

# Deconstructing Marketing: How Should We Approach Marketing in the New Economy?

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## Abstract

As a business function, marketing generates strong resistance within both consumers and companies that favour sustainable consumption and development, so we want to figure out how marketing should evolve to fit into this new economic scheme. In this article, we will analyse the experiences and main conclusions of a focus group about how should business approach marketing in the new economic models. For this, we will first conceptualize both the new economic models and the marketing criticism, as well as the focus group as a qualitative research tool that can help us to frame broader research.

We want to highlight the methodology of doing a focus group during a conference as well as the benefits of conducting such a group. The discussion of the focus group brings up two important issues: (a) the *green gap* in consumers, and (b) the fundamental differences between green and sustainable consumption and, consequently, between green and sustainable marketing.

We will analyse the main territories opened during the research, which will help us define a marketing model aligned with the new economies during further research. Our analysis will explore the importance of vocabulary for the perception of marketing, the fact that marketing should be created within the community, or the necessity to create a marketing model using a systemic consensus.

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**Keywords:** Marketing, compnies, consumers

## Introduction

In this article, we will scrutinize the experience and main conclusions of a focus group with the caption: “how should we approach marketing in the new economy models?” For this purpose, we will firstly conceptualize the new economy models and the marketing criticism, as well as the focus group

which will be utilized as a qualitative research tool that can provide assistance in framing a broader research.

Therefore, in order to start an in depth research about how companies can approach marketing with the intention to regain the consumer's trust and build a more sustainable economy, a plan was hatched. We organized a focus group inside the congress called NESI forum, which is a Global Forum on New Economy and Social Innovation that was celebrated in Malaga (Spain) in April 2017.

We would like to highlight the methodology constrains that emerges as a result of implementing a focus group during a conference as well as the benefits. We would also like to highlight the main territories that are set in motion during the research. This will equip us with the assistance we need to define a marketing model that is aligned with the new economies when carrying out further researches.

One of the major points of discussion that is evidently noticeable is the difficulties that the consumer and the self considered sustainable consumer is faced with to purchase, considering their value due to the missing integration of societal macro-level contemplation with the organization's micro level practice.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **New Economic Movements**

We included our research in the academic trend that affirms that capitalism, as the main economic system in the occidental world, is exhausted and in deep crisis (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005; Doogan, 2013; du Gay & Morgan, 2013; Mander, 2013; Žižek, 2014). With this idea in mind, it has become a matter of critical concern, both theoretically and substantively, within a range of disciplinary fields. Different studies and theories have come to light that we can qualify as neo capitalists, anticapitalists or post capitalists.

The self defined New Economic Models (NEMs) are a group of socio economics theories, movements, and organizations that express the current economic model as a model that is not working for the majority of the people. Thus, this comprises of our social and environmental spheres and endeavours to demonstrate that other economic models are feasible. Diego Isabel (2017), promoter and director of the New Economy and Social Innovation Forum, states on the New Economy Forum website:

“Models such as Social and Solidarity Economy, Economy for the Common Good, Sharing Economy (based on values), Circular Economy, Fair Trade, Social Enterprises, Transition Town or Degrowth are demonstrating both theoretically and practically that there are alternatives.”

As we can deduce from the quotation, there are several manifestations of this new economy. However, they all have one thing in common, which is an urge for a sustainable development. This therefore puts a demand on the economic actors such as consumer, companies and government, and it takes into consideration not only the financial profit but also the social and environmental effects of their economical activity. It also reflects on the economic activity as a means of enduring equitable and enhanced quality of life.

Additionally, these movements also have institutional support such as the European Economic and Social Committee (2017). The EESC calls for society to begin an economic transition from over-exploitation of resources, and a throw-away culture to a more sustainable job-rich era. This should be solely based on quality rather than quantity in a document titled “Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the functional economy.” According to the same document, it discloses that “the EESC would very much like to see Europe take the initiative in devising new economic models.”

In a previous opinion document of the EESC, evaluating the Common Good Economy, it enunciates that “the Europe 2020 framework proposes the transition towards a European Ethical Market which will foster social innovation”. The main characteristics of these models are (Mandel, 2013):

- nature comes first
- localization and globalization
- experiments in corporate values and structure
- hybrid economic models

Consequently, the EESC also organized an event in 2017 titled “New economy models and social innovation; an opportunity for a better Europe” and this quote was included in the presentation;

“In the last couple of years, the combination of opportunities brought about by digital revolution and the emergence of new consumer behaviours and aspirations have triggered radical change in the way we buy, exchange or even value goods and services, also known new economy models.”

These new economies can be defined as postcapitalist schemes. All of them have a common root. They consider that the current economical system is not working towards the collective interest of human beings and the ecosystem. Therefore, there is a necessity to carry out an inquest into other models and show their feasibility, centering the economy in the financial, social, and environmental pillars.

The main causes of these post capitalist ideas are (Archibugi, 2008, p.511):

- The extension of the non-market area and the decline of capitalist production and profitability;
- The spread of small and medium non-capitalist firms, even in the sector that is aimed at making profit;
- The emergence and growth of the “third sector” or “non-profit sector”;
- The qualitative rise and the quantitative decline of the state.

We define the new economy models (NEMs) as postcapitalist economic models that attempt to find sustainable development for human beings, the environment and the society as a whole, including future generations. In these models, the benefits turn out to be a means to guarantee sustainability.

### **Marketing Criticism**

The common belief system among these new economies is that marketing is an essential part to discover what is wrong with the economic system. In the words of Varey (2010, p 114), “The growth goal of laissez-faire capitalism has not produced continually greater happiness, but there is much evidence of resulting manipulation by marketers, obsessive materialism, environmental degradation, endemic alienation, and loneliness.”

According to Philip Kotler (2015), an economist and marketing guru, he stated; “marketing is the enabler of capitalism. It is the Engine of Capitalism. Without marketing, capitalism would collapse.” Kotler says that capitalism is the best economic system for producing the greatest volume and diversity of goods and services, and it needs marketing that will make available enough buyers for all the goods and services that it is capable of producing. Furthermore, according to Kotler, “Marketing jobs today is to sell materialism and consumption. Tomorrow’s marketing will be totally different.”

In the prologue of the book "Generación Marketing" by Victor Molera (2006), Federico Mayor Zaragoza states that “although marketing has achieved outstanding achievements as an instrument to understand people's lives and conceive solutions of value, nevertheless it has shown inability to give response to the great challenges faced by the society and companies.”

According to project “Reconnect”, from the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA, 2011), consumer scepticism is growing with 62% in United Kingdom and 54% in United States. As a result, consumers voice out that corporations are only interested in selling products. Another conclusion from the WFA project is that people assume marketers don’t listen, they are skeptical to the companies’ motives, they pass blames to marketing for problems and always want to regulate it. However, nowadays, consumers are in control of evaluations that are given about brands.

Back to our research, the goal of this focus group is to define how we feel marketing should help the new economy and how it can be different. When we try to redefine the business practices inside the new economies paradigm, organizations find it often difficult to sell products or services. This is because they have the impression that the marketing tools are not consistent with their values. Often times, Marketing is seen as a vital part of the consumerist society, but its basic principles and techniques can be used by new economy corporations, in order to be economically sustainable and make a difference.

## **Methodology**

### **The Focus Group**

A focus group is a technique involving the use of in-depth group interviews in which participants are selected. This is because they are a purposive, not necessarily a representative sampling of a specific population. Thus, this group is focused on a given topic. This definition is extracted from Lederman (as cited in Thomas et al., 1995), which states that “a focus group is a technique involving group interviews in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative sampling of a specific population.” The most important feature is that this group is being focused on a given topic.

This is the situation in our focus group. Therefore, the participants are already sensitive to the new economies as they have attended an event about this topic. Hence, they make a decision without been coerced or manipulated to join a session related to marketing among other activities, showing keen interest in the discussion. The proposed challenge was presented as a focus group with the title: “Deconstructing marketing: How should we approach marketing in the new economy?”

Consequently, it had three (3) main goals:

1. To define our feelings about current marketing practices and vocabulary;
2. To share good marketing practices;
3. To create the basis for marketing we feel comfortable with.

The focus group is dynamic in nature to explore a different way, and their findings will be used to precede other qualitative and quantitative procedures. However, our main purpose with this focus group is to discover territories and ideas that can be utilized for future quantitative and qualitative procedures. The uniqueness of a focus group is its ability to generate data based on the synergy of the group interaction (Green et al., 2003 as cited in Rabiee, 2004, p. 656). Hence, that is why after much consideration and deliberation, we had a clear opinion that a focus group was a good first step in our qualitative research. This research is, however, aimed at understanding

how we should address marketing in an economy for the collective benefit of all.

Nonetheless, we are aware of the main downsides of this technique. It is susceptible to bias from the moderator's point of view, and discussions may be diverted or dominated by a participant. As a result of this, the information can bring difficulties for analysis and generalizations. Therefore, we are using these data only as tracks, and they will be interpreted in the context of the group and its particularities and will be complemented in future research. In addition, data will be collected through other instruments, such as secondary research, personal interviews, and quantitative research.

On the other hand, this technique allows us to explore the subject associated with the feelings that emerge on both the participants and investigator. This provides a collective data full of meanings that can make allowances for the visualization of the perspectives around the object of the investigation.

Table 1  
**Headings to help in the interpretation of focus group data**

Krueger (1994)	Krueger & Casey (2000)	F.Rabiee recommendation
Words	Frequency	Words
Context	Motion	Context
Internal consistency	Specificity of responses	Internal consistency
Frequency and extensiveness	Extensiveness	Frequency
Intensity of comments	Big picture	Intensity of comments
Specificity of responses		Specificity of responses
Big Ideas		Extensiveness
		Big picture

Source: adapted from Rabiee, 2014.

### **Further Considerations and Limitations**

In this case, there was no role of recruiter. All the people attending the event called “NESI Forum” were invited to be part of the focus group. Participants share similar socioeconomics characteristics, and so they appear very comfortable talking to the interviewer and to each other. Also, they have an opinion about the topic, an important point for focus group according to Richardson and Rabiee (2001). The conversation was done in English. Although some of the participants had a limited fluency in English,

some of their comments were in Spanish. The moderator also acted as the translator when needed.

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives of this focus group are:

- To collect exploratory marketing information in the new economies.
- To identify arguments and counter arguments regarding marketing ethics.
- To develop hypotheses and territories to continue the research.

We will try to define collectively how we believe that marketing should help the new economy (and why). When we try to redefine business practices, we often find it hard to sell our products or services. Therefore, marketing is seen as a vital part of the consumer society, but its basic principles and techniques can be used by corporations in the new economy to be sustainable and make a difference.

### **Participant Profile**

The participants were those who voluntarily wanted to attend a meeting called *Deconstructing marketing: How should we approach marketing in the new economy?* This, however, was viewed as a collective challenge in the forum programme. A token was given to the participants in order to establish the profiles. The questions were as follows; name and surname, profession, country, and city and age.

They were 12 participants and one observer, and they have a common socio economic profile. Their interest could clearly be seen on the new economies and they considered themselves as critical consumers. The average age was 35, the youngest participant was 20, and the oldest 49. Furthermore, 9 of them were males and there were 3 females too. Even with this common background, they do not belong to the same circle of friendship or work. We have a mixture of consumers, marketing and community professionals, people with their own business, and thinkers.

### **Results**

The session took place around a conference table, where the participants sat freely in a semicircle to avoid assigning the seats. The moderator was in front of the group, taking notes in some paper sheets on the wall.

The focus group had 3 parts and a maximum duration of 60 minutes:

- Presentation: The relationship with the new economy and marketing.
- Body: Define our feelings about current marketing practices and vocabulary used in the industry.

- Conclusion: Share marketing practices that make us feel good or to give our opinion about marketing.

During the presentations, some of the participants expressed their feelings regarding marketing and the new economies:

*I am currently working on developing a new business model in agriculture. One of the issues that I detect so far working with some partners is that they don't want to sell their products, they have a big barrier about selling. (Female, 32)*

*I think marketing is the origin of many problems because marketing puts people in a position to consume more. (Female, 26)*

We spoke at length about what do the participants feel is wrong with the current marketing approach and practices. The feelings were mostly negative and we can group the critics in four main groups:

Table2

**Main marketing critics and concerns**

Consumerism	Focus on artificial needs Creates a "no" necessity It convinces people they need something-> consumerism Confusión need/want
Practices	Color of labels and packaging is more important than products Black friday. 2x1 Telepizza Influencing perception using tricks & not ethical values to sale products/services Appearances are more important than contents It often promotes quantity over quality Not ecological packaging
Consumers treatment	It makes me feel irrelevant because it expects nothing from me excepting for my money Harass Big data:non respect confidentiality Its aggressive It "assumes" too much about the person that I am. It impoverishes communication and it treats people like stupid ones.
Meaning	Lies It does not sound true It cannot be transparent Manipulate people and change culture (for bad?) It oversimplifies complex topics It cares about environment or quality or social impact only if it gives profit. Meet quarter sales is more important than return orders next month

Source: Compilation based on the participants' contributions

If we compare these with the marketing critics defined by Kotler and Armstrong (1999) we can find some similarities:

Table 3  
**Marketing critics**

Regarding its effects in society	For its effects on competition	By its effects on the individual consumer
Materialization of society: manipulation of demand	Anticompetitive practices	Increase the price
Contempt for goods and social costs	Anti-competitive absorption	Poor customer service
Contempt for goods and social costs	Entry barriers	High pressure on sale
Excessive political power		Defective or unsafe products
Cultural pollution		Scheduled obsolescence
		Deceptive practices

Source: Adapted from Kotler and Armstrong (1999)

We can see that the effects in competitors are not as important for consumers. Obviously, the effects in the society and the environment, as well as the materialization of society, turns citizens into consumers. This creates a major concern.

In the next part of the session with the focus group, we analyzed several terms related with marketing in order to analyze the feelings that they created. We worked on one term at that time. The first question asked was “how do you feel about the word itself?”. Then, we tried to find some substitutive term or idea that they think is more respectful with regards to customers and the society as a whole. We reproduced here the main conclusions regarding each word:

- **Competitors:** The participants agree that they need to be competitors. Here, the word is not inappropriate. In the new economy, we should consider them as partners, cross-collaborators, alternatives... In a purpose-driven world, competition is not so important, as everyone will have a different purpose and position in the world. Currently, there are too many big companies, and this makes competition aggressive.

- **Target Group:** We have to incorporate the world as a whole (including next generations) into this concept of target. One of the participant’s suggestions was audience or boss. Then we discuss if in the new economies we will like a term such as boss. Other suggestions were: focus, community or dialogue group.

- **Advertising:** There is an assimilation of marketing and advertising. Although it doesn't generate hard feelings, it is a way to add extra-price to products and cheapen the message. Too often, there is nothing to sell. As a result, advertising sells smoke and it is too short-termed. We should change advertising with the attitude to communicate reality and put people at the center of attention. There is no company to mass; thus it should be seen as me to you.
- **Consumer:** The word is masculine and utilitarian. We should speak about users, active choosers, the citizens and not only consumers. Moreover, the person who chooses our products should be a changemaker person.
- **Needs:** This word implies a sense of emergency and requires urgent attention. It creates an awareness of wants. New economies are working towards attaining contentment and sufficiency.
- **Social Corporate Responsibility:** This term sounds old school and only negligent companies need it. A true social responsibility shouldn't be philanthropic, and it is in the majority of companies. This implies a market based on corporates, when they can have different types of agents.
- **Market:** The problem is not with the term, but with the meaning. We need to empty it of significance and refill it with a different term that includes people as citizens and not only as consumers. Plaza (Main Square) can be an alternative and more suitable word for it.

To sum it all up, some of the terms are not intrinsically wrong but they are contaminated by inauspicious practices. Therefore, if we want to make marketing for the new economy have the desired result, and we want to keep using these terms, we need to empty them from their current meaning and replace it with a more human, co-created, and sustainable meanings.

Another interesting finding from this part was the use of the "systemic consensus". The essence of this finding was to evaluate the feelings provoked by the marketing argot, instead of asking if the word is acceptable. The question here changes and we evaluated the resistance that provokes the word. With one hand up, you can show certain resistance. On the other hand, with the two hands up, you can show that you have a stronger resistance.

During the last part, the group spoke about wholesome practices and what they would consider as a positive marketing. The answers focused on the purpose and values behind marketing more than its beneficial practices.

We have created a word cloud with the terms used:

Image 1  
Word cloud about the good marketing



Source: Compilation based on the participants' contributions

From this we can see three main topics: authenticity, community, and purpose-value. Among the three main topics, “community” was the most repeated word. The participants consider it right that marketing should create a community, taking into account their needs and feelings, and creating value for the consumers and citizens.

Furthermore, we had a contribution that explains a radical feeling about marketing. “Marketing should exist in the transition period to the new economy in order to sensibilize people. An economy based on sufficiency doesn’t need marketing.” (Male, 35)

Also, another person in the group that works in Patagonia (a B-certified sport apparel company) told us about their campaign during Black Friday in 2011. They decided to dissuade consumers from buying anything under compulsion, with a clear message showing “Don’t buy this jacket. We ask you to buy less and to reflect before you spend a dime on this jacket or anything else.”

## Discussion

There is something fascinating in the critics and the comments about how the new marketing should be. It is the priority on *the big picture*, and the values concealed in marketing are more than the current practices and representations.

The participants have taken in cognizance that companies invest in social responsibility and sustainable practices, but they believe that it is done

for the wrong reasons such as; thinking about their benefit with no intention in mind to change their values and market orientation. It is known as greenwashing or social washing. Greenwashing or social washing is the selective disclosure of positive information without full disclosure of negative information, so as to create an overly positive corporate image (Lyon & Maxwell, 2011).

Analyzing the comments of the participants in the focus group, that was represented in a word tag (image 1), we can describe three traits of new marketing:

- Firstly, marketing needs to be long term. This means it should have a purpose and a responsibility towards the society. Furthermore, it should help towards building the community and bring about happiness that is aimed at guiding the company to its mission.
- Secondly, it is about citizenship. Our participants give companies a role to play in the society with words like community, relationship and people centered, which is different from the current customer centered approach.
- Thirdly, it needs to regain the certitude of the society. It needs to be ethical, positive, honest, and clear. Much more, it should be easy to demonstrate that marketing is creating something real.

Apart from bringing up some new territories for research and sketching out some fundamental traits of marketing in the new economy, this focus group had two main underlying topics which were: the consumer's dilemma when trying to be responsible and the difference between green and conscious consumption, as well as green and conscious marketing.

### **The Green Gap or Consumer's Dilemma**

As we earlier stated, one critical topic underlying all the conversation is that consumers and business have to put in a great effort if they want to produce or consume in a way that is balanced with their values and what is considered sustainable. We can see in several studies that a great percentage of consumers state that they are willing to buy from companies that have a positive impact. According to the study, Superbrands 2016 of the communication agency Havas Worldwide stated that:

- 73% of consumers think that companies have a responsibility beyond profit.
- 78% of consumers feel that it is important for companies to be transparent.
- 53% avoid buying from companies that have negative social or environmental impact.
- 63% are afraid of the possibility that the big companies have more power than the countries.

According to the report “The consumer against corporate social responsibility of brands” prepared by the consultancy firm Nielsen (2014):

- One in three Spaniards takes into account the social commitments of the brands.
- 40% of Spanish consumers would pay more for products of socially responsible companies.

The Forética report (2015) elaborates on these conclusions:

- One in every two consumers in Spain claims to have made consumption discrimination based on elements of CSR.
- 49.9% say that they have bought products because they are aware that a company is socially responsible.
- 44.6% of consumers have stopped buying a brand because of their inappropriate practices regarding society and the environment.

Although these and many more studies affirm that customers value and look out for sustainable and value-based businesses that links this behavior to the so-called “millennial generation”, there are still few consumers who act consistently with this thought they express. It is what is called the “green gap” and this has different causes. Although the main one is what Deloitte defines as “the consumer dilemma”, which is a situation where a consumer confronts each act of resolving a conflict between his *consumer self* that is mainly pragmatic in nature and his *citizen self*, that is idealistic and aspirational (Redondo, 2013).

According to the same study, the citizen would be willing to pay more for a socially responsible product “if there is a consistent justification for the price increase through a clearly demonstrable added value.” Our focus group arrived at the same conclusion, but they are suspicious about the real reasons behind the company's behaviour (referring to their marketing): “It is hard to believe that it cares about environment, quality or social impact, unless, of course, it gives profit.”

As Adela Cortina rightly says in her book titled “Ethics of Consumption” (2002, p. 125): “More and more people are becoming aware that they are citizens and not just subjects of politics, and are also consumers with the right to quality and not consumers who are fraudulent with anything in economic terms. Economic citizenship, which weaves an economic audience and not a mere mass, is becoming a reality that needs to be strengthened.”

As Cortina (2002) and Martínez Navarro (2005) point out, “in order for this citizenship that requires an ethical behaviour to exist, it is necessary to enjoy a certain degree of negative freedom (of non-interference) and positive freedom (political participation), as well as economic, social and cultural rights.” This provides a reasonable explanation to why the green gap has increased in times of crisis. However, this is because more consumers

lack the freedom and the rights to prevail their citizen-aspirational behavior against the consumer-pragmatic.

However, there are more causes that express in words that the purchase behaviour in the end is not consistent with what has been stated in the surveys. In recent years, this aspirational tendency of the citizen to responsible consumption has resulted in a myriad of websites, blogs, experts, and listings. Obviously, this claims to improve the double asymmetry of information between the consumer and the companies, as well as "discover" companies and initiatives. According to Steen-Olsen (2015, p 131), "one challenge for the consumer is the plethora of information they are exposed to from media, official agencies, commercial actors, friends and family. Even from those who are motivated to do so, changing behaviour on environmental grounds takes cognitive effort, which consumers economize."

On the other hand, as we can see in the speaking of companies, cases have been brought to light that reveal actions aimed at sustainability to be superficial at its best. Alternatively, it is directly seen as marketing Strategies that seek to hide behaviors that are inconsistent with values declared as greenwashing or social washing.

Therefore, these two reasons, the fragmentation of information and the disrepute to the communication both from business and the media itself (it is nowadays a broadly accepted myth that we are in a *post-truth* era), make the search cost increase. This makes it difficult to choose a responsible consumption, knowing for sure that the price increases (including all costs such as; the cost of exchange or the cost of search) and it is unequivocally justified by a clearly demonstrable added value.

In addition, cases in which it is proved that companies that communicate social or environmental values, and betray them in their day to day activities, produce an effect of defenselessness learned from the consumer. Their perception of lack of control over the outcome of a situation becomes a make believe with the saying; "My effort is useless, they are all the same." Although as a conscious consumer, we would like to demand a greater social and ecological commitment from the companies. Also, there are opportunities to do so, but we will give up because of the feeling that it will not make a difference.

Rafael Silvela, CEO of Havas Worldwide, comments in an interview in *Compromiso empresarial* (2016): "The consumer has grown older and has grown more in the last five years than in the last five decades. Every day, his self-awareness and power is increasing, to believe more in his ability to change things with the power of his purchasing decisions than with the power of his vote, and is that we consume every day and at the polls they summon us every four years."

## **Differences between Green and Conscious Consumption**

Another issue that underlines the conversation is the difference between green consumption and sustainable consumption that goes far beyond semantics. In their strict meaning, green consumption is an oxymoron. However, the sustainable consumption can be traced back in the times, at least from Toureau in the 19th century. It was in 1992, at the Rio Earth Summit, that sustainable consumption became a policy concept in its own right. As we can see in the final world, leaders acknowledged that “the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances.” (UN, 1992, x4.3)

Green consumption, on the other hand, has been historically a concept of the market to the producer. Being green strategically provides a market for its products and to the customer (again, relegated from their citizen self). It provides a warm glow from acting in an altruistic manner (Akenji, 2013, p. 4). Marketing is focused on consuming different green, social, fair, but not less.

According to Akenji (2013, p. 2), “Green Consumption, although incorporates environmental considerations, is at best at the periphery of sustainable consumption and, even worse, provides an illusion of progress which distracts the urgent structural changes needed in order to achieve sustainable development (SD).

It is interesting to note here the rebound effect (Herring & Sorrell, 2009) that illustrates the problem with green consumption and green marketing. Although our electrical household appliances have become more efficient and “green”, savings per unit have implied that people buy even more. Therefore, the absolute amount of consumption has increased.

Nowadays, there are three different approaches of sustainable consumption that go from the mere green to a radical downsizing (Geels et al., 2015):

1. The ‘reformist’ position, which focuses on firms pursuing green eco-innovations and consumers buying eco-efficient products, represents the political and academic orthodoxy.
2. The ‘revolutionary’ position, which is a radical critique of the mainstream, advocates the abolishment of capitalism, materialism, and consumerism, and promotes values such as frugality, sufficiency, and localism.
3. The ‘reconfiguration’ position, which focuses on transitions in socio-technical systems and daily life practices, accommodates new conceptual frameworks.

Conclusively, new economies are aware of this distinction between sustainable and green or weak sustainability. This is attributed to the fact that some authors such as Fuchs and Lorek (2005) have named it. The strong sustainable consumption is based on sufficiency while the weak sustainable consumption or green approach is based on efficiency. The intention of the green consumption is to modify the production processes and the products that are consumed, but not to reduce consumption or change the system. In addition, they can also lead to a green consumerism. Strong sustainable consumption looks for sufficiency as we said previously. Hence, “this sufficient condition requires changes in infrastructures and choices, as well as a questioning of the levels and drivers of consumption” (Fuchs, 2005).

To wrap it all up, Fuchs and Lorek argued that the lack of commitment to strong sustainable consumption can be explained by the existence of strong opposing interests among consumers and business actors. That’s why the emerging new economic models consider that we need deep systemic changes and not the current model of peripheral activities (Jackson, 2009).

## **Conclusion**

This focus group with self-considered conscious consumers has brought up several conclusions and yielded clues that can help us define a marketing model for the new economies. We have three different sets of conclusions, ranging from the very specific (i.e., regarding the focus group itself), to further research lines, then to realities that we should consider when approaching marketing in the new economy.

If we evaluate the focus group according to the F. Rabiee recommendation (Table 1), we can outline further conclusions:

- **Words:** When the participants talk about the term *marketing*, it becomes evident that their actual experiences, mostly as consumers, identify marketing with advertising and/or with sales.
- **Context:** The way the questions are presented and the comments made by others in the group influences the context. The participants speak mostly with generalities and abstractions, and criticize the mainstream marketing. The participants also include their experience as consumers and how, although they believe in a new economy and consider themselves conscious consumers, marketing appeals to them; they feel bad because of this appeal.
- **Internal consistency:** Participants changed their point of view a bit when we opened the meaning of marketing, including all the processes of meeting the demand—not only advertising and sales. In a broader sense, the participants see it easier to use marketing on the benefit of NEMs.

- Frequency: Words related negatively with needs and consumerism and positively with ethic and community were the terms most used by participants.
- Intensity of comments: There is a deep feeling of anger in general when the participants describe marketing effects. Some expressions (e.g., ‘manipulates’, ‘It’s aggressive’, ‘It makes me feel irrelevant’) show strong feelings against the current marketing practices.
- Specificity of responses: The answers are mostly hypothetical situations, as opposed to responses referring to personal experiences. They relate the effects to the people or the community. There are some exceptions (e.g., ‘It makes me feel irrelevant because it expects nothing from me excepting for my money’; ‘It assumes too much about the person that I am’).
- Extensiveness: All participants talk at length about their feelings and considerations, especially about the common ground found in the topics of creating needs and lying. The participants who work in marketing or in their own businesses spoke at length about their challenges to be both ethical in the way they sell and competitive in the market. As we stated previously, one of the experiences was from a well-known American sports apparel company, Patagonia, that defines itself as ‘the activist company’.
- Big picture: There were several big ideas or concepts that emerged from the conversation: how marketing makes society more consumerist, and that trust and value for the community should be the pillars of marketing in the new economy.

There are several conclusions from the focus group that we should use in further research about positive marketing for post capitalist economies. We can say that the focus group has opened these new territories for our research:

- A methodological conclusion states that we do not need unanimity to find consensus. We can use systemic consensus as a methodological tool; thinking about what provokes our resistance instead of what is our favourite option helps us find consensus.
- A key criticism is that marketing is about creating needs and promoting the consumerist society that threatens the environment.
- The pillar of the new marketing should be a relationship with the community based on trustworthiness.
- Language is key for significance, and we should reconfigure the marketing vocabulary.
- A social conclusion states that if we want a new marketing approach to have a real impact, we should provide a solution to the consumer ‘green gap’.

Going back to the main goal of the building of the new marketing, if we want to create a new paradigm it need to focus on community and put the

add-on of the AMA's definition of marketing (2013) "(...) creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for (...) society as a large" in the center. We have sketch out a marketing model based on a social purpose, citizenship and collaboration and honesty. Taking into account that marketing is *just* a business tool, we need a different organizational paradigm that includes new cultural theories, economic theories and social responsibility theories.

Following Robledo (2017) we can say that we already have several theories and models in this line: cultural theories like Cultural transformation and Value assessment (Richard Barrett), Managing by values (Dolan, García and Richley), Deliberately developmental organizations (Robert Kegan); economic theories such as Economy for the Common Good (Christian Felber), Memenomics (Said Dawlabani) or Conscious capitalism (John Mackey and Raj Sisodia); and social responsibility theories liB Corps (Be Labs) or Economy of communion (Chiara Lubich). There are also holistic or integral theories, we can name Teal Organizations (Frederic Laloux) or 3D Management (Marco Robledo).

Finally, there are two realities that participants feel we need to consider when approaching marketing in the new economy. First, it is difficult for the people to be loyal to their values when buying due to the conflict between the *consumer self* (i.e., pragmatic) and the *citizen self* (i.e., idealistic and aspirational). This is called the *consumer green gap* or *consumer dilemma*, and it has several causes, among them the fact that in a crisis period, people lack the freedom and the right to impose their citizen-aspirational behaviour against the consumer-pragmatic self, or the high price of searching for and identifying the sustainable companies due to discredited business communication and the huge amount of information available.

The second reality is that most of the marketing efforts towards sustainability are not holistic or integral; the marketing is toward soft sustainability based on efficiency and technology. This green marketing is sometimes counterproductive for sustainability, and it just creates a placebo effect in the consumers, who feel that they are doing the right thing.

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