

The Saturated Society

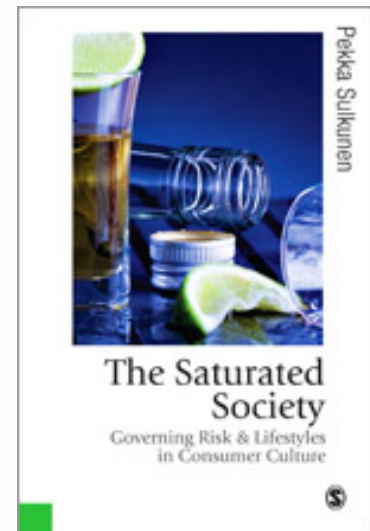
Governing Risk & Lifestyles in Consumer Culture

Pekka Sulkunen

Professor of Sociology, University of Helsinki

'A provocative and stimulating intervention in a debate of key contemporary importance' - **Chris Shilling, Professor of Sociology, University of Kent**

'Pekka Sulkunen offers a fresh look at the transition from industrial society to consumer capitalism. He asks important questions about how consumer desires are produced and regulated and what it means to attempt to regulate the way we live. This book is stimulating, erudite and important' - **Sue Scott, Pro Vice Chancellor at Glasgow Caledonian University**



We are faced with risks not only from the environment but also from our own lifestyle choices. Regulating them involves public intervention into private life. How can this interference be justified in societies with highly individualistic cultures and free markets?

This engaging title develops an original theory of justification in modern society. Individualistic values of autonomy and intimacy that have been complementary in industrial societies now clash. This clash explains

- the emphasis of agency in mass society
- our ambivalences towards consumption itself
- the contradictions of the welfare state
- the shift from pastoral to epistolary power, and
- re-invention of the social contract

The book provides a 'genealogical' account of the problem of justification since the French and American revolutions and Adam Smith's theory of modern society. It illustrates the theory by original case studies of alcohol policy and health promotion, and engages with the work of major contemporary social theorists including Ulrich Beck, Pierre Bourdieu, Luc Boltanski, Laurent Thévenot and David Riesman..

Contents: Introduction / Lifestyle and the Social Bond / The Good Order of Nature: Progress and Criticism in Adam Smith's Sociology of Modernity / Autonomy: the Contracting individual / Intimacy: the Romantic Self / The New Consumer Society and Its Critics / The Welfare State in the Consumer Society / From Pastoral to Epistolary Power / Inner-Directed or Other-Directed? Agency and Citizenship in Mass Society / Re-Inventing the Social Contract

Published in association with *Theory, Culture & Society*

March 2009 · 224 pages

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