

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO MARKETING AND SUSTAINABILITY

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Introduction

The 20th century saw the rise of ‘modern’ individualism and the figure of the individualist consumer in Western societies (Cova & Cova, 2009). Just as production underwent rationalization through scientific methods with Taylorism and Fordism, human activity was similarly rationalized (Durkheim, 1998). Modern individuals became defined as rational and self-centred, with a coherent and indivisible identity (Calhoun, 1994). Multiple identities emanating from individuals defining themselves personally rather than through their group associations (e.g. Church, unions and family) created a fragmentation of society into social classes of atomized individuals (Lipovetsky, 2003). Rational, individualized, calculating and optimizing consumers (Giddens, 1990) formed rational and fragmented markets targeted by marketing (Cova & Cova, 2009). Modernism separates production and consumption (see also Chapter 2), representing a rationalized movement for improved efficiency. In contrast, ‘postmodernism’ (Sitz, 2006) called the modernist movement into question by challenging rationality and advocating for relativism so that all interpretations are contingent on the perspective from which they are made (Bryant *et al.*, 2004).

Thus, in the 2000s, marketing, in its advanced state, saw the rise of networks federated by consumption styles, ‘tribes’ and niches (Cova & Cova, 2002). Collective consumption exchange systems and citizen consumption movements such as collaborative consumption and consumer communities enabled individualized consumers to reunite through consumption-centric groupings (Ertz *et al.*, 2016; Ertz, 2017). This contrast between post-modern marketing and the marketing of primordially modern, individualistic societies would then encourage another phenomenon, that of sustainable consumption (Decrop, 2017; see also Chapter 13) through product lifetime extension, inclusiveness in satisfying consumer needs and the broader circular economy (Ertz *et al.*, 2019a, 2019b; see also Chapter 10). This has many implications for marketing research and practice, and this chapter reviews those recent developments while suggesting they might be key to more profound paradigmatic changes in the economy.

Individualism versus collective approaches to life and consumption

Individualism, the dominant social model in the West, sees society as made up of individuals who are defined less by a solid social identity but are instead motivated by their interests and needs (Han *et al.*,

2021). The consumption model of the individualist consumer is, therefore, strongly characterized by ‘privileged’ possession or ownership, as well as a guarantee of fundamental freedom and self-realization for the consumer (Dabadie & Robert-Demontrond, 2022). This explains why, for example, individualistic consumers tend to spend comparatively less on social food consumption (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2002). Some cultural discrepancies subsist, though, with Western countries (e.g. the USA and France) being predominantly idiocentric (individualists), whereas Eastern ones (e.g. China, Japan) are allocentric (collectivists) (Sun *et al.*, 2004). The unitary model in household economics, which assumes that the household is acting as a single individual with a unique utility function and a common budget limitation, close to acting as one individual (Becker, 1974), is illustrative in this regard.

This consumerism mentality is paradoxically a source of consumer discontent. As De Angelis (2004) mentions:

A strong consumerist bent – what William Wordsworth in 1807 called ‘getting and spending’ – can promote unhappiness because it takes time away from the things that can nurture happiness, including relationships with family and friends.

In fact, individuals with more materialistic values have extrinsic goal orientations typically revolving around status, image, possessions, and receiving rewards and praise, which lead to poorer well-being due to greater unhappiness in relationships, more psychological problems, and poorer mood (Myers, 2001; Kasser, 2003). In addition, individualistic consumerism is widely questioned for ecological reasons as it increases pressure on limited resources, generates pollution, disturbs ecosystems, and could potentially also be linked to climate change (Belz & Peattie, 2012; Ertz, 2021). Hence, a trend towards ‘voluntary simplicity’ has flourished, advocating downgrading, modesty in consumption and favouring human wellbeing over material possession (Robert-Demontrond, 2015; Dabadie & Robert-Demontrond, 2022) (see Chapter 15). In addition, the conjoint effects of the global financial crisis and the resulting decrease in purchasing power, technological advances and consumers’ quest for meaning in consumption also led to the development of a whole new economic realm, the collaborative economy and its counterpart in collaborative consumption.

Rise and development of collaborative consumption

The notion of collaborative consumption has become a buzzword in the 2010s (Ertz *et al.*, 2016), yet it has its roots in Hawley’s (1950) theory of human ecology, used by Felson and Spaeth (1978) to evoke sharing and related practices. Collaborative consumption in this context was specific to family or friendship groups who shared goods or services for economic purposes. For example, a family might share a single washing machine, while a group of friends might use a single car for a road trip. In a similar sphere of proximity, acts of giving, lending, renting or bartering goods and services share similar levels of ‘collaboration’ provided they occur between consumers (Decrop, 2017; Ertz, 2017).

This change in consumer behaviour was made possible by substantial advances in digital technologies, such as Web 2.0 in 2005 (Peugeot *et al.*, 2015). Using digital platforms allowed for better coordination, scalability and even internationalization of collaborative consumption patterns. In contrast to the modernist perspective on consumption, which strictly separates consumer (consumption) from producer (production), collaborative consumption manifests postmodernism by blurring the lines between both roles, with consumers becoming prosumers (Ritzer *et al.*, 2012) adopting both merchant’s and producer’s roles (Decrop, 2017). Toffler’s prosumer concept was formulated in 1980 to encapsulate this hybridizing (Ritzer *et al.*, 2012). Currently, the prosumer concept has extended across multiple sectors and domains especially in energy (production-consumption), but

also in fashion, healthcare, education, agriculture, technology, and it underpins key trends such as the digital and sustainable transitions (Ertz *et al.*, 2025). The following are examples of resource circulation systems involving consumers as merchants and producers (adapted from Ertz *et al.*, 2016, 2019c; Botsman & Rogers, 2010):

- 1 The merchant-consumer:
 - a Redistribution system: organization of the transfer of goods from a weary owner to a willing buyer (transfer of ownership) in the form of resale, barter or donation (e.g. Craigslist [a Canadian online classified advertising website]).
 - b Product-service system: organization of an exchange (loan, rental, sharing) enabling the individual to use an asset (e.g. parking, vehicle, land, warehouse and housing) without transfer of ownership (e.g. Loue1Robe, Turo, ShareBee, Airbnb and Sonder).
 - c On-demand service: organization of an exchange of services (e.g. transportation, cleaning, DIY and parking), usually via a digital platform or mobile application (e.g. Amigoexpress, Netlift, UberX, CuisineVoisine, Homeaway, ParkMoi! and Copilote).
 - d Local cooperative system: grouping of local practices based on cooperation or networking. These may vary substantially in size, ranging from small (e.g. La Remise [Canadian tool-sharing cooperative], Cadwyn Housing Association [British housing cooperative] and Western Sugar Cooperative [American agricultural cooperative]) to large (e.g. Rabobank Group in The Netherlands, Migros in Switzerland, or Crédit Agricole Group in France) according to revenue.
- 2 The producer-consumer:
 - a Peer production: distributed manufacturing or design, collaborative creation and modification of content or goods (e.g. Wikipedia, FabLabs and Sensorica).
 - b Asset or resource sharing: sharing business assets (industrial equipment, cutting-edge technological tools, etc.) and human resources to reduce equipment purchases, make dormant assets more profitable and foster a continuum of employment for the workforce (e.g. BizBiz Share and Automated Resource Sharing in your business community [PARC]).

However, the concept of collaborative consumption, having reached a mature level of development thanks to the advent of the Internet and mobile technologies, is often mistakenly confused with the concepts of collaborative economy or sharing economy (Ertz, 2017) and even with the platform economy. The next part elucidates these different concepts and shows the implications of the collaborative economy for the circular economy and sustainability.

Collaborative consumption and the wider sharing/collaborative economy and its implications for the circular economy

Several attempts have been made to define the concept of collaborative consumption. Botsman and Rogers' (2010) pioneering work introduced collaborative consumption as "traditional sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting, and swapping redefined through technology and peer communities" (p. 10). They rightly emphasized the importance of technology as a key factor underpinning the phenomenon (Barnes & Mattson, 2017), as well as the community aspect, which was also emphasized by Belk (2014) in his definition of collaborative consumption as "people coordinating the acquisition and distribution of a resource for a fee or other compensation"

(p. 1597). Yet, both definitions were not exclusive to the participation of conventional organizations in business-to-consumer schemes, which contradicts the peer-to-peer configuration (P2P). This is well represented in Bardhi and Eckhardt's (2012) study on the B2C firm Zipcar, presented as an instance of 'access-based consumption' and part of the 'sharing economy' or in Lamberton and Rose's (2012) research on commercial sharing systems, corresponding to short-term bike rental. Other work sought to highlight different levels of collaboration (pure or offline P2P; facilitated or online P2P; mediated with two sub-levels, notably 'sourcing collaboration' when a consumer brings a resource to an intermediary, which could be a conventional business, and 'trading collaboration' when that intermediary remarkets that resource to other consumers or businesses) (Ertz *et al.*, 2016).

Ertz *et al.*'s (2019c) conceptualization integrates three key explanatory dimensions (as continuums) to define collaborative consumption, namely: (1) pricing regimes (from 'free' to 'at a cost'); (2) ownership and usage transfer (from 'mutualization' to 'redistribution'); and (3) channels (from 'pure offline' to 'pure online'). Their proposed corresponding definition of collaboration consumption thus reads as follows:

The set of resource circulation schemes that enable consumers to both receive and provide, temporarily or permanently, valuable resources or services through direct interaction with other consumers or through an intermediary. (p. 32)

Hence, a key defining aspect of collaborative consumption that strictly separates it from conventional consumption is that it encompasses any setting where consumers can switch roles from consumer to merchant/producer. Other perspectives on the concept have been provided in the literature, each focusing on different or similar aspects. These demonstrate that the collaborative consumption concept is limited to those exchanges emanating from the consumer. From a broader perspective, the collaborative economy is a concept akin to an economic system involving sharing access to goods, services and resources through peer-to-peer transactions often facilitated by digital platforms. Despite its strong reliance on digitalization, the collaborative economy should not be confused with the platform (or digital) economy since the latter refers to all businesses – collaborative or conventional – conducted on platforms (Acs *et al.*, 2021) or through digital media. The following non-exhaustive list of collaborative economy initiatives in Table 14.1 gives a sense of the extent to which the collaborative economy is increasingly becoming part of everyday life for people worldwide.

Botsman and Rogers (2010) referred to (1) as 'redistribution systems', (2) as 'product-service systems', consistent with the terminology clarified by Mont (2002), while (3)–(7) correspond to their 'collaborative lifestyles' category which has become too narrow to accommodate the wide variety of corresponding exchange schemes. In the next sub-sections, we will explore the commonalities and frontiers across collaborative consumption and the larger ecosystems of the collaborative economy and sharing economy; explain the concept of sharing economy and try to integrate it with the circular economy concept; and finally, address the economy of functionality and its role in sustainability objectives.

Collaborative consumption within the broader ecosystem of the collaborative/sharing economy

Collaborative consumption is a multidimensional construct reshaping traditional market behaviours through bartering, gifting, swapping, reselling, lending and renting on an unprecedented

Table 14.1 Collaborative economy initiatives

<i>Collaborative economy initiatives</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Webpages</i>
(1) Redistribution	Services facilitating the transfer of items between individuals through gifting, swapping, or secondhand exchange	eBay FB Marketplace The Salvation Army ThredUp VarageSale	https://www.cafr.ebay.ca/ https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/?locale=fr_CA https://salvationarmy.ca/ https://www.thredup.com/ https://www.varagesale.com/
(2) Goods mutualization	Services facilitating the borrowing or renting of items between individuals	Peerby Turo RVshare Getmyboat	https://www.peerby.com/en-nl https://turo.com/ca/en https://rvshare.com/ https://www.getmyboat.com/
(3) Ridesharing	Consumers using their personal vehicles to provide transportation to others	Uber Lyft BlaBlaCar DiDi	https://www.uber.com https://www.lyft.com/ https://www.blablacar.fr/ https://web.didiglobal.com/au/rider/
(4) Coworking spaces	Shared workspaces used by freelancers	LiquidSpace Peerspace	https://liquidspace.com/ https://www.peerspace.com/ca/plan/coworking-space
(5) Crowdfunding/ peer-to-peer lending	Mostly platforms allowing consumers to fund projects (<i>crowdfunding</i>) or lend money directly to each other (<i>peer-to-peer lending</i>)	<i>Crowdfunding</i> Patreon GoFundMe Kickstarter <i>Peer-to-peer lending</i> LendingClub Upstart Prosper	https://www.patreon.com/en-GB https://www.gofundme.com/en-gb https://www.kickstarter.com/ https://www.lendingclub.com/ https://www.upstart.com/ https://www.prosper.com/
(6) Crowdsourcing/ gig work platforms/gig economy	Services connecting individuals acting as freelancers with short-term jobs or tasks;	Amazon MTurk Upwork TaskRabbit Topcoder HeroX	https://www.mturk.com/ https://www.upwork.com/ https://www.taskrabbit.ca/ https://www.topcoder.com/ https://www.herox.com/
(7) Accommodation sharing	Services allowing individuals to rent their homes, rooms, or space to travelers	Airbnb Vacasa HomeExchange Couchsurfing	https://www.airbnb.co.uk/ https://www.vacasa.com/ https://www.homeexchange.com/ https://www.couchsurfing.com/

scale and scope (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Botsman, 2015). The collaborative economy is a socio-economic model based on collaborative consumption principles to unlock value from underused resources by better matching provision and demand through circumventing conventional intermediaries and distribution channels (Botsman, 2015). However, as emphasized by Belk (2014), genuine sharing and ‘pseudo-sharing’ might occur on a single platform. We posit that instances of conventional consumption (i.e., B2C or B2B) occurring in a supposedly peer-to-peer system can be labelled ‘sharing economy’ (SE) because the SE concept has conflated conventional

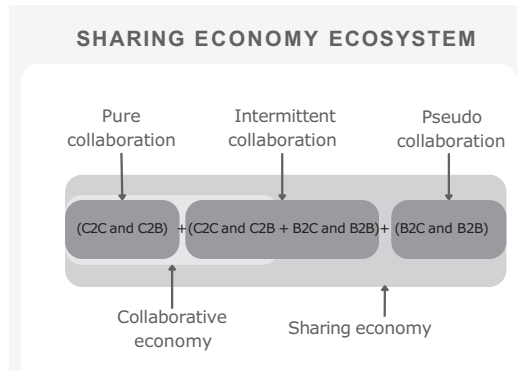


Figure 14.1 The interlinkages between the collaborative economy, the sharing economy and the three shades of the sharing economy.

Source: Adapted from Ertz (2020).

consumption with ‘sharing’ (e.g. Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Lamberton & Rose, 2012). As shown in Figure 14.1, the sharing economy encapsulates all three forms of collaboration: pure, intermittent and pseudo (Ertz, 2020).

On the extreme left, ‘pure collaboration’ is limited to exchanges where at least one party is a providing consumer (i.e., consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-business) (e.g. flea markets). On the other extreme, conventional consumption is ‘pseudo collaboration’ because it involves regular business-to-consumer (B2C) (e.g. Zipcar) and business-to-business (B2B) schemes. In-between, ‘intermittent collaboration’ best characterizes many contemporary ‘sharing economy’ apps, platforms and services because they work equally well for C2C and C2B2C along with B2C and B2B exchanges. For example, Airbnb facilitates peer-to-peer interactions while allowing private organizations to lend homes and even organizations to lend space to others.

The next two sections focus on the connection between collaborative and circular economies through product lifetime extension enabled by redistribution and mutualization.

Redistribution markets and product life extension

The linear economy can be defined as converting, via production, natural resources into goods, which then become waste, leading to environmental deterioration due to the removal of natural capital from the environment and the decrease in the value of natural capital caused by pollution from waste (Murray *et al.*, 2017). In contrast, the circular economy is an alternative economic model relying on production, exchange and consumption systems designed to optimize the use of resources at all stages of the product or service life cycle while reducing the environmental footprint and contributing to the wellbeing of individuals and communities (McDonald *et al.*, 2016; see also Chapter 10).

Redistribution (gifting, reselling, swapping) and mutualization (lending, renting, sharing, leasing and pooling) contribute unequivocally to product lifetime extension. They align with the reuse and reutilization aspects of the circular economy, respectively. In other words, these specific dimensions of the collaborative economy fit well with the principles of the circular economy and are a significant part of it (McDonald *et al.*, 2016; Perret, 2019). The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which has pioneered the dissemination of the circular economy principles to the general public,

notably mentioned that product mutualization (maintain/prolong/share) removes the need to create new ones. At the same time, redistribution (reuse/redistribute) ensures products are reused multiple times (MacArthur, 2013).

Other current thoughts in marketing suggest that closing the loop of the consumption production chain would not sufficiently attenuate the environmental issues generated by the classic (i.e., linear) consumption model and propose a usage-based consumption model (Peugeot *et al.*, 2015). The next section discusses this concept called the functionality economy in more detail.

The rise of the functionality economy

According to several authors (e.g. Stahel & Giarini, 1998; Stahel, 2016), the objectives of optimizing product eco-efficiency, heralded by the circular economy, are not enough to solve the environmental problems of our time. The sale, swapping or donation of a pre-owned item between individuals on a platform always involves a transfer of ownership. On the contrary, an approach consisting of temporarily making a resource available through mutualization (rental, lending, leasing, sharing, pooling) would be favourable due to the absence of transferring ownership. These practices are thought to contribute to the deceleration of consumption (Peugeot *et al.*, 2015).

This latter approach is part of a utilization-focused service economy (Stahel, 1994) known as the functional economy (Stahel, 1997) or the performance economy (Stahel, 2008). The first one is advocated by Rifkin (2011), who presents the functional economy as a service or on-demand economy in which goods are considered fixed assets and no longer as consumables, thus requiring a redefinition of ownership and its relationship to the market, considering the cooperative nature of this economic model. For example, Xerox sells the use of photocopiers rather than the photocopiers themselves (Chesbrough & Rosenbloom, 2002), and Bixi Montreal sells the time of use of a fleet of bikes rather than the bikes themselves (Gu nette & Doucet, 2017).

The other model of application, called *leasing*, replaces the sale of a good with the sale of a solution backed by a contractualized performance and based on the use of an integrated set of goods and services (Gaglio *et al.*, 2011). For example, Michelin's Fleet Solutions programme enables owners of heavy-duty truck fleets to outsource their tire costs by selling mileage rather than tires. Also, Pratt and Whitney Canada, with its pay per hours programme, offers various services tailored to its customers' needs, including engine leasing with maintenance service (McDonald *et al.*, 2016). In consumer markets, leasing has mainly grown in the automotive industry as more consumers prefer to lease rather than own their vehicles (KPMG, 2020).

Despite its merits, it is doubtful whether the functional economy will contribute more significantly to sustainable development due to the risk of rebound effects often observed under increased capacity (Leismann *et al.*, 2013). Specifically:

Rebound effects mean that more resource-efficient products and services, as well as the increase in resource efficiency in production, do not lead to a decline in resource consumption in macroeconomic terms if they are overcompensated by volume effects [...]. This is the case, for example, when the reduction in energy and water consumption of household appliances is overcompensated by additional sales and increased use. (pp. 186–187)

Likewise, granting efficient access to mutualized cars may not decrease pollution but increase it due to easier access to motor vehicles. Besides, new information and communication technologies remain predominant in the sharing economy, the collaborative economy, or the functionality economy (N'Goala, 2016). Such technologies are increasingly resource- and energy-intensive,

which might constitute an additional threat to sustainable development. This leads the discussion to the role of technology, the creator economy and the creative consumption it has promoted.

The rise of the creator economy and creative consumption

This section discusses the consumer as a co-creator of value and the implications of this for sustainability.

Consumers as co-creators of value, and the links with sustainability

Thanks to technological advances, consumers, organized in networks, can express opinions, impressions and experiences. Thus, brands need to include consumers in creating and developing new products and services to improve their growth and profitability (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000; Von Hippel, 2005). This process has long been known as value co-creation and has interesting ramifications for sustainability.

Co-creation of value has been defined in several ways. However, all authors agree that it is a joint, cognitive process through which different actors, mainly consumers, and companies, interact to add value to a product (Moussafir & Qmichechou, 2020). For brands, this means setting up an open, rich and evolving dialogue with consumers to gather their personal and individual opinions on the various stages of creating a product or service, from inception to production and consumption (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). For example, consumers may notably provide their inputs during product design to increase product robustness and longevity. Likewise, ongoing consumer-brand relationships during consumption increase opportunities for meaningful consumer-brand exchanges about product improvements, repair or recommerce opportunities.

To go beyond mere 'shadow work' extracted from consumers (Lambert, 2015), a meaningful value co-creation process involves the coordination and sharing of information between stakeholders; consultation through an open dialogue of stakeholders to gather ideas, needs and expectations; and the reconciliation of divergent viewpoints via compromise, followed by decision-making (Reyppens *et al.*, 2016). These facets improve sustainability by taking into account broader arrays of stakeholders, and notably a meaningful one, the consumer. For example, the Nike brand has set up a product co-creation process through the launch of a website to gather consumer feedback; consumer participation in competitions to make sneaker samples; consumer sneaker customization; improving training conditions for running enthusiasts with the Nike Apple Watch; and enabling consumers to share their running experiences with the rest of their community. Initiatives such as these have connected millions of consumers to each other and to the brand and gathered valuable consumer data through feedback, suggestions, and ideas for better production direction (Mushin, 2021). As there are many forms of value co-creation, Table 14.2 identifies and classifies existing forms of value co-creation.

Involving consumers via co-creation facilitates the understanding of value exchanges between producer and consumer, which reduces potential conflicts and better captures consumers' interests in order to craft an offering that meets the aspirations of consumers, even at the individual consumer level (i.e., microtargeting) (Ertz, 2024). Thus, brands ensure that their offerings optimally meet consumer demand to avoid wasteful production. Besides, engaging consumers throughout the product's lifetime, as shown in Table 14.2, could highlight sustainable value opportunities. This may imply more efficient and longer-term product use because consumers could be incentivized to do so, for example, through useful communication about repairability and maintenance costs during the pre-purchase phase, the use of AI tools for preventive maintenance during usage, and consignment or trade-back systems at the end-of-life phase (Bocken *et al.*, 2015).

Table 14.2 Identification and classification of value co-creation types

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Forms of co-creation and corresponding definitions</i>	<i>Authors</i>	<i>Level of participation</i>	<i>Company's response to the consumer</i>	<i>Level of freedom</i>	<i>Participant types</i>
Pre-design	<p>Open innovation Involves the active participation of consumers in developing new products through the generation and evaluation of new product ideas, the elaboration of concepts, the discussion and improvement of prototypes, or the testing of products in simulations.</p>	(Füller, 2006)	High	Yes	Open and creative freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	<p>Open source A massive online collaborative approach associated with the open-source movement that inspires that progress in the digital world is easily achievable through sharing intellectual property and allowing a large community of individuals to develop.</p>	(Cooke & Buckley, 2008)	High	Yes	Open and creative freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	<p>Crowdsourcing An approach that enables a company to draw on the creativity, intelligence, and know-how of many individuals, most frequently Internet users, to generate new ideas and find solutions to specific problems.</p>	(Rubel, 2006)	High	Yes	Open and creative freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	<p>Co-innovation It is a design method based on the contributions of several people involved in varying degrees of participation in the innovation process.</p>	(Cova, 2008)	High	Yes	Open and creative freedom	Lead users and predefined target consumers
	<p>Co-ideation The company invites consumers to submit innovative ideas, even providing resources such as toolkits, software, and beta versions to enhance their skills and knowledge and increase their participation in the co-ideation process.</p>	(Von Hippel, 2001; Roser <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Agrawal & Rahman, 2015)	High	Yes/No	Open and creative freedom	Lead users and predefined target consumers

Co-design	Co-testing Consumers, as co-testers, are involved in testing new offers prepared to be launched on the markets soon. Customer involvement as co-testers can increase the chances of product success.	(Agrawal & Rahman, 2015)	Low to high	Yes/No	Limited freedom	Lead-users and predefined target consumers
	Mass customization This form allows consumers to configure their pre-purchase product, design part of the pre-purchase product, or customize part of the post-purchase product.	(Merle, 2010)	Low to high	Yes/No	Limited freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Customization The company carries out product adaptation based on recording customer profiles or preferences.	Moon (2002)	Low to high	Yes/No	Limited freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Co-design Interaction between the individual and the object during the pre-purchase product co-design process, using computer-assisted design software, enabling the consumer to modify product components and visualize the result in real-time.	Merle <i>et al.</i> , 2008)	Low to high	Yes/No	Limited freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Co-distribution Consumers are involved in the distribution service through the self-service mechanism.	(Agrawal & Rahman, 2015)	Low to high	No	Limited freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Co-evaluation Once submitted to the co-ideation process, ideas are evaluated to assess their potential value. A closed management circle first carries out evaluations that are then opened to customer assessment.	(Agrawal & Rahman, 2015)	Low to high	Yes	Limited freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Co-communication Involving a wide range of consumers in competitions to create visual images or films for advertising campaigns	(Muñiz & Schau, 2007)	Low to high	Yes	Limited freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Participatory operations Consumers are invited to vote on the choice of a new product, take part in consumer castings, or compete to create new packaging or a new slogan.	(Reniou, 2009)	Low to high	Yes	Open and creative freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers

(Continued)

Table 14.2 (Continued)

Steps	Forms of co-creation and corresponding definitions	Authors	Level of participation	Company's response to the consumer	Level of freedom	Participant types
Co-production	Co-determination The company encourages the development of cross-identification of its needs and those of consumers.	(Cova, 2008)	Moderate	Yes/No	Limited freedom	Lead users and predefined target consumers
	Co-production Consumer participation in the production and supply of services within the limits defined by the organization.	(Bendapudi & Leone, 2003; Bolton & Saxena-Iyer, 2009)	Low to moderate	No	Limited freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Co-consumption Results from sharing consumer experiences with other consumers	(Agrawal & Rahman, 2015)	Low	No	Open and creative freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Experience co-creation Companies can collaborate with customers, generating richer experiences for them and benefitting in return from access to and capitalization on their latent perceptions and preferences.	(Rahman, 2006)	Low to high	No	Open and creative freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Co-promotion Customers spread the experience of the services and goods they have consumed through word-of-mouth.	(Agrawal & Rahman, 2015)	Low	No	Limited freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Prosumption A set of value-creating activities consisting of an integration of physical activity, mental effort, and socio-psychological experiences undertaken by consumers, leading to the production of products that they eventually consume and that become their consumption experience.	(Xie <i>et al.</i> , 2008)	High	No	Limited freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers
	Self-production Consumers engage in self-production when they actively create finished products, such as preparing a meal or assembling a piece of furniture independently, using products, tools and devices supplied by companies.	(Rifkin, 2011)	Moderate	No	Limited freedom	Lead users and ordinary consumers

Source: Adapted from Moussafir and Qmichchou (2020).

Note: 'Lead users' are a type of users or consumers who are significantly ahead of the market in adopting an organization's new products or services; 'predefined target consumers' refer to a particular group of consumers with shared characteristics that the brand involves in the co-creation process.

Meanwhile, the creative possibilities offered to consumers through digital platforms surpass by far mere brand collaboration. Consumers may personally create content, gather an audience and generate their own income (Patry-Beaudoin & James, 2019). They may also reuse company products in creative endeavours by reconditioning, reconfiguring, updating, or restoring products. For example, Klikobil is a network of local fan and seller communities of second-hand Playmobil, manifesting prosumption and co-consumption that contribute directly to product lifetime extension. In the following section, we will delve more directly into the concept of the creator economy and creative consumption.

The creator economy and creative consumption

The creator economy is an emerging economic ecosystem involving independent community builders, content creators and curators (e.g. podcasters, videographers, bloggers, vloggers and social media influencers [SMIs]) that has grown in significance with the development of digital platforms, including Patreon, Tipeee, YouTube, Twitch, Substack, TikTok, Instagram or Etsy. It enables creators to reach large audiences and monetize their content and influence through at least seven different revenue streams, including subscriptions, merchandising, affiliate marketing, advertising revenue, sponsorship and brand deals, and crowdfunding. Creative consumption, in turn, is the consumption of content generated by creators and engagement with it.

The creator economy was already defined in 2008 by UNCTAD (2008) as an evolving concept based on creative assets with the potential to generate economic growth and development. Likewise, Tremblay (2008) identified that the emergence of digital technologies has encouraged the production of creative content that becomes distributed and consumed digitally while enabling the development of new artistic and creative forms. Individuals use their originality, imagination, inspiration, ingenuity and inventiveness to create content ready for consumption and to generate income (Tremblay, 2008).

The creator economy involves different platforms and tools. First, content platforms (e.g. Instagram, TikTok and YouTube) to distribute the content. Second, monetization platforms for direct monetization (e.g. Patreon, Tipeee, Substack and OnlyFans), with some platforms such as YouTube acting both as content distributors and direct monetizers. Third, analytical tools to track performance and optimize content strategies, with most platforms integrating such tools into their built-in features. Fourth, e-commerce tools for merchandise sales can be built-in features of a platform or offered by a third-party provider (e.g. Shopify and Teespring).

Technologies such as augmented reality, virtual reality, and the broader metaverse create new opportunities for emerging creators. As immersive technologies become more widespread, increasing content is expected to be created in the metaverse and based on generative artificial intelligence, such as text or images developed by ChatGPT (notably GPT-4) or DALL-E (Haleem *et al.*, 2022). Technological shifts will also exacerbate the phenomenon of digitally native vertical brands (DNVB) (e.g. Allbirds, Casper and JustFab) operating mainly on a direct-to-consumer (D2C) basis through which manufacturers sell their goods online directly to end-consumers without a middle distribution channel (e.g. retailer) (Shalabi, 2023). Interestingly, it is no longer a question of a ‘business’ serving the customer – whether a business or consumer – it is now acknowledged that consumers can serve other customers. In fact, consumers may develop and market new services or products developed and marketed exclusively on the Web (e.g. crafts [Etsy], marketplaces [eBay]) for other consumers or businesses.

As such, the creator economy overlaps with collaborative consumption in that it posits individuals as providers, mostly of content but also of merchandise. The creator economy also squarely fits with co-creation since organizations partner with individuals acting as creators through sponsorships/brand deals and affiliate marketing (i.e., brands pay creators to promote products or services), for example. The creator economy facilitates entrepreneurship and allows individuals to turn hobbies into revenue generators. Yet, challenges such as creator burnout, income instability, algorithm dependency, censorship issues or platform policy changes may affect the creative process, while there are also growing concerns about the need for fairer compensation of creators and sustainable practices, notably on the social dimension.

Conclusion

Over the 20th century, while modernism posited a strict differentiation between production and consumption, post-modernist thought in the consumption realm has instead reconsidered that perspective, insisting on the versatility of the individual. Meanwhile, individualism and materialism as dominant social values in the West have been compensated for by a quest for collective approaches to life and consumption as well as meaning through consumption. This chapter discussed how collaborative consumption and the collaborative economy encapsulates these shifts forcefully by epitomizing an economic ecosystem in which consumers may switch roles, acting intermittently as users or providers in networks and communities of meaning-led consumption. It also specifies more precisely how the oxymoron ‘sharing economy’ fits in that broader nomological network. Specifically, while the collaborative economy involves only exchange systems in which consumers may act as providers, the sharing economy also encompasses intermittent collaboration schemes in which consumers and organizations may act as providers, as well as pseudo collaboration in which only organizations provide goods or services to consumers, mainly through online platforms. With precision in the analysis, the broadness inherent to the sharing economy concept shows how ill-fitted a concept it is and the little substance behind it. Regardless of that definitional conundrum, we can observe that economic systems now involve (and always have involved) hybrid exchange schemes and that conventional consumption relying on the modernist stance is now augmented with collaborative consumption through which individuals access goods and services provided by other individuals either directly or indirectly through a mediating business.

Both redistribution and mutualization present interesting opportunities for sustainable development. The redistribution of goods contributes to product lifetime extension, while mutualization increases resource utility by increasing use over time. Despite the desirable properties of the latter, the functionality economy, which relies predominantly on mutualization and the gradual erosion of ownership, also presents challenges. Challenges related to the collaborative economy overall also remain, especially considering the risk of rebound effects when additional goods and services are brought on the market by individuals. Besides technology being at the core of the rise of the collaborative economy, issues also concern the sustainability of digital infrastructures and energy consumption needs.

These discussions about sustainable digitalization will become more critical given the increasing importance of the creator economy and creative consumption. As a technological phenomenon that contributes to the living of millions of creators worldwide, it is crucial to ensure that technological assets remain sufficiently sustainable to accompany the expected exponential growth in content creation as technology develops further with augmented reality, virtual reality, and the metaverse.

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