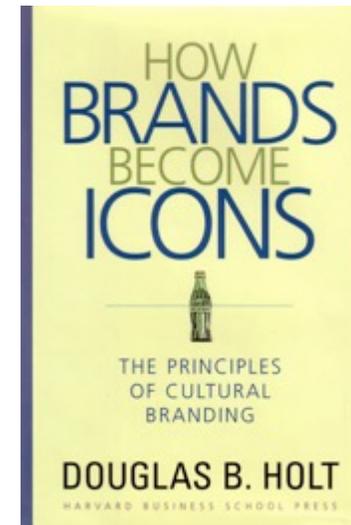


Cultural Branding

Introducing cultural branding

- Put together and formally introduced by Douglas Holt in his 2004 book “How Brands Become Icons”
- The themes and thinking had been developed in academic articles before this, through (Holt’s and others’)
- To a certain degree a culmination of the rise of CCT thinking in marketing



Reflections

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research

ERIC J. ARNOULD
CRAIG J. THOMPSON*

This article provides a synthesizing overview of the past 20 yr. of consumer research addressing the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption. Our aim is to provide a viable disciplinary brand for this research tradition that we call consumer culture theory (CCT). We propose that CCT has fulfilled recurrent calls for developing a distinctive body of theoretical knowledge about consumption and marketplace behaviors. In developing this argument, we redress three enduring misconceptions about the nature and analytic orientation of CCT. We then assess how CCT has contributed to consumer research by illuminating the cultural dimensions of the consumption cycle and by developing novel theorizations concerning four thematic domains of research interest.

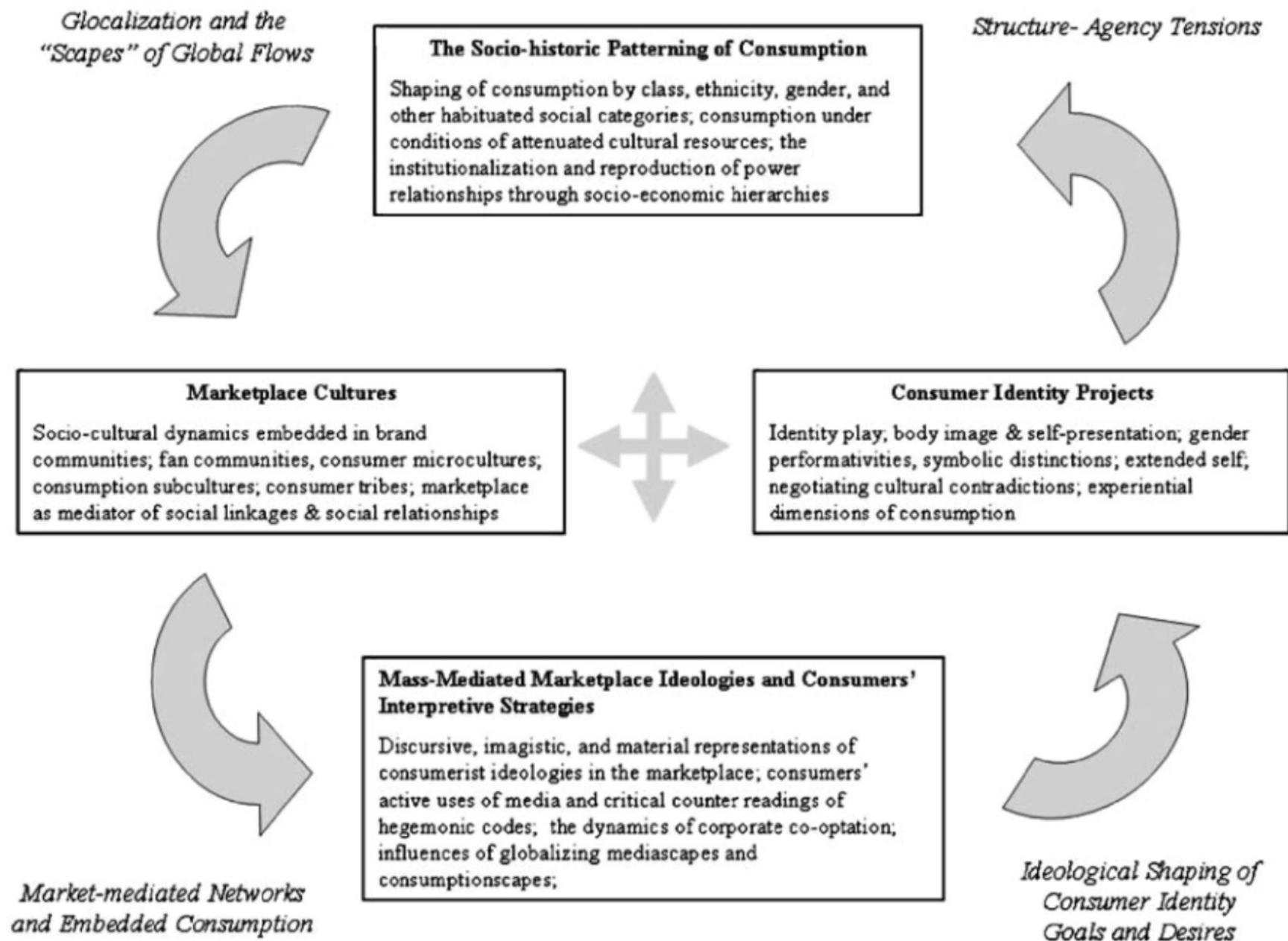


Fig. 1. CCT – Common Structures of Theoretical Interest.

What is “culture”?

- “excellence of taste in the fine arts and humanities, also known as high culture”
- “an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning”
- “the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group”

What is “culture”?

- ~~excellence of taste in the fine arts and humanities, also known as high culture~~
- an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning
- the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group

Cultural icons

- The goal of cultural branding is to build the brand into a cultural icon
- An icon is a symbol of an ideal that people hold in considerable esteem
- Other than brands, politicians, movies, books, photographs and even events can have iconic value









Identity brands

- The cultural branding model is intended for branding mostly identity categories
- Identity brands = value of products as a means of self-expression
- Products such as clothing, home decor, beauty, leisure, entertainment, automotive, food, and beverage etc.

Identity brands

- Brands, products and styles provide a tangible method of meaning transference for consumers who seek to both fit in to peer groups and express individuality (Tuten 2007)
- Consumers feel their identity-building projects are intense “personal quests”, but in truth similar quests are shared by many in the population (Holt 2004, p. 6)

Brand meaning

- Brands are historical artifacts moving through time and are carriers of meaning (Holt 2004, p. 1-4, 38)
- Brand meaning is a result of collective interpretations by multiple stakeholders over numerous historical moments (Hatch & Rubin 2005)
- Many of the assumptions in the other branding models don't take historical and the cultural context into account

The gist of Holt's criticism

- “Timeless consistency” can be impossible to attain, same for controlling a brand identity
- The idea is to align the brand with the right **identity myth (imaginative stories)** in a credible and appealing way in its marketing communication (Holt 2004, p. 11, 214-215)
- Brands respond to changes by “speaking again” in new contexts, and adapt old meanings to new circumstances

Identity myths?

“imaginative stories and images that selectively draw on history as source material, which function to continually re-imagine and vitalize the nation’s ideology”



Myth of man-of-action hero
A particular masculinity myth/story



Masculine
Patterns

Psychology Gender Studies
Society TOXIC Aggression
Traits Men Pressure
MASCULINITY Boys
Stereotype Dominant
Misogyny Violence Rewarded
Lashing Out Identity Politics
Expectations Homophobia
Unemotional Behavior Traits

Stress
Men

YOU CAN
BE MASCULINE
WITHOUT
BEING
TOXIC
BRO.
TRUTH TO POWER



More on identity myths

- Myths define culture by expressing its shared emotions and ideals (Solomon et al. 1999, p. 447)
- People feel anxieties when their personal life experiences and realities are in conflict with what the national ideology expects of them (Holt 2004, p. 45, 57, 210-213)
- People's identification with an identity myth is dependent on how well it soothes people's anxieties in their personal identity building projects

Common anxieties

- people's ambitions at work
- gender roles and sexuality
- their dreams for their children
- their fears of technology
- college graduation
- retirement
- mid-life crisis
- “the construction, maintenance and dissolution of key life roles that significantly alters one's concept of self”

(Holt 2004, p. 212; Fournier 1998)

How brands soothe anxieties

- Carriers of identity myths offer relief through ritualistic consumption of the product/text/brand
- Brands are special, because even if they aren't as affective as e.g. movies, they enable ritual and frequent consumption
- For example, by wearing a t-shirt of a certain myth, the myth is “transferred” to the person

Brands and identity myths

- A brand's strength is dependent on how well a brand encapsulates an identity myth and how strongly people identify with that myth
- The brand manager's role = to look back and understand the brand's "genealogy" and match it fit the proper identity myth
 - (think about the role of the CCO here)

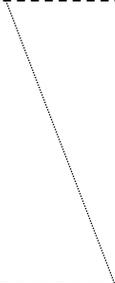
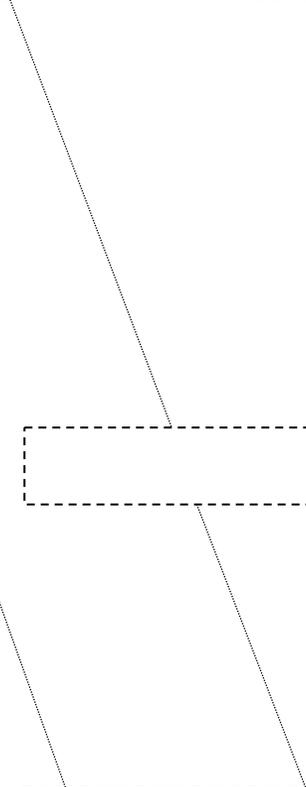
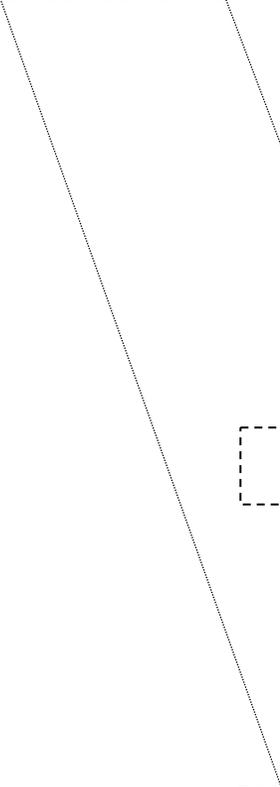
X related myth

Y- related myth

Y- related myth

Brands

Consumers (ritualistic)



Two examples of the same brand!

Gillette Mach3
BB3 VALUE COPY
30 sec
English
15.07.2015

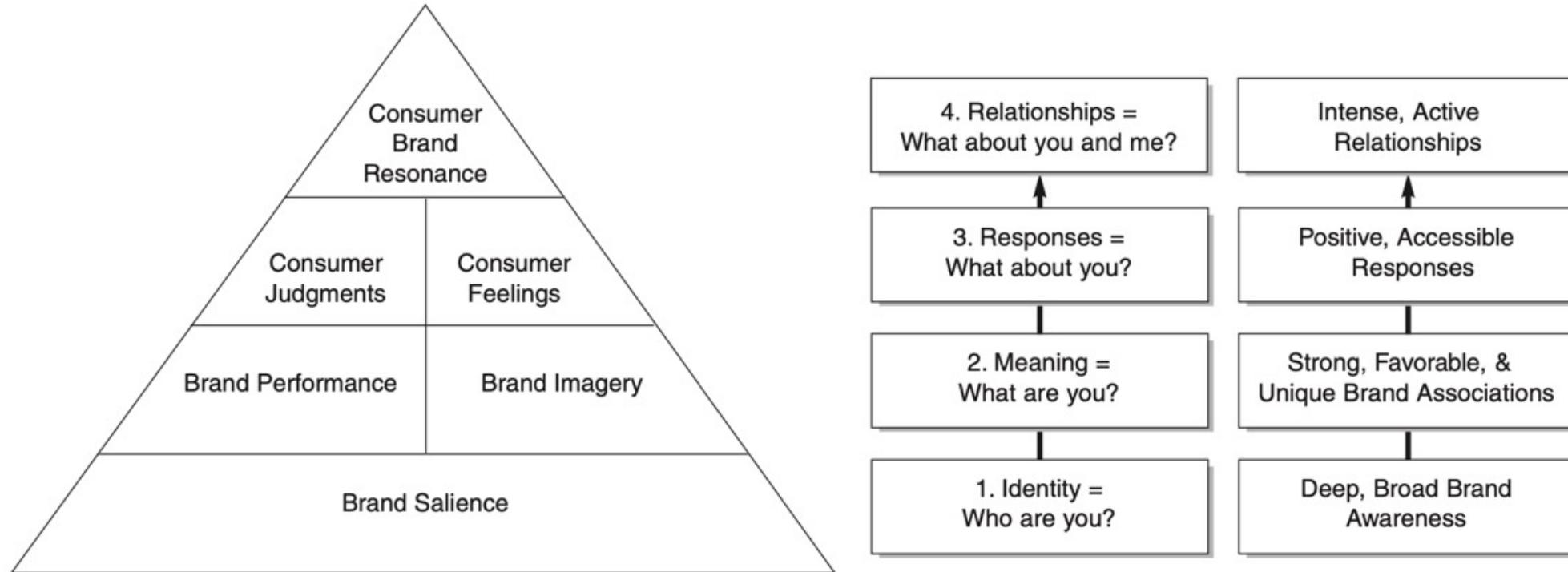
Value proposition

Why choose us?

What sets us apart from competitors?

Reflects the (brand) promise + benefits offered to consumer segments.

Figure 1. Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid



- **Brand identity**
 - Salience: a distinct value proposition. Our blades are sharper and smoother than competitor blades.
- **Meanings:**
 - Performance: reliable, durable, effective, efficient ...
 - Imagery: celebrity endorsement as an aspirational figure (sports celebs) → socio-psychological need.
- **Response:**
 - Judgment
 - Perceived quality
 - Credibility conveyed via celebrity endorsement
 - Credibility via innovation claim...
- **Consideration: unique need met → value proposition: sharp and smooth, and will not irritate your skin.**
 - Superiority:
 - We have three sharp blades, competitor 1. :)
 - Feelings:
 - Excitement, self-respect, approval, fun...
- **Resonance:**
 - Behavioral loyalty → regular and repeat purchase
 - Attitudinal attachment → brand love.



Competing masculinity myths – or "models"/"archetypes"

Brands

Consumers (ritualistic/performative)

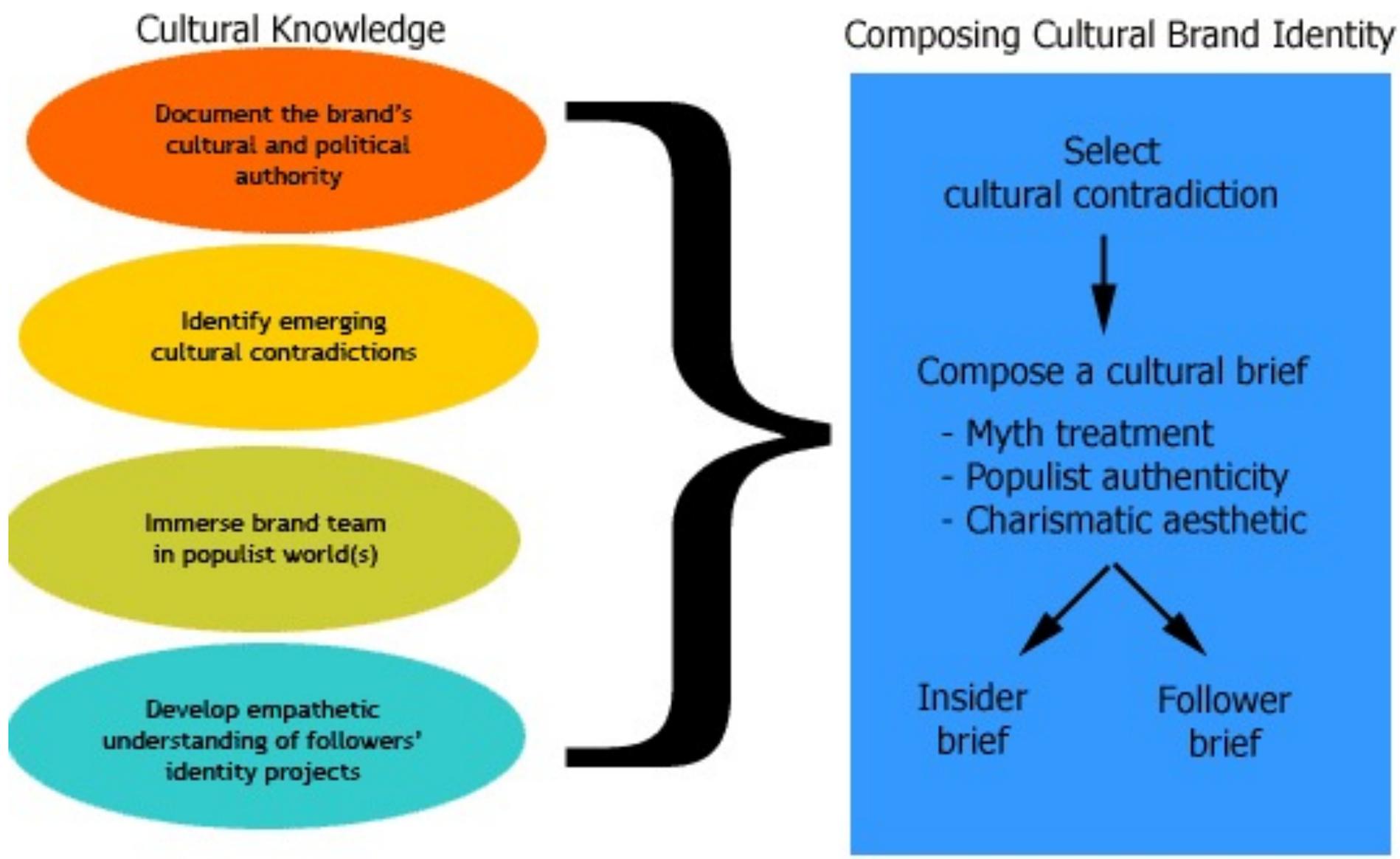
Myth: masculinity myths (competing masculinity ideals)

Anxiety: masculine identity – “what is the norm?” “how does society view distinct masculinity myths? “who am I?” ... “how I want others to see me?”

Brand strategists role: deep cultural understanding (meaning) of the myth + understand how consumers experience the myth.

Transfer meaning from the myth to the brand → creative idea → encoding

Communicate it via advertising (predominantly) ...



How the branding
models fit together

The branding models are connected

- Each model represents an evolutionary step in the marketplace, consumers, brand & marketing thinking and overall progress in management
- Tougher competition has driven the models in different product categories
- That doesn't mean they can't or shouldn't be used together, because they're intended for different purposes
- “Hybrid branding strategies”

Q&A!