Practising Co-production or Endorsing The Logic of Value Co-creation: How Marketers' Legitimacy Seeking Influences Co-creation Adoption

Carole Charbonnel

May 27, 2019

Carole CHARBONNEL
ESCP EUROPE

CO-CREATION: NEW PARADIGM OR MARKETING TECHNIQUE? ANALYZING CO-CREATION THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS IN THE FIELD OF MARKETING

ABSTRACT

While many papers have studied co-creation from the side of consumers, few research has been conducted from the side of organizations. In particular, the reasons why marketers are adopting co-creation are still unclear, as previous literature identified that those methods are not always beneficial to firms. Adopting an Institutionalist framework, and owing to 17 interviews with senior managers in FMCG industry, our research unveils the influence of tacit and cultural factors in co-creation adoption by managers. We show how professionals are navigating through three diverse "institutional logics" pervading the field of marketing, each leading to different a stance and practice of consumers' collaboration. By identifying two distinct approaches – co-creation as a "camouflage" technique within marketing management paradigm vs co-creation as a logic aiming at empowering consumers - our results underline the necessity to maintain a clear-cut distinction between two conceptualizing: collaborative practices, also called "co-production", and value co-creation paradigm.

Keywords: co-creation; co-production; marketing practice; marketing management; institutional logics

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of value co-creation paradigm (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), more and more brands are now seeking for consumers' creative participation in their marketing process. Many papers have studied those initiatives from the side of consumers, either searching for a better harnessing of consumer participation (Hoffman, Kopalle and Novak, 2010; Schreier and Prügl, 2008), or denouncing co-creation as free labour exploitation and customer control (Cova and Cova, 2009; Dujarier, 2014; Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody, 2008). Contrasting with those literature streams, few research has been conducted from the side of managers, as if co-creation adoption and implementation were given for granted within firms.

Yet, the reason why marketers are adopting the new "dominant logic" (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) of co-creation are still unclear. Direct calculation might not be their only motivation, as customer collaboration in some cases destroys value (Echeverri and Skalen, 2011), generates stress inside firms (Chan, Yim and Lam, 2010), exposes brands to criticism (Cova, Pace and Skalen, 2015) without necessarily rising consumers' satisfaction (Heidenreich, Wittkowski, Handrich and Falk, 2015; Wahieu et al., 2002). Above all, endorsing the logic of co-creation is inducing managers' role reconfiguration (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000), notably through the implementation of disruptive marketing methods: workshops with pioneering customers (Lilien et al., 2002), massive online competitions (Howe, 2006), or collaboration with customer communities (Min Antorini, Muniz, and Askildsen, 2012). While enabling managers to involve customers, those methods are challenging pre-existing processes and competencies within firms (Keinz, Hienerth and Lettl, 2010). Yet, we still do not know how marketers manage their endorsement of co-creation logic, in particular vis-a-vis pre-existing marketing approaches.

By inviting us to take into account symbolic aspects of organizational structure and behaviour (Meyer and Rowan, 1977), by emphasizing how actors are managing diverse and sometimes conflicting supra-organizational logics (Friedland and Alford, 1991), Institutionalist theory gives us an alternative point of view on this issue, and might help us addressing those gaps. Hence, this paper seeks answers to the following questions: (1) How might broader institutional forces influence co-creation adoption within marketing departments? (2) How do

marketers manage co-creation vis-à-vis pre-existing logics?

The paper is organized as follows. In the next section, our literature review presents co-creation as a new logic competing with prevailing logics in the field of marketing, in particular with "marketing management". Drawing on institutional theory, we then explain how diverse logics might at the same time shape behaviour within firms, and enable actors to exert their agency by manipulating coexisting frameworks, hence leading to practice diversity. Then, we describe our methodology based on in-depth interviews with senior managers in FMCG industry. After presenting our results, we discuss them and underline the contributions and limitations of the research.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND:

Co-creation: a new dominant logic opposed to the logic of marketing management logic

While post-modern vision denies separation of consumption and production (Firat and Ventakesh, 1995), "co-creation" (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) and related "S-D Logic" (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) claim that value is always created together with customers. A conceptualization of value creation, co-creation is also presented by its proponents as new "dominant logic" (Vargo and Lusch, 2004): a specific mind set influenced by macro-level beliefs (Dijksterhuis, Van den Bosch & Volberda, 1999), which shapes managers' everyday practice (Prahalad and Bettis, 1986).

Because co-creation logic considers goods as mere value propositions for customers (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), consumers might be enlisted as permanent members of marketing processes (Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody, 2008), then giving rise to practices of "co-production" (Arvidsson, 2008; Etgar, 2008). Based on the idea that real customers' needs are hardly identified by market research (Von Hippel, 2005), that huge creativity and problem solving resources are remaining untapped outside the firm (Füller, Hütter and Faulant, 2011), co-production practices are increasingly integrating consumers within companies' marketing processes: innovation (Von Hippel, 1986), design (Sanders and Stappers, 2008), advertising and brand promotion (Cova, 2008). Far beyond merely blurring the frontiers between firms and

consumers, the logic of co-creation and its associated co-production practices represent a major change for marketers. Whereas marketing managers have been usually sole responsible for firms' creative process, whereas they used to work apart from the market like in "citadels" (Gummesson, 1994), now they have to immerse in deep interaction with consumers, and to act as humble facilitators in order to provide resources for consumers' creativity (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000; Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody, 2008).

While scholars in innovation management oppose co-creation to "manufacturer-centric" approach (Von Hippel, 2005), from a marketing standpoint co-creation is considered a radical departure from marketing management logic, which has been dominating the field of marketing since the 50's (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody, 2008). At first sight, co-creation might appear as a mere evolution of marketing vision (Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody, 2008), which has been consistently promoting consumer centricity (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Levitt, 1960). Yet, a deeper analysis of what Vargo and Lusch (2004) call "the marketing management school of thought" unveils how the new logic of co-creation seems irreconciliable with marketing management. The title of Kotlers' first issue in 1967, *Marketing Management: analysis, planning, and control*, gives a clear insight about the gap separating both logics: while co-creation promotes free creativity and collaborative problem solving in order to fulfil unmet needs, marketing management views marketing as an "applied behavioral science" (Kotler, 1972), implemented by experts owing to a set of techniques, and aiming at shaping consumer preferences (Dujarier, 2014). This contrast is echoing fundamental differences in the conception of value. As evidenced in latest definition by Kotler and Keller (2015), marketing management considers value as created by the firm and for the sake of firm:

> We see marketing management as the art and science of choosing target markets, and getting, keeping and growing customers through creating, delivering and communicating superior customer value.

Marketers' legitimacy in question

Institutional theory conceives social actors as embedded in a specific cultural context, and in ongoing interaction with that context. Hence, behaviour in organizations is not merely rational, instead it is influenced by the need for social and cultural support (DiMaggio and

Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977), in other words by legitimacy seeking. "Cultural alignment, normative support, or consonance with relevant rules or laws" (Scott, 1995), legitimacy is indeed considered as a key resource (Suchman, 1988). Since Weber's seminal writings, legitimacy is recognized as fostering influence over social actors without using coercive power (Tyler, 2006; Weber, 1922/1978). Thus, legitimacy seeking plays an essential role in the adoption of organizational structures and practices, which are implemented by tacit compliance with cultural frameworks (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

Whereas legitimacy has been initially investigated through macro-level analysis within socio-political and organizational fields, scholars are now expanding studies on various entities and levels of analysis: brands (Kates, 2004), markets (Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli, 2015; Humphreys, 2010), consumer groups (Dolbec and Fischer, 2015; Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013). Like other social entities, professionals within specific subunits of organizations are affected by legitimacy (Ruef and Scott, 1998), and this includes notably marketing staff. While marketing concept seems to play a greater role in society (Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2008), some authors are questioning marketers' legitimacy, both within firms (Maclaran and Catterall, 2000; Moorman and Rust, 1999) and towards their external audience (Cronin, 2004).

Managing legitimacy by manipulating institutional logics

Facing social pressure, actors are not bound to stay passive, and they generally display a diversity of strategic responses (Oliver, 1991) allowing them to manage their legitimacy. Literature on "institutional work" (Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca, 2011) has notably emphasized how individuals engage in processes of creation, maintenance or disruption of institutional frameworks, hence provoking change in structures and practices.

In order to exert their agency, individuals might manipulate to their own advantage the diverse "institutional logics" (Friedland and Alford, 1991) diffusing in their field. Systems of belief and material practice (Thornton and Occasio, 1999), institutional logics shape organizations' and individuals' behaviour at a supra-organizational level in a given industry or profession (Friedland and Alford, 1991). Identified by their association of "Ideals", "Discourse" and "Techniques" (Dambrin, Lambert, and Sponem, 2007; Hasseblath and Kallinikos, 2000),

institutional logics can be compared to the concept of dominant logic that we presented earlier. Literature shows how some fields are dominated by one sole logic - for instance market logic in higher education edition (Thornton and Occasio, 1999) -, while others are pervaded by plural logics (Jones and Livne-Tarandach, 2008). In the latter case, there might be competition or conflict between plural frameworks (Moorman, 2002), and some logics often emerge as more popular in the field (Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli, 2015). Because they are reflecting the interests of the most legitimate and powerful actors in the field, more popular logics are generally supported actively by those "incumbents" (Fligstein and McAdam, 2011).

While institutional logics are constraining behaviour, at the same time the co-existence of plural logics in a field enable social actors to exert their agency. This is particularly relevant for actors endowed with less legitimacy, who might try to alter the statu quo (Kates, 2004; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2012), hence provoking change in practice (Leca, Battilana & Boxenbaum, 2008). As promoting an alternative framework should be in some cases more beneficial to them (Durand, Rao, & Monin, 2007; Fligstein and McAdam, 2011), those "challengers" might manipulate diverse logics, in order to change prevailing rules and norms. Because most popular logics are supposed to reflect their interests, actors endowed with full legitimacy are generally less prompted to alter the status quo. Yet, their apparent adherence to a predominant logic might conceal inconsistency, and the co-existence of plural logics is often leading to hybrid behaviours within firms (Pache and Santos, 2013). In particular, managers might "decouple" (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) actual organizational behaviour from symbolic practices, which are adopted by compliance with predominant framework.

METHOD

Research setting and design

Our research design is based on in-depth interviews with seventeen marketing managers and CEOs; whenever we interviewed a CEO, we arranged a meeting with firm's marketing manager, in order to ensure information consistency. The interviews were conducted within fifteen different companies in France and Canada (Quebec), all operating in FMCG industry (agro-food industry, cosmetics, food retail). This industry seemed particularly relevant to investigate the potential coexistence of diverse institutional logics in the field of marketing: while FMCG has been pervaded for a long time by marketing management methods, notably owing to the influence of leading companies such as P&G, we observe a recent and quick growth of co-production initiatives by famous firms (Nestle, Unilever, Pepsico, L'Oréal…) Furthermore, our sample enabled us to ensure a diversity in term of types of organizations (multinationals or local firms, from SME's and start-ups to worldwide leaders, privately owned firms and listed companies).

Data collection

Prepared following McCraken (1988), the interviews lasted 90 minutes on average, and were conducted face to face, either in "real life", or via Skype, between November 2014 and April 2015. Among the general questions included in the protocol were: How could you describe your approach of marketing? Which methods and marketing tools do you mostly use? As a professional, how do you consider your relationship to consumers? What do you think of methods enabling firms to collaborate with their consumers? Also included were specific questions adjusted to the background of the interviewee (education, former experience). Interviewees were contacted within the researcher's network, through professional networks (LinkedIn), or owing to snowballing sampling. Interviews were taped, and then transferred in verbatim, generating about 175 pages of data.

Here is a summary of informants' profile:

Name	Age	Professional position	Country	Firm description
Alain	48	Research and Strategy Director	France	Multinational, food industry, listed
Béatrice	50	CEO	France	National, food consultancy, private
Christian	45	Marketing Vice President	Canada	Multinational, food industry, listed
Delphine	33	Group Marketing manager	France	Multinational, food industry, listed
Dominique (male)	50	Marketing Director	France	Multinational, food industry, listed
François	45	CEO	France	Multinational, consultancy, private
Karine	45	Business Unit Manager	France	Multinational, food industry, listed
Laurence	49	Marketing & Innovation director	France	Multinational, food industry, listed
Laurent	43	Brand director	France	National, food retail, cooperative
Marion-Anne	41	World Consumer Science director	France	Multinational, cosmetics, listed
Michel	41	Founder & Managing partner	France	National, food industry, start-up, private
Nathalie	40	Marketing Director	France	Multinational, food industry, private
Nicolas	37	Marketing Manager	Canada	Multinational, food industry, listed
Olivier	47	CEO	France	Multinational, fast-food chain, listed
Pascal	55	CEO	France	Multinational, food industry, listed
Yves	52	CEO	France	Multinational, food industry, listed

Data analysis

Our analysis approach followed Corley and Gioia method (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2012). Hence, we started with field data, which we analysed through an open coding giving rise to a wide range of themes. As we aggregated our themes by confrontation with various theoretical lenses, the relevance of institutionalist framework became more accurate. Besides, we conducted two types of analysis: an analysis focused on each individual informant, followed by an analysis between informants across our sample.

FINDINGS

Our analysis suggests that marketers' adoption (or rejection) of co-creation, and the way they implement co-production practices vis-a-vis pre-existing marketing methods, mirror a process of institutional work. Depending on their legitimacy within marketing professionals' networks and inside firms, interviewees manipulate the diverse institutional logics pervading the field of marketing, hence leading to various stances and practice of co-creation.

Co-creation: a new institutional logic for "challengers"

Some managers in our research field are adopting co-creation as a comprehensive approach, by integrating co-production practices in several dimensions of marketing process, in particular within both promotion and innovation activities. Co-creation is viewed by those managers both as an innovative way to practice marketing, and a new paradigm attuned to current technological opportunities and societal needs.

In our research, all informants endorsing this vision of co-creation are "challengers", managers affected by a lower legitimacy within their organization and in the field of marketing professionals. All of them have been recently hired (less than two years) within the organization, and they manage departments that have been created recently, even though marketing function was existing previously. This marketing department seems as a work in progress, and none of our interviewees hides the difficulty to establish its influence. From an external point of view, those managers are not really involved in the field of marketing professionals. Most of them they did not receive a classical training in marketing, they hold for instance a degree in political science or engineering, and started their career outside marketing. As Laurence acknowledges, those challengers still feel outside the field of marketers:

> I am a little bit an engineer, I am a lot an engineer! At the beginning, I am an engineer, marketing came much later in my career, initially I did a lot of R&D, and I came to marketing through innovation. Well at that stage, I had an executive training in marketing at HEC, but I do not possess the operational skills of those who have been brand managers, who have grown up in marketing since they were little boys. *(Laurence Marketing and Innovation Director, France).*

When analysing the interviews of those managers, co-creation appears as a real institutional logic, characterized by the three characteristics of Hasselblath and Kallinikos (2000)

framework, "Ideals", "Discourse" and "Techniques". Thus, collaborating with customers is based on a clear "Ideal" expressed by interviewees: empowering consumers. This is an ideal in proper sense, as it stems from ethical values: even though the need for economic efficiency is present, informants express primarily the search for more balanced relationships between firms and markets. As expressed by Laurent, co-creation appears as a fair return towards consumers:

> The idea is not to think "we used you for something" but to tell him [the consumer] "you have really been actor of the solution" (…) When I think "I am close to you because concretely in everyday life we are acting to help you taking part in value creation, value creation which is made for your own benefit" (…) that is also a way to give him a return, a satisfaction towards what he has done (…) They know we consider them, we lesson to them, and somehow it's nearly a fair return (…) When they can impact on a decision, there is a feeling of power, and notably putting the customer at the right place, it's a kind of respect. *(Laurent, Brand director, France).*

Reflecting this Ideal of more balanced relationships, interviewees' "Discourse" is emphasising humility as an essential quality for marketing staff. With the advent of co-creation logic, marketers' are not anymore the sole recipients of knowledge, and consumers might even possess the best ideas, as suggested by Christian:

> I think this is a question of paradigm. One needs to be humble, we are in food industry, this is such a question of taste that anyone may come with an idea (…) When we view our selves so strong and so noble, at the end this is creating distance with consumers (…) That kind of workshops with kinds of ambassadors or heavy users, this is something essential, these are people that sometimes know the product better than ourselves (…) As a marketer, I am about to think that I am just a handover towards the machine which is manufacturing the product, I am only a spokesperson of consumers towards the machine which is manufacturing the product. On the contrary I want to feed myself from what consumers want to have, and then going to see the operations' manager *(Christian, Marketing Vice president, Canada).*

While interviewees aim at more balanced relationship to consumers, they pay at the same time much attention to efficiency: far from opposing ethics and profitability, they also consider consumers' collaboration as way to save time and money. Consistent with that pragmatic vision, "Techniques" stated in the interviews are multiple, allocating a major part to diverse co-production methods (crowdsourcing, Facebook voting, participatory design, collaborative workshops…) without excluding other approaches, either conventional (surveys, focus groups, panels) or marginal in FMCG industry (ethnological research, trends forecasting…)

Co-production as a technique for incumbents endorsing marketing management logic

Whereas some informants in our field adopt co-creation as a comprehensive approach, others have a more restrictive practice. They solicit consumers' collaboration only on one dimension of marketing process, most of time brand promotion, for instance through "Ambassadors" programmes. For those marketers, co-creation is adopted through co-production methods, which are viewed as innovative, agile and "low cost" marketing tools.

Considering co-creation as a marketing technique among others, those managers can be all characterized as "incumbents" in the field of marketing, endowed with legitimacy both within organizations and towards external audiences. Graduated of renowned business schools, they started their career in prestigious FMCG firms such as P&G, Unilever or Danone. Long-standing executives in their firm, they do not express doubts concerning their role within organizations, and are even developing their influence in external networks, through their active involvement in professional marketing or industrialists' associations. Reflecting informants' deep immersion in the field of marketing, their sentences are punctuated by marketing "verbal tics", with constant references to concepts such as marketing mix, consumer insight, consumer target, recruitment, loyalty, brand positioning…

Contrasting with former challengers' discourse, this vocabulary suggests how those incumbents are endorsing a quite different logic: the logic of marketing management. In particular, our analysis enables to identify existence of this logic through the three dimensions of "Ideals", "Discourse" and "Technique". "Value for firm" is the common Ideal for all those managers, as stated in the most direct and honest way by Fabrice:

> Me, I am an old style marketer, I only believe in what is entering within the P&L!
> *(Fabrice, Marketing Director, France)*

Yet, as if this Ideal were hard to assume, most informants try and justify the priority given to the sole objective of creating of value for firm, with its consequential process of market shaping. Constantly quoting figures, either financial ratios or marketing metrics, interviewees are systematically referring to economic pressure through their Discourse. While all managers in our sample are involved in the same industry and subject to the same financial pressure,

informants adhering to the logic of marketing management are the only ones who emphasize so dramatically economic constraints, as exemplified by Alain:

> The stake for us is to give once again a role to the category, to re-invent the category, to re-create value at the centre. (…) This is an indispensable path. It's an economic and strategic stake according to the macro- and micro-environment that is surrounding us. (…) The economic equation and its toughness today are demanding to go beyond the framework of functionality to enter in the area of desire (…) Today's economic equation and its toughness, markets' maturity, and the challenges of valorisation explain why we need to justify a superior value. (*Alain, Research and Strategy Director, France).*

Focused on the ideal of value creation for firms, interviewees' Discourse is leaving products and consumers in the background, as if they were only a lever enabling to generate value. While often referring to consumer centricity, marketers seem to adhere to this motto for instrumental reasons: customer orientation is viewed as a necessity due to increased competition and lower consumer loyalty. Because consumers do not share the objective of creating value for firm's only sake, they are not in capacity to act as collaborators. Hence they should either remain passive contributors in conventional market research, or be involved as brand advocates. Consumers have to stay "at their right place" and be managed by marketers:

> Today all our initiatives are based on consumer's voice, because we need to integrate him, because he is at the centre. (…) Building a vision that is disconnected from what the consumer is living, what he thinks, what he believes, it's risky in our current situation (…) We need to put the customer at the centre, but at the right place. Listening to the consumer in order to get inspired in our vision, that's right. But it's bloody different from saying that the consumer is conveying me his vision, or is substituting for the vision. He does not substitute, he might be the fuel in the engine. (*Alain, Research and Strategy Director, France.*)

Some informants endorsing the logic of marketing management might call for more creativity inside the firm, or more desire from consumers. However, their Discourse is reflecting a purely rational conception of marketing. Marketing appears as a science, implemented through a technical process made of tools and measures. Unsurprisingly, "Techniques" play a central role in this logic. While the logic of co-creation was mainly focused on techniques fostering deep understanding and creativity, here numerous marketing techniques aim at measuring: measuring consumer behaviour, situation in distribution, or financial performance. Far from being the humble translators of consumers' will, here marketers are the experts who control the scientific process of marketing, in order to shape consumers' preferences and needs. This conception of marketing is even implemented within co-production initiatives:

You have to motivate them [consumers], to involve them, to make them try the product, to inspire them, to foster their desire to collaborate with you. Afterwards, there is a competition mechanic, but basically if they are not motivated the result will be nothing (…) In the diffusion curve, these are the people you might find at the lowest points of the curve. Either you use them as a target, you are preparing your marketing mix internally and then you use them as a diffusion target. Or you integrate them upstream - perhaps not by starting from scratch -, but you use them in the last step of your development, in order to fine tune and test. *(Fabrice, Marketing Director, France).*

Co-creation opposes the logic of creation endorsed by other incumbents

While previous incumbents are using occasionally co-production techniques, other managers in our field display an explicit opposition to every kind of consumer collaboration. Yet, those informants also seem fully legitimate within their organizations as in the field of marketing professionals: like former interviewees, they received higher education in well-known business schools, they display a long lasting marketing experience in renowned firms, and do not express doubts about their influence within their organization.

However, a deeper analysis unveils some differences with former incumbents in the area of professional practice and networking. While they are also taking part to external networks, here informants are preferring more disparate networks. By mixing FMCG professionals with managers of other industries and individuals such as entrepreneurs, cooks, or politicians, their networks reflect a compromise between influencing the field of marketing and widely opening on society. The same kind of compromise might be identified when analysing managers' practice of marketing. Due to their background, those incumbents use conventional marketing management tools, which appear to them as "given for granted": panels, surveys, focus groups, brand positioning… Yet, they do not give much importance to those tools, which are considered as generating little added value compared to managers' strategic vision and creativity. Finally, while informants also recognize the strength of economic pressure, they are rarely referring to financial data or marketing KPI's.

Rejecting the vision of marketing as a technical process dedicated to sole financial goals, those informants are in reality endorsing another logic: the "logic of creation". Following Hasseblath and Kallinikos (2000), our data enabled us to identify the existence of this logic through specific "Ideals", "Discourses" and "Techniques". Interviewees express above all one

clear and common "Ideal" for marketing: offering the market a unique creation. This "Ideal" is illustrated through "Discourses" emphasizing inspiration, pleasure, passion, or alchemy. Like artists with their masterpieces, for those informants creativity can only originate within firms. Hence, external stakeholders, professionals like consumers, cannot take an active part in the creative process, which is viewed as a virtually demiurgic activity, as expressed by Yves:

> We think that marketers' intuition and cheese makers' quality, all these together this might find its audience, and not the reverse way. (…) Initiation of innovation is mainly managed internally. When you ask the consumer, there is often not much to get of it. Or you get kooky, useless stuff, things that you cannot develop. Either people don't have ideas, or it's too futuristic (…) This is not the consumer who is going to find our innovations. When we have to start from scratch, we do not trust him (…) The consumer is a very good receptor, we would rather go and see him at home, how he's doing lunch, his behaviour in real life. We are feeding ourselves from him, then we are doing the job ! (…) We ask developers 'make us dream', we are in firm's historic know how, and we try and do something unique. We prefer starting from the product, from our sensation of what is happening within the society to imagine an alchemy of this. *(Yves, CEO, France)*

Whereas previous logics emphasize either a social conception (co-creation logic), or a scientific vision (marketing management logic) of marketing, here marketing is considered in a very concrete and embodied manner. While products are at the centre of this approach, consumers are not neglected: both instigators and recipients of marketers' creativity, they are not perceived as social interactions or figures, they are neither associates nor subordinates. Customers are viewed primarily as real and independent individuals, which can decide to buy or not the product; hence, marketers' interaction with consumers is organized in the most direct manner, owing to "real life" individual to individual interaction, as expressed by Michel:

> We have the test on the first thursday of each month on 500 consumers, when we open the doors of our offices (…) Thus, there is a very strong relationship between the people working here and the consumers, because we have consumers who come to us once a month. This is a very interesting feed back. It's really real I mean ! These are people who come, who choose to come. Hence they are not, by far, representative of french population. But these are people who love the brand, who love it sufficiently to sometimes come to us while they were located several metro stations from here or on other side of Paris. *(Michel, founder and managing partner, France).*

As intuition and vision are essential, specific "Techniques" are not numerous in the logic of creation. Like Michel's open house initiative, the few techniques we might identify reflect this concrete approach of marketing: some managers organize meetings with consumers on point of sales, others might share a dinner at consumers' house, or read by themselves at night all

complaint letters. When communication on a project is needed, either inside firms (vis a vis top management or industrialists), or to external stakeholders (investors, retailers…), it seems that conventional marketing management techniques might help "disguise" the paucity of techniques used by those managers, who base their actions mainly on their own conviction and experience. For instance, Dominique states in a very sound manner that market research is mainly useful to back up decision making and to "sell" the project to other internal stakeholders:

> The marketing tool box, we know about that, but we have moved away from that. Control tools are technical, but brand mission this is something else! (…) The true decision is made upstream, when we decide to invest on a project, and this decision we make it owing to our experience of the market, this is what matters. On offer-driven markets it is difficult to trust in market research. Strategical judgment is important in decisions, market research is only evaluating the potential and reinforcing this judgement. It is also important to take into account firm's strategical orientations. Market research is mainly useful to deploy industrial facilities. *(Dominique, Marketing Director, France).*

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Starting from our initial research questions, our study provides insights in different theoretical areas, and notably it helps expanding our understanding of co-creation.

Co-creation: both a new paradigm and a "camouflage" technique

While its proponents present co-creation as a new paradigm (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) driven by a great democratic ideal (Von Hippel, 2005), our research suggests a more nuanced vision. In our field, some managers do endorse co-creation as whole logic enabling to empower consumers. At the same time, other informants manipulate customer collaboration as low-cost marketing technique within an unchanged logic of marketing management, and aim at shaping markets for firms' sole sake. By showing how co-creation might be used as a mere "camouflage" for traditional marketing approaches (Bauer and Gegenhuber, 2015), our results are thus substantiating critics of co-creation, in particular those critics placed within a foucauldian perspective (Cova and Cova, 2009; Shankar, Cherrier, and Canniford 2006; Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody, 2008). Indeed, the vision of co-creation as technique within a scientific process controlled by firms is echoing in a sound manner the concept of "Governmentality", this soft control exercised on skilled and allegedly autonomous individuals.

Moreover, the gap we observe between the vision and practice of managers fully endorsing the logic of co-creation on the one side, and of those manipulating co-creation as a mere technique on the other side, underlines the necessity to define in a more precise what we intend by "co-creation". In particular, we suggest distinguishing two different conceptualising: co-creation as a practice, that is to say "co-production" (Etgar, 2008), and co-creation as a paradigm for value creation and as a new school of thought in marketing.

Co-creation adoption under the influence of implicit and cultural factors

Although some authors present co-creation as an approach enabling maximum efficiency (Howe, 2006; Nikishawa, Schreier and Ogawa, 2013; Von Hippel, 2005), we have seen in introduction that doubts are still remaining about the real performance of collaborative methods. By showing that direct calculation is motivating only those managers who manipulate co-creation as a marginal marketing technique, our research sheds another light on this issue, and suggests that efficiency seeking is not the main driver of co-creation adoption. As most informants in our research are endorsing (or rejecting) co-creation under the influence of the institutional logic they are adhering – the logic of co-creation vs the logic of creation - our results underline on the contrary that co-creation implementation within firms is mainly influenced by implicit and cultural factors.

Besides, some scholars unveiled the variety of firms' stances towards consumers' collaboration (Berthon, Pitt, McCarthy and Kates, 2007), ranging from active promotion to rejection. Yet, the reasons of this diversity have not been identified so far. By unveiling the influence of the diverse logics pervading the field of marketing, some favouring other opposing customers' collaboration, our research might help addressing this gap.

In addition to those findings, our research is providing interesting insights in the area of institutional theory, and it deepens our understanding of marketing as an institutional field.

Managing legitimacy through institutional work

Consistent with the literature on institutional work (Lawrence, Suddaby, and Leca, 2011), our research illustrates how social actors might display strategic responses towards external

pressures (Oliver, 1991), by unveiling how marketers manipulate diverse institutional logics according to their position in the field. In particular, our analysis is confirming the essential role of "challengers" in the creation of new frameworks and practice, as already established by previous research (Durand, Rao and Monin, 2007; Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013): far from staying passive, informants affected by a lower legitimacy are those who try to alter the status quo, notably by promoting the logic of co-creation and its associated practices.

Diverse logics pervading the field of marketing professionals

While confirming how co-creation is opposing to marketing management (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Zwick, Bonsu and Darmody, 2008), our analysis enables to establish co-creation as a real institutional logic, a system of interwoven practice and beliefs which is influenced by a specific ideal for marketing activity: empowering consumers.

Whereas co-creation is actually competing with the logic of marketing management, the latter has not yet lost its predominance. Contradicting the vision of marketing management as a prevailing framework from the 50's up to the 2000's (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), our research shows on the contrary how this logic is still dominating the field of FMCG marketing in the 2010's. Consistent with the literature (Fligstein and McAdam, 2011), in our research incumbent managers do not try and question the role of marketing management methods, on the contrary some of them are actively supporting the most popular logic through their involvement in professional networks. The hybrid behaviour of some legitimate managers, using marketing management tools while endorsing in realty the logic of creation is confirming the predominance of marketing management framework: illustrating the concept of "decoupling" (Meyer and Rowan, 1977), those managers are apparently complying with prevailing norms, which appear to them as given for granted, hence displaying symbolic practice of marketing management.

Finally, an ultimate interesting finding of our research lies in the identification of the logic of creation in the field of FMCG marketing. In such a mass market industry, informants' vision of marketing seems surprisingly similar to the discourse on art. In particular, the very concrete conception of marketing expressed by our informants, their refusal to base their approach on

17

concepts and techniques of scientific marketing, can be compared to Bourdieu's dispositional theory of art: art is considered as a "pure practice without theory", in opposition to technique viewed as the application of a scientific theory (Bourdieu, 2013/1999 p.82).

Limitations

More research, situated in other kinds of contexts, will be required to substantiate our findings. In particular, we suspect that the identification of the logic of creation among marketing professionals could be influenced by the specific context our research field, focused on French speaking informants (France and Quebec) within food and cosmetic industries. While cosmetics are related to fashion and creativity in the most obvious way, food has almost the status of art in French culture, as exemplified by expressions such as "art culinaire" (art of cooking) or "art de vivre à la française" (French way of living as an art). Hence, further research should investigate other kind of industries, or focus on informants from other cultural contexts, for instance by interviewing anglo saxon or northern European managers.

REFERENCES

Arvidsson, A. (2008), The Ethical Economy of Customer Coproduction. *Journal Of Macromarketing*, 28, (4), 326-338.

Bauer, R. M., & Gegenhuber, T. (2015), Crowdsourcing: Global search and the twisted roles of consumers and producers. *Organization*, 22, (5), 661–681.

Berthon, P. R., Pitt, L. F., McCarthy, I., & Kates, S. M. (2007), When customers get clever: Managerial approaches to dealing with creative consumers. *Business Horizons*, *50,* (1), 39–47.

Bourdieu, P. (2013), *Manet, Une révolution symbolique, Cours au Collège de France 1998-2000*, Editions du Seuil, Paris.

Chan, K.W., Yim, C.K., and Lam, S.S.K. (2010), Is Customer Participation in Value Creation a Double-Edged Sword? Evidence from Professional Financial Services Across Cultures. *Journal of Marketing*, 74, (5), 48-64.

Corley, K.G., and Gioia, D.A. (2004), Identity Ambiguity and Change in the Wake of a Corporate Spin-off. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 49, (2), 173–208.

Cova, B. (2008), Consumer Made, quand le consommateur devient producteur. *Décisions Marketing*, 50, (2), 19–27.

Cova, B., & Cova, V. (2009). Les figures du nouveau consommateur: une genèse de la gouvernementalité du consommateur. *Recherche et Applications en Marketing*, 24 (3), 81–100.

Cova, B., Pace, S., and Skalen, P. (2015), Brand volunteering: Value co-creation with unpaid consumers. *Marketing Theory,* 1-21.

Cronin, A. M. (2004), Currencies of Commercial Exchange: Advertising agencies and the promotional imperative. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 4(3), 339–360.

Dambrin, C., Lambert, C., and Sponem, S. (2007), Control and change - Analysing the process of institutionalisation. *Management Accounting Research*, 18, (2), 172–208.

DiMaggio, P.J., and Powell, W.W. (1983), The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48 (2), 147-160

Dijksterhuis, M. S., Van Den Bosch, F. A. J., & Volberda, H. W. (1999), Where Do New Organizational Forms Come From? Management Logics as a Source of Coevolution. *Organization Science*, 10, (5), 569–582.

Dolbec, P.-Y., & Fischer, E. (2015), Refashioning a Field? Connected Consumers and Institutional Dynamics in Markets. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41, (6), 1447–1468.

Dujarier, M.-A. (2014), The three sociological types of consumer work. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 0(0), 1–17.

Durand, R., Rao, H., and Monin, P. (2007), Code and conduct in french cuisine: impact of code changes on external evaluations. *Strategic Management Journal*, (28), 455–472.

Echeverri, P. and Skalen, P. (2011), Co-creation and co-destruction. A practice-theory based study of interactive value formation. *Marketing Theory*, 11, (3), 351–373.

Ertimur, B., & Coskuner-Balli, G. (2015), Navigating the Institutional Logics of Markets: Implications for Strategic Brand Management. *Journal of Marketing*, 79, (March), 40–61.

Etgar, Michael (2008), A Descriptive Model of the Consumer Co-Production Process. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36, (4), 97-108.

Firat, A. F., & Venkatesh, A. (1995), Liberatory Postmodernism and the Reenchantment of Consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22, (3), 239.

Fligstein, N., & McAdam, D. (2011), Toward a General Theory of Strategic Action Fields. *Sociological Theory*, 29(1), 1–26.

Friedland, R., and Alford, R. R. (1991), Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices and institutional contradictions, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Powell W.W. & DiMaggio P.J. editors), University of Chicago Press, 1991, Chicago, 232-263

Fuller, J., Hutter, K., and Faullant, R. (2011), Why co-creation experience matters ? Creative experience and its impact on the quantity and quality of creative contributions. *R&D Management*, 41, (3), 259–273.

Gioia, D.A., Corley, K.G., and Hamilton, A.L. (2012), 'Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16, (1), 15–31.

Gummesson, E. (1994). Service Management : An evaluation and the future. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 5, (1), 77–96.

Hassellath, H. and Kallinikos, J. (2000), The project of rationalization: a critique and reappraisal of neo-institutionalism in organization studies. *Organization Studies*, 21, (4), 697–720.

Heidenreich, S., Wittkowski, K., Handrich, M., & Falk, T. (2015). The dark side of customer co-creation : exploring the consequences of failed co-created services, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, (43), 279–296.

Hoffman, D. L., Kopalle, P. K., and Novak, T. P. (2010), The " Right " Consumers for Better Concepts: Identifying Consumers High in Emergent Nature to Develop New Product Concepts. *Journal of Marketing Research*, XLVII, (October), 854–865.

Howe, J. (2006), The Rise of Crowdsourcing. *Wired Magazine*, 14, (6), 1–5.
Hunt, S. D. (1976), The Nature and Scope of Marketing. Journal of Marketing, 7, 17–29.

Humphreys, A. (2010). Semiotic Structure and the Legitimation of Consumption Practices: The Case of Casino Gambling. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *37,* (3), 490–510.

Jones, C., and Livne-Tarandach, R. (2008), Designing a frame: rhetorical strategies of architects. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29, (8), 1075–1099.

Kates, S. M. (2004), The Dynamics of Brand Legitimacy: An Interpretive Study in the Gay Men's Community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31, (2), 455–464.

Keinz, P., Hienerth, C., & Lettl, C. (2012). Designing the Organization for User Innovation. *Journal of Organization Design*, 1, (3), 20–36.

Kohli, A. K., & Jaworski, B. J. (1990). Market Orientation : The Construct, Research propositions, and Managerial Implications. *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (2), 1–18.

Kotler, P.T. (1972), A Generic Concept of Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 36, 46-54.

Kotler, P.T. and Keller, K.L (2015), *Marketing Management 15th*. *Edition*. Pearson.

Lawrence, T., Suddaby, R., and Leca, B. (2011), Institutional Work: Refocusing Institutional Studies of Organization. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 20, (1), 52–58.

Leca, B., Battilana, J., and Boxenbaum, E. (2008), Agency and Institutions: A Review of Institutional Entrepreneurship. *Working paper*.

Levitt, T. (1960), Marketing Myopia. *Harvard Business Review*, (July-August), 45–56.

Lilien, G. L., Morrison, P. D., Searls, K., Sonnack, M., & von Hippel, E. (2002). Performance assessment of the lead user idea-generation process for new product development. *Management Science*, 48, (8), 1042–1059.

Maclaran, P., & Catterall, M. (2000), Bridging the Knowledge Divide: Issues on the Feminisation of Marketing Practice. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 16, (6), 635–646.

McCracken, G. (1988), *The Long Interview*, Sage, Newbury Park, CA.

Meyer, J. W., Rowan, B. (1977), Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83, (2), 340–363.

Min Antorini, Y., Muniz, J., & Askildsen, T. (2012), Collaborating With Customer Communities: Lessons From the Lego Group. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 53, (3), 73-79

Moorman, C. (2002), Consumer Health under the Scope. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29, (1), 152–158.

Moorman, C., & Rust, R. T. (1999), The Role of Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 63, (Special issue 1999), 180–197.

Nishikawa, H., Schreier, M., & Ogawa, S. (2013), User-generated versus designer-generated

products: A performance assessment at Muji. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *30*, (2), 160–167.

Oliver, C. (1991), Strategic Responses To Institutional Processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 16, (1), 145–179.

Pache, A. C., & Santos, F. (2013), Inside the hybrid organization: Selective coupling as a response to competing institutional logics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56, (4), 972–1001.

Prahalad, C. K., & Bettis, R. A. (1986), The dominant logic: A new linkage between diversity and performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 7, (6), 485–501.

Prahalad C.K. , and Ramaswamy, V. (2000), Co-opting customer competence. *Harvard Business Review*, January-February, 79–86.

Prahalad, C. K., and Ramaswamy, V. (2004), Co-creating unique value with customers. *Strategy & Leadership*, 32, (3), 4–9.

Ruef, M., and Scott, W. R. (1998), Model of Organizational Legitimacy: Hospital Survival in Changing Institutional Environnnents. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, (43), 877–904.

Sanders, E. B., & Stappers, P. J. (2008), Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. *CoDesign*, (March), 1–16.

Scaraboto, D., and Fischer, E. (2012), Frustrated Fatshionistas: An Institutional Theory Perspective on Consumer Quests for Greater Choice in Mainstream Markets. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39, (6), 183-206.

Schreier, M., & Prugl, R. (2008), Extending Lead-User Theory: Antecedents and Consequences of Consumers' Lead Userness. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, (25), 331–346.

Scott, W. R. (1995), *Institutions and Organizations*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Shankar, A., Cherrier, H., & Canniford, R. (2006), Consumer empowerment: a Foucauldian interpretation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 9(10), 1013–1030.

Suchman, M. C. (1995), Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, (3), 571–610.

Suchman, M. C. (1988), Constructing an institutional ecology: Notes on the structural dynamics of organizational communities, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Atlanta, GA.

Tadajewski, M. & Brownlie, D. (2008), Marketing and Society, in *Critical Marketing: Issues in Contemporary Marketing*. Tadajewski, M. & Brownlie, D.. Chichester: John Wiley. 183-186.

Thornton P, and Ocasio W. (1999), Institutional Logics and the Historical Contingency of Power in Organizations: Executive Succession in the Higher Education Publishing Industry, 1958-1990. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105, (3), 801-844.

Tyler, T. R. (2016), Psychological Perspectives on Legitimacy and Legitimation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57, (2), 375–400.

Vargo, S., and Lusch, R. (2004), Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 68,(1), 1–17.

Von Hippel, E. (2005), *Democratizing Innovation*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Von Hippel, E. (1986), Lead Users: A source of novel product concepts. *Management Science*, 32, (7), 791–805.

Wahieu, L.,Brenner, L., Carmon, Z., Chattopadhyay, A.,Wertenbroch, K. (2002), Control and Empowerment : A Primer. *Marketing Letters*, 13, (3), 297–305.

Weber, M (1978), Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology (1922).

Zwick, D., Bonsu, S. K., and Darmody, A. (2008), Putting Consumers to Work: `Co-creation` and new marketing governmentality. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8, (2), 163–196.