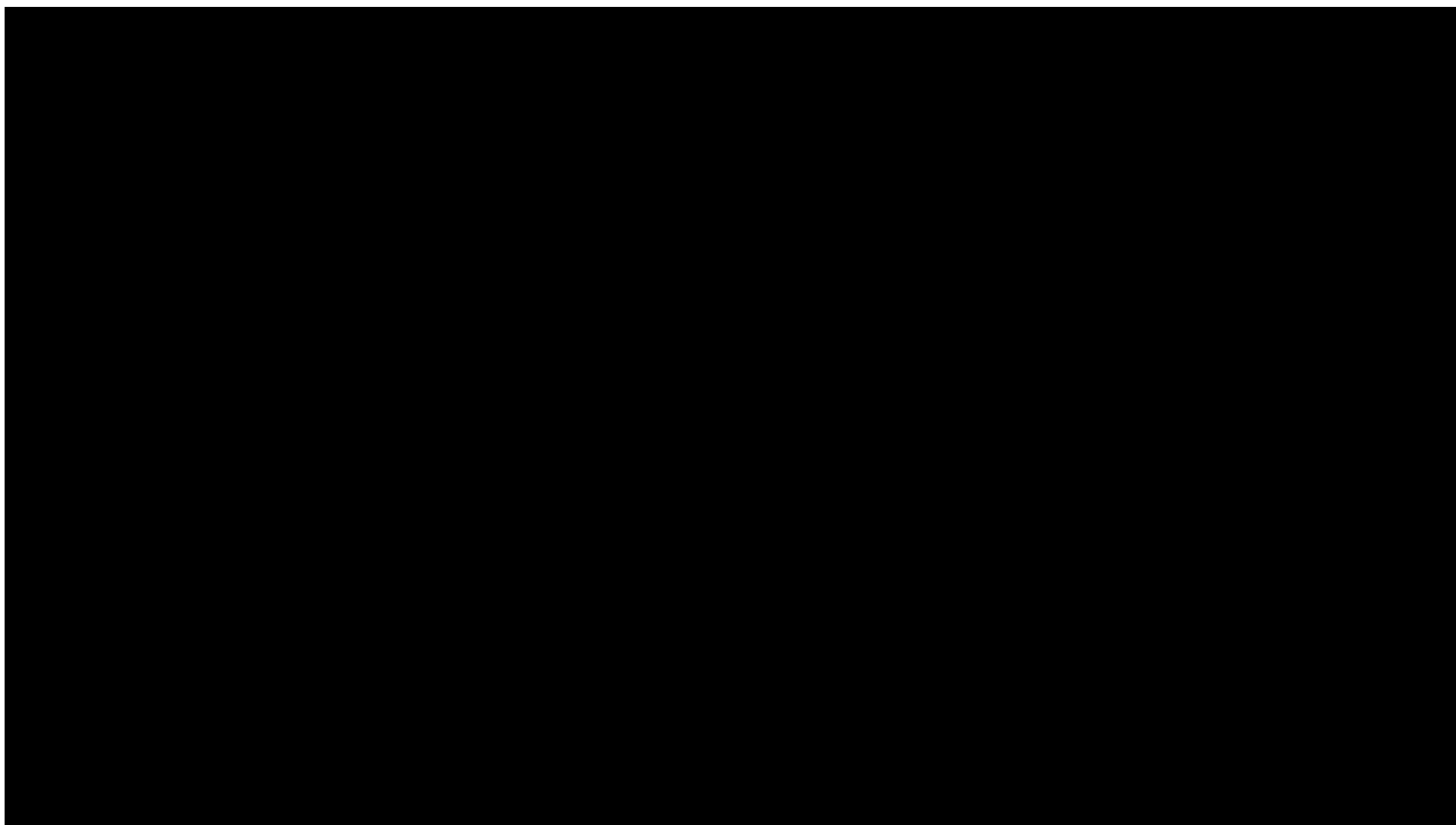
BUSINESS PROBLEM

What should be our go-to-market approach for toys in China?

PHENOMENON

What is the role of play in China?

KEY QUESTION:
what do our customers find valuable?



Technology

When Machine Learning Goes Off the Rails

A guide to managing the risks by Boris Babic, I. Glenn Cohen, Theodoros Evgeniou, and Sara Gerke
From the Magazine January-February 2021



Gregory Heist/Getty Stock



PSYCHOLOGY

The Dangers of Categorical Thinking

by Bart de Langhe and Philip Fernbach
From the September-October 2019 Issue

Artificial intelligence / Machine learning

Our weird behavior during the pandemic is messing with AI models

Machine-learning models trained on normal behavior are showing cracks — forcing humans to step in to set them straight.

by **Will Douglas Heaven**

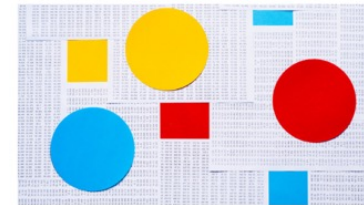
May 11, 2020

MARKETING

Why Marketing Analytics Hasn't Lived Up to Its Promise

by Carl F. Mela and Christine Mooman
May 30, 2018

Summary Save Share Comment Print \$4.95 Buy Copies



Mirage/Getty Images

Leer en español

We help forward-thinking businesses solve their most complex challenges



Case Study 1
Redefining digital transformation in finance



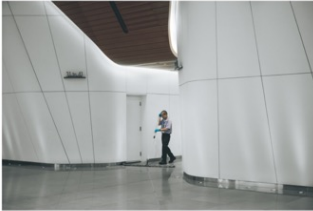
Case Study 2
Helping a CPG firm find its "invisible" markets



Case Study 3
Re-establishing connection to an iconic car brand



Case Study 4
Navigating disruption in the automotive industry



Case Study 5
Global reinvention for a giant B2B brand



Case Study 6
Redefining the value logic at a leading appliance company

GEMIC

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OFFERING

We develop strategies with the power to shape industry and society

- Growth Strategy +
- Innovation Strategy +
- Brand Strategy +
- Insight & Foresight +

PEOPLE
PRACTICES
PROCESSES
PARLANCE
PARTICULARS
PROBLEMS

PLANS
PROXIES
PROSUMPTION
PAIRINGS
PARTITIONS
PLEASURES



QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON PREMATURE BIRTH

APRIL 2018

▶ TREATMENT & CARE FOR PRETERM BABIES – *mothers*

BIRTH to DISCHARGE

DISCHARGE



- This is a very devastating and indescribable period for mothers; they blame themselves, look for reasons and explanations
- The feeling of being away from their baby is very hurtful;
 - All the plans they make before their labor is distorted
 - They go home without their babies.
 - They feel angry about '*normal labor moms' postnatal blues*'
- They do not want to talk to people, answer phones or make any explanations to anyone, they want to be left alone.
- They complain about not being '*understood, respected for what they are going through*'; they need more understanding from close family about the responsibilities and do's & dont's.



- Most feel frustrated about their husbands; being incompetent and weak in dealing with the situation.
- They need their mothers, most mothers have their mothers after discharge staying with them.



**Bilim gücüyle
geleceği emin ellerde**

NUTRICIA
Anne Bebek Beslenmesi

Sadece sağlık profesyoneli kullanım içindir. Anne sütü bebekler için en iyisidir. Anne sütü ile beslenmenin mümkün olmadığı durumlarda yetkililerle birlikte sağlıklı alternatifler değerlendirilmelidir.





WHAT IS THE VALUE OF MEAT?

(WHAT IS MEAT?)



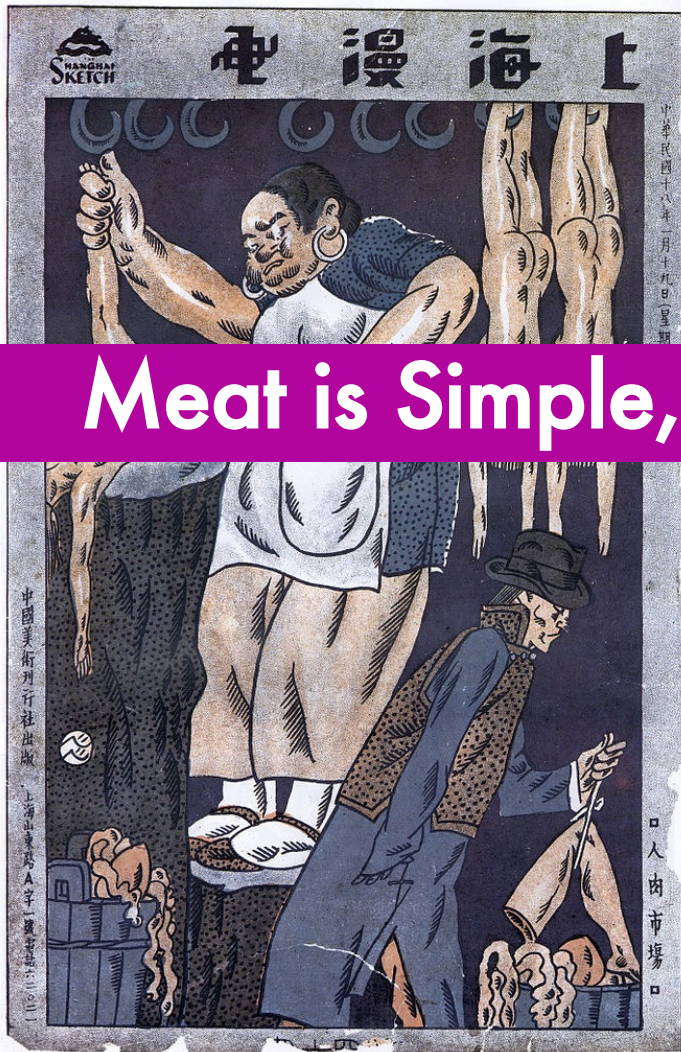
Meat is Sensuous, a Luxury, an Event





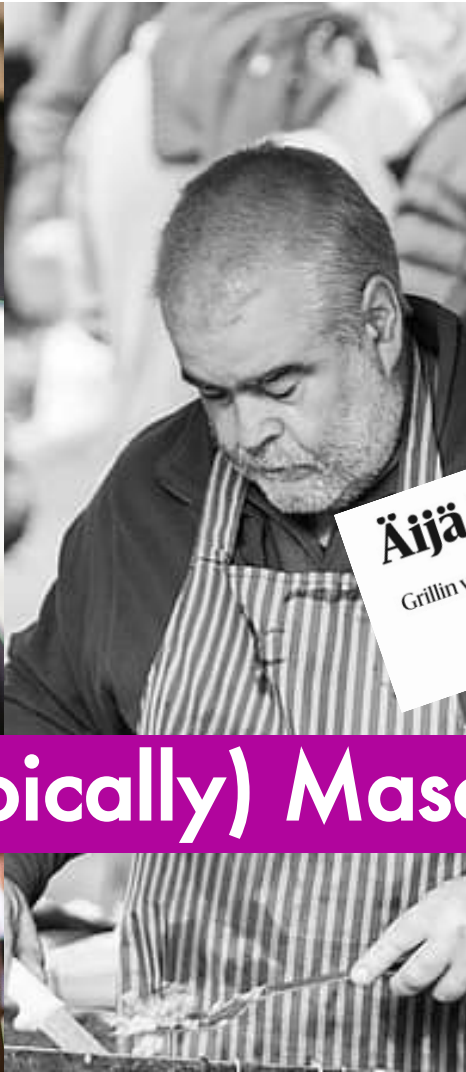
Meat is Traditional and Nostalgic





Meat is Simple, "Real Food", Protein





Äijä ja hänen grillinsä

Grillin vieressä seisoo usein mies, ja ritilällä tirisee liha.
Mitähän nainen tekee sillä aikaa?

Arttu Seppänen
Julkaistu: 23.8. 2:00, Päivitetty 23.8. 6:21



Meat is (Heroically) Masculine



Sarah J Martin @eatingpolitics · 19h
The politics of meat, especially red meat along with nationalism and masculine identities on full display here.

The Hill @thehill · Aug 13
VP Mike Pence: "Sen. Kamala Harris said she would change the dietary guidelines of this country to reduce the amount of red meat that Americans can eat."
Crowd boos.
VP: "Well I've got some red meat for you: We're not going to let Joe Biden & Kamala Harris cut America's meat!"

A background image showing a crowd of people at a political event, with several American flags visible.

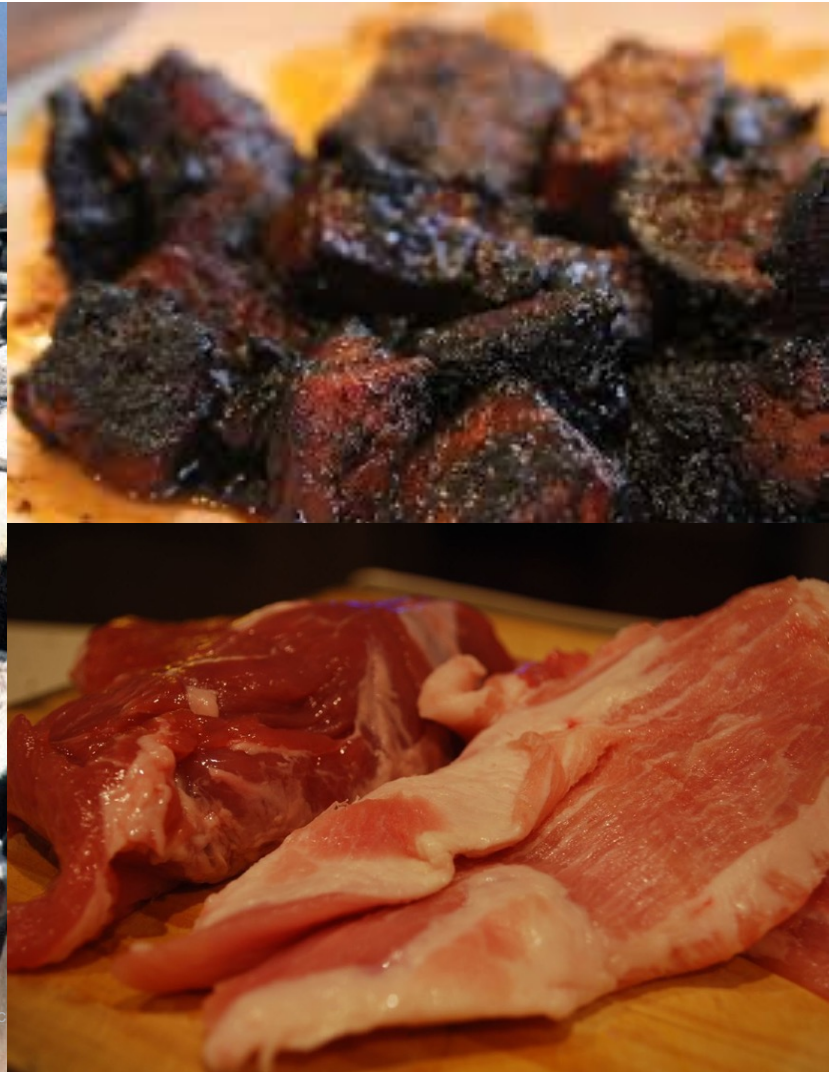
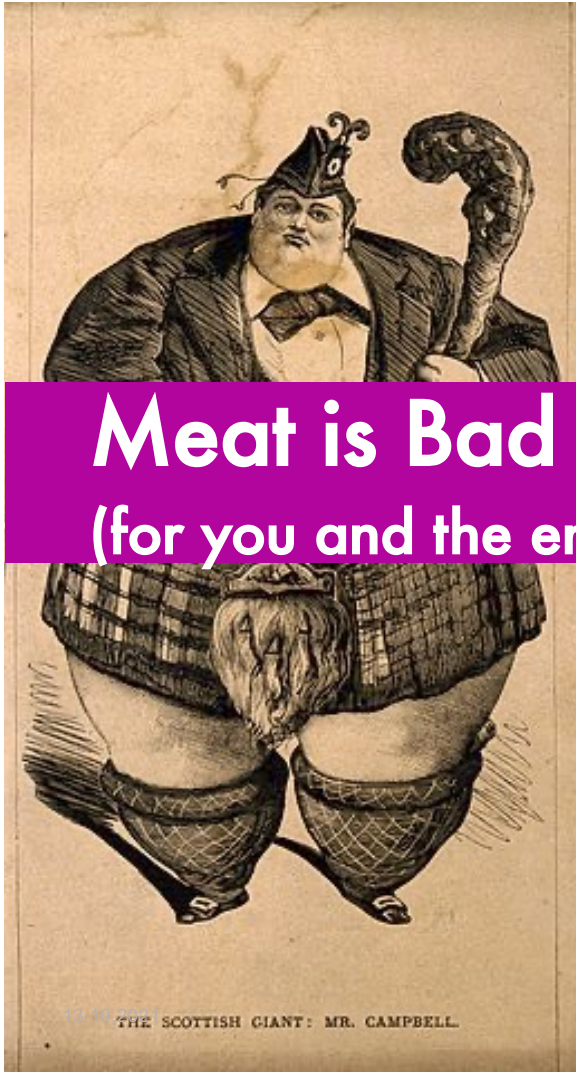
Meat is Political, a Lifestyle and Class Identity

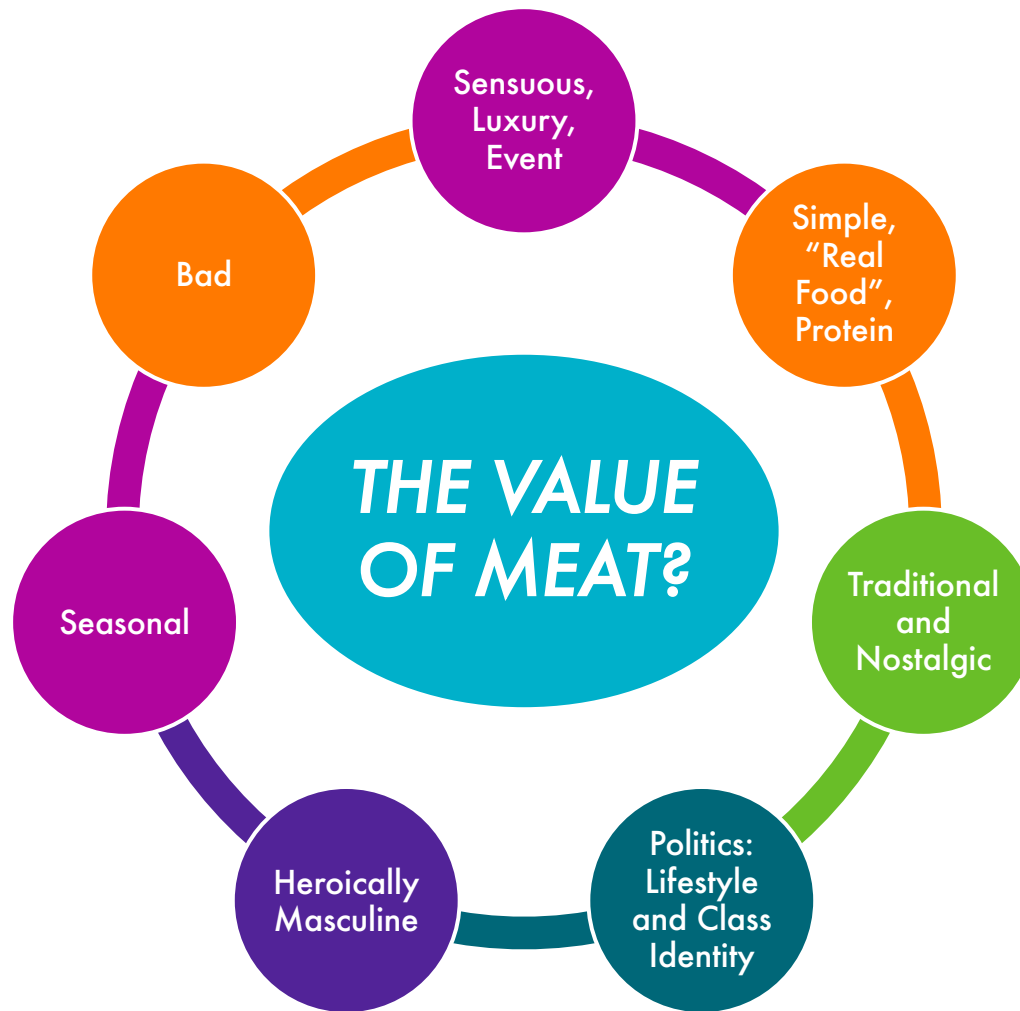


Meat is Seasonal



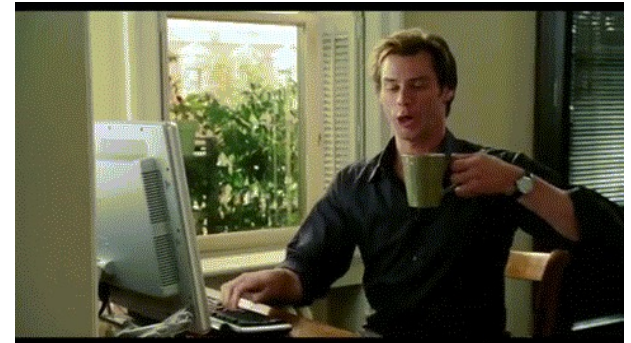
Meat is Bad (for you and the environment)





THESIS TIP #22:

A good approach for an applied thesis is to study "what" some phenomenon is and how this understanding could inform marketing strategy





KULUTUSKÄYTTÄYTYMINEN RUOKAOSTOKSILLA MUUTTUNUT: HINTATIETOISUUTTA SUUREMPI ILMIÖ ON HYBRIDIKULUTTAMINEN

24.05.2017

Kulutustottumukset ovat selvästi muutoksessa. Ruoan suhteen tehdään aiempaa tietoisempia valintoja, ruoan laatuun panostetaan enemmän ja ruokakaupoilta odotetaan entistä laajempia valikoimia, selviää K-ryhmän teettämästä ruokaa ja kulutustottumuksia käsittelevästä tutkimuksesta. Tutkimuksen mukaan hybridikuluttajia on jo lähes puolet suomalaisista.

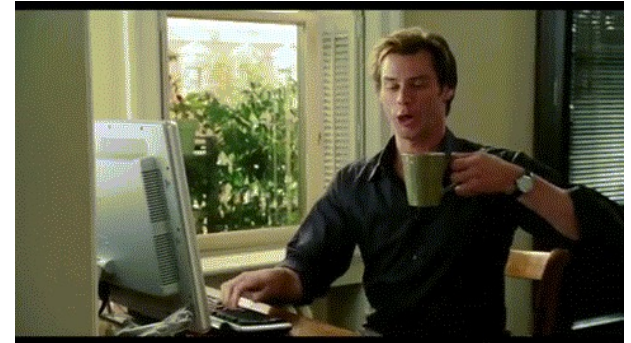
HS VISIO



**SÄHKÖSIIRTOYHTIÖ
CARUNA ON OLLUT
YKSI SUOMEN
HUONOMAINEISIMPIA
YHTIÖITÄ.**

THESIS TIP #23:

If you do a thesis for a company, make sure you have a good plan for what the "academic" thesis is going to be and the report that the company gets!



CUSTOMERS AND VALUE

- Customers do not care about products—they care what the product allows them to *do*
- Companies too often become “myopic” and only assume that their competitors are products in the same product category
- Customers can gain the same “value” through multiple ways → do not underestimate the plurality of value that your company’s products can deliver!

“Cleaning”

=

“Cheaper
cleaning”



“Improved
customer
experience”

! =

“Cheaper
cleaning”





MOOMING MUG COLLECTORS

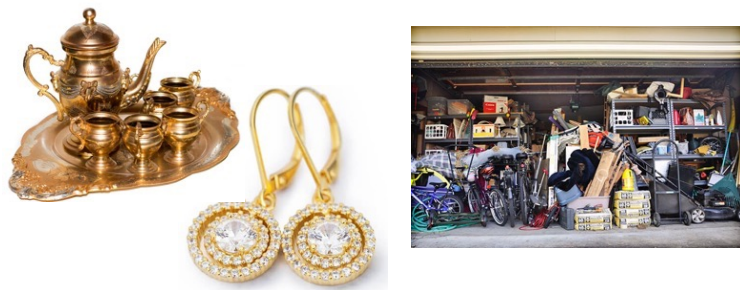
Not a Collection / In Use



Collection / In Use



Not a Collection / Not In Use



Collection / Not In Use



We learned, among others:

- Social games with mugs
- Mugs as anchors for routines
- Rotation between "in use" and "stored" mugs
- Seasonality in mug use
- Reimagining important (family) events
- Circulation and sharing of mugs
- Speculative investing
- Epistimicity and re-consumption
- Second lives for broken mugs

