Chapter 10

Novel Forms of Consumption in the Postmodern Era

Myriam Ertz
LaboNFC, University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada

Walid Addar
LaboNFC, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Canada

Asmaah Sultan
LaboNFC, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Canada

ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses collaborative and creative consumption. Collaborative consumption is the exchange of goods and services between individuals and challenges the fundamental concept of ownership. It is closely linked to the circular economy, promoting product lifetime extension and resource mutualization, which contribute to reducing environmental impact. Companies are working to adapt to this trend by rethinking their business models. In contrast, creative consumption refers to the (mostly digital) ecosystem in which consumers use digital tools and services to become active creators of original content primarily disseminated across various online platforms. Creative consumption is also tangential to consumers' design, creation, marketing, remarketing, and reutilization of products using traditional approaches (e.g., production and self-production) or technologies such as 3D printing. The chapter also deals with co-creation, which involves consumers partnering with organizations throughout the product or service life cycle from design to disposal.

INTRODUCTION

Collaborative and creative consumption reflects major societal changes that fit perfectly into the postmodern era (Kim, 2020). In this new era, rigid structures and traditional norms are giving way to greater flexibility, a questioning of hierarchies, and a search for authenticity. Collaborative and creative consumption embody these values by allowing individuals to actively participate in creating and exchanging goods, services, and content. They advocate a horizontal approach in which consumers are not simply recipients but key players. The movement is also rooted in postmodernist ideas that emphasize diversity, pluralism, and fragmentation. Collaborative and creative consumption celebrate this diversity by offering a variety of options, from product customization to content co-creation. They adapt to individual tastes and different needs and reflect the complexities of postmodernism.

The rise of collaborative and creative consumption marks an important turning point in the evolution of modern consumer behavior (Durif et al., 2016a). To place this development in context, it is important to look at the 20th century, often referred to as the "century of the self" (Curtis, 2002), during which the individual occupied a central place in society. According to Curtis (2002), The 20th century has been marked by the growth of consumption and materialism, both fertile grounds for the gradual fragmentation of historical social, workers', or religious communities and social relationships. In other words, the values of consumption and possession of material goods have deteriorated historical group membership, leading to a consumer society focused on material acquisition and the cult of personality, hence individualism. However, social, technological, economic, and even ecological shifts have eroded that movement in recent decades. Indeed, there has been a stark increase in loneliness and isolation in the social realm; powerful technologies connecting individuals – at least digitally – in the technological area; environmental degradation related to over-production and consumption in the ecological area; and global financial dysfunctions disrupting the economy and leading consumers to reunite to face financial hardships (e.g., children staying with parents; collective kitchens; swapping meets). Hence, manifestations of de-individualization in society include not only citizen movements focused on sustainability and environmental impact but also the rise of networks and systems of collective consumer exchange (Curtis, 2002).

More specifically, the changes in the consumption landscape have notably been driven by awareness of the environmental and social impacts of overconsumption and the desire to reduce these impacts (Fournier, 2020). In particular, collaborative consumption is based on the principle of sharing and exchanging goods and services between individuals. Short-term rental platforms like Airbnb or ride-hailing platforms like Uber have fundamentally changed how people access goods and services and challenged traditional ownership models (Slee, 2016). However, the environmental

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