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## Productive Consumption Changing Market Dynamics: A Study in Brazilian DIY Cosmetics

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### ABSTRACT

Although several studies have discussed from various perspectives the market-change dynamics of consumption and how consumers impact them, only a few have looked at consumers who act as producers themselves and how they affect the market with their self-production practices. Using data from netnography, participant observation, introspection, and in-depth interviews, this study aims to understand the strategies used by the consumers of DIY (do-it-yourself) cosmetics, which affect the market dynamics and foster a specific market apart from mainstream. We identified three approaches: the strategies such consumers use to make their products; the sharing of consumption experiences; and the disclosure of these products and practices, thereby legitimating them.

### RESUMEN

Aunque los estudios abordan la dinámica de los cambios del mercado bajo diferentes perspectivas inherentes al consumo y el impacto provocado por los consumidores, son pocos los que se preocupan con los consumidores que actúan como fabricantes, y cómo sus prácticas de autoproducción afectan el mercado. Empleando datos netnográficos, métodos de observación e introspección así como entrevistas en profundidad, este estudio tiene por objeto entender las estrategias usadas por los consumidores de cosméticos del tipo bricolaje que afectan la dinámica del mercado, evolucionando a un mercado específico distinto del principal. Identificamos tres abordajes: las estrategias utilizadas para fabricar sus productos, el intercambio de experiencias de consumo y la divulgación de dichos productos y prácticas, legitimándolas.

### RESUMO

Embora os estudos discutam a dinâmica da mudança do mercado sob diferentes perspectivas quanto ao consumo e como sofrem o impacto dos consumidores, apenas alguns poucos se preocuparam com os consumidores que atuam como fabricantes e como estes estão afetando o mercado com as suas práticas de autoprodução. Usando dados da netnografia, da observação do participante, da introspecção e de entrevistas

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minuciosas, este estudo pretende compreender as estratégias usadas pelos consumidores de cosméticos do tipo “faça você mesmo” que afetam a dinâmica do mercado, evoluindo para um mercado específico diferente do principal. Identificamos três abordagens: as estratégias que usam para fabricar os seus produtos, o compartilhamento das experiências de consumo e a divulgação destes produtos e práticas, legitimando-os.

## Introduction

Market change dynamics is discussed in the literature from different perspectives of consumption, such as engaged (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015), stigmatized (Sandikci & Ger, 2010), rebellious (Giesler, 2008), resistant (Kozinets, 2002), activist (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004), or discontent (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013) consumers. As asserted by Scaraboto and Fischer (2013), consumers play an important role in changing the field when they act on their dissatisfaction as institutional entrepreneurs. They can also influence the creation of a new market when they act in a collective way involving different actors (Martin & Schouten, 2014). In this collective perspective, consumers who share their interests in a particular product category, such as beer (Kjeldgaard, Askegaard, Rasmussen, & Østergaard, 2017) or fashion (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015), can connect with each other and share ideas that result in changes in existing market structures.

These studies show how consumers impact the market dynamics, thus contributing to its change via their active participation by buying and using products (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013) or making products and joining events organized by the mainstream market (Martin & Schouten, 2014). Earlier research showed how the agentic involvement of the consumer establishes a dialog with the mainstream market by seeking better service (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), joining its activities (Martin & Schouten, 2014), using and disseminating mainstream products (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Sandikci & Ger, 2010), or fighting and resisting it (Giesler, 2008; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). Some harmonious, some not, these studies present an intertwined link between the new market and the mainstream market. Taking a different perspective, our research advances the study of how consumers develop a specific market without establishing a connection with the mainstream market. Therefore, our article aims to explain (a) the strategies used by consumers to create and maintain a market apart from the mainstream market and (b) how such consumers avoid the mainstream market attempts of cooptation.

To pursue our research goal, we analyzed a context of productive consumers engaged in the transformation of ingredients and information into products, brands, and new market places. In this context, consumers produce and use homemade natural cosmetics made with ingredients that are not necessarily directly related to the mainstream market, such as baking soda, coconut oil, and vinegar. Over two years, we used multi-method ethnography, employing participant observation, netnography, in-depth interviews, and introspection, which were analyzed iteratively (Belk, Fischer, & Kozinets, 2012).

Our study identified three strategies in which consumers engage in productive consumption and change the market: (a) making and developing their DIY/homemade products, (b) sharing consumption experiences, and (c) disclosing these products and practices. We begin our discussion by reviewing the literature about market change dynamics and productive consumption to see what had been studied about these two universes and explain the gap that we seek to address here. Then we describe the methods used to obtain the results that are analyzed in the following section. We finish the article with some closing remarks and suggested future steps for this research.

### **The consumer's role in market change dynamics**

Studies show how the market can change through the action of the marketers (Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli, 2015; Giesler, 2012; Humphreys, 2010a, 2010b) or as an initiative of consumers (Ansari & Phillips, 2011; Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Kjeldgaard et al., 2017; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Martin & Schouten, 2014; Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013; among others). Martin and Schouten (2014, p. 855) stated, “work in the consumer culture tradition recently has shown consumers to be more active participants in market dynamics,” and these innovator consumers and their active participation are developing business opportunities as the market or segment changes.

This model of consumption, named by Martin and Schouten (2014) as consumption-driven market emergence (CDME), involves the participation of consumers in a more active way in harmony with the existing market offerings. By adapting an existing product, consumers use the *minimoto* to construct a new market that dialogs with the mainstream, rather than resisting it. But active consumers also change the structure when they contest the market through rebellious actions, either due to their divergent ideological goals from producers (Giesler, 2008), or when they actively respond to corporate co-optation by resisting it in association with producers, thereby creating a countervailing market system, such as the case of

the organic food movement in Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007). Such consumers can also try to resist to institutional market logics when they experience a temporary and local market, as in the Burning Man event (Kozinets, 2002).

The iterative process between consumers and the market enables the legitimacy of new offerings (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015) when the involvement of other actors promotes the creation of a new market. More activist consumers seek change, resisting and acting collectively to transform the ideology and culture of consumerism (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). Therefore, by following this collective way, consumers can influence the creation of a new market, involving different actors, as in the case of the minimoto market (Martin & Schouten, 2014). Those who share interest in a particular product category, such as beer (Kjeldgaard et al., 2017) or fashion (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015), can connect to each other and share ideas that result in changes in existing structures, should they seek to alter the logics in the market. Moreover, these changes can be the result of new types of consumer-to-consumer interaction, establishing an alternative form of market logic (Kristensen, Boye, & Askegaard, 2011). This connection is not necessarily intentionally established (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), but as shown in Dolbec and Fischer (2015), engaged consumers may influence institutionalized logics unintentionally.

Stigmatized consumers change existing logics when they transform a deviant practice into a fashionable and ordinary one (Sandikci & Ger, 2010). For example, in their discussion of fetishes and magical thinking in contemporary consumption, Fernandez and Lastovicka (2011, p. 297) mention the transformations of consumers and the development of their role as proactive agents of significance, whereby they “have progressed to more actively co-creating meaning with culture, celebrities, and media.” In this way, this active participation of consumers leads to additional insights, thus expanding the market and innovating on it. As asserted by Scaraboto and Fischer (2013), consumers play an important role in changing the field when they act on their dissatisfaction, as institutional entrepreneurs. “Embedded entrepreneurs include consumers with capacities to innovate and produce within their areas of consumption interest” (Schouten, Martin, Blakaj, & Botez, 2015, p. 22). The entrepreneurial interaction with the market happens also when consumers come together in consumer tribes (Goulding & Saren, 2007) or in the production and consumption of goods (Cova & Dalli, 2009).

Some consumers seek integration with the market, when they cannot find a way to satisfy tastes and desires (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013). Others act in harmony with existing market offerings, creating new options while staying part of the mainstream (Martin & Schouten, 2014). These studies

have explained the market change dynamics and its relation to the consumers' role, with the presence or absence of intent, harmony, engagement, or satisfaction, while interacting with the mainstream market. In homemade/DIY practices, consumers use the Internet as a structure to act, share, and spread their productive consumption, away from the mainstream. These consumers neither resist the market nor try to be part of it, but develop new forms of consumption to achieve the desired results in terms of personal beauty.

### **Productive consumption**

Researchers looking into consumers' participation as co-producers question its psychological implications (Bendapudi & Leone, 2003) and the perceptions of value (Troye & Supphellen, 2012) of those involved when joining the production process. The consumers' role and their relationship with the market is also discussed in Cova and Dalli (2009, p. 333), an article that advances the concept of "working consumers," who "by means of immaterial labor, add cultural and effective elements to market offerings." As mentioned by Press and Arnould (2011), the foundational idea of productive consumption is not new; neither is prosumption-like behavior (Xie, Bagozzi, & Troye, 2008). However, the concept of productive consumption appears in the literature under the guise of different terms, such as craft consumers (Campbell, 2005), co-producers (Bendapudi & Leone, 2003; Troye & Supphellen, 2012), working consumers (Cova & Dalli, 2009), or prosumers (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010).

Productive consumption (prosumption) is defined as the consumption activity of value creation that involves the consumers' inputs of money, time, effort, and skills to produce what they consume (Xie et al., 2008). Press and Arnould (2011) showed how productive consumption produces value and changes the relationship between consumers and organizations. This relationship can develop a dynamic tension between homemade and market-made consumption (Moisio, Arnould, & Price, 2004). Do-It-Yourself (DIY) is a specific form of prosumption in which consumers "engage raw and semi-raw materials and component parts to produce, transform, or reconstruct material possessions" (Wolf & McQuitty, 2011, p. 154). The tools, materials, and competence required to develop prosumption activities are explored by Watson and Shove (2008), who depicted DIY as an important area of craft consumption in which consumers are "actively and creatively engaged in integrating and transforming complex arrays of material goods" (p. 69). Their DIY activities are a consequence of the emergence of future patterns of demand and product development (Watson & Shove, 2008). Wolf and McQuitty (2011) expanded this

definition of DIY going beyond the transformation of commodities to the high involvement of consumers who transform raw materials into the desired final product.

When such DIY activity involves a desire for self-expression and personal influence in the process, it is called as craft consumption (Campbell, 2005). Craft consumers bring “skill, knowledge, judgment and passion while being motivated by a desire for self-expression” (p. 23) to consume what they produce. Although these practices can affect the market, these studies do not explain how this happens, nor they do not clarify how these practices change the market. The literature discusses productive consumption mostly in terms of the construction of consumers’ identity (Moisio et al., 2004; Press & Arnould, 2011; Troye & Supphellen, 2012), but also in terms of creativity (Dahl & Moreau, 2007), domestic masculinity (Moisio, Arnould, & Gentry, 2013), culture and craft consumption (Campbell, 2005), consumer’s role, and value creation (Humphreys & Grayson, 2008). In productive consumption, consumers create and personalize their product or search for some specific products and market characteristics (Moisio et al., 2013; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). The craft consumer designs, chooses the materials, and fabricates the product, while deploying elements such as skills and passion in the process of making (Campbell, 2005).

Homemade/DIY contexts comprise productive consumers engaged in the transformation of ingredients and information into products, brands, and new market places. Additionally, improvements in product development may appear in DIY home projects (Watson & Shove, 2008). In the case of beer, as reported by Kjeldgaard and colleagues (2017), the collective action of consumers encourages home brewers to become new, commercially viable producers. In another example, as a response to their own will, consumers start modifying and producing their own dirt bikes, thereby creating the minimoto market (Martin & Schouten, 2014).

Questioning the providence of market-made food, consumers believe homemade food is a guarantee of quality and protects their family from the “unknown” ingredients in processed food (Moisio et al., 2004). This concern with health and consumption, as well as control over one’s own life, also appears in the discussion of natural health by Thompson (2004) and in Haws, Reczek, and Sample (2016), when they show that consumers are worried about the healthiness of ingredients in food. Additionally, consumers are concerned about the work ethics of consuming “bad” versus “good” food brands (Ulver-Sneistrup, Askegaard, & Kristensen, 2011). Thompson (2004, p. 164) found consumers tend to believe that “contemporary lifestyles and modern technologies have created a plethora of unintended consequences that make people unnaturally susceptible to illness.” Even if this conflicting relationship between technology and nature



exists (Thompson, 2004), new tools and materials can transform and create new practices and also new patterns of demand (Watson & Shove, 2008), especially with regard to homemade products.

Even though consumers' initiatives to make products can affect market change dynamics, the studies have not thus far addressed this fact. Thus, our article aims to fill this gap in our understanding of the relationship between market change dynamics and productive consumption; moreover, our context provides a discussion in which consumers can become more active and impact the market dynamic in different domains without the involvement with the mainstream market.

### **Context, research methods, and data collection**

In this section we present the empirical context of the research and the methods used to collect and analyze the data.

#### ***Empirical context: DIY homemade beauty products in Brazil***

With respect to the global market for beauty and personal care products, Brazil is the largest market in Latin America and the fourth largest in the world (Euromonitor International, 2018b). According to Euromonitor International (2013, p. 4), the country “remains the star of the beauty industry” and is among the countries that show the strongest percentage in value growth since 2007. Sant’Anna (2014) stressed the importance of beauty in the history of Brazilian contemporary society and how it is related to the construction of the idealized body. Just to reinforce the importance of beauty to Brazilians, according to SPCBrasil (2016), in a crisis scenario, people would prefer to cut spending on leisure activities than on beauty. Furthermore, if it were necessary to cut spending on beauty products, people would switch to cheaper alternatives rather than stop buying.

Another characteristic of the beauty market in Latin America is the traditional use of natural ingredients. According to Euromonitor International (2014, p. 22) “the green and natural trend is well grounded, as the population has traditionally used many natural sources to enhance their beauty.” And recent research shows an expanding trend in natural or green beauty (Euromonitor International, 2018a; Mintel, 2018). Many consumer are “choosing to ‘get back to basics’ by shopping small, buying locally-sourced, locally-produced, and small-batch products, and by ‘being green,’ which is now not only trendy, but for many, a lifestyle choice” (Mintel, 2018, p. 9). A report from Euromonitor International (2018a, p. 8) defined green beauty in terms of four related concepts that help us begin the task of





**Figure 1.** Examples of contexts, products and ingredients.

defining this market: ethical (“cares about causes beyond just environment”); green (“environmentally friend”); natural (“uses natural ingredients”); and organic (“organic certified”).

Expanding the consumer’s interest in organic, natural, green, and ethical beauty products, according to a market report from PSFK (an American media company that examines trends), homemade cosmetics products have recently experienced growing popularity—a “DIY Beauty Boom,” with discernible impact on the market and on what consumers are doing in relation to cosmetic practices (PSFK, 2017). This is also mentioned by Mintel (2018) when talking about the consumer’s interest in learning about the products and the ingredients and their functionality.

Inserted in this macro-context, this article looks at an emerging phenomenon in which consumers manufacture natural cosmetic products through DIY activities. We analyzed this context to learn how the emergence of a market takes place from the productive consumption that reflects this dynamic. These consumers use products made with ingredients that are not necessarily directly related to the mainstream cosmetic market, including baking soda, coconut oil, and vinegar. The photos in Figure 1 illustrate the context and some examples of the products the consumers use.

DIY consumers develop different kinds of products related to beauty and personal hygiene, such as deodorants, moisturizers, facial toners, and toothpaste. Similar to the consumers of the natural health market described by Thompson (2004), this market links holistic alternatives to mainstream cosmetic market and involves different stakeholders, namely, consumers, small entrepreneurs, media experts, and entrepreneurial practitioners. What these stakeholders have in common is a willingness to produce their own cosmetics using simple ingredients as raw natural materials. They research and produce new products using few ingredients, five at the most, many of which also have culinary roles.

According to the data, the consumers have various terms for DIY practices, some of the most common of which were “natural,” “green,” “slow,” and “organic” beauty; or “homemade,” “natural,” “organic,” and “vegan” cosmetics. These consumers are engaged in the active transformation of

ingredients and information into new products to use as substitutes for products they previously purchased as finished products in the mainstream market.

### ***Data collection and analysis***

In this study, multiple types of data were collected. Initially, we used netnography (Kozinets, 2010) to understand the broader context of beauty and the cosmetic industry from different standpoints: (a) natural and traditional beauty, and (b) alternative beauty methods. The initial research was done on Facebook pages in groups that discuss beauty, in specialized blogs, and in YouTube pages via posted videos and respective comments. We followed Instagram pages of people and companies involved in natural beauty, magazine articles and specialized websites, and interviews published by bloggers and specialists.

This first broad research gave us clues to identify potential Facebook groups for data gathering, based on main discussion theme, volume of respective discussions, and as referrals from the consumers met with during the participant observation. Five Facebook groups were observed daily: “*Cosméticos Orgânicos e Naturais*” (Organic and Natural Cosmetics, which at the beginning of the study had 3,000 members and at the end, 11,363); “*Cosmetologia Orgânica*” (Organic Cosmetology, 3,558 members); “*Rotina Saudável*” (Healthy Routine, 180,458 members); “*Um Ano Sem Lixo*” (A Garbage-Free Year, 4,110 members); “*Projeto Beleza Minimalista – Consumo Consciente e Sustentabilidade*” (Minimalist Beauty Project – Conscious Consumption and Sustainability, 8,166 members). While joining and talking to the group organizers and members, the first author was also invited to join some other small closed groups on Facebook, as well as members’ personal pages, which provided additional insights to the research. By September 2017, the data collected from this monitoring totaled 396 pages of single-space text, plus 150 pages from the news, and magazines published on the groups.

To get involved with the market and its actors, we did participant observation (Belk et al., 2012) from September 2015 to March 2017. The observations started in the cities of Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. During the participant observation, the first author attended some online and offline courses, fairs, and events related to natural beauty. Usually, she joined the events that were organized by the Facebook groups and the main actors of the natural beauty context. The exceptions were five big events that were related to the subject, which she attended to get a deeper understanding of the context and the way consumers interact in the mainstream market. The five events were the Festival Path (2015 and

2018), the international fair Vivaness (2017 and 2018), and FCE Cosmetique. Four of these events took place in São Paulo, Brazil; in these, the first author mainly listened to lectures and talked to speakers and participants about a variety of subjects, including the slow movement, new ways of consumption, cosmetics, and natural beauty. With respect to Vivaness, an international trade fair for natural and organic personal care, the first author attended in two different locations: Nuremberg, Germany and São Paulo, Brazil. Participant observation has so far comprised 108 h and 35 min of fieldwork.

To extend our understanding of the context, the introspective approach (Gould, 1991; Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993) was used through behavior and reactions of the first author from her engagement in the consumption context of natural beauty. The introspection was important to gain closeness between the researcher and the researched. The first author wrote down her feelings and observations about the use of natural cosmetic products at least once a month. Starting in July 2016, she noted down the most relevant perceptions, behaviors, and experiences about the new practices and products she was using. Sometimes, depending on the regularity and the novelty or controversial of the practice, she wrote about it more than once a month (up to eight times a month) in order to document the perception as closely as possible to the time of the experience (Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993).

The first author had several open-ended conversations with consumers, doctors, pharmacists, and entrepreneurs, which were informal and non-recorded, and conversations *in-situ*, with written and audio-recorded field notes. She also conducted 12 in-depth interviews with consumers (Belk et al., 2012), face-to-face or via Skype, lasting an average of 68 min. The interviewees were chosen from the author's contacts in workshops and online groups based on their engagement in the communities, or from interpersonal networks, both subject to subsequent snowball sampling. Some of the interviewees were invited to more than one conversation to confirm some of the aspects mentioned during the first interview. We also conducted seven interviews with people related to the market: a professor who works with the mainstream cosmetic industry; three executives from the traditional market; and three executives in industries that manufacture organic and natural cosmetics. To ensure the coverage of the relevant aspects during the interviews, a protocol was used as a guide (Belk et al., 2012; McCracken, 2011). The formal in-depth interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews were conducted mostly in Portuguese (two in English) and the quotes in this article translated into English. All participants in the study were assigned pseudonyms.

**Table 1.** Summary of the methods used in the research.

| Methods                    | Participant observation      | Netnography                         | Interviews               | Introspection          |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Places and characteristics | Fairs, workshops, and events | Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, blogs | Homes, workplaces, Skype | Experiencing practices |
| Collected data             | 108 hours and 35 minutes     | 396 + 150 pages                     | 19 in-depth interviews   | 15 months              |

Research data.

The transcribed interviews, Internet analysis, interactions, as well as the field notes, netnography, and introspection were analyzed iteratively (Belk et al., 2012). Table 1 summarizes the collected data and methods used.

The data was read, coded, and analyzed using comparative and analytical techniques to find specific themes and features related to the research question and the literature. The analysis started at the beginning of the data collection phase, going back and forth in a series of part-to-whole iterations (Thompson, 1997). We analyzed each text collected to understand the whole, looking for any emerging key patterns through a constant reading and re-reading process. During the data collection, the second and third authors interacted with the first author to jointly interrogate the research material and discuss the first author's interpretation with a view to discovering additional connections and perspectives.

## Findings

Our research identified three strategies used by consumers to develop their own products and practices in the market through productive consumption: (a) making and developing their homemade cosmetic products; (b) sharing consumption practices; and (c) disclosing these products and practices. We explain these three approaches in the following subsections.

### *Making and developing their own products*

Consumers make products for their own consumption instead of purchasing cosmetics sold in supermarkets, pharmacies, and beauty salons. They use ideological and mythological resources (Ulver-Sneistrup et al., 2011)—such as tradition, concerns about health and the environment, and knowledge from past generations—associating them with pleasurable moments in order to legitimate their practice. Consumers' focus here is on the craft itself and engaging in creative acts of self-expression to avoid the homogenizing effect of mass consumption (Campbell, 2005). Criticizing and questioning mainstream beauty products and overconsumption, consumers develop their own cosmetics by transforming raw materials into personalized products. In her newsletter and Instagram account, on two different

occasions, Camila touches on this point: “It’s good for beauty: autonomy of choice, using fewer products, using products with fewer ingredients, making it at home, returning to and relying on earlier practices.” DIY consumers constantly refer to the traditions and knowledge of past generations to explain how easy and efficient it is to make homemade cosmetics.

The quotes also underscore the importance of the need for autonomy and self-care. Andrea shared on one of the Facebook groups her own blog about natural cosmetics, as follows: “Making your own cosmetics. It’s a ritual of self-esteem, where, through ancestral alchemy, we create a personal formula by adding energy in the pursuit of something we desire: self-esteem, the healing of an inner pain... love!” The emphasis is on their desire (Belk, Ger, & Askegaard, 2003) to access pleasurable moments of self-care while making their products. Luisa, another informant, when talking about her health concerns and the credibility of commercial cosmetic products, expresses her indignation and the need to think about beauty practices and the use of cosmetics:

It’s been a while since I’ve been questioning the ingredients in the cosmetics and products I use. What’s the use of paying more to eat organic and then covering your face with garbage? Worse, what’s the use of fighting for a better world and then using plastic balls to exfoliate your face? For a better world, we need the world not only to exist but also to be habitable, right?

Other members of the Facebook group where she posted this comment shared the same thinking as in Luisa’s post, suggesting a migration to homemade cosmetics and how easy it is to make them. Consumers do their research and on the Facebook groups, discuss how to create cosmetics by adapting and testing ingredients not found in the mainstream market and its formulas. Emphasizing the pleasure involved in the hedonic consumption (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982) of making homemade cosmetics, the informants show how they develop new recipes in a demonstration of how the “active, genuine work pleasure legitimizes pleasurable consumption” (Ulver-Sneistrup et al., 2011, p. 233).

This joy is related to the experiences of making something new or reusing apparently unusable ingredients without generating trash. They develop new recipes from the ingredients rather than from commercial cosmetic products in creative acts of self-expression (Campbell, 2005). In a post on Instagram, Camila shows a product she developed and shares the pleasurable experience she had with the new recipe:

What a beautiful feeling to make a beauty product with what could end up in the trash. (...) This time I had a lot of guavas here at home, so I decided to make guava jam. The seeds were not part of the recipe, so I set them aside to dry. I wondered what I could do with them and the idea of super-moisturizing massage bars just came to me. Super easy; what about making it, too? (...) If you try another recipe, please share it with me?

In relation to the economics of DIY cosmetics, the respondents frequently pointed out how cheap they can be. In contrast with the idea that what is healthy must be expensive (see Haws et al. 2016) the more consumers get involved with the practices and the products, the more they spread the idea of using cheap ingredients, including leftovers from other projects. The economic crisis is mentioned in the context of the beauty market and may indeed be key for the consumer to become interested and adopt DIY products; because of this, proponents talk up how cheap the cosmetics can be. The consumption of DIY beauty products is much more of an ideological issue that, through DIY, transforms the craft into a new market. Liz, one of the informants interviewed, talks about this on her blog and during a TEDx talk posted on the Facebook groups when sharing a moisturizer recipe and sharing her experience of not generating waste and gaining autonomy.

I also started making my own cosmetics to avoid packaging and also to avoid harmful synthetic chemicals. Conventional cosmetics have, for example, sulfates, parabens, triclosan, and formaldehyde, all of which are proven to be harmful. They are linked with increased incidence of cancer in some studies, as well as increased allergies, skin and hair dryness, and skin inflammation, such as pimples. Moreover, if someone is exposed to these chemicals over an entire life in toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner and baby products, why not look for a solution that is cheaper, more natural, and easier? (...) I make my own toothpaste with coconut oil and baking soda, I make my own moisturizer and every time something runs out, I look for a recipe to make it at home. (...) But the main change is knowing that if I make everything, I can to reduce my impact on the planet.

In this quote, it is evident that these consumers criticize commercial cosmetic products and, motivated by health and environment concerns, use traditional knowledge to develop and use homemade natural cosmetics that promote their sense of autonomy and personal care. Liz mentions the ingredients she thinks are not healthy (“sulfates, parabens, triclosan, and formaldehyde”), which are the most cited ones when talking about good and bad products vis-à-vis personal health. The workshops and books organized and produced by the informants and Facebook group members are keen to mention the ingredients that should be avoided, including those found in commercial products, in this process of sharing of what is deemed good or bad.

During one of the interviews, Laura talks about her willingness to change her practices and her worries about the reliability of traditional medicines and cosmetics: “So this thing [the commercial cosmetic] is not improving my skin ... This thing is ... messing up my skin. Not real, right? It’s not dealing with the oiliness ... It’s throwing the oil into another place—I don’t even know where.” When talking about her introduction to homemade cosmetics, Laura shows her dissatisfaction with the commercial

cosmetic market and her doubts about the effectiveness and credibility of professionals and products; she also mentions how natural cosmetics seem more trustworthy. Craft consumption is associated with this construction of homemade cosmetics that avoids mass production and homogeneous commercial products; rather, it creates a sense of personalized products that develops into a more complex consumption through DIY.

### ***Sharing consumption experiences***

The new homemade products, in contrast with those sold by the commercial cosmetics industry, may lead to the development of new companies and brands, or indeed alter the commercial market itself. Some of the informants are or became entrepreneurs of homemade cosmetics over the course of this study. They maintain the logic of the DIY/homemade cosmetics by selling finished products in fairs and events related to natural beauty and local production. Thus, this case of DIY is not the sum of the parts, but the creation and development of new products (see also Campbell, 2005; Watson & Shove, 2008) made of just a few, raw, ingredients, in their primary format. This contrasts with the development of commercial cosmetics, a type of development that more closely resembles, for example, the modification of existing products in the development of the *minimoto* (Martin & Schouten, 2014).

The consumers are now viewed as “knowledgeable actors whose acquisitions are in some sense an expression of their capabilities and project-oriented ambitions” (Watson & Shove, 2008, p. 71). “Motivations [for DIY] that derive from identity enhancement include fulfillment of craftsmanship, empowerment, community seeking, and the need for uniqueness” (Wolf & McQuitty, 2011, p. 165). The concept of DIY is used here because of these elements, which take the consumer beyond the DIY production and consumption to develop strategies to consolidate their practice, from the fulfillment of craftsmanship and the yearning for uniqueness mentioned before, to empowerment and search for community.

The consumers constantly emphasize the advantages of making their own cosmetics and promote them as more useful and less expensive than commercial cosmetics; they share their knowledge by “instantiating a logic of accessibility” (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015, p. 1462). In this quote from a post made on Facebook, Ana talks about her feelings regarding the cosmetic industry in terms of an “adversarial and alienating system” (Thompson, 2004, p. 171), and about the support she encountered on the social networks of practitioners who support her conceptions and where she can share the same willingness.



I had never thought about how all the beauty products I used to wear were imprisoning. And they meant, in most cases, the opposite of care: toxic, expensive, and irresponsible regarding both the production chain and the environment. My questioning began a few years ago and with it came a very beautiful change, with other women, who helped me a lot.

The consumers share the information they have about commercial products, as well as tips, recipes, and advice about cosmetics as a way of sharing to increase and sustain their practices (Belk, 2010). The recipes they use are shared on the groups with recommendations on how to experiment and test, since with DIY, they also learn from experience, be it good or bad (Watson & Shove, 2008). Answering questions about which product they should use and the best ingredients and formulas, one of the informants suggests testing and advises the others about the uncertainty of the products: “But oh, it’s a personal experience, right? It may or may not work on your skin. The best thing is to test to understand your skin and what it likes.” When fielding queries about an ingredient in the deodorant, Camila, who taught about the product during a workshop, suggests new formulations and tests: “If it works for you with nothing, just with the baking soda, go ahead. It’s wonderful to experiment!”

The consumers’ tests and experiments also led to another point of discussion related to the development of the products and the strategies they use to avoid interaction with the mainstream market. The Facebook group administrators are always advising about the risks and the difficulties of getting the right information on Internet, such as this alert posted on one of the groups: “We need to be careful about the sources of information we use to decide what to do with our health and be sure to share the right knowledge.” Or as an answer to a member, when asking about cosmetic suggestions and good sources: “We need to learn to read labels, to understand a little beyond ‘natural cosmetics’ and to know what that really means.”

The discussions are mostly related to suggestions and members asking and solving queries; however, they also advise and alert about the dangers and risks of making cosmetics without technical support and adequate information. The groups’ willingness to dispense technical support evident in the discourses is a way they have found to try to maintain the credibility of their products and the development of the market, creating communities of practice to learn through collaboration and experience (Wenger, 1998), rather than from the information coming from the mainstream market. Moreover, instead of sticking to the mainstream advice, they constantly share recipes and new ideas, which makes the Internet and Facebook groups a place to seek solutions, even after consulting a professional.

This space for interaction facilitates the sharing of consumption experiences (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015).

DIY/homemade products are the way they have found to maintain a skin-care beauty practice without the risk they associate with mainstream products. The micro-entrepreneurs who appear in the context reinforce the discourse and seek to build credibility within the group and through social media. Examples appear in conversations such as this one between small producers, who point to the credibility of the products, resulting from the knowledge developed in social networks:

Stella, yes, I also prefer everything I buy to be artisanal, from food to clothing; but I believe that not everyone is aware that certain products such as cosmetics can be dangerous. I have two small children and I use your soaps [referring to the products manufactured and sold by Stella] on them from head to toe. I do not know you personally, but I trust that you are careful. For me, the criterion is this, but for many people, price is the only parameter.

They use their bodies as a laboratory to test and improve ingredients, formulas, or new products. Sometimes the members share their opinions about a doctor, for example, criticizing the person and seeking solutions from the group members and administrators. In this example, a member of a Facebook group asks for solutions and group support:

(...) So, girls, I would like you to recommend to me some cosmetic brands for the same purposes, so I can suggest alternatives to my dermatologist for the prescribed products. If she agrees with equivalent substitutions, then great; otherwise, I will have to try other ways. I'll post some photos, so you can have an idea; then you can see that my case is superficial. Remember, the recommendations I need are for facial soap, body protector, and whitening cream for the face.

In this quote the girl searches for group support when she says she is not going to follow the doctor's prescription if the dermatologist does not agree with the recommendations of the Facebook group's members, information she believes to be more relevant than the formal, technical information. This behavior reflects the "competing expert systems" discussed in Kristensen and colleagues (2011, p. 198) that challenges traditional (scientific) authorities and develops another kind of knowledge developed from the DIY process of sharing and learning from experience (Watson & Shove, 2008).

### ***Disclosing their products and consumption practices***

The consumers affect the market dynamics by their desire to develop something consistent with their practices and that they cannot find in the traditional market. However, this involvement does not happen with interaction with the cosmetic industry, as in Scaraboto and Fischer (2013)

or Martin and Schouten (2014). They criticize and share their concerns about the truth and effectiveness of commercial products and traditional professionals and brands. Their involvement and sharing of tastes, interests, and information lead to changes in the market (a) without a formal agenda, (b) no shared desire for market-level changes (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015) and (c) without the engagement with the beauty market.

Productive consumption with the help of technology and social media enables the disclosure of the products and practices. In this parallel structure, without the government regulation or standard institutional support, DIY/homemade cosmetics consumers develop different kinds of products, from cosmetics for daily use to workshops and books that they spread among the users and group followers. The experts become entrepreneurs and use the Internet to spread word of the products and practices through online workshops, books, stores, and social media. The examples and constant feedback of the Facebook group members increases the involvement of the women in a “network of desire,” thereby enhancing their passion to consume (Kozinets, Patterson, & Ashman, 2017, p. 667).

In this context, technology offers the infrastructure they need to construct their ideas and formulate their conclusions about products, formulas, ingredients, and information related to skin and body care. The consumers develop their opinions based on each other, and by challenging regulations and institutionalized rules. They need the social media and the images/videos to reproduce the formula with the same characteristics and achieve consistent results. The image aspect is always something relevant to connect with each other, by showing results and specific characteristics of the products. Thus the technology operates as an actor to “make consumer desire more task-oriented, manageable, functional, and goal-oriented” (Kozinets et al., 2017, p. 677).

In this quote, part of a long discussion generated on the Facebook group Organic and Natural Cosmetics, one of the members asks for tips on how to change the texture of a moisturizer. Several members post answers to her question, but the original question then turns into a discussion about brands and products in the commercial cosmetic market and how the group can spread the use of homemade cosmetics by using the network of desire as a structure (Kozinets et al., 2017).

And it is up to each person, to ask, to research, and yes, again, to be ANNOYING even. I call this empowerment: We become owners of our choices and from there we will question every ingredient contained in the label. This knowledge allows us to have full latitude as to what we will use in our skin and what will become part of our routine. Knowledge is power. And it is in our hands!

The conversation continues, discussing how to inform consumers who are not aware of the products and how to raise awareness on the Internet:

“We know when a product is safe because we are annoying, but what about the innocents? I think the common point here is information.” A recurrent theme is that of spreading knowledge and information: “Slow cosmetics, a slow beauty strand (...) is something that has come to stay. Deal with it! It is knowledge that spreads to every formulation that you know what each ingredient is by name. Yes, it can be simple.” The spread of the *minimoto* market throughout the Western world was possible due to linked Internet communities and commerce that were the “key to the emergence of a meta-community of practice” (Martin & Schouten, 2014, p. 863). When Belk (2014) talked about sharing, he highlighted the role of the Internet on many categories of collaborative consumption. The Internet helps people to find what they want; and it also makes it possible to rate and create a reputation system where people can trust each other: “Owing to the internet’s specific features, it is an ideal platform for soliciting users’ participation in product innovation” (Cova & Dalli, 2009, p. 317).

A forum where consumers can search for information turns into a place to spread the movement and show the advantages that can motivate the maintenance of the practices, “Yes, it can be simple”. In the context, it is necessary to keep nurturing the process of creating, adapting, and finding new recipes and ingredients that are more adequate to their needs. It is an endless process of discoveries and development of knowledge that spreads in books, social media, and workshops. Many workshops were held during the period of this study, seeking to share and spread what they refer to as a “different lifestyle”, and promote the idea of new job for women to become entrepreneurs. Then, still inside this context, “as professionals, they seek to find, build, and maintain an audience” (Kozinets et al., 2017, p. 668).

We will try to understand how to make better choices in our day-to-day life and to solve issues that could disrupt our autonomy. Understanding the importance of making things ourselves, much of our time together will be devoted to making simple recipes and products that can be multiplied with easy ideas. We think of this course as being the way for women who wish for a more conscious and balanced lifestyle. Let’s realize that this talk has everything to do with broader issues, such as the production of garbage, sustainability, the rescue of forgotten knowledge, and the denial of consumerism.

The field notes about one of these workshops illustrate the goal of developing and disseminating practices: “You’re building something cooler, but the same amount does not work. You just change the way you consume. You seek salvation in things. We have to change the practices.” And the market changes to include homemade formulas. During the FCE Cosmetique, some of the lectures were about natural ingredients and addressed questions such as “can plant-based ingredients

achieve the same performance as the synthetics?” or main topics, such as “consumers are paying more for natural/herbal ingredients.” In an interview with an executive from the mainstream industry, she said, “the consumption model has changed. Now the ordinary consumer dictates the rules and there is a conscious consumption with its own lifestyle proposal.” The market seeks to adapt the discourse presented in the homemade cosmetics context and create alternatives for these consumers. According to an interview with Professor Arnould, consumers focus on certain “evil ingredients,” such as paraben and triclosan, and the industry changes the formula and replaces them with other, equivalent ingredients required in the process. The industry tries to dribble around the consumer who genuinely impacts the industry when they “use absolutely nothing,” according to Professor Arnould.

From the research notes we observe the rise of a market offering new products that resemble the DIY cosmetics. From the last fair the first author attended, she wrote “the number of people selling cosmetics has multiplied at this fair. At first, it was two or three, now I can count thirteen.” And in another field note:

I scheduled this meeting with Anna because she told me that she was going to give me a private facial skin care workshop. But the meeting ended up being a long conversation about the natural cosmetic industry and how it has changed during the last two years. Since our last conversation on August 8, 2016, many different brands have appeared on the market. She told me that it used to be the case that she'd go to fairs and there were just one or two other brands selling cosmetics. Now, in the most recent fair (if I'm not mistaken, it was the Secret Garden or the Rosenbaum Fair) there were seven different brands. And in her opinion they are not just natural brands. They sell soaps that are not totally organic and some of them are not even natural (i.e., made using the ingredients she does not consider natural).

The conflicts begin to appear, and producers look to make space in the market by differentiating themselves and forming opinions in the social networks. The role of the Internet, as pointed out in Kozinets and colleagues (2017), enables networks of desire to increase, facilitate, alter, and amplify the consumers' desires, thereby increasing their passion to consume. The connections established, as in the case of homemade cosmetics, lead to “signals of respect and belonging, but also creating external images to be rejected and despised” (Kozinets et al., 2017, p. 670). Technology and Internet are important elements in the DIY activities that function as triggers to the way they can affect the market. For the larger industry, despite signs of change, the movement is slow; but for small producers, especially those selling online or at fairs, there is an evident change, a discernible growth in the DIY market.

## Discussion

Productive consumption affects the beauty market, changing its dynamics through the strategies used by consumers to develop, share, and spread their products and practices. Consumers discuss formulas and construct technical arguments involving professionals from different areas and knowledge from ancient practices to develop DIY/homemade cosmetics that fulfill their needs and that can be easily produced by other consumers and popularized through Internet, tutorials, and workshops. The three consumers' strategies identified in our study: (1) making and developing homemade products, (2) sharing consumption practices, and (3) disclosing these products and practices – engender changes in the beauty market and the creation of new segments through the “distributed interactions among consumers” (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015), without the engagement with the mainstream beauty market.

This study first identifies how consumers use craft consumption (Campbell, 2005), making and developing homemade products to change the market dynamics. The Brazilian context is especially important in this analysis since Latin American consumers have a tradition of using natural ingredients for skin care and hair care. Moreover, it is easier for the consumers to make their practice culturally, socially and politically acceptable (Humphreys, 2010a) when they build up communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) to learn, develop, and make their cosmetics, catalyzing and legitimizing the market. This legitimation is attained by the mobilization of a variety of logics that permeate society and culture (Kjeldgaard et al., 2017). Ideological and mythological resources (Ulver-Sneistrup et al., 2011) are central to reinforce their legitimacy when consumers develop and make their own products. Thus, the observations of Dolbec and Fischer (2015) are extended in a context of consumers bringing old market logics to reconstruct new ones, not engaged in the beauty market, but from other markets to their beauty practices. They use these strategies to develop new skills, knowledge, judgment, and passion to express themselves, applying the essence of the craft consumption brought by Campbell (2005) to the development of new products and practices that become incorporated in the market.

Second, adding to the literature of productive consumption (Moisio et al., 2013; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Watson & Shove, 2008), this research shows how consumers affect the market with their DIY homemade practices based on what they learn through the Internet and experimenting with their own bodies. Rather than a practice of assembling ready-to-use DIY components, the consumers studied here develop new products and consumption practices that affect the market. They evolve from craft consumption to develop a DIY behavior, combining these characteristics and

incorporating the high levels of innovation, design, knowledge, skills, and time required by the DIY form of prosumption (Wolf & McQuitty, 2011). And they do this through the use of products in their most basic format – often, edible ingredients that are unrelated to the cosmetic industry. The use of unusual ingredients by non-specialists, who are then followed by others in constantly growing communities, brands, and producers, is an emergent phenomenon growing day by day in a network of desire (Kozinets et al., 2017). This DIY practice that includes all the elements of competence, practice, and consumption described by Watson and Shove (2008) adds the ingredient of *change* and *emergence* in a market in which consumers develop strategies, products, and practices to create what they want to consume, separately from the mainstream market.

In this context, the consumers do not adhere to the guidelines of the cosmetics professionals; instead, they engage in activities that, although not established as professions or occupations by the market/government, still influence the market (cf., Kristensen et al., 2011) as a reaction of distrust in institutionalized structures. By experimenting, testing and sharing through the Internet, they are creating new market possibilities, as courses, products and companies. In doing so, they add to the network of desire (Kozinets et al., 2017) a sense of necessity and entrepreneurial spirit to react and change the market. The influence they exert is directly related to the use of the Internet as an infrastructure and an important platform to get information, develop, make, share and disclose their products and practices, adding to the impact of the bloggers on the market in terms of development of cultural and social capital (McQuarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013).

Third, our article discusses a market change dynamic in which consumers seek new opportunities and new approaches to skin care. They eschew the mainstream market (cf. Martin & Schouten, 2014) in the pursuit of developing a new form of consumption. In contrast with Scaraboto and Fischer (2013), our findings demonstrate a very restricted marketplace where consumers are not looking to be better served by mainstream marketers or change the mainstream market practices. As people enter this market or new practices are associated with the existing ones, there is an assessment of the legitimacy of the consumer's practices in the field. In addition, mainstream industry seeks to become a part of the phenomenon, which subsequently triggers its very de-legitimization. The commercial beauty market companies try to market to DIY/homemade cosmetics consumers by advertising new products using the language used by them and adapting their products by not using the “condemned” ingredients, such as parabens and petrolatums. The consumers frequently react to these practices by questioning the companies about their formulas and reaffirming their needs; they do this on the Facebook groups they create, thereby



avoiding interacting directly with the commercial beauty market, as noted by Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007). This case of emergence of a consumption-driven market (Martin & Schouten, 2014) is increasing not in harmony with the market but as a critique of mainstream products and practices and a return to the past. Reversing the logic of the beauty market, “kitchen physics” became a mass market industry (Peiss, 2011, p. 4), now turns back into a market based on the logic of kitchen physics.

The history of the personal beauty market is one of cyclical movements that question the mainstream market (Black, 2004) in a constant practice of creation and destruction. The market adapts to include the homemade formulas, even if this is not a de facto change, or a change albeit a temporary one. Consistent with Giesler (2008), the consumers argue that they are developing another ideology, although this is something the technicians contradict. The specialists “dribble” DIY/homemade cosmetics because they have little technical knowledge of the products and their effects. In their attempts to change the market, they manage to do so only temporarily. This is a phenomenon that is increasing in Brazil, but it is even bigger around the world (e.g., Sorvino, 2018).

To better understand the market change dynamics, one possible path for future research is to look to the industry and at how they receive these new practices and values, or the values in which this movement emerges. A longitudinal analysis of the market in the years to come can better ascertain the changes in the mainstream market and the increasingly popular craft beauty market in Brazil. Other contexts, such as the anti-immunization movement or the natural birth movement, can indicate other strategies or follow similar structures of how consumers use productive consumption as a way to change and create a market.

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