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ONGOING ADOPTION OF THE ASSEMBLAGE THEORY IN CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY[1]

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Purpose: The aim of the present study is to investigate how CCT adopts Assemblage Theory as basis to produce knowledge in consumer research, based on an archive of articles published in major marketing journals.

Methodology: The Foucauldian Archaeology was the chosen research methodology, since it allows understanding how certain epistemes are socio-historically constituted over time, through discourse regularities. Articles adhering to the CCT field, which adopted the Assemblage Theory, were analysed based on this methodology.

Findings: Analysishave evidenced that the Assemblage Theory is a blunt option to ground CCT research because of its link to other theories and because it is a way to investigate consumer culture phenomena. Moreover, it is aligned with a central phenomenon in the field. These factors ground two discursive positions that support the Assemblage Theory either as an external approach useful for CCT studies or as a new naturalised theory in thisresearch field.

Theoretical contributions: The study presents in-depth understanding about the ongoing adoption of an emerging theory in the CCT field; it was possible due to the adoption of an epistemic-based methodological approach. Implications and insights for a research agenda were herein presented.

Practical contributions: Foucauldian Archaeology using has provided an epistemic view about the use ofAssemblage Theory in the CCT field. Thus, the current research provides the basis to think about the applications and potential consolidation of such a theory in the CCT research field.

Keywords: Assemblage Theory. Consumer Culture Theory. culture as distributed networks. Foucauldian Archaeology. Episteme.

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Introduction

Changes in the way modern societies deal with consumption have led to a best understanding that we live in a consumer society (Baudrillard, 2016; Bardhi *et al*., 2012). This statement implies that many contemporary phenomena are expressed through consumer cultural practices (Figueiredo& Uncles, 2014; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). This scenario forced the consumer research field to follow the cultural-driven consumer phenomena, and such process resulted in the establishment of the so-called Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). This approach mainly lies on the very basis of the interpretive paradigm, if one understands consumption as an intrinsic social and cultural practice (Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Woermann, 2018). Assumingly, consumers account for the production of the culture they belong to, which is created through their interaction with it (Berge 2017; Hartmann & Ostberg, 2012).

Since its proposition as alternative perspective to consumer research studies, CCThas been associated with theoretical concepts addressed in other social sciences fields (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; 2007; Jantzen *et al.*, 2012). This factor has led Holt (2017) to think that using high social theories to enable researchers to interpret consumer relations and practices through critical lenses – capable of indicating how market phenomena expand into broader social practices – may be one of the alternatives used to expand this field.

Thus, Arnould and Thompson (2005) proposed the CCT label based on studies dating back to the 1980s. The authors' seminal publications (see Arnould & Thompson, 2005; 2007) not only baptised an emerging study field, but proposed thematic research paths, as well as theoretical, epistemological and methodological orientations by making a retroactive analysis of a bibliographical corpus. Since its creation, CCT established and legitimised itself as an autonomous field in consumer research (Jantzen *et al.*, 2012); it formed a research community that deals with its own intellectual, rhetorical and political profile (Askegaard & Linet, 2011; Bode & Østergaard, 2013; Thompson *et al.*, 2013).

Initially, CCT studies tended to analyse culture based on how the individual deals with the symbolic aspects of consumption (Askegaard & Linet, 2011); this viewpoint was likely grounded on traditional consumer behaviour (Jantzen *et al.*, 2012). However, this perspective has changed, since Arnould and Thompson (2015) went back to their work a decade later and suggested that CCT research adopted the ontological concept of culture as distributed networks. This recent history of the CCT shows that it is in a clear process of its own constitution as a

field of research. Therefore, understanding how its theoretical arrangements and configurations are being established seems to be an important work to be done.

Moreover, when Arnould and Thompson (2015) have revisited their seminal work to conjecture future perspectives for the herein investigated field and indicated that consumption practices increasingly present themselves as likely to arrange several heterogeneous agencies in what they call culture as distributed network. Based on this understanding, different market players interact with each other in complex networks that add and converge singularities (Huff *et al*., 2021; Preece *et al*., 2018); this behaviour has been commonly treated as agencement and market assemblages, which, in their turn, are appropriations from the Assemblage Theory field (Fuentes & Samsioe, 2020; Stigzelius *et al.*, 2018).

Concerning the concept of culture as distributed networks, the understanding of cultural meanings takes into consideration the co-dependency of actions taken by multiple market players (Giesler & Veresiu, 2014; Saatcioglu & Corus, 2019). These actions reveal to what extent cultures are dynamic and how cultural arrangements are featured by the agencement of their members (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015). The concept of agencement in CCT has been commonly addressed according to the Assemblage Theory, which was originally conceived by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and later adapted to social sciences by DeLanda (2006). Assemblages are systems whose several human and non-human components interact with each other, at different places and under different conditions in order to negotiate and influence the arrangements connecting them (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; DeLanda, 2006).

Thus, the Assemblage Theory brings to CCT the premise that the actions of social individuals should not be dissociated from the ones they interact with. Both belong to these arrangements, which result from their skills and responsibilities (Arnould & Thompson, 2015; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015). However, new components can arise and the old ones can be adapted, because members of assemblages are not fixed. This process generates new non-linear relations and follows a rhizomatic order (Castilhos *et al*., 2017; Thompson, 2019).

Therefore, the aim of the current research was to investigate how CCT adopts Assemblage Theory as basis to produce knowledge in consumer research. Accordingly, we used the Foucauldian Archaeology as research method, since it allows better understanding how certain epistemesare socio-historically constituted over time, through discourse regularities. This choice was based on the current study's aim tobetter understand the episteme(s) associated

with the use, appropriation and reference of Assemblage Theory by interpretive marketing research – as in the case of CCT.

At this point, the research follows Thompson's (2019) understanding aboutthe way social theories have been used by this field to interpret ontologies arranged in consumer practices, as well as to produce epistemes based on such a combination. Hence, the study is justified by the growing adoption of the Assemblage Theory to answer investigative questions, and by its adequacy to ground the concept of culture as a distributed network (see Arnould & Thompson, 2015). It also reflects Tadajewski's (2014) proposition for expandingmarketing theoryby investigating and registering existing thought patterns, as is the case of CCT (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Thompson *et al*., 2013).

Moreover, understanding how the adoption of high social theories (e.g., Foucauldian, Butlerian, Assemblage) by CCT substantiates its knowledge production process is one of the ways to enable the continuous growth of consumer studies that see consumption as cultural and meaningful practice (Arnould & Thompson, 2015; Holt, 2017; Thompson, 2017).

Assemblage theory in consumer culture theory

Assemblage Theory addresses how fluid and heterogeneous cultural classifications depend on cultural and ontological formations, whose actors have their own particularities and autonomy and, yet, they align with each other according to the individual and collective interests bringing them together (DeLanda, 2006; Latour, 2005). Along with the Assemblage Theory, this perspective counts on the contribution of other theories, such as Actor-Network Theory (Callon, 1986; Latour, 2005), Practice Theory (Warde, 2005) and Governance Studies (Bonsu & Darmody, 2008).

The contribution from Assemblage Theory to CCT lies on its ability to allow the best understanding about how heterogeneous elements can remain together without forming a coherent whole (Allen, 2011; Arnould & Thompson, 2015). It enriches works that address the meaning of discourses, technologies and behaviours to consumers by focusing on fragmented and changeable socio-material arrangements (Woermann, 2017). This theory has been used in works that sought to understand the formation and maintenance of identities through consumption (Barnhart & Peñaloza, 2013; Epp & Price, 2010; Epp *et al.*, 2014), as well as the configuration and importance of consumer communities (Thomas *et al.*, 2013, Canniford &

Bajde, 2016; Woermann, 2017), the relationship between advertising, brands and consumers (Bjerrisgaard *et al.*, 2013, Giesler, 2012), among others.

The Assemblage Theory defines assemblages as the arrangement of objects, individuals and devices that work together; therefore, this process allows them to reach skills they would not achieve alone (Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017). Thus, this theory allows researchers to observe how different human or non-human elements interact with each other based on their function in an assemblage and on the strategic contradictions of social phenomena (e.g., consumption) adopted to intensify or lessen inherent tensions in the analysed interactions. It enables investigating how different elements lign-up in face of distinct contingencies and how they shape their contextualised meanings and effects. These factors, in their turn, force changes in existing relationships as different elements and assemblages arise (Canniford & Bajde, 2016; Woermann, 2017).

Based on Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and DeLanda (2006), CCT has mainly incorporated two perspectives of the Assemblage Theory. Deleuze and Guattari's Assemblage Theory is basically featured by rhizomatic structures substantiated by power relationships that intersect and branch out without top-to-bottom hierarchical imposition. These structures are contingent alignments of human and nonhuman actors who offer ways to order social life within power chains that legitimise and normalise certain actions, identities and practices. On the other hand, they block, prohibit or stigmatise other power chains (Huff *et al.*, 2021; Pridmore & Zwick, 2013).

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point out how assemblages provide stratification lines capable of perpetuating power relationships and they give the opportunities to interrupt and enhance such lines within rhizomatic resistance practices that can challenge them. Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari's concepts are fruitful theoretical lens for studies that see consumption as fluid cultural practice capable of territorializing, deterritorializing and likely, reterritorializing consumers agencements (Carrigton & Ozanne, 2002; Kozinets *et al.*, 2017). This approach takes market as a network of stabilized assemblages susceptible to be destabilized. Thus, symbolic value and exchange patterns shared by new market actors – human or otherwise – are incorporated in this network and their dynamics can either institutionalize or subvert consumption norms (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Epp *et al.*, 2014; Huff *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, DeLanda's approach is acknowledged among marketing studies for re-elaborating Deleuze and Guattari's concepts. DeLanda (2016) focuses on discussions about how the connectivity network of modern society allows individuals, objects and products – not

originally related to each other – to work together through continuous interactions in an assemblage. Such interactions lead to new possibilities that have the potential to expand in order to reach human and non-human members of different assemblages, and their actions, given the way they are linked to each other. DeLanda's idea of socio-material assemblages explains how consumers and other market actors engage at the time to establish connections between a certain market environment (e.g., online) and their material practices (Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Novak, 2020; Schöps *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, components and parts of an assemblage can be separated from it or become a new assemblage, or even integrate itself to an existing one. However, interactions in these other assemblages will never be the ones made in the original assemblage, due to the simple fact that they are different assemblages in themselves (Diaz Ruiz *et al.*, 2020; Preece *et al.*, 2018).

Both perspectives reveal how each member of an assemblage embodies responsibilities set by collectiveness (Huff *et al.*, 2021; Scaraboto, 2015; Schöps *et al.*, 2020). The Assemblage Theory offers to CCT researchers the possibility of investigating stratification lines through which power, resistance and regrouping relationships are achieved through consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2015; Hoffman & Novak, 2018). This process takes place within assemblage through interactions between their components, between a component and the arrangement it is part of and even between assemblages (Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017). Thus, despite being very enlightening, previous studies do not specifically aim at exploring the potential of the Assemblage Theory or how its use is capable of institutionalizing discourses about knowledge production in the CCT field.

With respect to this potential gap, we agree with Dolbec *et al.* (2021), according to whom, Assemblage Theory works for marketing studies in two different fronts. On the one hand, combining established theories to other nearby (e.g., conceptually, epistemologically) theories expands research interpretations and their potential theoretical contribution. On the other hand, matching research policies, practices and/or methodologies with theories requires critical and well- outlined research designs capable of producing knowledge advancements.

Belk and Sobh (2019) have pointed out how harmful both the adoption and likely disposal of theories imported from other fields can be. On the one hand, the adoption of a new theory is only linked to a certain innocuous fascination and/or to insights that require little reflective effort; however, on the other hand, rejecting a new theory can deprive a given knowledge domain of new and powerful perspectives. Both sides reflect how CCT remains an oxymoron that requires researchers to evaluate theories based on epistemic consistencies at the

time to adopt them. Consequently, it is essential exploring the epistemic grounds of different theories to integrate them at the time to interpret consumption phenomena, as seen in research dealing with Big Data's treatment, just to mention a recent trend in online consumer environments.

Thus, understanding the epistemic conditions producing knowledge in consumer research through Assemblage Theory contributes to the CCT field. Accordingly, our study assumes that the assemblage logic indicates how consumers can create sets of marketing resources to represent collectiveness and individuals inside them, since the CCT field tends to portray consumers as co-responsible for the agency that guides them (Arnould & Thompson, 2015; Hoffman & Novak, 2018).

Methodological procedures

By keeping in mind the aim of the current research, we investigated a method capable of disclosing the knowledge production conditions in a certain domain. The Foucauldian Archaeology meets this purpose, since it reveals epistemological formations based on discourse analysis application to documental data (Thompson, 2017). Accordingly, this methodology is an analytical tool that enables marketing studies to "dig" into discursive regularities to identify how certain epistemes are produced (Denegri-Knott *et al.*, 2018; Tadajewski, 2011).

Archaeology is the method developed by Michel Foucault to substantiate his philosophical investigations about knowledge construction (Tadajewski, 2011; 2016). Accordingly, Archaeology's purpose is not to produce theories, but to enable understanding the socio-historical constitution of epistemes through discourses that substantiate them over a certain period of time, in a certain knowledge domain (Thompson, 2017).

According to Deleuze (1988), Foucault's archaeological methodology enables observing discursive multiplicities that are not limited to indicate the knowledge behind the investigated phenomenon, but how it is evoked in discursive practices and, mainly, the epistemological concepts used to propagate such a knowledge. According to Tadajewski (2011; 2016), the Foucauldian epistemological orbit allows us to observe how the production of knowledge is strongly linked to power.

Therefore, Foucauldian Archaeology is a methodological perspective that meets the aim of the current study, as well asthat share the same ontology. Foucault's (2002) conditions were herein adopted to elaborate an archive to be investigated. Archive is the Foucauldian term

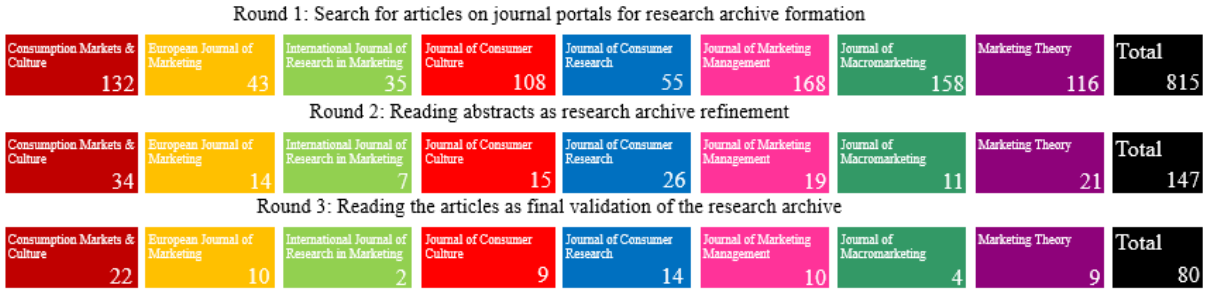
applied to the data collection procedure used in an investigation. It is determined by an event that means a novelty to, or rupture in, some phenomenon, and these processes establish a certain discursive regularity.

The research archive comprised 80 articles collected from Marketing journals rated as Q1 and Q2, according to SCImago Journal Ranks (SJR indicator). This platform produces an impact factor measure of scientific influence, which is adopted as criterion to select academic journals in rankings that take into consideration the quantity and quality of citations in other academic publications (Mañana-Rodríguez, 2015; Sota *et al.*, 2018). Journals are organized into four strata; thus, the ones ranked at the top half (i.e., Q1 and Q2) were taken into consideration for analysis purposes.

Data collection was based on the search for the keyword "assemblage", which resulted in 815 articles (round 1). The abstracts of the selected articles were evaluated in order to identify the ones addressed as CCT studies; therefore, the number of selected articles dropped to 147 (round 2). Articles in the selected sample were read to enable the final selection of the ones connected to the Assemblage Theory, since many of them simply used the term in an ordinary form (round 3). Archive information and data collection rounds are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Data Collection Round and Research Archive Composition by Marketing Journal



It is worth emphasizing that the option made for using Marketing journals in the current investigation lied on the fact that CCT is a sub-discipline within the consumer research field (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Askegaard, 2015). Thus, although CCT benefits from studies produced in other knowledge fields (e.g., anthropology, sociology, business and management), this criterion has set selection consistency for data collection.

The analysis took place according to the analytical categories of the method, which relate to each other through beams at different signification levels (Foucault, 2002).

Inference of statements and its relationships. Statements are the most fundamental meaning units on Foucauldian Archaeology. They are found in language signs, but they cannot be reduced to such signs, since they lie on their pragmatic context. It happens because statements refer to concrete topics that can be localised in certain time and space, they carry a certain regularity they cannot be dissociated from. Statements are inferred by analysing the whole archive, by seeking connections between existing meanings between texts. Different statements, in their turn, may be related to each other, since their meanings can have connection points or overlays.

Definition of enunciative functions. Statements are discursive instances understood as actions about what they concern; thus, they account for certain functions in the discourse; these functions result from the interconnection among four criteria. References indicate the contents and relationships that statements elucidate or deny. They are limited to an associated domain, which means a space of knowledge that gives meaning to the statements and to their relationships. It delimits subject's positions, which are social places where the discourse is enunciated from. These positions are occupied by any individual able to produce specific statements and this process allows the material existence of statements, which means to be used to produce and repeat them.

Definition of formation rules. Formation rules are directives established by statements for discursive formations. They derive from four criteria analogous to the ones of enunciative functions. Objects are particularities and delimitations observed in statement references; they lie on concepts that represent succession, coexistence and intervention types observed in associated domains. It happens through modalities, which are certain styles used by the subjects making a statement due to their status, location and situation. This process reveals strategies, in other words, they mean concepts established through statement materiality.

Determination of discursive formations. Discursive formations are general meanings of the discursive set observed in the archive. They are established in time and space by synthesizing regularities at a given moment, under certain epistemic conditions. Discursive formations derive from the convergence between statements and their functions, and formation rules. Relationship sets within these categories drive guidelines and patterns towards discursive formations.

Results and discussion

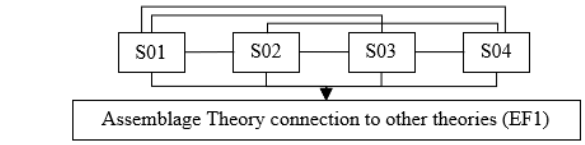
The identified discursive formations are presented below based on the set of relationships of their constitutive elements, from the statements' description and discussion.

Assemblage Theory connection to 1369ther theories

The first four statements (S01-S04) share the same function, namely: they advocate for the feasibility of both the Assemblage Theory and its concepts in CCT studies by taking into consideration other theories (EF1) (see Fig.2). This process takes place through comparison (referential), in an interdisciplinary (associated) domain that encompasses the approaches' particularities and approximations (e.g., theoretical, epistemological) and their relevance to the area. Authors working with this evaluation approach become specialists (subject) able to attest (materiality) the compatibility and applicability of the Assemblage Theory in CCT studies.

Figure 2

EF1 Statements and Criteria



S01 - CCT combines Assemblage concepts with high social theories
S02 - CCT compares Assemblage and Practice Theory
S03 - CCT associates Assemblage and Actor-Network Theory
S04 - CCT complements Assemblage with Non-Representional Theory

Referential	Associated domain	Subject	Materiality
Comparison	Interdisciplinary	Specialist	Attestation

CCT studies can bring along the Assemblage Theory – or its concepts – **based on the association with perspectives of high social theories** (S01) developed by other emblematic scholars (Cohen, 2020; Lanier & Rader, 2016; Scaraboto, 2015; Thompson, 2019). Interactions among actors forming marketing assemblages are interpreted as human actors' performances aimed at elaborating representations of themselves based on Erving Goffman's contributions (Belk & Sobh, 2019; Cohen, 2020; McCabe *et al*., 2017; Šimůnková, 2019). By expanding these performances in arrangements capable of enabling the performativities proposed by Judith Butler, market assemblages produce the conditions for human or non-human actors to influence each other (McCabe *et al*., 2017; Scaraboto, 2015; Schöps *et al*., 2020). Studies based on Michel Foucault's propositions about power relationships in the market context used to interpret that assemblages produce multiple agencements in different instances,

as well as that such a multiplicity is capable of deterritorializing and/or destabilizing different forms of government or exercise of power ruling social structures (Beckett, 2012; Bhattacharyya & Belk, 2019; Cronin *et al*., 2015; Hawkins, 2020; Langely, 2014; Lanier & Rader, 2016; Nøjgaard & Bajde, 2021; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Thompson, 2019; Zwick *et al*., 2008). Yet, some scholarsbelieve that the deindividualization process produced by the influence of mutual agencies corresponds to Jacques Derrida's deconstruction concept (Huff *et al*., 2021; Lanier & Rader, 2016; Schöps *et al*., 2020; Šimůnková, 2019).

Cohen (2020) has investigated how assemblages in collective production processes are affected and shaped by the convergence of multiple audiences of consumer performances. According to Schöps *et al.* (2020), the assemblage theory helps better understanding the way consumers materialize and express a work of visibility, which corresponds to the Butlerian concept of performativity. Based on Langely (2014), consumer practices encourage contemporary assemblages that are often disciplined or controlled by market forms of government that call out Foucauldian and Deleuzian concepts, respectively.

It is similar to Thompson's (2019) understanding, who suggested that the analytics of market assemblages are equivalent to the analytics of power relations long discussed by field studies based on Foucauldian concepts. Lastly, Lanier and Rader (2016) have emphasized that assemblages work as Derrida's deconstruction of previous – market – structures, by subverting multiple agencies.

The Assemblage Theory is compared to the Practice Theory (S02), which concerns how gathering different features of significant social situations can result in social practices. We identified several works (Bjerrisgaard *et al*., 2013; Hagberg, 2016; Hartmann & Ostberg, 2012; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Sandikci & Kravets, 2019; Welch, 2020; Woermann, 2017; 2018) in our archive pointing towards social meaning and order dimensions, such as material entities that lead to restrictions and resources, to trained and skilled bodies, to personnel moods and emotions and to explicit and implicit social rules that are broadly shared in understandings about the social world. These dimensions refer to interactions within assemblages (Assemblage Theory) and to individual practices (Practice Theory).

Sandikci and Kravets (2019) argue that there is the trend to combine nearby theories in CCT, among them one finds the Assemblage and Practice theories. These two theories provide a new viewpoint of the market to this study field, they broaden the understanding about how insights, relationships and practices are created and maintained. Woermann (2018) pointed out that, despite using rival vocabularies, the Assemblage and Practice theories are based on almost

identical assumptions. Based on both theories, social interaction results in a unique situation that boosts the creation and exercise of consumer practices. They are the context of a context and take the contemporary society as the historical and global product from cultural values and norms.

The author (Woermann, 2018) suggested that these theories remain a separate approach in consumer research due to political reasons, rather than to theoretical substances, since their particularities become more visible when their similarities are taken into account. The origin of both theories lies on careful ethnographic analyses focused on production structures or on social processes that cannot be reducible to human actions. Although the ontological foundations of both theories advocate that local situations are unique social manifestations, the Assemblage theory points out that such process takes place due to the assemblages, whereas the Practice Theory advocates that it is all about gathering practices. The singularity of each theory persists due to this difference between them.

The Assemblage Theory – or its logic and concepts – **isrelated to the Actor-Network Theory (ANT)** (S03), in order to observe the ability of both theories to explain agencements and market assemblages (Belk & Sobh, 2019; Hartmann & Ostberg, 2012; Woermann, 2018). By taking into consideration the concept of agencement by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), ANT, which was originally proposed by Latour (2005), states that actions taken by social agents are interconnected within a network.

Some authors consider ANT sufficient to deal with agencements or market assemblages in CCT (Bajde, 2013; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; Hawkins, 2020; Lanier & Rader, 2016; Leggett, 2020; McCabe *et al*., 2017; Nøjgaard & Bajde, 2021; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Scott *et al*., 2014; Strengers *et al*., 2016). Other authors understand that both theories are equally valid for such purpose (Figueiredo *et al*., 2016; Hartmann & Ostberg, 2012; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Lugosi & Quinton, 2018; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016; Saatcioglu & Corus, 2019). There are the ones who believe that CCT would benefit from the combined use of them (Barnhart & Peñaloza, 2013; Belk & Sobh, 2019; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Diaz Ruiz *et al*., 2020; Hill *et al*., 2014; Smaniotto *et al*., 2020) and there are authors who consider the Assemblage Theory even more appropriate than ANT to investigate agencements or market assemblages in CCT studies (Huff *et al*., 2021; Thompson, 2019; Woermann, 2017; 2018).

Rokka and Canniford (2016) advocate for the supremacy of ANT over the Assemblage Theory when they mention the existing agencement logic, which explains the coexistence of heterogenous elements in assemblages. However, they consider that relationships established

through consumption are well-explained by the connectivity that connects different actors or market components based on Latour's (2005) definitions. According to Woermann (2017), this is a worrisome argument, since these theories suggest that (respectively) assemblages and actors within networks manifest themselves in any social situation involving individuals' practices.

The Assemblage Theory addresses features and processes of members of a network, whereas ANT focuses on relationships of human and non-humanactors. Although taking different paths, both theories present assemblages as the possibility to understand social relationships established through consumption (Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Thompson, 2019). Hoffman and Novak (2018) even considered that ANT ignores existing borders in networks and argued that the Assemblage Theory acknowledges such limits, regardless of whether they are physical, temporal or affective. Thus, the Assemblage Theory can be considered as adequate as ANT for CCT studies; it can be used in separate or combined to each other.

Hill *et al.* (2014) argued that, similar to ANT, the **Non-Representational Theory (NRT) can be used to complete the Assemblage Theory** (S04). This argument is based on the understanding that NRT looks closer to the market; yet, it is not as broad as the Assemblage Theory (Canniford *et al*., 2018; Cheetham *et al*., 2018; Scott *et al*., 2014). This statement reinforces the hypothesis that the Assemblage Theory can be adopted to recreate the market or consumption knowledge by institutionalising concepts and textual accounts, whereas NRT can generate knowledge by proposing and inventing new ways to design inquiry-objects (Canniford *et al*., 2018; Hill *et al*., 2014).

Scott *et al.* (2014) considered that materiality is the shaping force of both theories, either when it comes to the topography of social interactions or to the way people think and give meanings; therefore, their combined use makes total sense. Hill *et al.* (2014) pointed out that the sense of representation is taken as a synchronous process in which consumers and social structures mutually reproduce their own characteristics. They suggest the NRT completes the Assemblage Theory to investigate agencements based on a new range of consumer sensory possibilities. It explains why NRT has been used in studies focused on agencements observed in consumers' experiences (Cheetham *et al*., 2018; Hill *et al*., 2014).

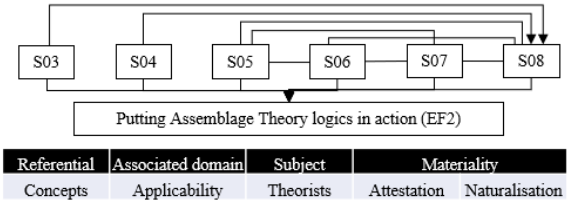
Putting assemblage theory logics in action

A second enunciative function was identified between S04 and S08 (see Fig. 3). It reveals the need of demonstrating how the Assemblage Theory logic works in CCT studies

(EF2) by evidencing how its concepts (referential) have applicability (associated domain) and help understanding relationships established in consumer culture practices. These authors acted as theorists (subject) who attested and naturalised (materialities) the adoption of the Assemblage Theory – or its logic – in CCT.

Figure 3

EF2 Statements and Criteria



Many studies (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015; Bettany & Kerrane, 2016; Bhattacharyya & Belk, 2019; Brodie *et al.*, 2017; Castilhos *et al.*, 2017; Cheetham *et al.*, 2018; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; Deville, 2014; De Mello *et al.*, 2020; Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Hill *et al.*, 2014; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Lucarelli & Giovanardi, 2019; Lucarelli & Hallin, 2015; Novak, 2020; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Preece *et al.*, 2018; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019; Scott *et al.*, 2014; Šimůnková, 2019; Stigzelius, 2018; Stigzelius *et al.*, 2018; Thomas *et al.*, 2013; Thompson & Kumar, 2018; Türe & Ger, 2016; Woermann, 2017) suggest that **understanding market and social interactions through the assemblage concept** (S05) is essential. Members of an assemblage interact with each other similarly to the social and market interactions (Hill *et al.*, 2014). The presence or absence of members have direct influence on assemblage arrangement, just as it happens in social and market interactions (D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; Stigzelius, 2018; Stigzelius *et al.*, 2018).

Consumption interactions, in particular, highlight the possibility of improving the skills or of changing the perspective of members in a community. Such improvements and changes derive from interactions within the community and with the community itself, a fact that characterises an assemblage (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014). Deville (2014) considered that the concept of assemblage brings the possibility of anticipating future actions taken by groups of individuals to CCT. Hoffman and Novak (2018) pointed out that social and market interactions are problematised and reassembled based on the assumption that heterogeneous actors influence consumption. They explained that components of social and market interactions play material

(i.e., structural, infrastructural, mechanical, operational or functional) or expressive (e.g., conveying meaning) roles. The synergy of an assemblage settles consumer practices, as well as makes social and market actors understand their roles and their importance in interactions (Thomas *et al.*, 2013).

The **concept of assemblage** also **allows flexibility between consumers and producers** (S06) (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015; Beckett, 2012; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Hill *et al*., 2014; Huff *et al.*, 2021; Lucarelli & Hallin, 2015; Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Roberts & Cremin, 2017; Ryder, 2020; Scaraboto, 2015; Shi *et al.*, 2019; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009). Assemblages are made of heterogeneous actors (Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Ryder, 2020); Scaraboto (2015) argued that the heterogeneity of assemblage members (e.g., persons, technical systems, materials) tends to give flexibility to performativities that are not typically originated from them. When the roles of assemblage members are destabilised, these members use assemblage flexibility by interacting with each other. This process enables the duality of roles in consumption relationships to become flexible between producers and consumers (Roberts & Cremin, 2017; Scaraboto, 2015; Schöps *et al*., 2020).

Ng and Wakenshaw (2017) suggested that the continuous use of technologies to connect persons and objects change the role of consumers and producers, which stop being fixed and become flexible. They explained that the countless possibilities of performing online material relationships have turned ancient marketing roles (i.e., duality between producers and consumers) that are now situationally contextualised. Roberts and Cremin (2017) considered that constant contact with technology leads consumers to productivity in terms of what they consume. Deterritorialised flows are captured and (re)territorialised through productive consumption; thus, the assemblage concept points out that the dualistic role of producers and consumers no longer fits CCT studies.

Likewise, **the assemblage concept explains how interactional objects relate to consumers** (S07) (Beckett, 2012; Bhattacharyya & Belk, 2019; Cardoso *et al*., 2020; Cronin *et al*., 2015; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; De Mello *et al*., 2020; Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Lucarelli & Hallin, 2015; Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Novak, 2020; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Roberts & Cremin, 2017; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019; Schöps *et al.*, 2020; Scott *et al.*, 2014; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009). Lucarelli and Giovanardi (2019) explained that human beings interact

with and relate to objects capable of governing them and of interfering in their social relationships.

Consumers interact with specific representational objects (e.g., popular culture products, brands, consumer goods and services) and such interactions matters for both market and assemblage itself (De Mello *et al.*, 2020; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Novak, 2020; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015). By having their roles blended in the marketing system, they embody new functions by means of connectivity and relationships established in assemblages (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Roberts & Cremin, 2017; Schöps *et al.*, 2020).

On the other hand, several articles in our archive (Canniford *et al*., 2018; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Cardoso *et al*., 2020; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; De Mello *et al*., 2020; Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Huff & Cotte, 2016; Kozinets, 2019; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Rose, 2020; Scott *et al*., 2014; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019; Stevens *et al*., 2019; Stigzelius *et al.*, 2018; Thomas *et al*., 2013; Trees & Dean, 2018) explored how **the agencement capacity introduced by the Assemblage Theory logics enriches consumer experience studies** (S08). These studies state that consumption experiences result from cultural itineraries, material geographies and technological resources, as well as that consumers engage in assemblages among the interactions of these elements. Steven *et al.* (2019) asserted that the sense of assemblage allows individuals to go beyond individual experiences to understand how they happen in market and social systems.

The agencement concept of the Assemblage Theory introduced how the reproduction of assemblage rules impacts the experience of consumption in CCT studies (Canniford *et al*., 2018; Thomas *et al*., 2013). Canniford and Shankar (2013) suggested that the assemblage concept improved the understanding about consumer experience, since it is partially subjective – depends on individuals' beliefs and intentions –, partially objective – it is influenced by the agencement context – and partially relational – refers to the roles of individuals who relate to others and to the market. This concept highlights the potential permeability of the agentic expressive role and the communal expressive role developed overtime due to enabling experiences (Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019). The consumer experience can be understood as an assemblage of resources within social groups and marketplaces (Cardoso *et al*., 2020; De Mello *et al*., 2020; Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Huff & Cotte, 2016).

Scott *et al.* (2014) considered that the agencements of consumer experiences both result from the constant rise and shift of assemblages composed of people, places, objects and discourses. The modelling force observed in the way people think and produce meaning are

aspects explained by the Assemblage Theory and NRT, respectively. Thus, this statement (S08) is incidentally related to the one that suggests a complementary approach between these two theories (S04). On the other hand, statements about how the concept of assemblage influences actors' relationships are mainly constituted of articles that define assemblage based on Assemblage Theory, but some of them (D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; Hill *et al.*, 2014; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Scott *et al.*, 2014) do it by combining it to ANT. This process makes such statements incidentally related to the approach that compares both theories (S03).

The four statements addressed above are interconnected. The heterogeneity of assemblages also allows consumers and producers to make their roles flexible (S06) by making it possible to be in compliance with social and market interactions (S05) (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015; Hill *et al*., 2014; Lucarelli & Hallin, 2015; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al*., 2016) and to better understand how interactional objects relate to consumers (S07) (Bhattacharyya & Belk, 2019; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Lucarelli & Hallin, 2015; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019; Scott *et al*., 2014).

The interaction between consumer and representational objects (S07) makes the relationships between consumers and producers flexible (S06) by closing this circle (Beckett, 2012; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; De Mello *et al*., 2020; Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al*., 2016; Roberts & Cremin, 2017; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009). In turn, social and market interactions (S04) are broader in explaining consumer experience through agencement (S08) (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019; Thomas *et al*., 2013), as well as in addressing that the agencement of consumers' experience takes place in their relationship with representational objects (S07) (Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019) and producers (Parmentier & Fischer, 2015).

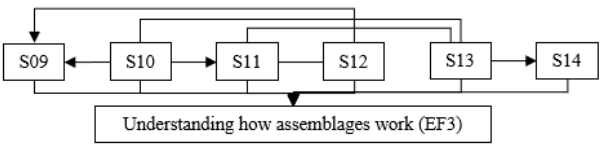
Understanding how assemblages work

The six statements, and their interrelationships, aim at evidencing how principles and dynamics between members rule the assemblages (EF3) (see Fig. 4). Once again acting as theorists (subject), CCT researchers used Assemblage Theory fundamentals (referential) to explain how assemblage members relate to each other, exercise power and negotiate truths with

each other, they also define assemblage hierarchies and functions. This attitude benefits from theoretical approaches that have become legitimised (associated domain) to naturalise (materiality) their contributions to CCT studies.

Figure 4

EF3 Statements and Criteria



S09 - Territorialization process stabilizes market
S10 - Assemblages' discourses establish its boundaries
S11 - Assemblages can be ruled by their internal or external members
S12 - Ethical values and social norms legitimizes assemblages
S13 - Particular values of assemblage members produces its hierarchy
S14 - Social environment shapes, and are shaped, by assemblage interactions

Referential	Associated domain	Subject	Materiality
Fundamental	Legitimacy	Theorists	Naturalisation

The territorialisation process stabilises assemblages (S09) (Epp & Price, 2018; Huff *et al*., 2021; Langely, 2014; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Preece *et al*., 2018; Presi *et al*., 2016; Price & Epp, 2016; Shi *et al*., 2019; Weijo *et al*., 2018; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009). Different assemblage members often share the same goals and make agencement instruments more homogeneous (e.g., population, expressions, practices) (Preece *et al*., 2018; Weijo *et al*., 2018). An assemblage consists in different parts and practices that form contingent relationships throughout time to produce a collective sense (Epp & Price, 2018; Weijo *et al*., 2018). The territorialisation process strengthens the assemblage by weakening its heterogeneity (Huff *et al*., 2021; Preece *et al*., 2018).

Langely (2014) indicated that assemblage deterritorialisation means the opposite, losing its original purpose: it introduces consumer to a different assemblage – as in a producers' database, for instance – and turns them into docile bodies to be governed. Preece *et al.* (2018) stated that the Assemblage Theory approach can explain practices such as the creation and maintenance of meanings given to a brand, as well as its longevity.

Other studies (Bettany & Kerrane, 2016; Cardoso *et al*., 2020; Castilhos *et al*., 2017; Cohen, 2020; de Waal Malefyt & McCabe, 2016; Epp & Price, 2018; Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Hagberg & Kjellberg, 2020; Hill *et al*., 2014; Huff & Cotte, 2016; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al*., 2016; Thompson, 2019) address how **assemblages' discourses establish its boundaries** (S10). The Assemblage Theory emphasises that the world embodies shapes and meanings through dynamic relationships between boundaries – tangible

and intangible elements, synchronicity of temporal activities, affective experiences (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Huff & Cotte, 2016).

According to Thompson (2019), the discourse of an assemblage sets limits that legitimise power relationships among its members – internal or external, human or non-human. Thus, in order to maintain its possibility, an assemblage must acknowledge certain factors, that are real and need to be addressed, as unethical to the discourse, (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019). Huff and Cotte (2016) quoted the possibility to conceptualise brands, consumer practices and the relationship between consumers and marketplaces through assemblage discourses. The boundaries that revealed the discourses in an assemblage (S10) allowed the territorialisation that homogenised its members (S09) (Epp & Price, 2018; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016).

Likewise, **assemblages can be ruled by their internal or external members** (S11) (Beckett, 2012; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Cherrier, 2017; Fuentes & Samsioe, 2020; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Langely, 2014; Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016; Thompson, 2019; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009). The Assemblage theory indicates that governance – management and exchanment – can be carried out by internal or external assemblage members who act as catalysts to gather and manage assemblage interests (Cherrier, 2017; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016).

Canniford and Shankar (2013) explain that internal components – human or non-human – of an assemblage can threaten or betray its original purpose. In turn, new members – originally outsiders – who are incorporated to an assemblage are responsible for maintaining its original purpose (Cherrier, 2017; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016). According to Zwick and Denegri-Knott (2009), consumers are naturally part of digital assemblages and they can be driven by other consumers, but also governed by producers who seek to interpret data provided by assemblage members.

Discourses establishing the boundaries of an assemblage (S10) allow its members to rule based on assemblage original interests (S11) (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Thompson, 2019). On the other hand, the management of an assemblage by its members (S12) influences its stabilisation process (S09) (Langely, 2014; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009).

The way **ethical values and social norms** articulate with individuals **legitimises the existence of assemblages** (S12) (Cherrier, 2017; Fuentes & Samsioe, 2020; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Ryder, 2020; Weijo *et al.*, 2018; Woodward & Greasley, 2017). When assemblages focus on human attributes, they show how governance types imply ethical values and current social

standards (Cherrier, 2017; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019). Assemblages can deal with collective and dynamic interaction phenomena between human and non-human components such as the stress that emerges between them through irregular topographies (Fuentes & Samsioe, 2020; Woodward & Greasley, 2017).

According to Weijo *et al.* (2018), the Assemblage Theory allows identifying social and ethical levels in society, which are assemblage apparatuses because they have the ability to interact with each other and to affect other components they have contact with. These authors indicated two creative ways to express these apparatuses, the transformability and explorability that represent how consumers create ethical values or exploit social norms in assemblage processes, respectively. Cherrier (2017) pointed out how ensuing institutional arrangements and practices are social standards formerly used to manage the market system, including the creation and maintenance of an alternative market.

The two forms of creativity addressed by Weijo *et al.* (2018) demonstrated territorialisation processes capable of stabilizing assemblage (S09) by negotiating social standards and ethical values with individuals (S12). In addition, ethical values and social standards that legitimise assemblage existence (S12) represent assemblages' original purpose, they account for setting how external or internal members rule such assemblages (S11).

On the other hand, our archive demonstrated how **particular values of assemblage members have impact on its hierarchy** (S13) (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; De Mello *et al.*, 2020; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Huff & Cotte, 2016; Thompson, 2019; Trees & Dean, 2018). The Assemblage Theory brings up the discussion about how truths and particular values of assemblage members can define the hierarchical levels of its internal composition (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Thompson, 2019).

Such values can also affect other assemblages and even the social environment they are inserted in – the so-called chain effect (Hoffman & Novak, 2018). Thompson (2019) says that valid truths for individual consumers in the market context can have impact on the agency in the market structure. Such ability is aligned with the concept of resistance: power will be exercised via truth, as long as it is exercised by the correct entities.

Assemblage members' own values have impact on its hierarchy (S13), and they are manifested in discourses responsible for establishing hierarchy boundaries (S10) (Huff & Cotte, 2016; Thompson, 2019). On the other hand, assemblage management (S11) is grounded in the values of its components (S13) (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Thompson, 2019).

Finally, **interactions in assemblages shape, and are shaped, by the social environment** (S14) (Fuentes & Samsioe, 2020; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Kozinets, 2019; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Novak, 2020; Thompson, 2019). According to the Assemblage Theory, it is not possible to disassociate assemblages from the social environment they take part at. Assemblages have impact on other assemblages and, consequently, on all social environments they are inserted in (Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Novak, 2020).

Thompson (2019) explained that assemblages' capacity is not anchored in any holistic and organizing principle or inherent unifying structure because of the heterogeneity of assemblage members. However, it does not mean that assemblages are not affected by structures; there is a dynamic and synergistic relationship between the two instances, which makes them mutually influential. Fuentes and colleagues (Fuentes & Samsioe, 2020; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019) showed how some producers support the assemblages of their consumers through agencement. When it happens, market niches are influenced and can modify the market system they are part of.

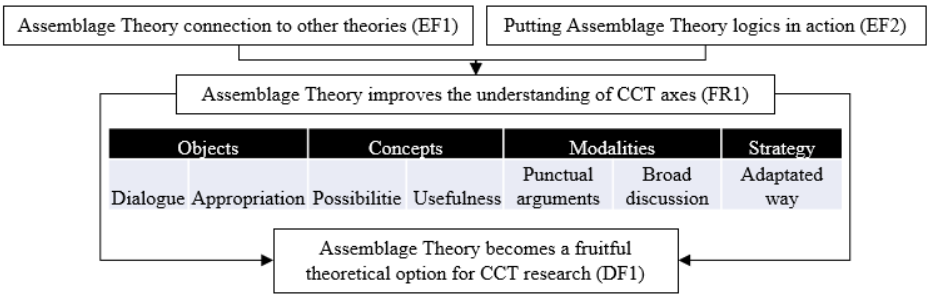
The synergetic connection between assemblages and social environment (S14) explains assemblage hierarchies, which are anchored in its members' own values (S13), a fact that reflects and is reflected on the social relationships (Hoffman & Novak, 2018 Thompson, 2019). This process also allows members to be incorporated to assemblage government (S11) (Fuentes & Samsioe, 2020; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019, Thompson, 2019).

The use and grounds of Assemblage theory in CCT

The set of relationships between statements and their functions converge into two discursive formations. On the one hand, based on discussions about the theoretical aspects of this approach, the **Assemblage Theorybecomes a fruitful theoretical option for CCT research** (DF1). This discursive formation derives from functions that apply to the first two groups of statements: the possibility of combining the Assemblage Theory to other theoretical approaches (EF1) and its suitability to investigate marketing objects (EF2) (see Fig. 5).

Figure 5

DF1 Foundations

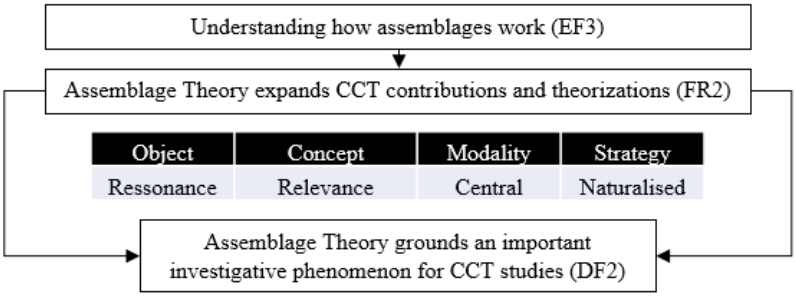


This discursive formation is based on how theoretical possibilities and their usefulness (concepts) for CCT are pressing; it is presented through theoretical dialogues or appropriations (objects). The Assemblage Theory is incorporated and re-signified in an adapted way (strategy), either through punctual arguments or broad discussion (modalities), to help better understanding the current theoretical-epistemological axes of CCT (FR1).

On the other hand, the way assemblages are shaped by the dynamics and principles established between its members (EF3) points towards the second discursive formation. This process indicates that the **Assemblage Theory grounds an important investigative phenomenon for CCT studies** (DF2) (see Fig. 6). This discursive formation substantiates the applicability of the theory to the CCT field. Assumingly, consumers take part in assemblages by embodying the actions, relationships and functions of these groupings in a dynamic system. This system incorporates different ways through which individuals get related to material systems by organizing themselves into a broader and more complex social system via stratification, coding and territorialisation processes.

Figure 6

DF2 Foundations



Accordingly, the rule guiding this discursive formation (FR2) advocates for the relevance (concept) of the Assemblage Theory to the CCT research agenda, since its contributions are resonant (object) to the observed consumer culture. This concept attests the Assemblage Theory as a central (modality) approach in CCT studies, it becomes a naturalised (strategy) knowledge for this field.

Implications and insights

Based on our findings about the conditions enabling the Assemblage Theory to produce knowledge in the CCT field, it is valid to evoke the review by Arnould and Thompson (2015) about the four conceptual axes guiding inspirational journeys to expand research in this field. This consideration enables reasoning about the relevance of adopting Assemblage Theory in CCT studies, with implications for its research agenda. Table 1 shows the association among the identified enunciative functions and all four conceptual axes, through potential research topics, whose concepts are discussed below.

Table 1

Relationship Between Arnould and Thompson's (2015) Conceptual Axes and the Current Research Findings

Conceptual axes	Assemblage Theory connection to other theories (EF1)	Putting Assemblage Theory logic in action (EF2)	Understanding how assemblage works (EF3)
Culture seen as distributed networks	Cultural dynamics such as: ✓ Power relationships; ✓ Consumer resistance; ✓ Consumer performativities; ✓ Ideological discourse production; ✓ Human-technology relationships. Benefiting from Assemblage Theory's dialogue with other theories, such as: ✓ Foucault's Theories of Knowledge and Power; ✓ Butler's Performativity Theory; ✓ Derrida's Deconstruction; ✓ Actor-Network Theory; ✓ Post-Human Theory.	Consumption phenomena through fluid networks, such as: ✓ Prosumption practices (e.g., consumer bricolage, fan productions); ✓ Consumers' experience (e.g., social media interactions, virtual tourism); ✓ Interactional objects (e.g., digital platforms, Internet of Things).	Market arrangements seen as assemblages, such as: ✓ Consumption assemblages (e.g., consumer and brand communities, self-service technologies); ✓ Production assemblages (e.g., content marketing, brand storytelling); ✓ Mediation assemblages (e.g., interactions between digital influencers and followers, audience participation in the broadcast of live events).

Conceptual axes	Assemblage Theory connection to other theories (EF1)	Putting Assemblage Theory logic in action (EF2)	Understanding how assemblage works (EF3)
Politics of consumption	Political dynamics such as: ✓ Identity politics; ✓ Consumerism issues; ✓ Market ethics; ✓ Social and environmental responsibility. Benefiting from Assemblage Theory's dialogue with other theories, such as: ✓ Practice Theory; ✓ Feminist and Queer Theories; ✓ Foucault's Theories of Power and Subjectivity; ✓ Deleuze's Theory of Difference; ✓ Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory.	Politicized consumption phenomena, such as: ✓ Identity projects (e.g., black and LGBTQIA+ people's demand, fan engagement); ✓ Conscious consumption (e.g., recycling, financial responsibility); ✓ Reprimands (e.g., boycotts, cancel).	Market movements and organized actions seen as assemblages, such as: ✓ Anti-consumerism; ✓ Ecological demands (e.g., clean-energy, cruelty-free and vegan products); ✓ Well-being demands (e.g., accessibility, corporative ethics).
Consumer marketing theoretics	Assemblage Theory's dialogue with major Marketing theories, such as: ✓ Critical Marketing; ✓ Macromarketing; ✓ Resource-Advantage Theory.	–	–
Regional cultural theoretics	Assemblage Theory's dialogue with theories regarding non-global consumption logics, such as: ✓ Postcolonial Theory; ✓ Pos-Development Theory; ✓ Conflict Theory; ✓ Nordic Model.	–	–

Understanding culture as distributed network requires assuming that cultural categories are fluid and show contingent formation, since their agents are aligned through different non-hierarchical configurations. This conceptual axis was conceived in compliance with Assemblage Theory; thus, it is natural that our findings fully fit this approach. Accordingly, studies should explore certain market arrangements as assemblages, by analysing them as dynamic territories (EF3). Moreover, they should adopt assemblages' logic to investigate different consumption phenomena taking place through fluid networks (EF2). Finally,

investigations about typical dynamics of culture seen as network can benefit from the dialogue with other theories compatible with Assemblage Theory (EF1).

The politics of consumption takes into consideration how heterogeneous arrangements comprising multiple market actors (e.g., consumers, managers, entrepreneurs and technologies) get mobilized to change established market practices and norms through actions and innovations. Thus, market movements and organized actions should be investigated as assemblages (EF3), as well as politized consumption phenomena could benefit from assemblage logic (EF2). Accordingly, consumer political dynamics can be analysed through the dialogue between Assemblage Theory and other compatible theories (EF1).

The extension of cultural analysis into the realm of marketing and management theory indicates CCT's trend to establish cultural marketing theories. Based on this proposal, it is possible reflecting about how the Assemblage Theory applied to consumption phenomena can dialogue with theoretical macro-approaches to marketing (EF1), which can range from social (i.e., how marketing must benefit individuals and society) to managerial (i.e., how marketing must benefit organizations) perspectives.

Based on the same line of reasoning, regional cultural theories explain the maturation of CCT schools and the spread of researchers worldwide. It is a remarkably significant trend in places such as Nordic countries, Brazil and the Middle East, which focuses on exploring local, global and glocal market phenomena. The Assemblage Theory can be associated with theories aimed at reflecting about consumer realities outside the globalization axis or at taking into consideration realities rarely addressed by the mainstream literature.

Conclusion

Results evidenced that the Assemblage Theory adoption on CCT has becoming not only an infusion of theoretical vernaculars to the field (Arnould & Thompson, 2015), but a blunt option to ground CCT research, both by its connection with other theories and because it is a way to investigate consumer culture phenomena, as well as because it is aligned with a central phenomenon in this research field.

If the Assemblage Theory can enrich CCT studies for real, it can likely fail to capture some particularities of certain phenomena. Therefore, CCT has combined the Assemblage Theory to other theories that are epistemologically aligned to it (i.e., ANT, NRT and Practice Theory); some of them were indicated by Holt (2017) as high social theories developed by

emblematic scholars (e.g., Erving Goffman, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, and Michel Foucault).

Furthermore, the Assemblage Theory substantiates CCT studies by the sense that culture acts in distributed networks of multiple agents. This theory seems to be able to inquiry the consumption phenomenon as a result from the agency of different actors who interact in dynamic arrangements, under changing conditions and circumstances.

Yet, it is possible arguing that the Assemblage Theory is supposed to be part of the literature and it should not be considered an imported or exogenous approach. It is clear that agencements and assemblages are intrinsic to consumption relationships; therefore, they are inherent to CCT phenomena.

The discourses identified behind these arguments reveal two different, yet potentially complementary, positions. The understanding that the Assemblage Theory is a suitable option for CCT studies is supported by the assumption of its usefulness for CCT studies. However, it may also be an externality to be embodied and adapted by this research field. In turn, understanding this theory becomes essential, because it focuses on a core phenomenon in CCT research, which is built by the way it naturalises this theory.

Consequently, we believe that the current study contributes to the discussion aboutbenefits of social theories tostudies conducted in the CCT field. Assemblage Theory – and its concepts –were originally proposed by Deleuze and Guattari; however, CCT studies can mention the theory, without evoking its genesis and/or its original concepts. Such aspect is an alert on how social theories should be used in critical marketing research by adopting conceptual care linked to ontological alignment.

The Foucauldian method can be used in future research focused on investigating the proper conditions to produce epistemes in marketing theory. In line with that, Tadajewski (2011; 2016) indicates the use of the Foucauldian lens to understanding how philosophical theories can be evoked or associated with cultural consumption practices enables the mobilization and possible expansion of themes and phenomena investigated by the CCT.

Authors' contributions

Contribution	Souza-Leão, A.L.M.	Moura, B.M.
Conceptualization	X	X
Methodology	X	X
Software	--	--
Validation	X	--
Formal analysis	--	X
Investigation	X	X
Resources	X	--
Data Curation	X	X
Writing - Original Draft	--	X
Writing - Review & Editing	X	--
Visualization	X	X
Supervision	X	--
Project administration	X	--
Funding acquisition	X	--

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ADOÇÃO CONTÍNUA DA ASSEMBLAGE THEORY NA CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY[1]

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Objetivo: O objetivo do presente estudo é investigar como a *Consumer Culture Theory* (CCT) adota a *Assemblage Theory* como base para produzir conhecimento na pesquisa do consumidor, a partir de um arquivo de artigos publicados nos principais periódicos de marketing.

Metodologia: A Arqueologia Foucaultiana foi a metodologia de pesquisa escolhida, pois permite compreender como determinadas epistemes são constituídas de forma sócio-histórica ao longo do tempo, por meio de regularidades discursivas. Os artigos aderentes ao campo da CCT, que adotaram a *Assemblage Theory*, foram analisados com base nessa metodologia.

Resultados: As análises evidenciaram que a *Assemblage Theory* é uma opção contundente para fundamentar a pesquisa CCT, por sua ligação com outras teorias e por ser uma forma de investigar fenômenos da cultura de consumo. Além disso, está alinhado com um fenômeno central no campo. Esses fatores fundamentam duas posições discursivas que sustentam a *Assemblage Theory*, seja como uma abordagem externa útil para estudos da CCT ou como uma nova teoria naturalizada neste campo de pesquisa.

Contribuições teóricas: O estudo apresenta uma compreensão aprofundada sobre a adoção em curso de uma teoria emergente no campo da CCT; isso foi possível devido à adoção de uma abordagem metodológica de base epistêmica. Implicações e *insights* para uma agenda de pesquisa são apresentados.

Contribuições práticas: O uso da Arqueologia Foucaultiana forneceu uma visão epistêmica sobre a adoção da *Assemblage Theory* no campo da CCT. Assim, a pesquisa atual fornece as bases para se pensar sobre aplicações e potencial consolidação dessa teoria no campo de pesquisa da CCT.

Palavras-chave: *Assemblage Theory*. *Consumer Culture Theory*. Cultura como redes distribuídas. Arqueologia Foucaultiana. Episteme.

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[1] Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq).

Introdução

As mudanças na forma como as sociedades modernas lidam com o consumo levaram a uma melhor compreensão de que vivemos em uma sociedade de consumo (Bardhi *et al.*, 2012; Baudrillard, 2016). Essa afirmação implica que muitos fenômenos contemporâneos podem ser expressos por meio de práticas culturais de consumo (Figueiredo & Uncles, 2014; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). Tal cenário levou o campo de pesquisa do consumidor a considerar que os fenômenos do consumo são direcionados culturalmente, resultando no estabelecimento do que se denominou *Consumer Culture Theory* (CCT). Essa abordagem se fundamenta, principalmente, no paradigma interpretativo, em que o consumo é entendido como uma prática intrinsecamente social e cultural (Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Woermann, 2018). Assumidamente, os consumidores respondem pela produção da cultura a que pertencem, que é criada por meio de sua interação com ela (Berge 2017; Hartmann & Ostberg, 2012).

Desde sua proposição como perspectiva alternativa aos estudos de pesquisa do consumidor, a CCT tem sido associada a conceitos teóricos abordados em outros campos das ciências sociais (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; 2007; Jantzen *et al.*, 2012). Esse fator levou Holt (2017) a pensar que o uso de altas teorias sociais para que pesquisadores interpretem as relações e práticas de consumo por meio de lentes críticas – capazes de indicar como os fenômenos de mercado se expandem para práticas sociais mais amplas – pode ser uma das alternativas utilizadas para expandir esse campo.

Assim, Arnould e Thompson (2005) propuseram o rótulo CCT com base em estudos que remontam à década de 1980. As publicações seminais dos autores (ver Arnould & Thompson, 2005; 2007) não apenas batizaram um campo de estudos emergente, mas também propõem caminhos temáticos de pesquisa, bem como orientações teóricas, epistemológicas e metodológicas, fazendo uma análise retroativa de um *corpus* bibliográfico. Desde a sua criação, a CCT tanto se estabeleceu e se legitimou como um campo autônomo na pesquisa do consumidor (Jantzen *et al.*, 2012), quanto formou uma comunidade de pesquisa que lida com seu próprio perfil intelectual, retórico e político (Askegaard & Linet, 2011; Bode & Østergaard, 2013; Thompson *et al.*, 2013).

Inicialmente, os estudos da CCT tendiam a analisar a cultura a partir de como o indivíduo lida com os aspectos simbólicos do consumo (Askegaard & Linet, 2011); esse ponto de vista provavelmente estava fundamentado no comportamento tradicional do consumidor (Jantzen *et al.*, 2012). No entanto, essa perspectiva mudou, uma vez que Arnould e Thompson (2015) voltaram ao seu trabalho seminal uma década depois e sugeriram que as pesquisas da

CCT adotassem o conceito ontológico de cultura como redes distribuídas. Essa proposta recente à CCT mostra que ela está em claro processo de constituição própria como campo de pesquisa. Portanto, entender como seus arranjos e configurações teóricas estão se estabelecendo parece ser um trabalho importante a ser feito.

Além disso, quando Arnould e Thompson (2015) revisitaram seu trabalho seminal para conjecturar perspectivas futuras para o campo de investigação, indicaram que as práticas de consumo se apresentam cada vez mais como passíveis de organizar várias agências heterogêneas no que denominam de cultura como rede distribuída. Com base nesse entendimento, diferentes atores de mercado interagem entre si em redes complexas que agregam e convergem singularidades (Huff *et al.*, 2021; Preece *et al.*, 2019); esse comportamento tem sido comumente tratado como agenciamento dos consumidores e agenciamentos de mercado, que, por sua vez, são apropriações do campo da *Assemblage Theory* (Fuentes & Samsioe, 2021; Stigzelius *et al.*, 2018).

No que diz respeito ao conceito de cultura como redes distribuídas, a compreensão dos significados culturais leva em consideração a dependência mútua das ações realizadas por múltiplos atores de mercado (Giesler & Veresiu, 2014; Saatcioglu & Corus, 2019). Essas ações revelam até que ponto as culturas são dinâmicas e como os arranjos culturais são caracterizados pelo agenciamento de seus membros (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015). O conceito de agenciamento na CCT tem sido comumente abordado de acordo com a *Assemblage Theory*, que foi originalmente concebida por Deleuze e Guattari (1987) e posteriormente adaptada às ciências sociais por DeLanda (2006). *Assemblages* – ou arranjos – são sistemas cujos diversos componentes humanos e não humanos interagem uns com os outros, em diferentes lugares e sob diferentes condições para negociar e influenciar os arranjos que lhes conectam (DeLanda, 2006; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

Assim, a *Assemblage Theory* traz para a CCT a premissa de que as ações dos indivíduos sociais não devem ser dissociadas daquelas com as quais interagem. Ambos pertencem a esses arranjos, que resultam de suas competências e responsabilidades (Arnould & Thompson, 2015; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015). No entanto, novos componentes podem surgir e os antigos podem ser adaptados, pois os membros dos arranjos não são fixos. Esse processo gera novas relações não lineares e segue uma ordem rizomática (Castilhos *et al.*, 2017; Thompson, 2019).

Com isso, o objetivo da presente pesquisa é investigar como a CCT adota a *Assemblage Theory* como base para produzir conhecimento na pesquisa do consumidor. Nesse sentido, utilizamos a Arqueologia Foucaultiana como método de pesquisa, uma vez que ela permite se

compreender melhor como determinadas epistemes são constituídas socio-historicamente ao longo do tempo, por meio de regularidades discursivas. Essa escolha foi baseada no objetivo do presente estudo de compreender melhor a(s) episteme(s) associada(s) ao uso, apropriação e referência da *Assemblage Theory* pela pesquisa interpretativa de marketing – como é o caso da CCT.

Nesse ponto, a pesquisa segue o entendimento de Thompson (2019) sobre o modo como as teorias sociais têm sido utilizadas por esse campo para interpretar ontologias dispostas em práticas de consumo, bem como para produzir epistemes a partir de tal combinação. Assim, o estudo justifica-se pela crescente adoção da *Assemblage Theory* para responder a questões investigativas e por sua adequação para fundamentar o conceito de cultura como uma rede distribuída (ver Arnould & Thompson, 2015). Também reflete a proposição de Tadajewski (2014) de expandir a teoria do marketing a partir de investigações e registros de padrões de pensamento existentes, como é o caso dos estudos da CCT (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Thompson *et al.*, 2013).

Além disso, entender como altas teorias sociais (e.g., Foucaultiana, Butleriana, *Assemblage Theory*) têm sido adotadas pela CCT para substanciar seu processo de produção de conhecimento é uma das formas de possibilitar o crescimento contínuo de estudos que assumem o consumo como prática cultural e significativo (Arnould & Thompson, 2015; Holt, 2017; Thompson, 2017).

Assemblage Theory na *Consumer Culture Theory*

A *Assemblage Theory* aborda como as classificações culturais fluidas e heterogêneas dependem de formações culturais e ontológicas, cujos atores têm suas próprias particularidades e autonomia e, ainda assim, se alinham de acordo com os interesses individuais e coletivos que os unem (DeLanda, 2006; Latour, 2005). Juntamente com a *Assemblage Theory*, essa perspectiva conta com a contribuição de outras teorias, como a *Actor-Network Theory* (Callon, 1986; Latour, 2005), *Practice Theory* (Warde, 2005) e Estudos de Governança (Bonsu & Darmody, 2008).

A contribuição da *Assemblage Theory* para a CCT reside na sua capacidade de permitir um melhor entendimento sobre como elementos heterogêneos podem permanecer juntos sem formar um todo coerente (Allen, 2011; Arnould & Thompson, 2015). Ela enriquece trabalhos que abordam o significado de discursos, tecnologias e comportamentos para os consumidores,

concentrando-se em arranjos socio-materiais fragmentados e mutáveis (Woermann, 2017). Essa teoria tem sido utilizada em trabalhos que buscam compreender a formação e manutenção de identidades por meio do consumo (Barnhart & Peñaloza, 2013; Epp & Price, 2010; Epp *et al.*, 2014), bem como a configuração e importância das comunidades de consumidores (Canniford & Bajde, 2016; Thomas *et al.*, 2013; Woermann, 2017), a relação entre publicidade, marcas e consumidores (Bjerrisgaard *et al.*, 2013, Giesler, 2012), entre outros.

A *Assemblage Theory* define arranjos como a conjunção de objetos, indivíduos e dispositivos que trabalham juntos; portanto, esse processo permite que eles alcancem habilidades que não alcançariam sozinhos (Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017). Assim, essa teoria permite aos pesquisadores observar como diferentes elementos humanos ou não humanos interagem entre si com base em sua função em um agenciamento e nas contradições estratégicas dos fenômenos sociais (e.g., consumo) adotados para intensificar ou diminuir as tensões inerentes às interações analisadas. Mais que isso, permite investigar como diferentes elementos se alinham diante de distintas contingências e como moldam seus significados e efeitos contextualizados. Esses fatores, por sua vez, forçam mudanças nas relações existentes à medida que surgem diferentes elementos e agenciamentos (Canniford & Bajde, 2016; Woermann, 2017).

Com base em Deleuze e Guattari (1987) e DeLanda (2006), a CCT incorporou principalmente duas perspectivas da *Assemblage Theory*. A *Assemblage Theory* de Deleuze e Guattari é caracterizada basicamente por estruturas rizomáticas substanciadas por relações de poder que se cruzam e se ramificam sem imposição hierárquica de cima para baixo. Essas estruturas são alinhamentos contingentes de atores humanos e não humanos que oferecem formas de ordenar a vida social dentro de cadeias de poder que legitimam e normalizam certas ações, identidades e práticas. Por outro lado, bloqueiam, proíbem ou estigmatizam outras cadeias de poder (Huff *et al.*, 2021; Pridmore & Zwick, 2013).

Deleuze e Guattari (1987) apontam como os agenciamentos fornecem linhas de estratificação capazes de perpetuar relações de poder e oportunizam interromper e potencializar tais linhas em práticas rizomáticas de resistência que podem desafiá-las. Portanto, os conceitos de Deleuze e Guattari são lentes teóricas frutíferas para estudos que veem o consumo como prática cultural fluida, capaz de territorializar, desterritorializar e, provavelmente, reterritorializar agenciamentos de consumo (Carrigton & Ozanne, 2022; Kozinets *et al.*, 2017). Essa abordagem toma o mercado como uma rede de agenciamentos estabilizados, suscetíveis a serem desestabilizados. Assim, valores simbólicos e padrões de troca compartilhados por novos

atores do mercado – humanos ou não – são incorporados nessa rede e sua dinâmica pode institucionalizar ou subverter as normas de consumo (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Epp *et al.*, 2014; Huff *et al.*, 2021).

Adicionalmente, a abordagem de DeLanda tem sido reconhecida entre os estudos de marketing por reelaborar os conceitos de Deleuze e Guattari. DeLanda (2016) se concentra nas discussões sobre como a rede de conectividade da sociedade moderna permite que indivíduos, objetos e produtos – originalmente não relacionados entre si – trabalhem juntos por meio de interações contínuas em um agenciamento mútuo. Tais interações levam a novas possibilidades que têm potencial de expansão para atingir membros humanos e não humanos de diferentes agenciamentos e suas ações, dada a forma como estão ligados uns aos outros. A ideia de arranjos socio-materiais de DeLanda explica como os consumidores e outros atores de mercado se engajam no momento de estabelecer conexões entre um determinado ambiente de mercado (e.g., online) e suas práticas materiais (Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Novak, 2020; Schöps *et al.*, 2020). Além disso, componentes e partes de um arranjo podem ser separados dele ou se tornar um novo arranjo, ou mesmo se integrarem a um já existente. No entanto, as interações nesses outros arranjos nunca serão aquelas feitas por meio dos agenciamentos originais, pelo simples fato de serem em si diferentes arranjos socio-materiais (Diaz Ruiz *et al.*, 2020; Preece *et al.*, 2019).

Ambas as perspectivas revelam como cada membro de um arranjo incorpora responsabilidades estabelecidas pela coletividade (Huff *et al.*, 2021; Scaraboto, 2015; Schöps *et al.*, 2020). A *Assemblage Theory* oferece aos pesquisadores da CCT a possibilidade de investigar as linhas de estratificação pelas quais as relações de poder, resistência e reagrupamento são alcançadas por meio do consumo (Arnould & Thompson, 2015; Hoffman & Novak, 2018). Esse processo ocorre nos arranjos por meio de interações entre seus componentes, entre um componente e o arranjo do qual faz parte e até mesmo entre múltiplos arranjos (Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017). Assim, apesar de muito esclarecedores, os estudos anteriores não visam especificamente explorar o potencial da *Assemblage Theory* ou como seu uso é capaz de institucionalizar discursos sobre a produção de conhecimento no campo da CCT.

Com relação a essa lacuna potencial, concordamos com Dolbec *et al.* (2021), segundo quem a *Assemblage Theory* trabalha para estudos de marketing em duas frentes diferentes. Por um lado, combinar teorias estabelecidas com outras teorias próximas (e.g., conceitualmente, epistemologicamente) expande as interpretações da pesquisa e seu potencial de contribuição teórica. Por outro lado, combinar políticas, práticas e/ou metodologias de pesquisa com teorias

requer projetos de pesquisa críticos e bem delineados, capazes de produzir avanços no conhecimento.

Belk e Sobh (2019) apontam o quão prejudicial pode ser tanto a adoção quanto o provável descarte de teorias importadas de outros campos. Por um lado, a adoção de uma nova teoria está ligada apenas a um certo fascínio inócuo e/ou a *insights* que exigem pouco esforço reflexivo; entretanto, por outro lado, rejeitar uma nova teoria pode privar um determinado campo de conhecimento de novas e poderosas perspectivas. Ambos os lados refletem como a CCT continua sendo um oxímoro que exige que os pesquisadores avaliem teorias baseadas em consistências epistêmicas no momento de adotá-las. Consequentemente, é essencial explorar os fundamentos epistêmicos de diferentes teorias para integrá-los na hora de interpretar fenômenos de consumo, como visto em pesquisas que se focam no tratamento de Big Data, apenas para citar uma tendência recente em ambientes de consumo online.

Portanto, compreender as condições epistêmicas produtoras de conhecimento na pesquisa do consumidor por meio da *Assemblage Theory* contribui para o campo da CCT. Nesse sentido, nosso estudo assume que a lógica de *assemblage* indica como os consumidores podem criar arranjos de recursos de marketing para representar a coletividade e os indivíduos neles, uma vez que o campo da CCT tende a retratar os consumidores como corresponsáveis pela agência que os orienta (Arnould & Thompson, 2015; Hoffman & Novak, 2018).

Procedimentos metodológicos

Tendo em vista o objetivo da presente pesquisa, investigamos um método capaz de revelar as condições de produção de conhecimento em um determinado domínio. A Arqueologia Foucaultiana atende a esse propósito, pois revela formações epistemológicas baseadas na aplicação da análise de discurso a dados documentais (Thompson, 2017). Nesse sentido, essa metodologia é uma ferramenta analítica que permite aos estudos de marketing "cavar" regularidades discursivas para identificar como certas epistemes são produzidas (Denegri-Knott *et al.*, 2018; Tadajewski, 2011).

A arqueologia é o método desenvolvido por Michel Foucault para fundamentar suas investigações filosóficas sobre a construção do conhecimento (Tadajewski, 2011; 2016). Nesse sentido, o propósito da Arqueologia não é produzir teorias, mas possibilitar a compreensão da constituição sócio-histórica das epistemes por meio de discursos que as substanciam ao longo de um determinado período, em um determinado campo de conhecimento (Thompson, 2017).

Segundo Deleuze (1988), a metodologia arqueológica de Foucault permite observar multiplicidades discursivas que não se limitam a indicar o conhecimento por trás do fenômeno investigado, mas como ele é evocado nas práticas discursivas e, principalmente, os conceitos epistemológicos utilizados para propagar tal conhecimento. De acordo com Tadajewski (2011; 2016), a órbita epistemológica foucaultiana permite observar como a produção do conhecimento está fortemente ligada ao poder.

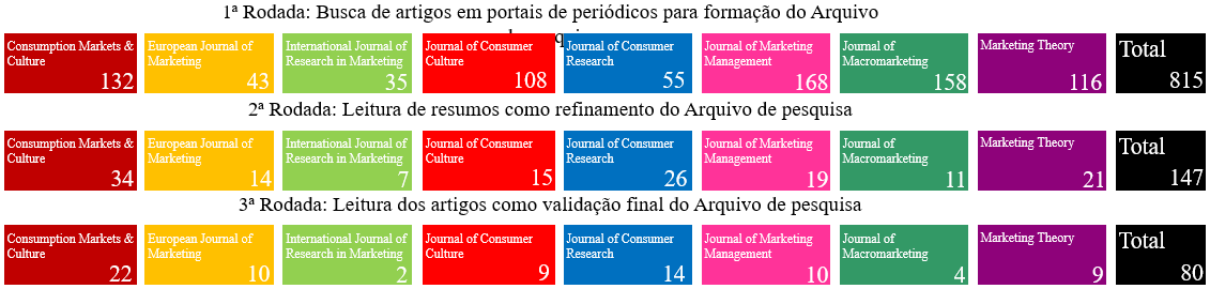
Portanto, a Arqueologia Foucaultiana é uma perspectiva metodológica que atende ao objetivo do presente estudo, bem como compartilha de sua ontologia. As proposições de Foucault (2002) foram aqui adotadas para a elaboração de um arquivo a ser investigado. Arquivo é o termo foucaultiano aplicado ao procedimento de coleta de dados utilizado em uma investigação. O arquivo é estabelecido tanto por um evento que significa novidade ou ruptura no fenômeno investigado, quanto pelos processos que estabelecem uma certa regularidade discursiva ao que se está investigando.

O Arquivo da presente pesquisa foi composto por 80 artigos coletados de periódicos de Marketing classificados como Q1 e Q2, de acordo com o *SCImago Journal Ranks* (indicador SJR). Essa plataforma produz uma medida de fator de impacto de influência científica, que é adotada como critério para selecionar revistas acadêmicas em rankings que levam em consideração a quantidade e a qualidade das citações em outras publicações acadêmicas (Mañana-Rodríguez, 2015; Sota *et al.*, 2018). Os periódicos são organizados em quatro estratos; assim, os classificados na metade superior (i.e., Q1 e Q2) foram levados em consideração para fins de análise.

A coleta de dados se deu a partir da busca pela palavra-chave – em inglês – "*assemblage*", que resultou em 815 artigos (1ª rodada). Os resumos dos artigos selecionados foram avaliados para identificar aqueles abordados como estudos CCT; assim, o número de artigos selecionados caiu para 147 (2ª rodada). Os artigos sobressalentes foram, então, lidos para possibilitar a seleção final daqueles vinculados à *Assemblage Theory*, pois muitos deles simplesmente utilizavam o termo de maneira ordinária (3ª rodada). As informações do arquivo e as rodadas de coleta de dados são ilustradas na Figura 1.

Figura 1

Rodadas de Coleta de Dados e Composição do Arquivo de Pesquisa a Partir dos Periódicos de Marketing



Aqui, é válido ressaltar que a opção pelo uso de periódicos de Marketing na presente investigação se deu pelo fato de a CCT ser uma subdisciplina dentro do campo de pesquisa do consumidor (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Askegaard, 2015). Logo, embora a CCT se beneficie de estudos produzidos em outras áreas do conhecimento (e.g., antropologia, sociologia, gestão e negócios), esse critério estabeleceu consistência de seleção para a coleta de dados.

A análise ocorreu de acordo com as categorias analíticas da metodologia, interrelacionadas por meio de fundamentos em diferentes níveis de significação (Foucault, 2002).

Inferência dos enunciados e suas relações. Os enunciados são as unidades de significado mais básicos na Arqueologia Foucaultiana. Encontram-se nos signos da linguagem, mas não podem ser reduzidos a tais signos, pois repousam em seu contexto pragmático. Isso acontece porque os enunciados se referem a tópicos concretos que podem ser localizados em determinado tempo e espaço; eles carregam uma certa regularidade da qual não podem ser dissociados. Enunciados são inferidos se analisando todo o arquivo, buscando conexões entre os significados existentes entre os textos. Diferentes enunciados, por sua vez, podem estar relacionados entre si, pois seus significados podem ter pontos de conexão ou sobreposições.

Definição das funções enunciativas. Enunciados são instâncias discursivas entendidas como ações sobre o que dizem respeito; assim, dão conta de certas funções no discurso. Essas funções resultam da interligação entre quatro critérios. Os referenciais indicam os conteúdos e as relações que os depoimentos elucidam ou negam. Limitam-se a um campo associado, o que significa um espaço de conhecimento que dá sentido aos enunciados e às suas relações. Isso delimita as posições de sujeito, que são os lugares sociais de onde o discurso é enunciado. Essas posições são ocupadas por qualquer indivíduo capaz de produzir enunciados específicos e esse

processo permite a existência material dos enunciados, o que significa ser utilizado para produzi-los e repeti-los.

Definição das regras de formação. As regras de formação são diretrizes estabelecidas por enunciados para formações discursivas. Eles derivam de quatro critérios análogos aos das funções enunciativas. Objetos são particularidades e delimitações observadas nos referenciais dos enunciados; repousam em conceitos que representam tipos de sucessão, coexistência e intervenção observados nos campos associados. Isso acontece por meio de modalidades, que são determinados estilos utilizados pelos sujeitos que enunciam, devido ao seu *status*, localização e situação. Esse processo revela estratégias, ou seja, significam conceitos estabelecidos por meio da materialidade do enunciado.

Determinação das formações discursivas. As formações discursivas são significações gerais do conjunto discursivo observado no arquivo. Elas se estabelecem no tempo e no espaço sintetizando regularidades em um dado momento, sob certas condições epistêmicas. As formações discursivas derivam da convergência entre enunciados e suas funções e regras de formação. Conjuntos de relacionamentos dentro dessas categorias direcionam diretrizes e padrões para formações discursivas.

Resultados e discussão

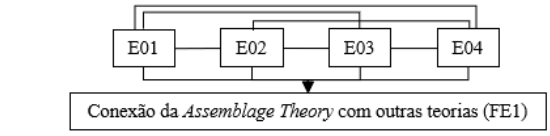
As formações discursivas identificadas são apresentadas a seguir com base no conjunto de relações de seus elementos constitutivos, a partir da descrição e discussão dos enunciados.

Conexão da *Assemblage Theory* com outras teorias

Os primeiros quatro enunciados (E01-E04) compartilham a mesma função, a saber: defendem a viabilidade tanto da *Assemblage Theory* quanto de seus conceitos em estudos de CCT levando em consideração outras teorias (FE1) (ver Fig.2). Esse processo se dá por meio da comparação (referencial), em um campo (associado) interdisciplinar que engloba as particularidades e aproximações das abordagens (e.g., teóricas, epistemológicas) e sua relevância para a área. Autores que trabalham com essa abordagem avaliativa se tornam especialistas (sujeito) capazes de atestar (materialidade) a compatibilidade e aplicabilidade da *Assemblage Theory* em estudos de CCT.

Figura 2

Enunciados e Critérios da FE1



E01 - CCT combina conceitos da *Assemblage Theory* com altas teorias sociais
E02 - CCT compara Assemblage Theory e *Practice Theory*
E03 - CCT associa *Assemblage Theory* e *Actor-Network Theory*
E04 - CCT complementa *Assemblage Theory* com a *Non-Representional Theory*

Referencial	Campo associado	Sujeito	Materialidade
Comparação	Interdisciplinaridade	Especialistas	Atestação

Os estudos da CCT podem recorrer à *Assemblage Theory* – ou a seus conceitos – **a partir da associação com perspectivas de altas teorias sociais** (E01) desenvolvidas por outros estudiosos emblemáticos (Cohen, 2020; Lanier & Rader, 2016; Scaraboto, 2015; Thompson, 2019). As interações entre os atores que formam os agenciamentos de marketing são interpretadas como performances de atores humanos visando elaborar representações de si mesmos a partir das contribuições de Erving Goffman (Belk & Sobh, 2019; Cohen, 2020; McCabe *et al.*, 2020; Šimůnková, 2019). Ao expandir essas performances em arranjos capazes de viabilizar as performatividades propostas por Judith Butler, os agenciamentos de mercado produzem as condições para que atores humanos ou não humanos se influenciem mutuamente (McCabe *et al.*, 2020; Scaraboto, 2015; Schöps *et al.*, 2020). Estudos baseados nas proposições de Michel Foucault sobre as relações de poder no contexto de mercado interpretam que arranjos produzem múltiplos agenciamentos em diferentes instâncias, bem como que tal multiplicidade é capaz de desterritorializar e/ou desestabilizar diferentes formas de governo ou exercícios de poder que governam a estruturas sociais (Beckett, 2012; Bhattacharyya & Belk, 2019; Cronin *et al.*, 2015; Hawkins, 2021; Langely, 2014; Lanier & Rader, 2016; Nøjgaard & Bajde, 2021; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Thompson, 2019; Zwick *et al.*, 2008). Ainda, alguns estudiosos acreditam que o processo de desindividualização produzido pela influência das agências mútuas corresponde ao conceito de desconstrução de Jacques Derrida (Huff *et al.*, 2021; Lanier & Rader, 2016; Schöps *et al.*, 2020; Šimůnková, 2019).

Cohen (2020) investiga como agenciamentos em processos de produção coletiva são afetados e moldados pela convergência de múltiplos públicos de performances de consumo. De acordo com Schöps *et al.* (2020), a *Assemblage Theory* ajuda a compreender melhor a forma como os consumidores materializam e expressam um trabalho de visibilidade, o que corresponde ao conceito butleriano de performatividade. Com base em Langely (2014), as práticas de consumo estimulam agenciamentos contemporâneos que muitas vezes são disciplinados ou controlados por formas de governo de mercado que evocam conceitos

foucaultianos e deleuzianos, respectivamente.

Isso se assemelha ao entendimento de Thompson (2019), que sugere que as análises de agenciamentos de mercado equivalem às análises de relações de poder há muito discutidas por estudos de campo baseados em conceitos foucaultianos. Por fim, Lanier e Rader (2016) enfatizam que os agenciamentos funcionam como a desconstrução derrideana de estruturas anteriores – de mercado – ao subverter múltiplas agências.

A ***Assemblage Theory* é comparada à *Practice Theory*** (E02) trata de como a reunião de diferentes características de situações sociais significativas pode resultar em práticas sociais. Identificamos vários trabalhos (Bjerrisgaard *et al.*, 2013; Hagberg, 2016; Hartmann & Ostberg, 2012; Murphy & Patterson, 2011; Sandikci & Kravets, 2019; Welch, 2020; Woermann, 2017; 2018) apontando para dimensões de significados sociais e ordem, como entidades materiais que levam a restrições e recursos, a corpos treinados e qualificados, a humores e emoções pessoais e a regras sociais explícitas e implícitas que são amplamente compartilhadas em entendimentos sobre o mundo social. Essas dimensões se referem a interações em agenciamentos (*Assemblage Theory*) e a práticas individuais (*Practice Theory*).

Sandikci e Kravets (2019) argumentam que existe a tendência de combinar teorias próximas na CCT, entre elas se encontram a *Assemblage Theory* e a *Practice Theory*. Essas duas teorias fornecem um novo olhar de mercado para esse campo de estudos, pois ampliam a compreensão sobre como os *insights*, relacionamentos e práticas são criados e mantidos. Woermann (2018) aponta que, apesar de usar vocabulários rivais, a *Assemblage Theory* e a *Practice Theory* são baseadas em pressupostos quase idênticos. Com base em ambas as teorias, a interação social resulta em uma situação única que impulsiona a criação e o exercício de práticas de consumo. Elas são o contexto de um contexto e tomam a sociedade contemporânea como o produto histórico e global de valores e normas culturais.

O autor (Woermann, 2018) sugere que essas teorias permaneçam como abordagens separadas na pesquisa do consumidor por razões políticas, e não por substâncias teóricas, uma vez que suas particularidades se tornam mais visíveis quando suas semelhanças são levadas em consideração. A origem de ambas as teorias está em cuidadosas análises etnográficas focadas em estruturas de produção ou em processos sociais que não podem ser redutíveis a ações humanas. Embora os fundamentos ontológicos de ambas as teorias defendam que as situações locais são manifestações sociais únicas, a *Assemblage Theory* aponta que tal processo ocorre devido aos agenciamentos, enquanto a *Practice Theory* defende que se trata de se reunir práticas. A singularidade de cada teoria persiste devido a essa diferença entre elas.

A ***Assemblage Theory*** – ou sua lógica e conceitos – **se relaciona com a *Actor-Network Theory*** (E03), a fim de observar a capacidade de ambas as teorias explicarem agenciamentos e agenciamentos de mercado (Belk & Sobh, 2019; Hartmann & Ostberg, 2012; Woermann, 2018). Ao levar em consideração o conceito de agenciamento de Deleuze e Guattari (1987), a ANT, originalmente proposta por Latour (2005), afirma que as ações dos agentes sociais estão interligadas em uma rede.

Alguns autores consideram a ANT suficiente para lidar com arranjos ou agenciamentos de mercado em CCT (Bajde, 2013; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; Hawkins, 2021; Lanier & Rader, 2016; Leggett, 2020; McCabe *et al.*, 2020; Nøjgaard & Bajde, 2021; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Scott *et al.*, 2014; Strengers *et al.*, 2016). Outros autores entendem que ambas as teorias são igualmente válidas para tal propósito (Figueiredo *et al.*, 2016; Hartmann & Ostberg, 2012; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Lugosi & Quinton, 2018; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016; Saatcioglu & Corus, 2019). Há os que acreditam que a CCT se beneficiaria do uso combinado delas (Barnhart & Peñaloza, 2013; Belk & Sobh, 2019; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Diaz Ruiz *et al.*, 2020; Hill *et al.*, 2014; Smaniotto *et al.*, 2020) e há autores que consideram a *Assemblage Theory* ainda mais apropriada que a ANT para investigar arranjos ou agenciamentos de mercado em estudos de CCT (Huff *et al.*, 2021; Thompson, 2019; Woermann, 2017; 2018).

Rokka e Canniford (2016) defendem a supremacia da ANT sobre a *Assemblage Theory* quando mencionam a lógica de arranjos existente, o que explica a coexistência de elementos heterogêneos por meio de agenciamentos. No entanto, consideram que as relações estabelecidas por meio do consumo são bem explicadas pela conectividade que relaciona diferentes atores ou componentes de mercado com base nas definições de Latour (2005). Segundo Woermann (2017), esse é um argumento preocupante, pois essas teorias sugerem que (respectivamente) agenciamentos e atores dentro das redes se manifestam em qualquer situação social que envolva as práticas dos indivíduos.

A *Assemblage Theory* aborda características e processos dos membros de uma rede, enquanto a ANT foca nas relações de atores humanos e não-humanos. Apesar de trilharem caminhos diferentes, ambas as teorias apresentam agenciamentos como a possibilidade de compreender as relações sociais estabelecidas por meio do consumo (Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Thompson, 2019). Hoffman e Novak (2018) chegam a considerar que a ANT ignora as fronteiras existentes nas redes e argumentam que a *Assemblage Theory* reconhece tais limites, sejam eles físicos, temporais ou afetivos. Assim, a *Assemblage Theory* pode ser considerada

tão adequada quanto a ANT para estudos de CCT; elas podem ser usadas em separado ou combinadas entre si.

Hill *et al.* (2014) argumentam que, assim como a ANT, a ***Non-Representional Theory* (NRT) pode ser utilizada para completar a *Assemblage Theory*** (E04). Esse argumento se baseia no entendimento de que a NRT está mais próxima do mercado; ainda assim, não é tão ampla quanto a *Assemblage Theory* (Canniford *et al.*, 2018; Cheetham *et al.*, 2018; Scott *et al.*, 2014). Essa afirmação reforça a hipótese de que a *Assemblage Theory* pode ser adotada para recriar o mercado ou o conhecimento de consumo, institucionalizando conceitos e relatos textuais, enquanto a NRT pode gerar conhecimento propondo e inventando novas formas de projetar objetos-investigação (Canniford *et al.*, 2018; Hill *et al.*, 2014).

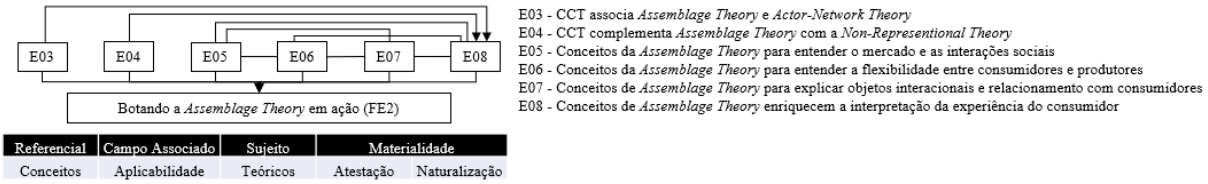
Scott *et al.* (2014) consideram que a materialidade é a força modeladora de ambas as teorias, seja no que se refere à topografia das interações sociais, seja ao modo como as pessoas pensam e atribuem significados; portanto, seu uso combinado faz todo o sentido. Hill *et al.* (2014) apontam que o sentido de representação é tomado como um processo sincrônico em que consumidores e estruturas sociais reproduzem mutuamente suas próprias características. Eles sugerem que a NRT completa a *Assemblage Theory* para investigar agenciamentos baseados em uma nova gama de possibilidades sensoriais do consumidor. Isso explica por que a NRT tem sido usada em estudos focados em agenciamentos observados nas experiências dos consumidores (Cheetham *et al.*, 2018; Hill *et al.*, 2014).

Colocando a *Assemblage Theory* em ação

Uma segunda função enunciativa foi identificada entre E04 e E08 (ver Fig. 3). Ela revela a necessidade de se demonstrar como a lógica da *Assemblage Theory* funciona nos estudos da CCT (FE2) evidenciando como seus conceitos (referenciais) têm aplicabilidade (campo associado) e auxiliam na compreensão das relações estabelecidas nas práticas da cultura de consumo. Esses autores atuaram como teóricos (sujeito) que atestam e naturalizam (materialidades) a adoção da *Assemblage Theory* – ou sua lógica – na CCT.

Figura 3

Enunciados e Critérios da FE2



Muitos estudos (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015; Bettany & Kerrane, 2016; Bhattacharyya & Belk, 2019; Brodie *et al.*, 2017; Castilhos *et al.*, 2017; Cheetham *et al.*, 2018; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; Deville, 2014; De Mello *et al.*, 2021; Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Hill *et al.*, 2014; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Lucarelli & Giovanardi, 2019; Lucarelli & Hallin, 2015; Novak, 2020; Parmentier & Fischer , 2015; Preece *et al.*, 2019; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019; Scott *et al.*, 2014; Šimůnková, 2019; Stigzelius, 2018; Stigzelius *et al.*, 2018; Thomas *et al.*, 2013; Thompson & Kumar, 2021; Türe & Ger, 2016; Woermann, 2017) sugerem que **entender o mercado e as interações sociais por meio do conceito da *Assemblage Theory*** (E05) é essencial. Os membros de um arranjo interagem uns com os outros de forma semelhante às interações sociais e de mercado (Hill *et al.*, 2014). A presença ou ausência de membros tem influência direta no arranjo de agenciamentos, assim como acontece nas interações sociais e de mercado (D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; Stigzelius, 2018; Stigzelius *et al.*, 2018).

As interações de consumo, em particular, destacam a possibilidade de melhorar as habilidades ou mudar a perspectiva dos membros de uma comunidade. Tais melhorias e mudanças decorrem das interações na comunidade e com a própria comunidade, fato que caracteriza um agenciamento (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014). Deville (2014) considera que os conceitos da *Assemblage Theory* trazem a possibilidade de antecipar ações futuras realizadas por grupos de indivíduos para a CCT. Hoffman e Novak (2018) apontam que as interações sociais e de mercado são problematizadas e remontadas a partir do pressuposto de que atores heterogêneos influenciam o consumo. Eles explicam que os componentes das interações sociais e de mercado desempenham papéis materiais (i.e., estruturais, infra estruturais, mecânicos, operacionais ou funcionais) ou expressivos (e.g., transmitindo significado). A sinergia de um agenciamento sedimenta as práticas de consumo, bem como faz com que os atores sociais e de mercado compreendam seus papéis e sua importância nas interações (Thomas *et al.*, 2013).

Os **conceitos da *Assemblage Theory*** também **permitem flexibilidade entre consumidores e produtores** (E06) (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015; Beckett, 2012; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Hill *et al.*, 2014; Huff *et al.*, 2021; Lucarelli & Hallin, 2015; Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Roberts & Cremin, 2019; Ryder, 2022; Scaraboto, 2015; Shi *et al.*, 2021; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009). Os arranjos mercadológicos são compostos por atores heterogêneos (Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Ryder, 2022). Scaraboto (2015) argumenta que a heterogeneidade dos membros destes arranjos (i.e., pessoas, sistemas técnicos, materiais) tende a dar flexibilidade a performatividades que normalmente não são originadas deles. Quando as funções dos membros dos arranjos são desestabilizadas, esses membros usam a flexibilidade de seus agenciamentos ao interagir uns com os outros. Esse processo permite que a dualidade de papéis nas relações de consumo se torne flexível entre produtores e consumidores (Roberts & Cremin, 2019; Scaraboto, 2015; Schöps *et al.*, 2020).

Ng e Wakenshaw (2017) sugerem que o uso contínuo de tecnologias para conectar pessoas e objetos altera os papeis de consumidores e produtores, que deixam de ser fixos e se tornam flexíveis. Eles explicam que as inúmeras possibilidades de realizar relacionamentos materiais online transformaram antigos papéis de marketing (i.e., dualidade entre produtores e consumidores) que agora são contextualizados situacionalmente. Roberts e Cremin (2019) consideram que o contato constante com a tecnologia leva os consumidores à produtividade em relação ao que consomem. Os fluxos desterritorializados são capturados e (re)territorializados por meio do consumo produtivo; assim, o conceito de agenciamento aponta que o papel dualista de produtores e consumidores não cabe mais nos estudos da CCT.

De maneira similar, os **conceitos da *Assemblage Theory* explicam como os objetos interacionais se relacionam com os consumidores** (E07) (Beckett, 2012; Bhattacharyya & Belk, 2019; Cardoso *et al.*, 2020; Cronin *et al.*, 2015; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; De Mello *et al.*, 2021; Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Lucarelli & Hallin, 2015; Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Novak, 2020; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Roberts & Cremin, 2019; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019; Schöps *et al.*, 2020; Scott *et al.*, 2014; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009). Lucarelli e Giovanardi (2019) explicam que os seres humanos interagem e se relacionam com objetos capazes de governá-los e de interferir em suas relações sociais.

Os consumidores interagem com objetos representacionais específicos (e.g., produtos de cultura popular, marcas, bens de consumo e serviços) e essas interações são importantes

tanto para o mercado quanto para o próprio arranjo (De Mello *et al.*, 2021; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Novak, 2020; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015). Por terem seus papéis mesclados no sistema de marketing, eles incorporam novas funções por meio de conectividade e relacionamentos estabelecidos em agenciamentos do arranjo (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Roberts & Cremin, 2019; Schöps *et al.*, 2020).

Por outro lado, vários artigos em nosso arquivo (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Canniford *et al.*, 2018; Cardoso *et al.*, 2020; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; De Mello *et al.*, 2021; Epp & Velagaleti , 2014; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Huff & Cotte, 2016; Kozinets, 2019; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Rose, 2020; Scott *et al.*, 2014; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019; Stevens *et al.*, 2019; Stigzelius *et al.*, 2018; Thomas *et al.*, 2013; Trees & Dean, 2018) exploraram como a **capacidade de agenciamento introduzida pela lógica da *Assemblage Theory* enriquece os estudos de experiência do consumidor** (E08). Esses estudos afirmam que as experiências de consumo resultam de itinerários culturais, geografias materiais e recursos tecnológicos, bem como que os consumidores se engajam em agenciamentos entre as interações desses elementos. Steven *et al.* (2019) afirmam que o sentido dos arranjos permite que os indivíduos vão além das experiências individuais para entender como elas acontecem no mercado e nos sistemas sociais.

O conceito de agenciamento da *Assemblage Theory* introduz como a reprodução de regras de arranjos impacta a experiência de consumo em estudos de CCT (Canniford *et al.*, 2018; Thomas *et al.*, 2013). Canniford e Shankar (2013) sugerem que o conceito de arranjos melhora o entendimento sobre a experiência do consumidor, uma vez que é parcialmente subjetivo – depende das crenças e intenções dos indivíduos –, parcialmente objetivo – é influenciado pelo contexto de agenciamento – e parcialmente relacional – refere-se aos papéis dos indivíduos que se relacionam com os outros e com o mercado. Esse conceito destaca a permeabilidade potencial do papel expressivo dos atores e seus agenciamentos, bem como do papel expressivo comunitário desenvolvido ao longo do tempo devido a experiências facilitadoras (Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019). A experiência do consumidor pode ser entendida como um conjunto de recursos em meio a grupos sociais e ambientes mercadológicos (Cardoso *et al.*, 2020; De Mello *et al.*, 2021; Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Huff & Cotte, 2016).

Scott *et al.* (2014) consideram que os arranjos das experiências de consumo resultam da constante ascensão de múltiplos recursos e do deslocamento de agenciamentos compostos por pessoas, lugares, objetos e discursos. A força modeladora observada na forma como as pessoas pensam e produzem significados são aspectos explicados, respectivamente, pela *Assemblage*

Theory e NRT. Assim, este enunciado (E08) está incidentalmente relacionado àquela que sugere uma aproximação complementar entre essas duas teorias (E04). Por outro lado, o enunciado sobre como o conceito dos arranjos influencia as relações dos atores são constituídas principalmente de artigos que definem o agenciamento com base na *Assemblage Theory* (D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; Hill *et al.*, 2014; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Scott *et al.*, 2014) embora alguns destes trabalhos façam isso combinando-a com a ANT. Esse processo torna tais afirmações incidentalmente relacionadas à abordagem que compara as duas teorias (E03).

As quatro afirmações abordadas acima estão interligadas. A heterogeneidade dos agenciamentos também permite que consumidores e produtores flexibilizem seus papéis (E06), possibilitando estarem em conformidade com as interações sociais e de mercado (E05) (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015; Hill *et al.*, 2014; Lucarelli & Hallin, 2015; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016) e entender melhor como os objetos interacionais se relacionam com os consumidores (E07) (Bhattacharyya & Belk, 2019; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Lucarelli & Hallin, 2015; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Rokka & Canniford, 2016; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019; Scott *et al.*, 2014).

A interação entre consumidores e objetos representacionais (E07) flexibiliza as relações entre consumidores e produtores (E06) fechando esse círculo (Beckett, 2012; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; De Mello *et al.*, 2021; Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Roberts & Cremin, 2019; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009). Por sua vez, as interações sociais e de mercado (E04) são mais amplas na explicação da experiência do consumidor por meio de agenciamento (E08) (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019; Thomas *et al.*, 2013), bem como ao abordar que o agenciamento da experiência dos consumidores se dá em sua relação (E07) seja com objetos representacionais (Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2019), seja com os produtores (Parmentier & Fischer, 2015).

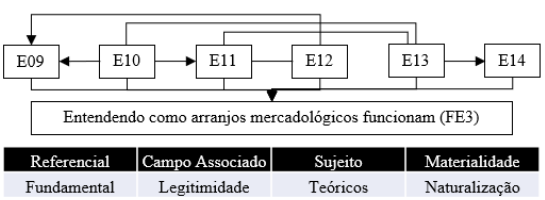
Entendendo como arranjos mercadológicos funcionam

Os seis outros enunciados, e suas inter-relações, visam evidenciar como princípios e dinâmicas entre membros regem arranjos mercadológicos (EF3) (ver Fig. 4). Mais uma vez atuando como teóricos (sujeito), os pesquisadores do CCT utilizaram os fundamentos (referencial) da *Assemblage Theory* para explicar como os membros de arranjos mercadológicos se relacionam, exercem poder e negociam verdades entre si, também definindo

as hierarquias e funções de seus agenciamentos. Essa atitude se beneficia de abordagens teóricas legitimadas (campo associado) para naturalizar (materialidade) suas contribuições aos estudos da CCT.

Figura 4

Enunciados e Critérios da EF3



E09 - Processo de territorialização estabiliza arranjos mercadológicos
E10 - Os discursos dos arranjos mercadológicos estabelecem suas fronteiras dos arranjos
E11 - Os arranjos mercadológicos podem ser regidas por seus membros internos ou externos
E12 - Valores éticos e normas sociais legitimam arranjos mercadológicos
E13 - Valores particulares dos membros dos arranjos mercadológicos produzem sua hierarquia
E14 - O ambiente social molda e é moldado por interações dos arranjos mercadológicos

O processo de territorialização estabiliza os arranjos mercadológicos (E09) (Epp & Price, 2018; Huff *et al.*, 2021; Langely, 2014; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Preece *et al.*, 2019; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Price & Epp, 2016; Shi *et al.*, 2021; Weijo *et al.*, 2018; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009). Diferentes membros dos arranjos muitas vezes compartilham os mesmos objetivos e tornam os instrumentos de agenciamento mais homogêneos (e.g., população, expressões, práticas) (Preece *et al.*, 2019; Weijo *et al.*, 2018). Um arranjo mercadológico consiste em diferentes partes e práticas que formam relações contingentes ao longo do tempo para produzir um sentido coletivo (Epp & Price, 2018; Weijo *et al.*, 2018). O processo de territorialização fortalece o arranjo ao enfraquecer sua heterogeneidade (Huff *et al.*, 2021; Preece *et al.*, 2019).

Langely (2014) indica que a desterritorialização dos arranjos significa a perda de sua finalidade original: introduz o consumidor em um arranjo distinto – como em um banco de dados de produtores, por exemplo – e os transforma em corpos dóceis a serem governados. Preece *et al.* (2019) afirmam que a abordagem da *Assemblage Theory* pode explicar práticas como a criação e manutenção de significados atribuídos a uma marca, bem como sua longevidade.

Outros estudos (Bettany & Kerrane, 2016; Cardoso *et al.*, 2020; Castilhos *et al.*, 2017; Cohen, 2020; de Waal Malefyt & McCabe, 2016; Epp & Price, 2018; Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Hagberg & Kjellberg, 2020; Hill *et al.*, 2014; Huff & Cotte, 2016; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016; Thompson, 2019) abordam como os **discursos dos arranjos mercadológicos estabelecem seus limites** (E10). A *Assemblage Theory* enfatiza que o mundo incorpora formas e significados por meio de relações dinâmicas entre fronteiras – elementos tangíveis e intangíveis, sincronicidade de atividades temporais, experiências afetivas

(Epp & Velagaleti, 2014; Huff & Cotte, 2016).

Segundo Thompson (2019), o discurso de um arranjo estabelece limites que legitimam as relações de poder entre seus membros – internos ou externos, humanos ou não humanos. Assim, para manter sua possibilidade, um arranjo deve reconhecer certos fatores, que são reais e precisam ser abordados, como antiéticos ao discurso (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019). Huff e Cotte (2016) citam a possibilidade de conceituar marcas, práticas de consumo e a relação entre consumidores e ambientes mercadológicos por meio de discursos dos arranjos ao qual são membros. As fronteiras que revelam os discursos em um arranjo mercadológico (E10) permitem a territorialização que homogeneizou seus membros (E09) (Epp & Price, 2018; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015; Presi *et al.*, 2016).

De maneira similar, os **arranjos mercadológicos podem ser governados por seus membros internos ou externos** (E11) (Beckett, 2012; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Cherrier, 2017; Fuentes & Samsioe, 2021; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Langely, 2014; Ng & Wakenshaw, 2017; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016; Thompson, 2019; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009). A *Assemblage Theory* indica que a governança – gestão e intercâmbio – pode ser realizada por membros internos ou externos dos arranjos que atuam como catalisadores para reunir e gerenciar os interesses do arranjo em si (Cherrier, 2017; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016).

Canniford e Shankar (2013) explicam que componentes internos – humanos ou não humanos – de um arranjo mercadológico podem ameaçar ou trair seu propósito original. Por sua vez, novos membros – originalmente *outsiders* – que são incorporados a um arranjo são responsáveis por manter seu propósito original (Cherrier, 2017; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016). Segundo Zwick e Denegri-Knott (2009), os consumidores são naturalmente parte dos arranjos digitais e podem ser conduzidos por outros consumidores, mas também regidos por produtores que buscam interpretar os dados fornecidos pelos membros do arranjo de que fazem parte.

Os discursos que estabelecem os limites de um arranjo mercadológico (E10) permitem que seus membros governem com base nos interesses originais do arranjo (E11) (Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Thompson, 2019). Por outro lado, a gestão de um arranjo mercadológico pelos seus membros (E12) influencia o seu processo de estabilização (E09) (Langely, 2014; Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009).

A forma como os **valores éticos e as normas sociais se articulam com os indivíduos legitima a existência de arranjos mercadológicos** (E12) (Cherrier, 2017; Fuentes & Samsioe, 2021; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Ryder, 2022; Weijo *et al.*, 2018; Woodward & Greasley, 2017). Quando os arranjos se concentram nos atributos humanos, eles mostram como os tipos de

governança implicam valores éticos e padrões sociais atuais (Cherrier, 2017; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019). Os arranjos podem lidar com fenômenos de interação coletiva e a dinâmica entre componentes humanos e não humanos, como o estresse que emerge entre eles por meio de topografias irregulares (Fuentes & Samsioe, 2021; Woodward & Greasley, 2017).

De acordo com Weijo *et al.* (2018), a *Assemblage Theory* permite identificar níveis sociais e éticos na sociedade, que são aparatos dos arranjos porque têm a capacidade de interagir entre si e de afetar outros componentes com os quais têm contato. Esses autores indicam duas formas criativas de expressar esses aparatos: a transformabilidade e a explorabilidade que representam como os consumidores criam valores éticos ou exploram normas sociais em processos de agenciamento, respectivamente. Cherrier (2017) aponta como os arranjos e práticas institucionais subsequentes são padrões sociais usados anteriormente para gerenciar o sistema de mercado, incluindo a criação e manutenção de um mercado alternativo.

As duas formas de criatividade abordadas por Weijo *et al.* (2018) demonstram processos de territorialização capazes de estabilizar o arranjo mercadológico (E09) por meio da negociação de padrões sociais e valores éticos com os indivíduos (E12). Além disso, os valores éticos e os padrões sociais que legitimam a existência dos arranjos (E12) representam o propósito original destes arranjos, respondendo e definindo como os membros externos ou internos governam os múltiplos agenciamentos que lhes compõem (E11).

Por outro lado, nosso arquivo demonstra que **valores particulares dos membros dos arranjos mercadológicos impactam em sua hierarquia** (E13) (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; D'Antone & Spencer, 2015; De Mello *et al.*, 2021; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Huff & Cotte, 2016; Thompson, 2019; Trees & Dean, 2018). A *Assemblage Theory* traz à tona a discussão sobre como verdades e valores particulares de membros de um arranjo mercadológico podem definir os níveis hierárquicos de sua composição interna (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Thompson, 2019).

Tais valores também podem afetar outros arranjos e até mesmo o meio social em que estão inseridos – o chamado efeito em cadeia (Hoffman & Novak, 2018). Thompson (2019) diz que verdades válidas individualmente para os consumidores no contexto de mercado podem impactar no agenciamento das estruturas de mercado. Tal habilidade está alinhada ao conceito de resistência: o poder será exercido via verdade, desde que exercido pelas entidades corretas.

Os próprios valores dos membros dos arranjos mercadológicos têm impacto em sua hierarquia (E13), e se manifestam em discursos responsáveis por estabelecer os limites da hierarquia (E10) (Huff & Cotte, 2016; Thompson, 2019). Por outro lado, a gestão dos arranjos

(E11) é fundamentada nos valores de seus componentes (E13) (Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Thompson, 2019).

Por fim, as **interações em arranjos mercadológicos moldam e são moldadas pelo ambiente social** (E14) (Fuentes & Samsioe, 2021; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019; Kozinets, 2019; Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Novak, 2020; Thompson, 2019). De acordo com a *Assemblage Theory*, não é possível dissociar os arranjos do meio social do qual fazem parte. Os arranjos têm impacto em outros arranjos e, consequentemente, em todos os ambientes sociais em que estão inseridos (Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Novak, 2020).

Thompson (2019) explica que a capacidade dos arranjos não está ancorada em nenhum princípio holístico e organizador ou estrutura unificadora inerente em virtude da heterogeneidade de seus membros. No entanto, isso não significa que os arranjos não sejam afetados pelas estruturas; existe uma relação dinâmica e sinérgica entre as duas instâncias, o que as torna mutuamente influentes. Fuentes e colegas (Fuentes & Samsioe, 2021; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019) mostram como alguns produtores apoiam os arranjos de seus consumidores por meio de agenciamentos. Quando isso acontece, nichos de mercado são influenciados e podem modificar o sistema de mercado do qual fazem parte.

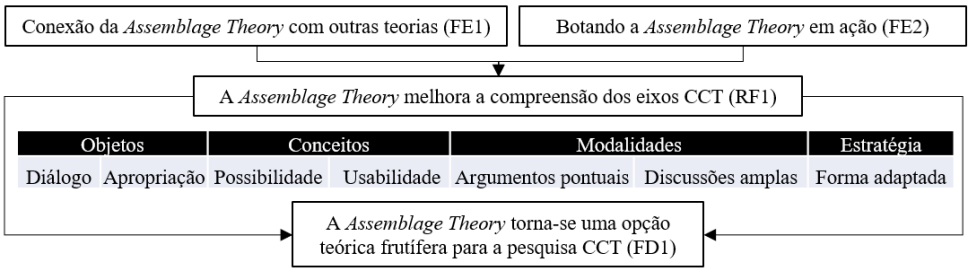
A conexão sinérgica entre arranjos mercadológicos e ambiente social (E14) explica as hierarquias dos arranjos, que estão ancoradas nos próprios valores de seus membros (E13), fato que reflete e se reflete nas relações sociais (Hoffman & Novak, 2018 Thompson, 2019). Esse processo também permite que os membros sejam incorporados ao governo dos arranjos (E11) (Fuentes & Samsioe, 2021; Fuentes & Sörum, 2019, Thompson, 2019).

Uso e fundamentos da *Assemblage Theory* na CCT

O conjunto de relações entre enunciados e suas funções convergem em duas formações discursivas. Por um lado, a partir das discussões sobre os aspectos teóricos dessa abordagem, **a *Assemblage Theory* torna-se uma opção teórica frutífera para a pesquisa na CCT** (FD1). Essa formação discursiva deriva de funções que se aplicam aos dois primeiros grupos de enunciados: a possibilidade de combinar a *Assemblage Theory* com outras abordagens teóricas (FE1) e sua adequação para investigar objetos de marketing (FE2) (ver Fig. 5).

Figura 5

Composição da FD1

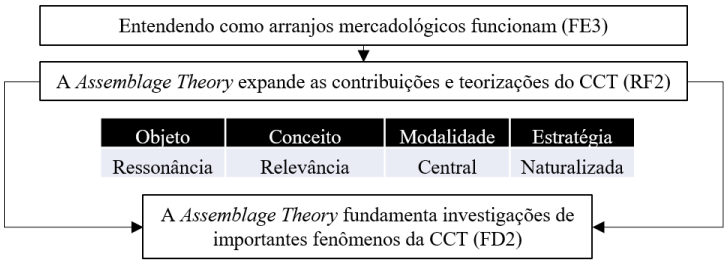


Essa formação discursiva se baseia em como as possibilidades teóricas e sua usabilidade (conceitos) para a CCT estão crescendo; é apresentada por meio de diálogos ou apropriações (objetos) teóricos. A *Assemblage Theory* é incorporada e ressignificada de forma adaptada (estratégia), seja por meio de argumentos pontuais ou amplas discussões (modalidades), para auxiliar na melhor compreensão dos atuais eixos teórico-epistemológicos da CCT (RF1).

Por outro lado, a forma como os arranjos mercadológicos são moldados pelas dinâmicas e princípios estabelecidos entre seus membros (FE3) aponta para a segunda formação discursiva. Esse processo indica que a ***Assemblage Theory* fundamenta investigações de importantes fenômenos da CCT** (FD2) (ver Fig. 6). Tal formação discursiva atesta a aplicabilidade da teoria ao campo da CCT. Assumidamente, os consumidores participam de arranjos mercadológicos incorporando as ações, relações e funções desses agrupamentos em um sistema dinâmico. Esse sistema incorpora diferentes maneiras pelas quais os indivíduos se relacionam com os sistemas materiais, organizando-se em um sistema social mais amplo e complexo por meio de processos de estratificação, codificação e territorialização.

Figura 6

Composição da FD2



Nesse sentido, a regra que orienta essa formação discursiva (RF2) preconiza a relevância (conceito) da *Assemblage Theory* para a agenda de pesquisa do CCT, uma vez que suas contribuições são ressonantes (objeto) à cultura de consumo observada. Este conceito atesta a *Assemblage Theory* como uma abordagem central (modalidade) nos estudos da CCT, torna-se um conhecimento naturalizado (estratégia) para este campo.

Implicações e *insights*

Com base em nossas constatações sobre as condições que permitem à *Assemblage Theory* produzir conhecimento no campo da CCT, é válido evocar a revisão de Arnould e Thompson (2015) sobre os quatro eixos conceituais que orientam jornadas inspiracionais para ampliar a pesquisa nesse campo. Essa consideração permite raciocinar sobre a relevância da adoção da *Assemblage Theory* nos estudos da CCT, com implicações para sua agenda de pesquisa. A Tabela 1 mostra a associação entre as funções enunciativas identificadas e os quatro eixos conceituais, por meio de potenciais tópicos de pesquisa, cujos conceitos são discutidos a seguir.

Tabela 1

Relação Entre os Eixos Conceituais de Arnould e Thompson (2015) e os Resultados da Presente Pesquisa

Eixos conceituais	Conexão da *Assemblage Theory* com outras teorias (FE1)	Colocando a *Assemblage Theory* em ação (FE2)	Entendendo como arranjos mercadológicos funcionam (FE3)
Cultura como redes distribuídas	Dinâmicas de mercado, como: ✓ Relações de poder; ✓ Resistência dos consumidores; ✓ Performatividades dos consumidores; ✓ Produção de discursos ideológicos; ✓ Relações entre humanos e tecnologias. Benefícios do diálogo da *Assemblage Theory* com outras teorias, como: ✓ Teorias do Saber e do Poder de Foucault;	Fenômenos de consumo a partir de redes fluídas, como: ✓ Práticas prossumidoras (e.g., bricolagem de consumidores, produções de fãs); ✓ Experiência dos consumidores (e.g., interações em redes sociais, turismo virtual); ✓ Objetos interacionais (e.g., plataformas digitais, *Internet of Things*).	Arranjos mercadológicos vistos a partir do agenciamento, como: ✓ Arranjos de consumo (e.g., comunidades de consumidores e de marcas, tecnologias de autosserviço); ✓ Arranjos de produção (e.g., conteúdo de marketing, *brand storytelling*); ✓ Arranjos de mediação (e.g., interações entre influenciadores e seguidores digitais, participação da audiência em eventos online).

Eixos conceituais	Conexão da *Assemblage Theory* com outras teorias (FE1)	Colocando a *Assemblage Theory* em ação (FE2)	Entendendo como arranjos mercadológicos funcionam (FE3)
	✓ Teoria da Performatividade de Butler; ✓ Desconstrução de Derrida; ✓ *Actor-Network Theory*; ✓ *Post-Human Theory*.		
Política do consumo	Dinâmicas políticas, como: ✓ Identidades políticas; ✓ Questões relacionadas ao consumerismo; ✓ Éticas de mercado; ✓ Responsabilidade socioambiental. Benefícios do diálogo entre *Assemblage Theory* e outras teorias, como: ✓ *Practice Theory*; ✓ Teorias Feminista e Queer; ✓ Teorias do Poder e da Subjetividade de Foucault; ✓ Teoria da Diferença de Deleuze; ✓ Teoria do Discurso de Laclau e Mouffe.	Fenômenos de consumo politizados, como: ✓ Projetos de identidade (e.g., demandas de pessoas pretas e LGBTQIA+, engajamento de fãs); ✓ Consumo consciente (e.g., reciclagem, responsabilidade financeira); ✓ Repreensões (e.g., boicotes, cancelamentos).	Movimentos de mercado e ações organizadas vistas como agenciamentos, como: ✓ Anti-consumerismo; ✓ Demandas ecológicas (e.g., energia limpa, produtos veganos e sem uso de crueldade com animais); ✓ Demandas de bem-estar (e.g., acessibilidade, ética corporativa).
Abordagens teóricas culturais de marketing	Diálogo da *Assemblage Theory* com grandes teorias de marketing, como: ✓ Marketing crítico; ✓ Macromarketing; ✓ *Resource-Advantage Theory*.	–	–
Abordagens teóricas culturais regionais	Diálogo da *Assemblage Theory* com teorias sobre lógicas de consumo não globais, como: ✓ Teoria Pós-Colonial; ✓ Teoria Pós-Desenvolvimentista; ✓ *Conflict Theory;* ✓ Modelo Nórdico.	–	–

Compreender a cultura como rede distribuída requer assumir que as categorias culturais são fluidas e apresentam formação contingente, uma vez que seus agentes estão alinhados por

meio de diferentes configurações não hierárquicas. Esse eixo conceitual foi concebido de acordo com a *Assemblage Theory*; assim, é natural que nossos achados se enquadrem plenamente nessa abordagem. Nesse sentido, os estudos devem explorar determinados arranjos de mercado como agenciamentos, analisando-os como territórios dinâmicos (FE3). Além disso, devem adotar a lógica dos agenciamentos para investigar diferentes fenômenos de consumo que ocorrem por meio de redes fluidas (FE2). Por fim, investigações sobre dinâmicas típicas da cultura vista como rede podem se beneficiar do diálogo com outras teorias compatíveis com a *Assemblage Theory* (FE1).

A política do consumo leva em consideração como arranjos heterogêneos que compreendem múltiplos atores do mercado (e.g., consumidores, gestores, empreendedores e tecnologias) são mobilizados para mudar as práticas e normas de mercado estabelecidas por meio de ações e inovações. Assim, movimentos de mercado e ações organizadas devem ser investigados como agenciamentos (FE3), assim como fenômenos de consumo politizado poderiam se beneficiar da lógica de agenciamento (FE2). Nesse sentido, a dinâmica política do consumo pode ser analisada por meio do diálogo entre a *Assemblage Theory* e outras teorias compatíveis (FE1).

A extensão da análise cultural ao campo da teoria de marketing e gestão indica a tendência da CCT de estabelecer teorias de marketing cultural. Com base nessa proposta, é possível refletir sobre como a *Assemblage Theory* aplicada aos fenômenos de consumo pode dialogar com macro abordagens teóricas do marketing (FE1), que podem ir desde a social (i.e., como o marketing deve beneficiar os indivíduos e a sociedade) até a gerencial (i.e., como o marketing deve beneficiar as organizações).

Com base na mesma linha de raciocínio, as teorias culturais regionais explicam o amadurecimento das escolas CCT e a disseminação de pesquisadores pelo mundo. É uma tendência notavelmente significativa em lugares como países nórdicos, Brasil e Oriente Médio, que se concentra em explorar fenômenos de mercado local, global e glocal. A *Assemblage Theory* pode ser associada a teorias que visam refletir sobre as realidades do consumidor fora do eixo da globalização ou levar em consideração realidades raramente abordadas pela literatura *mainstream*.

Conclusões

Os resultados evidenciaram que a adoção da *Assemblage Theory* na CCT tem se tornado não apenas uma infusão de vernáculos teóricos para o campo (Arnould & Thompson, 2015),

mas uma opção contundente para fundamentar a tradição alternativa da pesquisa do consumidor, tanto por sua conexão com outras teorias quanto por ser uma forma de investigar fenômenos da cultura de consumo, bem como por estar alinhado a um fenômeno central neste campo de pesquisa.

Se a *Assemblage Theory* pode realmente enriquecer os estudos de CCT, provavelmente pode deixar de capturar algumas particularidades de determinados fenômenos. Portanto, a CCT combina a *Assemblage Theory* com outras teorias que estão epistemologicamente alinhadas a ela (i.e., ANT, NRT e *Practice Theory*); algumas delas foram indicadas por Holt (2017) como altas teorias sociais desenvolvidas por estudiosos emblemáticos (e.g., Erving Goffman, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler e Michel Foucault).

Além disso, a *Assemblage Theory* fundamenta os estudos da CCT no sentido de que a cultura atua em redes distribuídas de múltiplos agentes. Essa teoria parece ser capaz de investigar o fenômeno do consumo como resultado da agência de diferentes atores que interagem em arranjos dinâmicos, sob condições e circunstâncias mutáveis.

Ainda assim, é possível argumentar que a *Assemblage Theory* deve fazer parte da literatura e não deve ser considerada uma abordagem importada ou exógena. Fica claro que arranjos e agenciamentos são intrínsecos às relações de consumo; portanto, são inerentes aos fenômenos CCT.

Os discursos identificados por trás desses argumentos revelam duas posições diferentes, mas potencialmente complementares. O entendimento de que a *Assemblage Theory* é uma opção adequada para estudos de CCT é sustentado pelo pressuposto de sua utilidade para estudos de CCT. No entanto, também pode ser uma externalidade a ser incorporada e adaptada por este campo de pesquisa. Por sua vez, a compreensão dessa teoria se torna essencial, pois focaliza um fenômeno central da pesquisa em CCT, que se constrói pela forma como naturaliza essa teoria.

Dessa forma, acreditamos que o presente estudo contribui para a discussão sobre os benefícios das teorias sociais para os estudos realizados no campo da CCT. A *Assemblage Theory* – e seus conceitos – foram originalmente propostos por Deleuze e Guattari; no entanto, os estudos de CCT podem fazer menção à teoria, sem evocar sua gênese e/ou seus conceitos originais. Tal aspecto é um alerta sobre como as teorias sociais devem ser utilizadas na pesquisa crítica de marketing, adotando cuidados conceituais atrelados ao alinhamento ontológico.

O método foucaultiano utilizado pode beneficiar pesquisas futuras focadas em investigar as condições adequadas para produzir epistemes na teoria do marketing. Em

consonância com isso, Tadajewski (2011; 2016) indica que o uso da lente foucaultiana para compreender como as teorias filosóficas podem ser evocadas ou associadas às práticas de consumo cultural possibilita a mobilização e a possível ampliação dos temas e fenômenos investigados pelo CCT.

Contribuições dos autores

Contribuição	Souza-Leão, A.L.M.	Moura, B.M.
Contextualização	X	X
Metodologia	X	X
Software	--	--
Validação	X	--
Análise formal	--	X
Investigação	X	X
Recursos	X	--
Curadoria de dados	X	X
Original	--	X
Revisão e edição	X	--
Visualização	X	X
Supervisão	X	--
Administração do projeto	X	--
Aquisição de financiamento	X	--

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