From communal resistance to tribal value creation

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Abstract

Marketing expertise is no longer a tool exclusively in the hands of companies. Today, consumers create services, goods, and experiences, and they participate in the design of many of them, update them, and reconfigure them. Consumers are not mere receivers of companies' offerings but are said to be active participants in the co-creation, if not hijacking, of company's strategies. Companies often exploit consumer made resources (e.g. new product ideas, improvements, new styles and trends, etc.), but it also happens that consumers are able to protect the value they have created from exploitation. They do so developing communities that interact with more traditional market agents (companies) and assume strong market positions. In this paper, we investigate the rapprochement that exists between consumer resistance and consumer tribes theories in order to develop a framework able to foresight the coming role of consumer tribes as players on the market. Indeed, when resistance assumes a communal dimension, consumers are able to challenge given market rules and counteract companies' market power. Communities act as guardians in that they defend consumer made market value and as entrepreneurs, when they develop competitive strategies in order to exploit their own value, getting the price of it and redistributing profits within the community.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers have recently been given a new and more active role in the process of value creation. In a sense, consumers are not only mere consumers of goods and services provided by other economic agents. Consumers are more and more integrated in the market process and they contribute directly and explicitly to market value creation, still remaining consumers in the sense that they buy and use the goods and services they contribute to develop. Consumer resistance can be seen as one of the ways in which consumers contribute to the market process: in a very few cases this means that they refuse market ideology, market resources (goods and services) and the market as such. In the vast majority of cases, resistant consumers interact with the market in a critical way and they are able to co-create new market ideologies, new goods and services and new forms of exchange, transforming the market. These processes are particularly evident in the case of consumption communities: while individual resistance usually does not affect market processes, once individual efforts are integrated in a community project, the effectiveness in terms of transformative power increases. Communities today are both an environment where business can be created and creators of businesses by themselves. The first case still represents the traditional approach towards communities. The second case – community as creator of business – is the core of an alternative phenomenon that could lead to communal initiatives that compete directly with companies offerings.

The core issue is thus to discuss the changing role of consumer tribes that allow them to shift from pure communal resistance to tribal value creation. To discuss this issue, we will first rely on an overview of the theories dealing the phenomena of consumer involvement in the co-creation of value. We will then highlight the contributions of consumer resistance and consumer tribes theories and propose to mix them into a grand theory of communal resistance. We will integrate in this theoretical framework the concept of communal value creation. All that will allow us to understand why and how consumer tribes are becoming efficient actors on the marketplace.

THEORIES DEALING WITH THE NEW ROLE OF THE CONSUMER IN THE MARKET PROCESS

A number of new managerial approaches point toward an increasing involvement of consumers in the value creation through marketing processes. Co-creation of value, customer competence co-optation, value co-production, etc., are different labels used to address roughly the same issue: the more the consumer is involved in the "making of" goods and services, the higher will be his or her commitment to the collaboration process, identification with the collaboration outcome, and

willingness to buy. In addition to these consumer-specific effects, proponents of the collaboration/co-production model suggest that integrating customers in the production of market value is not only economically necessary (it is the consumer that gives actual value to goods and services) and strategically effective (consumers are more willing to pay for something they have contributed to) but essential for maintaining competitive advantage through innovation.

There are several streams of research that have addressed the phenomenon of consumer's involvement in the value creation process. Cova and Dalli (2008) identify at least the following ones: collaborative innovation, consumption experience, co-production at the service encounter, service-dominant logic in marketing, consumer empowerment, consumer agency, consumer tribes, consumer resistance (see table 1).

These streams rely both on positivistic (Gronroos, 2006; Vargo and Lusch, 2004) and interpretive types of research (Penaloza and Venkatesh, 2006; Firat and Dholakia, 2006; Carù and Cova, 2007). The positivistic streams seem to take for granted that the value is or can be produced by consumers and that companies compete with each other in capturing it (Priem, 2007). In the S-D logic, for example, it is expected that by co-creating the function as well as the meaning of his/her experience, the customer co-constructs value for her/himself: "*the customer is always a co-creator of value*" (Lusch and Vargo, 2006b, p. 284). In doing so, the S-D logic moves the orientation of marketing from a *'market to'* philosophy where customers are promoted to, targeted, and captured, to a *'market with'* philosophy where the customer and supply chain partners are collaborators in the entire marketing process (Lusch and Vargo, 2006a).

The interpretive streams are usually more critical and give the consumer an active, productive, subjective and irreducible role in the "production" of the consumption experience, being it symbolic, cultural, creatively and/or reflexively resistant, empowered, etc. Amongst the interpretive streams which deal with this issue, two streams are of particular interest because they do not take for granted that companies could capture the value created by consumers and that they hypothesize the possible re-appropriation of value by communities of resisting consumers: consumer resistance and consumer tribes.

Table 1. Research streams on the co-creation of value

Research stream	Consumer-producer relationship	Central topic
Consumption experience	Immersion	Appropriation by consumers
Co-production at the service encounter	Service encounter	Integration through consumer participation
Service dominant logic	Co-creation	Consumer as resource integrator
Collaborative innovation	Collaboration	Consumer as developer and marketer
Consumer empowerment	Power	Responsibility of consumers
Consumer agency	Narrative re-framing	Performance of consumers
Consumer tribes	Collective action	Consumers as competitors
Consumer resistance	Subversion	Hijack by consumers

Adapted from Cova and Dalli (*2008*)

Consumer resistance

Today consumers are more apt to resist corporate marketing actions and possess greater expertise in terms of their consumption and in regards to the products and brands they consume: "Consumers are wise to the wiles of marketers. They possess a 'marketing reflex', an inbuilt early warning system that detects incoming commercial messages, no matter how subtle, and automatically neutralizes them" (Brown, 2003, p. 37). This 'marketing reflex' rose against the backdrop of consumers' renewed resistance to marketing: "the new anti-marketers are not against the free market as such… The anti-marketers today argue that the process has gone too far, the system is out of whack, and our consumer paradise has turned into a quagmire of commercialism, consumption, and materialism" (Johansson, 2004, p. 41).

Research on consumer resistance has drawn attention to critical aspects of consumption, mass consumerism, and the resulting reactions from consumers (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Fischer 2001; Fournier 1998; Ozanne and Murray 1995; Penaloza and Price 1993). In some cases, consumers deconstruct and re-appropriate meanings from consumption rituals (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991), commercial communication (Ritson and Elliott 1999), consumption practices (Moisio and Askegaard 2002), commercial symbols (Bengtsson et al. 2005), and gendered self-representations (Kates 2003). In other cases, consumers react in a more intense fashion and assume an antagonistic and emancipatory attitude, aimed at actively influencing the market system (Dobscha and Ozanne

2001; Hollenbeck and Zinkhan 2006; Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Muniz and Schau 2005; Roux 2007; Thompson and Haytko 1997).

From one point of view, resistance can also be seen as a source of innovation and change that the market is – sometimes – able to control and exploit (Holt 2002; Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Thompson 2004). From this perspective, resistant consumers represent an effort made by individuals to distance themselves from the oppressive control exerted by marketing and communication: sometimes it works properly, that is, liberating consumers and giving them legitimate power to influence the market processes. In other cases it opens new room for cultural engineering and commercial exploitation. In both cases, resistance operates for market evolution and development (Carducci 2006).

Consumer tribes

The tribal perspective to consumption holds that people like to gather together in tribes and that such social, proximate communities are more affective and influential on people's behaviour than either marketing institutions or other formal cultural authorities (Cova and Cova, 2002). The consuming individual as a tribe member "exists beyond the emotional and narcissistic project described in the consumer research category. The tribe members still have some of the tourist's emotional aspects, but the individual is no longer viewed as an independent self who is trying to collect ever more experiences. Instead of being based on personal emotions, the consuming individual is a member of a tribe where the product symbolism creates a universe for the tribe" (Ostergaard and Jantzen, 2000, p. 18).

This perspective also holds that there is an element of resistance and re-appropriation in the acts of being, gathering and experiencing together (Cova and Cova, 2002). The most frequent example today is the brand hijack (Wipperfürth, 2005). Here the brand is re-appropriated by one or several consumer tribes, and the firm that owns the brand wants to take advantage of this. Examples include Harley-Davidson with bikers (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) or Apple with Macintosh devotees (Belk and Tumbat, 2005).

Furthermore, this brand hijack phenomenon is even more accentuated when the interactions with the brand tribe take place on-line (Kozinets, 2002; O'Guinn and Muniz, 2005). Recent research has highlighted the many problems a company can have when interacting with this type of hard-to-control collective actor whom the Net has spontaneously helped to emerge and bolster (Broderick and al., 2003; McWilliam, 2000). On-line consumers would appear to be more active, participative, resistant, militant, playful, social and communitarian than ever before (Kozinets, 1999). They want to become influential participants in the construction of experiences (Firat and Shultz, 1997). As a

consequence, companies no longer drive communication with these empowered customers; instead, they just provide a forum for exchanging shared interests (McWilliam, 2000). The shared passion of certain consumers for a cult brand translates, via various collective learning systems, into expertise and competencies, thereby imbuing on-line tribes with increasing amounts of production and marketing legitimacy (O'Guinn and Muniz, 2005).

The presence of tribes of impassioned, united and expert fans has led to a re-balancing of power in company-consumer relations (Cova and Pace, 2006). Examples abound in modern marketing literature: Ducati, Harley-Davidson, Mercedes, Mini, Saab, Star Trek, Star Wars, etc. Passionate and geeky Star Wars enthusiasts are so loyal to the brand that they literally make and exchange their own Star Wars movies, using digital camcorders and laptop computers. Rather than try to fight these brand devotees, Lucasfilm, the official owner of Star Wars, acts as an enabler on their behalf by distributing online 'reference', Star Wars sounds and visual effects that devotees can insert into their DIY fan films.

COMMUNAL RESISTANCE

Mixing together the above reviewed streams, consumer resistance and consumer tribes, leads to draw the picture of the communal resistance of consumers. From the very beginning of interpretive consumer research (Belk et al. 1989; Sherry 1990; Wallendorf and Arnould 1991), many authors have identified the strong link between the communal and critical dimensions of consumption. Consumers express reaction toward the market in terms of confrontation, avoidance and reasoned adaptation (Roux, 2007): these behaviours can be seen as parasites of the market: they live within it, they even flourish and, in some cases, they produce new segments (Rumbo, 2002). This phenomenon can be usefully observed at the aggregate level: (communities of) consumers are able to develop forms of resistance that interact with and integrate traditional markets, contributing to their transformation (Dalli and Corciolani, *forthcoming*). Cases of resistant communities and/or collective antagonistic behaviours will be examined in the light of DeCerteau (1980) taxonomy.

Community and emancipation through antagonism

Taking part in a community is often the simplest way to realize one's project of emancipation: in their study on Thanksgiving rituals, Wallendorf and Arnould (1991) showed how American families used to re-appropriate authentic meanings and symbols by means of mass-marketed consumption goods, removing their commercial and standardized value and increasing their subjective and specific cultural values. This process was managed by means of recipes,

preparations, and social rituals: the most important was that of story-telling, that is, the repetition of family stories and anecdotes. In this way the family was able to retrieve authentic values and avoid – at least in part – the standardization induced by mass production and mass communication. According to this line of reasoning, the point is that a communal structure, even a small one, like a family, is necessary to enable individuals to fulfil their emancipation process. It is only through socialization and exchange of personal experiences that the process of emancipation can be enacted. In the case of the Burning Man Festival (Kozinets 2002), the actual burning of the Man is a metaphor for the process of purification of the individual from market constraints. Every year, artists from all over the world come together in a desert spot (Black Rock, Nevada) with the purpose of liberating themselves from market restrictions, as well as from social and cultural conditioning. The oppositional nature of Burning Man is instantiated in some of its most important rules: the No Vending rule and its Mask the Brand Names extension are intimately related to the antagonistic nature of this event and show how strongly its participants explicitly assert their criticism of the market.

Even file sharing and its related systems and processes can be seen from this perspective: peer-to-peer systems are based on the willingness of their members to exchange goods without employing the market exchange process. They do not want to pay for music and so they exchange it for free: gift systems can be seen as alternative exchange systems and are explicitly designed to counteract market forces (Giesler 2006; Giesler and Pohlmann 2003).

Other interesting cases that can be interpreted in this perspective (communal resistance) are the oppositional community Newted.org (Muniz and Schau 2005), the Star Trek community (Kozinets, 2001, 2007), communities of consumers interested in the re-enactment of primitive forms of consumption (Belk and Costa 1998), users and developers of open source software (Hemetsberger 2006; Hemetsberger and Reinhardt 2006), individuals that belong and give support to cultural subcultures (Kates 2002), groups of consumers that express love for their preferred brands and hatred for others (Luedicke and Giesler 2006; Muniz and Hamer 2001).

In general, empirical analyses like those briefly reviewed above show a strong convergence between the phenomenon of consumer emancipation and that of consumption communities. In many of these studies it is clear that communal consumption emphasizes the emancipatory projects of many consumers and – vice versa – consumers' emancipation often goes through some forms of collective action (Hemetsberger 2006; Kozinets 2002).

Community and emancipation through twist/diversion

According to this perspective, consumer activism is often described in terms of authenticity retrieval, resistance and actual antagonism (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Penaloza and Price

1993). There are also more moderate forms of emancipation, concerning the subjective, even unaware dimension of consumer behaviour (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Holt 2002; Kozinets 2002; Thompson 2004). Both these categories of behaviour can assume a collective form and permeate consumption communities.

There are also examples of communal consumption systems: consumers do not necessarily aggregate in order to subvert the system, but behave and cooperate in such a way as to alter, correct, and affect the market process (Hemetsberger 2006). Often these conditions hold in the communities that work as gift economies (Cheal 1988). In this context, market exchange is replaced by gift exchange and these communities often work as alternative systems for producing, distributing, and consuming goods and services (Bergquist and Ljungberg 2001; Dalli and Corciolani 2007; Giesler 2006; Giesler and Pohlmann 2003; Hemetsberger 2006; Zeitlyn 2003).

Consumers participating in these communities accomplish their emancipation through the creation of a common space, which is essentially self-managed and partially taken out of the hands of companies and away from the impersonal functioning of market mechanisms (Melucci 1996). Within this context they develop a collective form of cultural opposition to the rules and codes imposed by the market. They partially "segregate" from the system that they criticize and, as an alternative, they propose the gift culture and the solidarity perspective (Giesler and Pohlmann 2003; Giesler and Pohlmann 2003; Hemetsberger 2003; Hemetsberger 2006; Hemetsberger and Reinhardt 2006; Kozinets 2002).

According to Moore (2005), subcultures are usually labelled as deviant, revolutionary, and even abnormal. In so doing, market and social institutions (e.g. schools) emphasize their revolutionary nature and increase their attractiveness for young people, at least those that want to express their need for subversion and differentiation. If the subculture reaches a certain level of involvement (e.g. the number of fans of a specific musical genre), then the market comes back and re-evaluates the subculture in commercial terms: entertainment, fashion, and related businesses are typical contexts that can be interpreted in this way (Frank 1997; Goldman and Papson 1998; Heath and Potter 2005). Consequently, the original revolutionary nature of the movement is partly regulated and brought back into the market, and the market gains new and original inputs to satisfy the needs of new and growing segments.

This process is embedded in new forms of communal resistance, which seem to be less radical, but very effective. Consumption communities develop new products and services, renew old ones, create new exchange systems, gain control over distribution, and react to the power of large companies. These activities include radical and purposeful resistance (e.g. boycotting), but extend to more moderate, creative forms of emancipation: "the emphasis is not primarily on attacking or destroying products, ads, and established market structures, but to radically alter and introduce new

elements to it" (Hemetsberger 2006, 495). And this happens without taking an oppositional stance towards the market: consumption communities are often able to affect the market process through interacting with market agents in a moderate, dialectical, but effective way.

In sum, resistant consumption communities can be seen as a means for individuals to express their criticism of the market, both in reflexive or creative terms. At the same time, they interact with the market in a "transformative" way (Holt 2002): they correct and integrate market functioning with significant consequences in terms of effectiveness, competition, respect for ethical and environmental issues, etc. (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007; Dalli and Corciolani *forthcoming*).

Community and emancipation through opposition

By the mere fact that the people gather and associate together, the group that is formed shows a tendency to express some form of hostility towards the rest of the world, towards the outsiders. This phenomenon is well known in the social psychology field. By simply assigning subjects to one or another group totally at random, the two groups can develop quite hostile feelings towards each other when competition over resources is at stake. In the case of brand communities, the scarce resource involved is the brand meanings, the product, the decisions to take about it. Some communities identify themselves as oppositional in nature against other brands (Muñiz and O'Guinn, 2001). The stigma that is sometimes involved in some practices pushes individuals to seek the protection and comfort of like-minded people in a community, and then the community will assume a defensive posture against the mainstream society. The examples are various: *Star Trek*'s true believers stigmatized by some for their passion (Kozinets, 2001), *Warhammer* enthusiasts criticized for the aggressive content of their preferred game (Cova, Pace, and Park, 2007), and Apple Newton lovers who would be considered oddly out of date with their attempt to revive an old portable computer (Muñiz and Schau, 2005, 2007).

FROM COMMUNAL RESISTANCE TO COMMUNAL VALUE CREATION

Value is created by consumers. Many authors support the idea that consumers "produce": they give actual value to the goods and services that they consume (Firat and Dholakia, 2006, p. 138). Consumers contribute to the creation of goods and services by not only reacting, sometimes critically, against companies' modes of providing, but – more fundamentally – by constructing their consumption objects, both physically and culturally (Keat et al., 1994). Consumers develop the primary components of a consumption culture (knowledge, meanings, and affect) and contribute to its development, regardless of the market. This process is based on direct, inter-personal

interactions, that is, primary sociality (Godbout and Caillé, 1992). Primary sociality is not affected by the economic dimension of market exchanges (see below).

It is through social interaction at the primary level that consumers create market value, even if they criticize the market or some of its components/agents: as in the case of music (Moore 2005), deviant and antagonistic artists "have" to develop some sort of fandom, that is a community of people that identify with the artist, in order to be able to get the market. In this sense, market value is generated and captured by some sort of resistant movement/subject if and when a community develops in support of it.

This point is clarified from the perspective of a post-Marxist elaboration of Marx's thoughts with particular reference to the immaterial labour concept (Lazzarato, 1997)[1]. This concept derives directly from Marx's notion of "living labour" and refers to the idea that individuals are primarily workers, not only in the sense that they work for someone else. They work in the sense that they actually build the substance and meaning of their daily lives, regardless of their status as employees, self-employed persons, unemployed ones, etc. According to this perspective, the most intimate and essential dimension of human beings is that of their work, in the sense of producing some sort of value for themselves and society.

In its elementary form, immaterial labour is the activity by which a growing number of contemporary workers contribute to the development of post-Fordist industry: in the field of service, culture/entertainment, software and other digital industries, workers do not perform traditional transformations, although they do add value to goods and services in two main forms of immaterial labour (Hardt and Negri, 2004, p. 108):

- The first is primarily cultural (intellectual or linguistic), such as problem solving, symbolic and analytic tasks, and linguistic expressions. Through these tasks, workers produce ideas, symbols, codes, texts, linguistic figures, images, etc.;
- The second is affective and is related to both mental and body elements. It is therefore possible to produce or manipulate feelings of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion through affective labour. This can be done directly through personal interactions, or indirectly through mass communication.

Immaterial labour is not only a fundamental activity of employees, but of any social subject, even – and perhaps mostly importantly – of consumers (Cova and Dalli 2007). Immaterial labour encompasses cultural and affective elements that ordinary people employ – both within and outside

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[1] See Arvidsson (2005, 2006a, 2006b) for a critical appraisal of marketing and, within it, of branding based on this view.

the capitalist organization of labour – to produce socioeconomic added value that will be distributed throughout society as consumption goods and services.

The distribution and communication of value throughout the society is usually realized by the means of communities: forums, meet-ups, peer-to-peer systems and other forms of collective action are responsible for a) giving the individual the possibility to communicate and share the result of his/her immaterial work and b) pooling together inputs from several individual sources, selecting the best ideas, exchanging and strengthening resources, etc. In other words, communities give individual consumers (immaterial workers) the possibility of presenting the result of their work and getting some kind of symbolic, social and even material reward.

The evolution of the Burning Man case is of interest here (Kozinets, 2002): once the event has got international recognition a market emerged. Thousands of people go to Black Rock in Nevada not to participate in the original sense (performing arts), but as tourist, "watching" the Burning Man Festival. In this sense, they benefit from cultural value that has been produced by traditional participants. This depends on the fact that the original community has developed to a point that has generated interest, curiosity, attractiveness – in a word – market value. This sounds somehow paradoxical if we consider that, at the very beginning, the BM festival was aimed at opposing the market exchange logic in art creation and distribution.

In these terms, consumption and resistance to (or through) consumption can be regarded as forms of immaterial labour. Consequently, both active and self-conscious consumers who are engaged in projects of (reflexive) resistance as well as less involved, less aware subjects who contribute to the post modernization of the market in a more creative way can be regarded as working consumers who produce immaterial value. In this sense, the distinction between resisting and creating, criticizing and deviating, resisting and resisting through consumption can be regarded in a different light (Goulding and Saren, 2007). And this is the more so considering that communities play a major role in amplifying the outcomes of individual consumption/resistance efforts.

The connection between the socio-economy of gift giving and the consumer's productive role is given by the writings of Godbout and Caillé (1992): the obligation to give is the fundamental rule of primary sociality, i.e. of the face-to-face and interpersonal relationships developed within the family, neighbourhood or in friendships. In short, the obligation to give is crucial in all those types of relations in which people's personalities are more important than their functions. Conversely, the sphere of secondary sociality is the domain of impersonal relationships, the sociality of the market or state in which the efficiency of persons is more important than their personality (Caillé, 2000). At the level of the primary sociality, individuals give what they produce, for example, services, help and hospitality (Godbout, 2000), which, according to some evaluations, represent more than the

nation's GDP (Insel, 1993). This production at the primary level is not visible and, consequently, economists do not take it into account in their analyses, as they only consider what is produced by producers and exchanged with consumers at the secondary level of sociality (Godbout, 2007). However, that which circulates between people through gift exchanges at the primary level (Godbout, 2007) is not a relic of the past (barter), but a building-block of the coming socio-economy.

Consumption communities can be seen as an extension of primary sociality: these communities are made of people that interact with each other directly or by the means of enabling technologies (internet, mobile, etc.). They often develop very strong bonds through which immaterial value can be circulated, exchanged and stored. The discussion by Mathwick et al. (2008) about the role of social capital in a virtual community brings the argument of the communal meta-level (between the individual and the society) as the one at which individual efforts produce some sort of collective resource with which consumers interact getting and or giving value.

It is at this level that (communities of) consumers are able to interact with market agents negotiating, fighting, collaborating, etc. It should be impossible to do so at the individual level. For instance (figure 1), on one side companies usually interact with communities of consumption in order to get market value from primary sociality, that is from the level at which market value is actually produced. In some cases, communities are able to protect their members from exploitation (e.g. Open source). On the other hand, communities move from primary to secondary sociality in order to "market" the value produced by consumers and they do it competing with traditional companies (e.g. Linux).

Secondary sociality: market value is captured by companies

Communities enter secondary sociality in order to "market" the value produced by consumers

Companies enter primary sociality in order to capture the value produced by communities of consumers. Sometimes communities are able to

Primary sociality: market value is defended and appropriated by communities
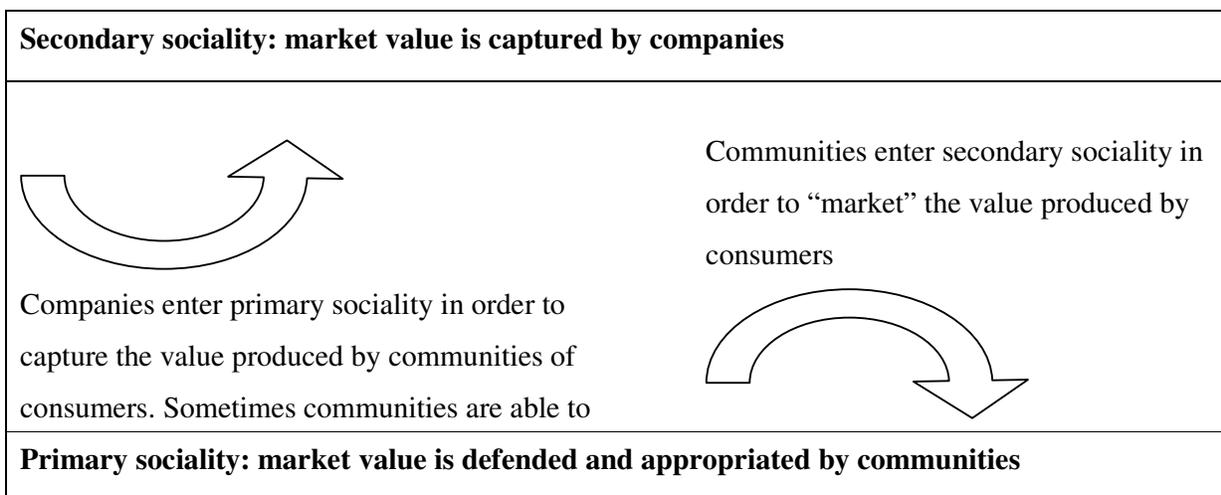
Communities act as "guardians" when they defend consumer made market value and as "entrepreneurs", when they develop competitive strategies in order to exploit their own "value", getting the price of it and redistributing profits within the community.

WHY COMMUNAL VALUE CREATION IS MORE EFFICIENT THAN CONSUMER VALUE CREATION?

Communities today are both an environment where business can be created and creators of businesses by themselves.

The first case still represents the traditional approach towards communities. The first management authors to study the collective aggregation over the web would suggest how to create business opportunities by leveraging on existing communities or promoting new ones. In some way, this top-down approach is still present when offline companies try to figure out which type of business would better fit an environment like Second Life. The questions are whether a carmaker should open a showroom in Second Life to advertise its new product. That question is still about Web 1.0. Seen in the entrepreneurial community approach, the real question the carmaker should ask is: How to let people in Second Life build my new car?

The second case – community as creator of business – is the core of a tribal entrepreneurship phenomenon. Bookcrossing (Dalli and Corciolani, 2007), for instance, is a grass-roots type of initiative that creates and exchanges value without any help by publishers, which are kept outside the project. The very nature of bookcrossing lies in the fact that a multitude of subjects are part of the project. The network is necessary to initiate a sustainable and sufficiently varied exchange of books. Publishers usually frown on this activity, arguing that it would divert books from the bookshops, subtracting value from the industry and the economy in general. Bookcrossing supporters, on the contrary, would emphasize the fact that the practice could act as word-of-mouth advertising for less known authors or minor publishers. They also add that, on strict economic terms, often one buys two books instead of one: one for one's own library and the other to be delivered in the circuit. Significantly, in coherence with the antimarketing stance that communities sometimes show and that is at the root of "consumer made", those who practice bookcrossing call themselves ironically "pirates". They do not commit any misdemeanor; however, they play with the stigma of being pirates to signal their peculiar position at the periphery of the marketplace.

Consumer tribes do things (Cova and Cova, 2002). In these communities consumers are working to solve problems related to their shared consumption experiences (Mathwick et al., 2008). Certain tribes, such as the Goth tribe, form their own markets and engage with one another in the

production and consumption of good and services. These market transactions are characterised by tribal affiliation and the reconnection of 'producers' and 'consumers', the very antithesis of globalized, corporatized and socially distanced relationships that characterize many market relationships. Cova, Kozinets and Shankar (2007) significantly claim that consumer tribes will become the new marketers of the 21st century – equal competitors of traditional marketers. These authors regard consumer tribes as the leading edge of a force that will totally obscure the production/consumption divide. The market created by the community can have three different positions with respect to the "official" market of the company (Cova and Pace, 2008):

- *Conflicting* position against the official market. In this case it is an overt expression of a negative antimarketing position.

- *Integration* of what normal markets could not provide to the true believers. A fan searching for a rare vintage version of a song of his or her preferred band should refer to the community to satisfy this particular need, both in real terms (having the vinyl) and symbolically (enjoying the song with other connoisseurs).

- *Extension* of the official market. In this case, any consumer of the brand – regardless of whether or not that consumer belongs to a community – can find objects or activities linked to that brand both in the official market and in the community creations. The community creates a market that integrates the company's offer for the common user. A fans website that eagerly provides gossip news around a celebrity can be a source of information for normal users too.

The three situations can coexist. Videos made by fans of a TV series as a form of gift for the fellow members of the community can be posted on open websites and enjoyed also by an audience that does not belong to the community. The markets created by the entrepreneurial communities have a role to complete some gap that is left open by the normal economy. Like flea markets, the markets created by the communities can be seen as strange by the mainstream, but they represent a source of creativity that completes the offer of the company.

This integrative action is particularly relevant for brands. A brand can be considered a polysemic system: many meanings combine together to form a constellation. For the most complex brands, this system is rich and incomplete. Nutella (the famous hazelnut spread) has several meanings (Cova and Pace, 2006). A community can help by adding new ones coherently with what already exists. For instance, the hedonism of Nutella is one of its meanings. The dialogue that can develop in a community of Nutella lovers could integrate that meaning with a mild sense of guilt or with a dichotomy between the good of Nutella and self-discipline. All these variations of meanings cannot be conveyed by a single source, that is, the company. A community can help in this operation. The

world of a brand is applied in many instances and translated in different forms by the community, since the company could not do it alone.

One could observe that this operation of integration really would not need a community. An individual could do the same alone. Actually, the concept of community is necessary. Like languages, the creation of a meaning occurs through a dialogue, that is, within a community, a group with a shared language that spent time interacting. The word "home" gets its sense through daily use among people. Similarly, the Nike logo acquires a sense through a dialogue among consumers. The preferred source of this dialogue is the community of those passionate about that brand. At the other extreme, one can argue that the entire market formed by all the consumers does the same: it redefines the meaning of a brand the same way as a community. The difference with the community is still present. The community is organized to create and take action very quickly, more critically, and with more competencies, compared with the slow formation of a public opinion or a fad.

Communities as creators of collective outcomes and market makers differ from individual consumers and the market as a whole. Communities develop "we-intentions" that are of a higher order with respect to the individual or the anomic masses. We-intentions are: "(1) mutual responsiveness among participants to the intentions and actions of others, (2) collective commitment to the joint activity, and (3) commitment to support others involved in the activity" (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006, p. 1101). We-intention is the willingness of the community as a whole. The community can be considered as a single head with many neurons represented by its members. People in communities wish to contribute owing to their social identity, their identification with the group. The utilitarian consideration of giving something to the community in order to receive something else is of secondary importance. The identification with the community positively impacts on we-intentions (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002, 2006). Collective endeavors like the operating system Linux (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006) are explained by we-intentions, that is, by the community as a subject in itself. These features of the community would explain the different nature of communities' creations compared with individual creations. When individuals create something and share it with others, what is created is a repository of different contributions. When the community is at stake, the outcome is collective, with no authors that overcome others. The result is unique and is expressed by a single collective mind that cannot be referred to any individual. This would explain also why communities remain the same even when members leave.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, the case of vintage car collecting (Leigh et al., 2006) can be employed in order to better understand the role of the community in the process of market value creation, with implications at both the primary and the secondary levels of sociality. In the process of restoring vintage cars the community plays a very important role as both the repository of cultural and affective resources (social capital) and as the collective subject that develops and holds the rules to follow in the restoring process (guardian). This process is not only a technical one related to the material restoring of the car, but the subject also has to perform other ritual and symbolic activities in order to become a member of the community and, hence, obtain access to communal resources. Vintage cars were once ordinary cars, that is, ordinary products realized by ordinary automotive companies. At a certain point in time, they were considered obsolete and removed from the market. They were now "old" cars and had virtually no value other than for marginal activities such as spare parts retrieval, recycling, etc.: at this stage, these objects lose all value at the secondary level of sociality (market) and are consequently eliminated.

After some time, and given special conditions, old cars become "vintage" cars. The "immaterial labour" of individual consumers restores these objects' cultural and affective value. In this case, cultural value comprises competence, knowledge, technical skills that are required to restore such a car. Affective value is related to the amount of passionate effort that these people employ when working on their cars, to the intensity of their emotional attachment to it, and to the importance allocated to the product in the owner's relationship with other people, whether they are interested in the vintage car culture or not .

In order to accomplish the task of restoration, it is often necessary to rely on other subjects that are competent, specialized and committed to the "cause": these subjects interact with one another, forming networks of immediate personal ties. The product has been retrieved from the secondary sociality, where they had virtually no significance, to the primary level. It is at this level that the value of the object is recovered and even increased beyond its original value due to individual consumers' immaterial labour (as individuals and in cooperation with one another).

At the end of the process, the individual and the community have restored value (and soul) to the product. The vintage car, once properly restored, is assigned a price. The vintage car market is almost like a second-hand market. There are no companies and/or intermediaries, with the exceptions of a few small ones. The market is strictly linked to the community, which influences, secures, and legitimates prices by means of a number of tools (journals, forums, meetings, competitions, exhibitions, etc.). There are also small companies that enter the market to assist and support (and even profit from) vintage car owners in the restoring process, but they do not usually

have the power to affect the market process, perhaps because passionate members of this community usually run them. Consequently, through the community the product is returned to secondary sociality (market) that differs significantly from the original one (the mass market for automobiles) due to social, cultural and affective norms administered at the community level.

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