

Platforms for Social Innovation

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The President:

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Summary

Today's society is undergoing a number of swift and groundbreaking developments, such as population ageing, changing family structures, a shifting role of the consumer, and a more influential role of market forces. This dissertation explores various responses, namely innovative initiatives, to these societal developments.

Central to these initiatives is the phenomenon of social innovation. The initiatives are aiming to overcome key societal challenges by creating an innovative type of service organization. Especially relevant is the creation of new social arrangements, which are mediated and organized through online platforms. These arrangements are often based on and managed according to market and business logics.

The dissertation consists of four stand-alone articles and explores three research contexts of platform-based social innovations following a qualitative research design.

Article 1 investigates the initiative 'Housing for Help' and contributes to better understanding the transformation of relationship types through gift-giving strategies. It establishes the spiral of reciprocity as a framework to explain the development of relationships through non-material and material gifting over time. Article 2 explores the initiative 'Timebanking for the future' and illustrates how marketized service relationships are humanized and how consumers create Do-It-Yourself extended families through a digital platform. Article 3 conceptualizes the differences and commonalities of private sector, public sector, and hybrid platforms. Article 4 investigates the initiative 'Familyship' and develops a framework introducing consumer-driven social innovation.

In addition to the theoretical contributions of the articles, this dissertation has several broader implications. First, this dissertation underscores the specific opportunities that each of the investigated initiatives offers its participants. Second, this dissertation emphasizes the role of digital platforms, especially in the field of social innovation. Third, another important finding is the incorporation of business and market logics into the new type of social arrangements presented in this dissertation. Lastly, I discuss the prospects for these initiatives within the broader societal context and the respective field of public policy.

Zusammenfassung

Unsere Gesellschaft ist aktuell mit einer Reihe bahnbrechender Entwicklungen, wie dem demografischen Wandel, veränderten Familienstrukturen, einer verantwortungsvolleren Rolle des Konsumenten und einer einflussreichen Rolle des Marktes konfrontiert. In der vorliegenden Dissertation werden verschiedene Reaktionen auf diese gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen, namentlich innovative Plattforminitiativen, untersucht.

Im Zentrum dieser Initiativen steht das Phänomen der sozialen Innovation. Die Initiativen zielen darauf ab, gesellschaftliche Herausforderungen durch die Schaffung neuartiger Dienstleistungsorganisationen zu überwinden. Besonders relevant ist hierbei die Schaffung neuer sozialer Arrangements, die über Online-Plattformen vermittelt und organisiert werden. Diese Arrangements basieren oft auf Logiken des Marktes und werden nach diesen gesteuert.

Die Dissertation besteht aus vier eigenständigen Artikeln und untersucht drei Forschungskontexte plattformbasierter sozialer Innovationen mithilfe eines qualitativen Forschungsdesigns.

Artikel 1 untersucht die Initiative ‚Wohnen für Hilfe‘ und vertieft unser Verständnis für die Transformation von Beziehungen durch Strategien des Gebens und Schenkens. Die Studie etabliert die „Spirale der Gegenseitigkeit“, um die Entwicklung von Beziehungen durch nicht-materielles Geben und materielle Geschenke im Laufe der Zeit zu erklären. Artikel 2 befasst sich mit der Initiative ‚Zeitvorsorge‘ und veranschaulicht, wie vermarktete Dienstleistungsbeziehungen humanisiert werden und wie Konsumenten über eine digitale Plattform Do-It-Yourself-Familien schaffen. Artikel 3 konzeptualisiert die Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten von privatwirtschaftlichen, öffentlichen und hybriden Plattformen. Der abschließende Artikel 4 betrachtet die Initiative ‚Familyship‘ und entwickelt ein konzeptionelles Framework, um konsumentengetriebene soziale Innovationen zu erklären.

Zusätzlich zu den erhaltenen theoretischen Erkenntnissen diskutiert diese Dissertation weitergehende Implikationen. Erstens unterstreicht sie die spezifischen Möglichkeiten, die jede der untersuchten Initiativen ihren Teilnehmern bietet. Zweitens betont diese Arbeit die Rolle der digitalen Plattformen, insbesondere im Bereich der sozialen Innovation. Drittens zeigen die Studien, wie Marktlogiken in die neuartigen sozialen Arrangements einbezogen werden. Abschließend werden die Aussichten für diese Initiativen im breiteren gesellschaftlichen Kontext diskutiert.

Introduction

Today's society is undergoing a number of swift and groundbreaking developments. One of these is population ageing (UN, 2020). It not only impacts current and future generations but also burdens existing social security systems, pension schemes, health care approaches, and public policy (EU, 2019; European Commission, 2020). As such, demographic change poses various challenges that existing institutions cannot easily overcome (EPRS, 2020; UN, 2019). More specifically, caregiving resources are scarce, leading to a care deficit (Sahmel, 2018). Additionally, cross-generational family care networks have changed due to women's participation in the labor market and the geographical distance of family members (UNECE, 2010, 2015, 2019).

A second major shift concerns changing family structures. The traditional multi-generational family living under one roof has become rare (European Commission, 2020). Instead, many family-related changes are occurring, such as delayed marriage (Furstenberg, 2020; Guzzo & Hayford, 2020; Smock & Schwartz, 2020), remarriage (Smock & Schwartz, 2020), delayed childbirth (Guzzo & Hayford, 2020), increasing divorce rates/union separation (Härkönen et al., 2020; Kreyenfeld & Trappe, 2020; Smock & Schwartz, 2020), voluntary childlessness (Furstenberg, 2020), multiple-partner fertility (Smock & Schwartz, 2020), increasing unmarried cohabitation (Cherlin, 2020; Guzzo & Hayford, 2020; Härkönen et al., 2020; Smock & Schwartz, 2020), LGBTQ+ unions (Cherlin, 2020; Digoix, 2020; Furstenberg, 2020; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020), and diversifying family bonds (Cherlin, 2020; Digoix, 2020; Furstenberg, 2020; Holland, 2013; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020). However, legal regulations and societal norms are lagging behind the lived reality of these diverse family constellations.

Another important shift impacting society is the changing role of the consumer. Governments are progressively shifting responsibility toward consumer-citizens in various areas. These areas include social problems such as health, finance, poverty, and global warming. The goal is to establish "responsible consumers" who act as "moral market actors" to stabilize a successful capitalist market system and to perform accordingly (Giesler & Veresiu, 2014, p. 841).

Moreover, market forces are becoming more influential, also in areas of life where governments have thus far held sole responsibility: medicine and hospitals (Thompson,

2004), universities and education (Bartlett et al., 2002; Whitty & Power, 2000), governmental services (Massey, 1997), social services and civic organizations (Salamon, 1993), local authorities and welfare associations (Reichard, 2002), care and nursing (Anderson & Hughes, 2010; Petersen & Hjelm, 2014). Market involvement also affects various other spheres of everyday life, such as religious holidays (Okleshen et al., 2000), art (Zhu, 2002), extraordinary consumption experiences (Tumbat & Belk, 2011), historical phenomena (Brunk et al., 2018), culture and politics (Navarro, 2016), and religion (McAlexander et al., 2014). The market now even impacts areas previously considered private: childcare (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014), family life (Epp & Price, 2008), elderly care (Huff & Cotte, 2016), and personal relationships (Marcoux, 2009).

This dissertation explores various responses to the societal developments described above. It consists of four stand-alone articles and explores three research contexts of platform-based social innovations. These innovative initiatives aim to overcome key societal challenges, such as population ageing, changing family structures, housing shortages due to urbanization, and increasing loneliness and estrangement. Central to these initiatives undertaken by civil society actors (see articles 1-3) and consumers entrepreneurs (see article 4) is the phenomenon of social innovation. The initiatives all address a social need by creating an innovative type of service organization. Especially relevant is the creation of new social arrangements (i.e., new ways of taking care of others), which are mediated and organized through online platforms. These arrangements are often based on and managed according to market and business logics.

Research Contexts

This dissertation examines three innovative initiatives aimed at addressing key societal challenges: ‘Housing for Help’, ‘Timebanking for the future’, and ‘Familyship’.

Article 1 studies Housing for Help. This home-share program pairs elderly homeowners with student-tenants. Elderly landlords provide students with low-cost or free rooms in return for household chores, gardening, technical assistance, social activities, or basic assistance (e.g., doctor visits and grocery shopping). This arrangement allows the elderly to continue to live in their homes more easily and more safely than they would otherwise be able to. It also means student-tenants receive substantial housing benefits from the elderly landlords.

Articles 2 and 3 focus on Timebanking for the future. This alternative pension scheme matches sexagenarians and octogenarians. The younger cohort makes the older cohort's life easier by performing various activities (e.g., household chores, gardening, social and leisure activities, going for walks, and accompanying the elderly to medical appointments). The younger cohort's invested time is credited to a timebank. Sexagenarians may use this credit once they reach the age of 80 when they can ask for help themselves.

Article 4 investigates Familyship. This online platform has been established to support people in creating new family units, with previous strangers, in various constellations and roles. It serves singles or couples, LGBTQIA+ or straight, who cannot or do not wish to have a baby in the traditional biological way. It also serves people seeking to separate the concept of parenthood from that of romantic love. It is alternative approach to starting a family.

These three initiatives share important characteristics: They are platform-based market solutions that reach into consumers' private spheres, address societal challenges, enable new ways of social organizing and have been founded as innovative alternatives due to inadequate public policy solutions. The initiatives require active participation of consumer-citizens.

Methodology

This dissertation follows a qualitative research design that aims to investigate platforms for social innovation in-depth. Qualitative work is especially useful for investigating new phenomena, such as platform-based initiatives for creating new ways of life and social organizing. These “new questions will reveal deeper insights into management, organizations, and society, which are critical to understanding and potentially shaping our world (Bansal & Corley, 2011, p. 235).” Qualitative research enables holistic immersion into social phenomena through “observing, interviewing and close reading of research-relevant materials” (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 5). The in-depth exploration of “different perceptions, acts, opinions, beliefs, attitudes, cultures and lifestyles” (Bjørner, 2015, pp. 23–24) brings readers “closer to the phenomenon being studied” (Bansal & Corley, 2011, p. 235) and provides more immediate experience (Bansal & Corley, 2011, p. 235).

Another reason for choosing a qualitative research design is that it allows one to more thoroughly investigate temporal dynamics (Bansal & Corley, 2011, p. 235). This aspect has proven particularly useful in article 4, which explores the longitudinal development of the processes and dynamics of consumer-driven innovation. Moreover, qualitative work enables studying “dynamics across different levels of analysis” (Bansal & Corley, 2011, p. 235). This advantage was helpful in article 4, which investigates consumer-driven innovation from a micro, meso, and macro perspective.

I applied various qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. Articles 1–3 follow an ethnographic research approach, including interviews and observations at participants’ homes. Interviews are central to qualitative research as participants “speak meaningfully about their wishes, needs, and expectations” (Mariampolski, 2006, p. 14). Article 4 is based on a longitudinal approach, including interviews and netnography. Every article describes its particular methodology in more detail.

Overview of the articles

Table 1 summarizes the key differences and similarities between the four self-standing articles of this dissertation.

Table 1: Overview

Overarching phenomenon	Platforms for Social Innovation			
Title	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3	Article 4
	From Strangers to Family: How Material and Non-material Gift-giving Strategies Create Intimate Relationships over Time	Humanizing Market Relationships: the DIY Extended Family	Private and Public Sector Platforms: Characteristics and Differences	Consumer-driven Social Innovation
Keywords	Gift-giving spiral, relationship transformation, exchange types, reciprocity, ageing consumers	Marketization, extended family, institutional logics, timebanking, population ageing, elderly citizens	Platform economy, private sector platforms, public sector platform, conceptualization, timebanking, hybrid platforms	Family social innovation, online platforms, templates, consumer-driven social innovation, social change, consumer entrepreneurs

Theoretical angle	Gift-giving	Marketization	Platform economy	Social innovation
Context	Housing for Help	Timebanking for the future	Timebanking for the future	Familyship
Main methodology	Ethnographic approach: interviews & observation at participants' homes	Ethnographic approach: interviews & observation at participants' homes	Ethnographic approach: interviews & observation at participants' homes	Longitudinal; in-depth interviews & netnography
Commonalities between the articles	• Theory: Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) • Context: online platforms • Methodology: qualitative, interpretive research designs • Implications: addressing societal challenges; innovating forms of social life • platform-mediated, executed offline			
Theoretical implications	Transformation of relationship types through gift-giving strategies; spiral of reciprocity	Exploring the humanization of marketized service relationships; creation of DIY extended family	Conceptualizing private sector, public sector, and hybrid platforms	Developing a multilevel framework for consumer-driven social innovation
Practical implications	Ageing populations; ageing in place, addressing housing shortage due to urbanization, addressing the care deficit of social security systems; increasing intergenerational understanding	Ageing populations; ageing in place, addressing the care deficit of social security systems, alternative pension schemes; increasing intergenerational understanding	Systematizing platform types; recommended actions for public policy makers; increasing intergenerational understanding	Solutions for alternative family constellations (currently discriminated by legislation)

Theoretical contributions

All four articles contribute to the current discussions in consumer research and more specifically to Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). Together, they explore various aspects of social innovation platforms: the reasons for participating in the initiatives, the dynamics and newly developing relationship types, and the processes accompanying these new social formations.

Article 1 contributes to better understanding the transformation of relationship types through gift-giving strategies. It establishes the spiral of reciprocity as a framework to explain the development of relationships through non-material and material gifting over time. Article 2 explores how marketized service relationships are humanized and how consumers create Do-It-Yourself extended families through a digital platform. Article 3 conceptualizes private sector, public sector, and hybrid platforms. Article 4 develops a

framework introducing consumer-driven social innovation. Every article discusses its theoretical contributions in more detail.

Overall implications

This dissertation has several broader implications.

First, this dissertation underscores the specific opportunities that each of the investigated initiatives offers its participants. Housing for Help means students pay low rents in cities with a tight housing market. The elderly participants of Housing for Help are able to age in their own home and receive assistance from their student-tenants. Timebanking for the future provides sexagenarians with an additional pension in the currency of time while enabling octogenarians to age in their own home and to receive assistance from the younger cohort. Housing for Help and Timebanking for the future both strengthen intergenerational solidarity. Familyship means that more people, especially ones discriminated by legislation, can fulfill their wish to become parents.

Second, this dissertation emphasizes the role of digital platforms. These serve as mediators and connect people in new ways (e.g., pairing an elderly homeowner with a student seeking accommodation, see article 1; or matching people in their 60s and 80s; see articles 2 and 3). Moreover, digital platforms may even assume an institutionalized form, thus boosting broader societal change (see article 4). Together, these articles show that digital platforms are central to creating new social forms and to promoting consumer-driven social innovation (article 4). Article 3 conceptualizes and discusses the potential of digital platforms for the public sector. The discussion in article 4 places special emphasis on the implications of online platforms with regard to fostering consumer-driven social innovation.

Third, another important finding is the incorporation of business and market logics into the new type of social arrangements presented in this dissertation. As acknowledged by prior research, market involvement is becoming more relevant in various aspects of consumers' everyday life. This dissertation observes how business- and marketing-like logics and tools are increasingly entered hitherto sacred areas of life, such as elderly care, private homes, social relationships, as well as childbearing and child rearing. In contrast to prior studies, which have identified social tensions as a result of spheres becoming mixed, the participants in my studies did not report any tensions due to business and market logics. Instead, they benefitted from business- and marketing-like

logics and tools in forging their own relationships and in managing their relationships to replace the missing level of trust, intimacy, or love on which relationships in these spheres are usually based. This aspect is strongly related to an ongoing sociological discussion on the manifold relations between the market/economy and intimacy/privacy.

Lastly, I discuss the prospects for these initiatives. Unquestionably, new ideas and projects are required to address today's pressing societal challenges. Demographic change alone is reason enough to consider progressive solutions. As a positive side effect, the initiatives studied in this dissertation address people's need for companionship in times of uncertainty, increasing anonymization, and social isolation. Currently, the scope of these initiatives is rather small and targeted at a specific purpose. However, the initiatives are seeking to broaden their applicability, in order to serve a broader target group. For example, Housing for Help now matches not only senior citizens with students, but also single parents or people with minor physical disabilities with students; the main principle — "accommodation for assistance" — remains. Timebanking for the future is also considering broadening its applicability by connecting sexagenarian timebanks with an established neighborhood project. Here, the key principle is "Neighborhood assistance in exchange for timebanked hours." Thus, participating sexagenarians will not need to wait until they reach the age of 80 to receive help but may already access various neighborhood assistance (e.g., householding, gardening, etc.). A similar development has happened with Familyship. Initially established for the LGBTQIA+ community, the platform is now open to anyone with a non-traditional notion of family. However, these initiatives require further support from public policy makers. Legislation still lags behind in acknowledging new social forms and ways of life. Legitimizing these new forms often comes with a much-needed shift of societal reservations and social norms.

Article 1

Title	From strangers to family: how material and non-material gift giving strategies create intimate relationships over time
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Author	Lydia Ottlewski
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Abstract	Gift giving is an important element in various cultures, systems, and dyadic relationships. Multiple facets of gifting, mainly relational, have been examined in the realm of consumer research. In the context of a non-commercial elderly-student home share program, 'Housing for Help', this study extends our understanding about the progression of relationship types and exchange dynamics in the field of gift giving. Drawing on Sahlins' (1972) model of kinship distance and reciprocity as well as Belk and Coon's (1993) agapic love model, this study explores how strangers transform their transactional market exchanges into close family-like relationships and friendship bonds, by engaging in strategies of material and non-material gifting. The gifting strategies follow a spiral of reciprocity, which consists of material gifting, and non-material gifting, such as sharing of interests, telling & listening, shared experiences, learning from and caring for each other. The contribution is a temporally extended model that considers both the longitudinal emergence and reformulation of relations between alternating givers and recipients. This study also provides insights into the broader context of marketing and public policy: addressing the importance of aging in place, the wellbeing of elderly through social connections, and the disruption of current care solutions.
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Keywords	Gift-giving spiral, relationship transformation, exchange types, reciprocity, aging consumers
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Status	Published
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Publication Reference	Ottlewski, L., (2018). From strangers to family: how material and non-material gift giving strategies create intimate relationships over time. In: Minowa, Y. and Belk, R.W eds. Gifts, Romance, and Consumer Culture, Routledge Interpretive Marketing Research. https://www.routledge.com/Gifts-Romance-and-Consumer-Culture/Minowa-Belk/p/book/9781138500709
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Article 2

Title	Humanizing Market Relationships: the DIY Extended Family
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Authors	Lydia Ottlewski, Johanna F. Gollnhofer, John W. Schouten
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Abstract	Purpose: Market logics have increasingly dominated consumer life worlds. Consumers may embrace marketization, or they may resist it, try to escape it, rebel against it, or actively manage its effects. This chapter examines the marketization of elderly care (in the form of transactional service provider relationships) and how consumers apply humanizing strategies to market relationships. Methodology/Approach: This is a qualitative interpretive study using in-depth interviewing, observations, and the analysis of media coverage. Findings: Drawing on institutional theory, this study shows how consumers humanize a marketized service relationship by weaving social logics into existing market logics. Our research finds consumers engaging in three humanization strategies: (1) moving beyond transactional relationships; (2) sharing consumption experiences; and (3) reinforcing social bonds through giving. The end result is the do-it-yourself (DIY) creation of extended family relationships from market resources. Social Implications: The context of this study is a government-supported, non-profit, exchanged-based retirement support scheme that addresses the challenges of global population aging and the increasing anonymization and estrangement in our society. The authors tentatively suggest that our findings represent a move to mitigate adverse effects of neoliberalism. Originality/Value of the Paper: Prior research has shown that consumers embrace marketization, resist it, try to escape it, rebel against it, or actively manage its effects. The authors identify another strategy used by consumers to address the increasing marketization of their life worlds, namely humanization. This study shows that consumers assemble market resources and humanize transactional service provider relationships by weaving social- into market logics resulting in the creation of a DIY extended family.
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Keywords	Marketization; extended family; institutional logics; timebanking; population aging; elderly
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Status	Published
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Publication Reference	Ottlewski, L., Gollnhofer, J.F., Schouten, J.W, (2019). Humanizing Market Relationships: the DIY Extended Family' In: Bajde, D., Kjeldgaard, D. and Belk, R.W. eds. Consumer Culture Theory, Research in Consumer Behavior, Vol. 20. https://books.emeraldinsight.com/page/detail/Consumer-Culture-Theory/?K=9781787542860
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Article 3

Title	Private and Public Sector Platforms: Characteristics and Differences
Authors	Lydia Ottelewski, Johanna F. Gollnhofer
Abstract	Private sector platforms allow for new ways of doing business by connecting different market actors. Recently, public sector platforms have emerged that engage consumer citizens for economic and societal challenges. This paper conceptualizes such platforms, based on a thorough literature review and an empirical data collection. We provide five defining characteristics of platforms and show how private and public sector platforms differ.
Keywords	Platform Economy, Private Sector Platforms, Public Sector Platforms, Hybrid Platforms, Conceptualization, Timebanking
Status	Published
Publication Reference	Ottlewski, L., Gollnhofer, J.F., (2019). Private and Public Sector Platforms: Characteristics and Differences, in Marketing Review St. Gallen (02/2019).

Article 4

Title

Authors Lydia Ottlewski, John W. Schouten, Joonas Rokka (2020)

Abstract Consumer-driven social innovation (CDSI) is consumer's entrepreneurial effort to develop a solution to a particular social problem, where the problem and the solution need to be constructed and legitimated by the social innovator. Drawing on a longitudinal qualitative interpretive study of the online platform Familyship.org and Tracey et al.'s (2011) multilevel model of institutional entrepreneurship, we explain why and how consumers actively drive social innovation. Our findings present a framework for consumer-driven social innovation and explain the detailed process of CDSI in the Familyship organization. More specifically, we shed light on how consumers create new individual forms of family based on the platform innovation. We detail the system of CDSI highlighting actors, functions and dynamics. We conclude the paper by discussing our theoretical contributions on CDSI with regard to institutional entrepreneurship, the role & functions of online platforms, marketization of sacred spheres, and templating/templates in Consumer Research.

Keywords Family Formation, Social Innovation, Online Platform, Templates, consumer-driven social innovation, social change, multilevel, Gioia methodology

Status Working Paper (currently published as Working Paper with non-disclosure notice at Alexandria Research Platform: <https://www.alexandria.unisg.ch/260746/>)

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Article 1 - From Strangers to Family: How Material and Non-Material Gift Giving Strategies create Agapic Relationships over Time

Lydia Ottlewski

ABSTRACT

Gift giving is an important element in various cultures, systems, and dyadic relationships. Multiple facets of gifting, mainly relational, have been examined in the realm of consumer research. In the context of a non-commercial elderly-student home share program, 'Housing for Help', this study extends our understanding about the progression of relationship types and exchange dynamics in the field of gift giving. Drawing on Sahlins' (1972) model of kinship distance and reciprocity as well as Belk and Coon's (1993) agapic love model, this study explores how strangers transform their transactional market exchanges into close family-like relationships and friendship bonds, by engaging in strategies of material and non-material gifting. The gifting strategies follow a spiral of reciprocity, which consists of material gifting, and non-material gifting, such as sharing of interests, telling & listening, shared experiences, learning from and caring for each other. The contribution is a temporally extended model that considers both the longitudinal emergence and reformulation of relations between alternating givers and recipients. This study also provides insights into the broader context of marketing and public policy: addressing the importance of aging in place, the wellbeing of elderly through social connections, and the disruption of current care solutions.

Keywords: Gift-giving spiral, relationship transformation, exchange types, reciprocity, aging consumers

INTRODUCTION

This book chapter contributes to our understanding of the social ontology of gifts, and gift giving as a practice of giving and reciprocation in intimate relationships. The social framework in which I explore the gifting dynamics and relationship progression is the context 'Housing for help'- a non-profit home share arrangement between an elderly person (the homeowner) and a student (the tenant). This special arrangement is not organized as a typical rent contract. Support, in terms of assistance and activities for

the elderly, is exchanged for low-cost/free lodging.

The ‘Housing for help’ initiative is an interesting and illustrative case that address the increasing loneliness of elderly and the alienation of individuals in our society. It places two persons of different generations together in the same household, such that they begin to share their lives together. This is similar to former living arrangements of extended families that were characterized by different generations under one roof – with the major difference that the elderly person and the student are not related. They are, in fact, complete strangers.

Sahlins’ (1972) model of kinship distance and reciprocity as well as Belk and Coon’s (1993) relationship paradigms are central concepts of this chapter to understand the types, dynamics and reciprocity of the relationships. Building upon these frameworks, I provide a processual model that discusses the progression of market-gift relationships.

Sahlins’ (1972) model assumes an a priori condition that determines what kinds of reciprocity will occur among people- ranging from family at the closest to enemies at the most distant. Sahlins (1972) uses the term ‘kinship distance’ to describe the kinship relations among people in terms of social distance. A high kinship distance exists between strangers and enemies, whereas we can find a low kinship distance between friends and family, ‘closest kin’. According to Sahlins, this kinship distance defines the type of reciprocity one may expect. Negative reciprocity occurs among stranger and enemies in unbalanced transfers that are characterized by theft or underhanded dealings. Balanced reciprocity occurs in a market exchange among people who are not close kin but rely on each other’s trust and cooperation in a communal setting. Generalized reciprocity occurs among the closest kin, such as family. They are acts of kindness and generosity that do not assume a quid pro quo. I use Sahlins’ framework of kinship distance and reciprocity to characterize the progression of the relationship dynamics among the ‘Housing for Help’ participants.

The second theoretical building block for this chapter is Belk and Coon’s (1993) agapic love paradigm that I use to specify the various types of relationships in the ‘Housing for help’ context. According to Belk and Coon (1993), economic exchange and social exchange are not the only two models within the broader exchange paradigm. Building on that they present ‘agapic love’ as an alternative paradigm of gift giving. Agapic love is characterized by “altruistic gifts that celebrate powerful emotions” (Belk and Coon 1993, p.393). The term ‘agapic’ refers to altruism and selflessness (Oxford University Press 2018). It is important to note that the term ‘agapic’ does not just refer to romantic love but also includes brotherly love, spiritual love, and parental or familial love (Belk and Coon 1993, p.406). I extend this definition of ‘agapic love’ by including

friendships and quasi-family relations.

This chapter does not refer to the concepts of romance and intimacy as an emotional, sexual, or passionate attachment between lovers. Instead, the word intimacy is used to refer to a very close relationship, that is personal and private in nature and connotes familiarity, bonding, and belonging. In Sahlins' (1972) terms, it would be a relationship with a minimal kinship distance and only little or no expectation for reciprocity.

This book chapter presents the development from strangers in an economic exchange model into intimate relationships within an agapic love model. The starting point is a dyadic relationship between two strangers of different generations engaged in a balanced quid-pro-quo exchange, in which there exists no expectation of additional gifts or reciprocity. The ending point is an agapic bond (family-like relations and friendships) characterized by familiarity and closeness. Addressing Belk and Coon's (1993, p.412) claim that "gift giving may reveal the move from economic exchange to romantic love", I explore the transformation of relationships by analyzing strategies of material and non-material gifting, the dynamic development of the exchange types, and the relationship outcomes that flow from them.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL BONDS THROUGH GIFT GIVING

The literature on gift giving has a long history and started with classics like Mauss's (1967) work on the forms and functions of exchange and Sahlins' (1972) seminal theory on kinship distance and reciprocity. Since then, literature on gift giving has been further explored throughout various disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, marketing, family literature, economics, and consumer behavior.

In these disciplines, studies consider different contexts of gift giving such as dating (Belk and Coon 1993), festive occasions (Clarke, 2006; Fischer et al., 1990; Lowrey et al., 2004; Rugimbana et al., 2003), business situations (Bellemare & Shearer, 2009; D'Souza, 2003; Lambsdorff & Frank, 2010), online gifting (Hollenbeck et al., 2010; Skågeby, 2010), surrogacy and organ donation (Raymond, 2014), meanings, values and feelings associated with gift giving (Chan et al., 2003; McGrath et al., 1993), charitable giving, volunteerism (Bajde, 2009, 2012; Eckstein, 2001; Mathur, 1996) etc.

Most of these studies investigate relational aspects of gift giving. We learn about different relational constructs, ranging from interpersonal, dyadic gifting to whole gift systems, and also negative influences of gifting on relationships (Marcoux 2009). More specifically, relational gift giving studies cover gifting oneself (Mick & Demoss, 1990),

dyadic gifting (Lowrey et al., 2004; Raymond, 2014; Rugimbana et al., 2003; Saad & Gill, 2003), household/familial gifting (Bradford, 2009; Clarke, 2006; Joy, 2001; Tumama Cowley et al., 2004), business/work gifting (Bellemare & Shearer, 2009; D'Souza, 2003; Lambsdorff & Frank, 2010), community gifting (Eckstein, 2001; Hollenbeck et al., 2010; Skågeby, 2010; Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012), to whole gift systems (Giesler, 2006; Sherry, 1983; Weinberger, 2017).

One common characteristic that we find in most of these relational gift giving studies is that gift giving strategies are applied to strengthen an existing personal connection between people: “to reproduce a social bond between people (Mauss 1967), “to communicate and solidify intimate relationships” (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012, p.74), “strengthen and maintain relationships” (Joy 2001, p. 240), “demonstrate ones feelings through gifts” (Csikszentmihalyi 2000, p.269), “promote ties and bonding between individuals” (Joy 2001, p.239), and “gifts as expressions of the desire for connection...and intimacy with others“ (Belk 2010, p.716).

For example, gift giving is used to improve the relationship between people in various situations, such as dating (Belk and Coon 1993, p.393), between lovers (Rugimbana et al., 2003) in between generations (Bradford, 2009; Price et al., 2000), within a community rather than interpersonal relationship work (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012), between employee and co-worker (Bellemare & Shearer, 2009), or between family members (Cheal, 1987), and business partners (Chan et al., 2003; D'Souza, 2003).

Based on the common finding that gifts strengthen and maintain existing relationships, some studies further extend this knowledge by exploring the relational dynamics in more detail. Joy (2001) extends our understanding about relational dynamics and presents a gift continuum that calibrates relationships from most effective to least. According to her study, gift giving differs among the different relationship types. Sherry's foundational anthropological perspective (1983) extends our understanding about the relational dynamics of the gifting process by providing an understanding about the gift giving cycle itself. His work offers a detailed examination of a single gift giving phase, consisting of three stages: gestation, prestation, and reformulation. Gestation is the behavior antecedent to the exchange on donor's side and his/her motivation (Giesler 2006, p.284). Prestation is the substance of gift transaction and involves the recipient's response and donor's evaluation of the response (Giesler 2006, p.284). The reformulation concerns the disposition of the gift, such as display,

storage, or rejection (Giesler 2006, p.284). His work assumes that gifting partners reciprocate the gift transaction continuously like a cycle.

In contrast to previous research, Belk and Coon (1993, p. 403) provoke a new direction of thought by claiming that gifts do not just strengthen *existing* relationships- “gifts can be the symbolic ritual medium through which *strangers* are transformed into kin” (Belk and Coon 1993, p.403). This statement assumes, that gift giving can be used as means to establish a relationship between strangers. This research gap serves as a starting point for my research.

In line with Belk and Coon’s (1993) assumption, this book chapter explores the progression of a transactional market relationship to an agapic family-like bond and provides insights about how strangers can become quasi-family by applying material and non-material strategies of gift-giving. In contrast to Sherry’s work (1983) that covers a single gift giving phase, I provide a temporally extended model that considers both the longitudinal emergence and reformulation of relations between alternating givers and recipients.

The ‘Housing for help’ initiative provides the ideal context to study this research question. Starting off as strangers, the participants describe their relationships as friendship, mentorship and family over time. This book chapter explains how they transformed their relationships by engaging in practices of gift-giving. A processual model provides the framework for discussing the progression of market-gift relationships.

CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

Vast growth in elderly populations is disrupting existing social systems, health care approaches, markets, and public policy, leading to various challenges that existing institutions can barely cope with (Ulrich 2005; Mai 2008; World Health Organization 2008; Pavalko 2011; European Commission 2015; European Commission 2017). One condition that researchers identify as enhancing elderly consumers’ wellbeing is the ability to grow old in the familiarity of their own homes, something that is often difficult to achieve given declining health, current economic conditions, and family structures (Aceros et al., 2015; Black et al., 2015; Ewen et al., 2014; Granbom et al., 2014; Vasunilashorn et al., 2012; Wiles et al., 2012). A possible initiative to address and overcome these challenges is the context of this study, the initiative ‘Housing for Help’.

This non-profit initiative arranges home-sharing between an elderly homeowner and a student in need of lodging. Elderly persons act as landlords, providing students with low-cost or free rooms in their apartments or houses. In return, student tenants assist the

elders with such things as household chores, gardening, technical matters, social activities, or basic consumption activities such as doctor visits and grocery shopping. Nursing-care activities (e.g. medication, bathing, assisting to go to the restroom etc.) are forbidden by the organization. The arrangements allow the elderly to remain living in their homes more easily and safely than they otherwise could, and the students receive substantial housing benefits. 'Housing for Help' developed independently in many countries in the world. It is institutionalized in different cities through sponsorship by various organizations, such as student unions, city governments, universities, federal ministries, volunteer organizations, senior and social services, private sponsors, churches, the job center, the Red Cross or Caritas. In facilitating service exchanges between elders and students, 'Housing for Help' effectively offers a market-based approach to addressing the changing emotional, material and health-related needs of older consumers desiring to age in place.

This research utilized an ethnographic approach (Giesler, 2006; Marcoux, 2009; McGrath et al., 1993; Scaraboto, 2015; Sherry, 1983; Sherry & Kozinets, 2001; Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012) to advance our understanding about these elderly-student home-sharing arrangements in Germany and Switzerland. I visited the six pairs, consisting of six elderly women and the six corresponding student-tenants, in their homes and spend a few hours with them. This allowed me to engage in in-situ observations of their private sphere. Moreover, in-depth, semi-structured interviews together as pairs and separately, took place ranging from 2-4 hours. It is important interviewing both, the elderly and the student, together to understand the interactions and dynamics of their relationships. Additionally, separate interviews were conducted to create a trustful atmosphere for the individual, making them feel comfortable to also talk about possible challenges and worries of the home share. A total of 18 participant interviews was recorded and transcribed verbatim resulting in 200 pages of single spaced transcriptions.

The detailed emic perspective of the participants was enriched by four formal interviews with four project coordinators. The interviews with the project coordinators lasted 1-1,5 hours resulting in 85 single spaced pages. Further informal interviews with other project coordinators transpired in the course of the data collection. Enriching the 285 pages of transcribed interviews are 14 pages of field notes from 15 hours of in-situ observation, a researcher diary (11 single spaced pages), and 15 photographs. Media data (180 items) in the form of newspaper articles, documentaries, videos, and governmental reports about the 'Housing for Help' initiative helped to triangulate my findings (Rothbauer 2008). An online blog (weekly posts over a two-year period) of one

of the elderly participants allowed for a longitudinal perspective of her daily life with the student.

The data analysis was conducted in iterative steps, continuously moving between empirical data and theoretical background, using open, selective and axial coding, until “subcategories, perspectives and themes” evolved from the multidimensional data (Spiggle 1994, p.492). Recurring patterns led to more abstract conceptualizations.

TRANSFORMING STRANGERS INTO QUASI-FAMILY & FRIENDS

The ‘Housing for help’ initiative illustrates that strangers in a balanced quid-pro-quo exchange use gift giving practices as a strategy to create intimacy and transform their relationships into agapic bonds. The dynamic changes in forms of reciprocity and kinship distance are in line with this transformation of exchange practices. The first section provides an understanding about the economic exchange between strangers as a starting point. The second section demonstrates the type of relationships that developed over time in the home share arrangements. The concluding section explores material and non-material gift giving practices that the pairs engaged in in order to move from strangers to quasi-family and friends. The findings will be discussed under the light of the spiral of reciprocity.

Starting point: Quid pro quid exchange between strangers

The ‘Housing for help’ initiative serves as an intermediary to match the needs of students and those of the elderly. The volunteer-run project introduces potential participants and provides them with a contractual basis for home sharing. The contract specifies that the homeowner grants a certain amount of living space, measured in square meters, to the student in exchange for a certain amount of labor, measured in hours. The contract can be personalized so that the living space is free or greatly reduced in price, with the labor hours adjusted accordingly. Other practical rules or expectations also are agreed upon in advance as well. The arrangement is beneficial for both sides, a tit-for-tat. This means that the elderly and the student enter the agreement in a balanced quid-pro-quo exchange as two strangers. The project coordinator describes it the following way:

It is a clear and smart idea. Both parties have something that the other party needs or wishes for. It’s mutual. So they just get together and the scale is balanced, and that is a very simple idea. That’s why it fits. The one has 100% space and 0% strength, whereas the other brings strength

and flexibility but no room to live. So the two sides just come together and exchange where they have a shortages and contribute from their abundance. It's a win-win situation. Maybe even win-win-win, because I also benefit from it. Because I am satisfied with my work since the student and older person are both happy. And that is just wonderful! (Project Coordinator, 45)

We find various market-like elements in the project coordinator's quote: balance, mutuality, reciprocity, and exchange. One of the seniors describes the market exchange character of the project in a similar way:

This project is great, because it provides me the opportunity to do both, stay independent and continue living in my house. I worked hard to finance this home, so it means even more to me. There was a point last year when my health deteriorated drastically I certainly did not want to move to an elderly home. Luckily, I have the help of Nadine. Through that, I could stay in my home receiving her help and she has a nice and spacious place to live. (Anna, 82)

In this statement, Anna highlights the tangible advantages of the market-like arrangement that she has with the student Nadine. The elderly receives help and security to age in place, and the student benefits from a large place to live during the studies at minimal costs. Both the elderly and the student receive benefits from their arrangement and balance what they give and receive.

To describe this starting point of the arrangement in theoretical terms, it can be characterized as 'commodity exchange' (Belk 2010) due to the involvement of strangers, who engage in an economic market-like exchange with a reciprocal transaction (Belk 2010, pp. 718-720). A market transaction normally expects high reciprocity (Marcoux 2009, p.681). In Sahlins' (1972) terms, considering the model of kinship distance and reciprocity, this case is characterized as balanced reciprocity- the closest equivalent to a market exchange. It occurs among people that are not close kin, but who rely on each other's trust and cooperation in a communal setting.

Development of close agapic bonds- establishing quasi-family relations & friendships

Over time, emotional dimensions develop in the dyads. One aspect that influences this emotional aspect is certainly the close collaboration and living conditions of the participants. However, this cannot be the sole reason, as we also find some dyads whose relations are kept to material and economic dimensions. In this work, I focus on the majority of dyads, which started to trade in non-material aspects as well and

developed into non-market types of relationships. An example of this is the pair Johanna (student, 25) and Elisabeth (homeowner, 73). Elisabeth, the elderly homeowner, describes their relationship the following way:

Friendship! We maintain our independence but just with pleasure. It's a very warm relationship. When I'm in the kitchen she comes out of her room and we talk, and it is just so nice. Or when she comes home, she knocks and asks if I need something and tells me about her day. It is very kind. A very friendly communication. Recently, we went to the city together, because I needed to do some shopping, and it was very entertaining. She also tells me about herself and her mother, I appreciate that. (Elisabeth, 73)

Also Johanna, the student, describes their relationship as friendship:

We are at least friends. We live very well together. And we talk about things, we help each other and I also receive important help. This is a very positive situation for me. (Johanna, 25)

The pair- Sophie (student, 21) and Inge (homeowner, 75) even describe their developed relationship as family.

We also go out for a coffee. It's nice, because I don't live in a shared housing with other students any more, and sometimes I feel lonely. And also because she is a grandma for me here, since mine are back home. ... I think we just get along really well. And I am about the same age as her grandchildren. And yes, we also talk a lot. I don't know, we always have something to talk about. And that's really nice, not to just sit next to each other silently. We talk about anything. She tells me about her past – for example about her husband and how they met – and I tell her about my family, my grandparents. It's really nice, she's my grandma from Freiburg. (Sophie, 21)

The development of close agapic and even family-like relationships is a non-planned side effect of the initiative. In Sahlins' (1972) terms, the pairs decreased their kinship distance and established kinship relations. Close kin, such as family, engage in generalized reciprocity, which includes acts of kindness and generosity with no expectation for quid pro quo. The age difference between the students and the homeowners points us towards grandmother/grandchild relations, as the 'Housing for help' participants also refer to. I use Belk and Coon's (1993) terminology of 'agapic' to describe non-romantic, but close family-like relationships and friendship bonds. The next section shows how the participants of the 'Housing for help' initiative engaged in

gift-giving strategies to transform their relationship from strangers to agapic relations.

Spiral of reciprocity: engaging in material and non-material practices of gift-giving

In the first section of the findings, we learn that the ‘Housing for help’ participants enter their arrangement as strangers. Over time they develop close agapic bonds. This section explores how gifting as a practice of giving and reciprocation transformed these relationships. The formal exchange is already balanced and fulfilled, so the participants freely engage in material and non-material gifting. Especially the non-material ‘gifts’ do not happen based on contractual obligations, but out of care, interest, generosity, and the willingness to bond with the other.

Material Gifts. Louisa (student, 22) regularly receives little gifts from Erna (79) when they go shopping.

When we are out in the city, she always invites me for something or pays for me. I always tell her that it is really not necessary and that she does not need to do that, but she insists on doing so. When we are grocery shopping for example, I take care of the shopping cart, she adds her things and I help her to find stuff. Simple as that, just like grandma and grandchild. (Louisa, 22)

Louisa describes that she often receives little presents from Erna, when they are shopping together. Even though Louisa does not expect a gift and even tries to reject it, Erna constantly insists. Erna uses gift giving as a strategy to thank Louisa for her companionship, even though Louisa already receives a cheap lodging to balance the exchange. Both developed a very close relationship, that Louisa describes as grandma and grandchild in the quote above.

Material gifts also play a role in the case of Judith (26) and Bettina (81). Judith describes that Bettina would like to pass along the furniture to her:

I have my room and bathroom in the upper part of the house. Bettina got it refurbished before I moved in. The room was also furnished with really nice, wooden pieces so I didn’t have to bring all the stuff from my hometown. Bettina told me a while ago that I could keep the furniture in the future if I’d like to, since she does not have any relatives. (Judith, 26)

This example draws a parallel to Price, Arnould and Curasi’s study (2000, p.180) about older consumers’ disposition of special possessions. In their case, older consumers passed along their belongings to other family members. In the case of Judith and Bettina, the elderly does not have any extended family anymore and therefore decided to gift the student with the antique wooden furniture. The giving of material gifts is just one

strategy applied by the participants to transform their relationships. Non-material gifting plays a more important role in developing family-like relationships.

Non-Material Gifts. According to Belk and Coon (1993, p. 403), examples for non-material gifts are time, ideas, feelings, and experiences. They are considered even more important than material gifts. The participants of 'Housing for help' engage in strategies of sharing the same interests, learning from another, telling & listening, shared experiences, and caring about each other.

a) Sharing of interests

A very basic form of non-material gifting is to share the same interests. Marie (student, 24) describes how much Susan (homeowner, 68) and her have in common:

Well, we share the same religious faith. And what else? So many things! We listen to music, because we both like Schlager music. (laughs). Other things- we talk about educational topics, because she used to be a teacher and I am becoming one. She is very interested in what has changed within the educational structures of universities, what is being taught. And also about parties of younger people. She used to go out to dance as well. We both like the French language and we like to talk about our families. (Marie, 24)

This quote illustrates that the both create a common bond through the same interests in music, education, dancing and religion. Interests of other pairs include cooking & baking, theater plays, novels, and current politics.

b) Telling and Listening

An essential type of giving is to pay attention to and appreciate each other's interests, lives, and histories. The participants of the initiative engage in genuine conversations and share their thoughts, emotions, and stories with one another. The different pairs report about their profound conversations:

We also have a lot of long conversations, for example when I am eating downstairs, sometimes I am eating up here when Anna is on the phone, but otherwise, I learned a lot about her life and we talk about many things. It is really nice to talk to her. She also likes to talk a lot, that is good. (Nadine, 28)

Nadine reports that most of their conversations happen in the course of joint dinner. The student enjoys the conversations with the senior. It is important to note that both sides value the common, non-contractually-obliged time. Also Sophie point out their special relationship and describes how much they contribute to each other's lives:

I think we just get along really well. And I am about the same age as her grandchildren. And yes, we can also talk a lot. I don't know. We always have something to talk about. And that is really nice, not to just sit next to each other silently. We talk about anything. She tells me about her past, for example from her husband and how they met- and I tell her from my family, my grandparents. It is really nice. (Sophie, 21)

Also the elderly reports how much they share with one another, even very private matters:

She already told me about her life and these are things that you don't tell just anyone, it was very private. I perceived that as a big credit of trust towards me. And I also tell her about my family and my worries and that is very nice, because you spend more time together than with the own children. (Inge, 75)

Inge feels honored that the student shares those details with her. She perceives this as a sign of trust, which makes her relationship very special. She also emphasizes that she spends even more time with the student, than with her own children, which creates a closeness and strong attachment among them. What we learn in all these quotes is that they do not just engage in deep conversations, but rather spend time together appreciating and respecting each other, and caring for another.

c) Learning from another

Another gifting practice that pairs engage in is to teach each other and learn from another. Learning in this respect may have various facets. Anna (homeowner, 82) describes that she taught the student to appreciate the nature:

And Nadine certainly learns from me how to deal with the nature. Now she feeds the birds and the dog, and she really enjoys it. (Anna, 82)

Erna describes that she learns from Louisa on a very personal level:

I learn from Louisa to be constantly friendly, always being willing to be responsive to others. And absolutely her understanding for the situation. I learn that from her. To settle into this situation without any egoism. (Erna, 79)

Erna suffered from a stroke and it took her some time to recover and to be able to live a normal life again. Louisa supported her in this situation. What Erna values is not just the physical support, but also the emotional attitude that Louisa brought towards her. Furthermore, the participants mentioned to learn about tidiness, different cultural and religious beliefs, political perspectives, specialized medical knowledge, languages, about other generations, technical know-how, and discipline during their arrangements.

Both sides give and receive in the process of learning and teaching, since it requires the willingness and goodwill of both.

d) Shared experiences

Another fundamental type of gifting are shared experiences. Both parties are simultaneously giving, or contributing, to the experience. It is important to note, that these common experiences are non-contractual and outside of the obligatory exchange dimension. Both sides engage in the common experiences freely. Shared experiences can be various activities, such as enjoying a coffee together, attending church services, or sharing meals. The following quotes describe the feelings of the participants:

It is always so nice together. Sometimes we go for a coffee together, and it is really cozy. I really like that, and I think she is also happy to have someone to drink a coffee with, without any time-restrictions, without being hectic to have a proper exchange. (Marie, 24)

Marie emphasizes how much both enjoy being together without any stress. She appreciates the exchange they engage in, in a comfortable atmosphere. Susan (68) values the church visits with the student.

Sometimes, we also go to church together. We share the same faith. Even though I can get there quite easily without her help- but if she has time and no other plans, she joins me. (Susan, 68)

Going to church together is a very private and family-like activity- similar to sharing meals as described by Elisabeth (homeowner, 73):

I always wake up early and directly have to eat breakfast, but she usually joins later. And when she is having breakfast I join her with the newspaper and we start to talk. And also in the evening, we often talk a lot and sit together comfortably. (Elisabeth, 73)

Elisabeth emphasizes her ability to relax with the student and enjoy the time together. Sharing these experiences together is a central element that contributes to developing these close relationships. This takes place outside of the contractual exchange. Instead, the participants build closer connections through their shared experiences.

e) Caring about each other

Gifting takes also place by expressing how much one cares for the other and the wish to contribute to facilitating each other's' lives. Bettina, who sits in a wheelchair, describes how the student Judith takes care of her and surprises her with little favors:

And I would really like to add that Judith spoils me. I am really spoiled! I just put all my dishes somehow in the kitchen and she just cleans everything, puts it into the dishwasher, unloads the dishwasher etc. I always realize that when she is not here, and I have to do it myself. (Bettina, 81)

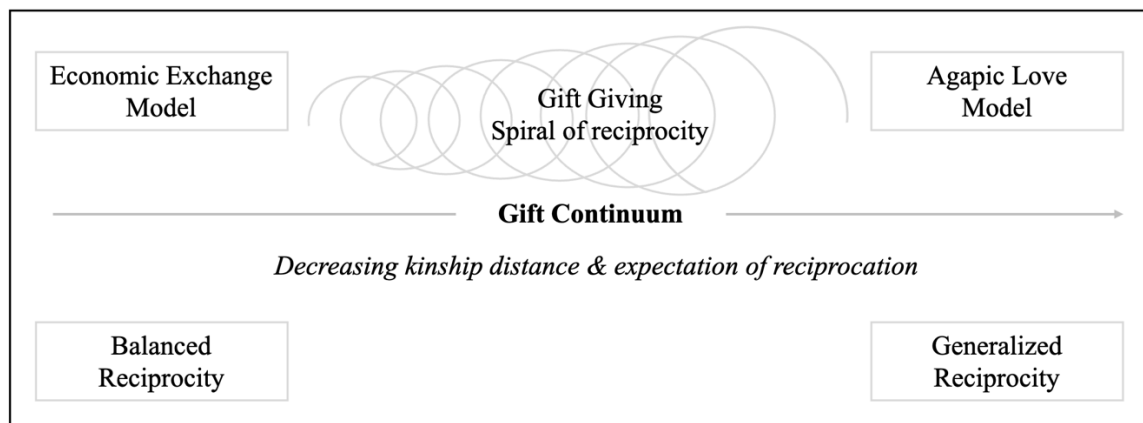
Claudia emphasizes how much she appreciates the extra effort Marina is doing for her and that she does not take it for granted. Also Nadine, the student, freely takes on additional chores, when Anna's cleaning lady is sick:

She has a cleaning lady who comes once a week to clean downstairs, I clean my room and the bathroom up here myself. And if the lady is sick, I clean downstairs as well - that is not a problem for me at all. I also do the dishes right after the meal, even though we did not set that in the contract. Anna normally just leaves the dishes during the day to do it all at once. But I just do all our dishes right away. She tells me that I don't have to do that, but I still do it. (Nadine)

All these activities are examples for showing affection and care for the other person. To summarize, gifting occurs in various instances and facets. It can take place in a material and non-material way. In the preceding sections, we learned that various facets of gifting are applied by the participants of the 'Housing for help' initiative to transform their relationships from strangers to close agapic bonds.

THE GIFT GIVING SPIRAL

The next section discusses the findings in a broader context. The participants of the initiative engaged in spirals of reciprocity to establish trust and increasing care. The gift giving spiral is characterized by non-circular movements that do not return to its original point: e.g. some of the gifts are not directly reciprocated and the relationships are progressively developed. In contrast to Sherry's work (1983) that covers a only single gift giving phase, I provide a temporally extended model that considers both the longitudinal emergence and reformulation of relations between alternating givers and recipients. The following illustration demonstrates the connections between the various elements of gift giving in more detail.



- Legitimized, standardized home-share agreement
- Contractually arranged tasks and (common) activities
- Contractual quid-pro-quid
- High degree of formality
- Devaluation of contractual arrangements
- Voluntary common activities
- Generosity and care
- Close relationships

Figure 1 Gift giving spiral (own illustration developed based on Sahlins (1972) and Belk & Coon (1993))

The gift continuum (Joy 2001) represents the spectrum of gifting relationships. Economic exchange and romantic love lie at opposite ends of the continuum (Malinowski's (1922) cited in Belk and Coon 1993, p.407).

The findings showed that the study's participants moved from one side of the continuum to the other as they engaged in practices of gift giving and thus transformed their relationships from stranger on the left to family-like relations and friendships on the right. In Sahlins' (1972) terms, balanced reciprocity lies at the very left and develops into generalized reciprocity on the right. In between, the expectation of reciprocity and the kinship distance, both decrease.

The spiral of reciprocity constitutes the center of the illustration. The "continuous spiral of reciprocity" (Giesler 2006, p.284) consists of three distinct phases: giving, receiving, and reciprocating (Joy 2001, p. 239). This spiral repeats in reciprocal giving. With each "turn of the circle" the levels of trust and caring increase. Throughout these spirals, the participants build up trust and increase their generosity and gift-giving.

The gifting can either be material or non-material, as we have seen in the findings. Material gifting is more traditional and hence more akin to Sahlins's (1972) generalized reciprocity. Non-material gifting has various facets. The sharing of interests and the shared experiences are special and important cases. Every shared experience represents a full spin of the spiral, because both parties are simultaneously giving, or contributing, to the experience.

The pair starts off with a formalized, balanced and contractual quid-pro-quo exchange (lodging in exchange for support) of two strangers. The kinship distance is

high, and each side fulfills their obligations with a high expectation for reciprocity. Over time, a non-transactional relationship type develops. In alignment with this transformation of exchange practices are the dynamic changes in forms of reciprocity and kinship distance. Kinship distance as well as the expectation for reciprocity both decreased. Instead of contractual arrangements, the social aspect becomes the central element of the pair. They engaged in material and non-material strategies of gift giving to create intimacy/closeness.

However, not all 'Housing for help' pairs experienced the positive spiral of reciprocity. One of the couples described their relationship as negative. Their living arrangement started like all others as a contractual formalized home share agreement. The elderly loosened the formal rules of the home share agreement to grant trust to the student and improve their relationship. Instead of reciprocating this gift, the student (ab)used the freedom and increasingly stopped to fulfill his formalized obligations of the contract. In contrast to the elderly's expectation, the student did not seek a close relationship with the co-living partner. This unbalanced state of giving and receiving led to a broken gift spiral and to increasing conflicts between the elderly and the student. Sahlins' (1972) model describes this type of unbalanced transfers as negative reciprocity. Once the senior realized that the student gained more at her expense, she introduced formal control measures (e.g. book keeping of the student's tasks, reminder notes, timing the student's household activities, etc.). The student did not understand this drastic step out of the gift spiral, leading to further misunderstandings of the pair. Marcoux' 'dark side of the gift' discusses these negative feelings and dangers of gift giving like social indebtedness, embarrassment, emotional oppression, and a sense of dependence (Marcoux, 2009, p. 671). As described in Marcoux' work, the senior also turned to market logics and measures to avoid the disadvantages of the gift economy.

This study contributes to the gift giving literature by exploring the progression of a transactional market relationship to an agapic family-like bond and provides insights about how strangers can become quasi-family by applying material and non-material strategies of gift-giving. In contrast to Sherry's work (1983) that covers a single gift giving phase, I provide a temporally extended model that considers both the longitudinal emergence and reformulation of relations between alternating givers and recipients.

It is important to discuss these findings in their broader context of aging populations. The data for this study was gathered in Switzerland and Germany. One might well wonder why elderly consumers in these two countries, being among the wealthiest countries in the world, with established social security and care systems, would choose to participate in the 'Housing for help' initiative. The findings of this

study clearly point to the fact, that elderly are not primarily part of this initiative to receive support in the household or to receive assistance with any other activities. Instead, by transforming the transactional service arrangement into a family-like cohabitation constellation, the close relationships become the central element and *raison d'être* of the initiative.

The study is of high importance since elderly generations are the fastest-growing population groups in most countries. Population estimates predict that by 2050 every third German and every fifth person in the world will be aged 60 and over (The Boston Consulting Group 2012). Large percentages of elderly in a population place strains on social systems including but not limited to pensions and health care. Existing institutions struggle to meet these challenges. Many elderly people desire to continue living in their own homes, even as their abilities to maintain those homes are becoming compromised by declining strength and health. In preindustrial times, or even in many non-western cultures, the situation of elderly isolation in their own homes would be rare because of the orientation to extended families. Members of multiple generations living in the same households naturally took care of each other. What 'Housing for Help' has managed to do, is to address the real needs of elderly consumers and craft a solution to the problems of elderly citizens in need of assistance, comfort, and companionship.

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Article 2 – Humanizing Market Relationships: the DIY Extended Family

Lydia Ottlewski, Johanna F. Gollhofer, John W. Schouten

Purpose: Market logics have increasingly dominated consumer life worlds. Consumers may embrace marketization, or they may resist it, try to escape it, rebel against it, or actively manage its effects. This paper examines the marketization of elderly care (in the form of transactional service provider relationships) and how consumers apply humanizing strategies to market relationships.

Methodology/approach: This is a qualitative interpretive study using in-depth interviewing, observations, and the analysis of media coverage.

Findings: Drawing on institutional theory, this study shows how consumers humanize a marketized service relationship by weaving social logics into existing market logics. Our research finds consumers engaging in three humanization strategies: (1) moving beyond transactional relationships, (2) sharing consumption experiences, and (3) reinforcing social bonds through giving. The end result is the DIY creation of extended family relationships from market resources.

Social implications: The context of this study is a government-supported, non-profit, exchanged-based retirement support scheme that addresses the challenges of global population ageing and the increasing anonymization and estrangement in our society. We tentatively suggest that our findings represent a move to mitigate adverse effects neoliberalism.

Originality/Value of the paper: Prior research has shown that consumers embrace marketization, resist it, try to escape it, rebel against it, or actively manage its effects. We identify another strategy used by consumers to address the increasing marketization of their life worlds, namely humanization. Our study shows that consumers assemble market resources and humanize transactional service provider relationships by weaving social- into market logics resulting in the creation of a do-it-yourself extended family.

Keywords: Marketization, extended family, institutional logics, timebanking, population ageing

MARKETIZATION

Consumers' life worlds are increasingly governed by logics of the market. Our current neoliberal economic system stands for liberalization, free trade, monetary objectives, technologic advancement, and individualism. The neoliberal economy drives marketization in various contexts, such as the commercialization of Christmas holidays (Okleshen et al., 2000), art (Zhu, 2002), extraordinary experiences (Tumbat & Belk, 2011), tattooing (Bengtsson et al., 2005), historical phenomena (Brunk et al., 2018), and culture and politics (Navarro, 2016). Studies show that marketization reaches even the most traditionally sacred areas of consumers' life worlds, such as religion (McAlexander et al., 2014), family intimacy (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014), and sexual relationships (Illouz, 2007; Hochschild, 2003), not to mention professions such as medicine (Thompson, 2004), education (Bartlett et al., 2002), and government service (Massey, 1997).

The term marketization – although widely used (Bengtsson et al., 2005; Brunk et al., 2018; Callon, 2016; Okleshen et al., 2000; Zhu, 2002)– is only loosely defined. For our current purpose we define marketization as follows: Marketization is the process of infusing market logics into organizational fields that were formerly located outside the purview of markets. Consumers react differently to the marketization of such aspects of their lives. For example, McAlexander and colleagues (2014), found attrition of membership from the Mormon Church to be driven partly by perceptions that the church had become too much of a business and a marketing organization. Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007), in their study of community supported agriculture, found people resisting the corporate-capitalist logic of modern organic food production and working to construct an alternative market, the logic of which prioritized local relationships. Kozinets (2002), in his study of Burning Man, questioned whether or for how long consumers can escape market logics altogether, and he plumbed tensions between the logics of communality versus self-interest. In the marketization of interpersonal relationships, Epp and Velagaleti (2014) studied effects of the marketization on parental caregiving. They found parents, in their relationships to nannies and other child-care providers, struggling between logics of the market and those of love and family obligation, and trying to develop strategies for reconciling them. The parents showed concern for keeping clear the lines separating family from paid service help, and more importantly, the lines between what duties should or should not be marketized. Barnhart, Huff and Cotte (2014) found, in similar caregiving situations, that such lines can get blurred, in that paid help often, by virtue of the intimacy of care and the trust placed in them, come to be regarded much like family members. In other words, family is what

family does. Sociological literature also describes the blurring of economics and intimacy (Giddens, 1991; Hochschild, 2003; Zelizer, 2005; Illouz, 2007).

This study looks at the marketization of elderly care (in the form of transactional service provider relationships) and how consumers react to it. Like some prior research, we find that consumers assemble market resources and humanize transactional service provider relationships by weaving social logics into market logics, resulting in the creation of a do-it-yourself extended family.

AN INSTITUTIONAL THEORY PERSPECTIVE

We draw from institutional theory, using the key concepts of institutional logics and institutional work to interpret our findings. In marketing and consumer research, institutional theory is widely used for theorizing market dynamics, such as the creation of new markets (Giesler, 2008; Humphreys, 2010) significant changes to existing markets (Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli, 2015; Giesler, 2008; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013; Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007) consumer roles in market change (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015), and how consumers deal with conflicting logics (Gollnhofer et al., 2016; Scaraboto, 2015). We use institutional theory to frame our findings regarding consumers' humanization of transactional service provider relationships in the context of elderly care.

Institutional logics are sets of material practices and symbolic constructions that constitute an institution's organizing principles (Scott, 2014, pp. 90-91). They are shaped within dominant philosophical underpinnings and worldviews. These "shared complex conceptual frameworks provide guidelines for the behavior of field participants: on the individual, organizational and societal level" (Scott, 2014, p. 225). The socially constructed character of institutional logics helps people in particular contexts provide meaning to their social reality (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015, p. 1449). Since there is a multiplicity of value spheres, each is associated with a distinctive institutional logic. Each arena, field or institution – be it political, economic, or religious – is governed by specific logics. Prior research in marketing and consumer research has drawn distinctions between market and social logics. Market logics turn on money, economic exchange (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014), economic self-interest (Kozinets, 2002), consumer choice (McAlexander et al., 2014), transactions, and profit maximizations (Scaraboto, 2015). Social logics include love, sacrifice, family, intimacy, care (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014), community (Kozinets, 2002), reciprocity (Scaraboto, 2015), gifting, and generosity (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012).

Institutional work deals with tensions of competing institutional logics, and can lead to actions aimed at creating, maintaining, or disrupting practices, understandings, rules, and conventions that are shared by individual and collective actors in an organizational field (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015, p. 1450). Diverging institutional logics might interact with one another, take on hierarchical constellations, balance each other out, and achieve acceptance over time (Gollnhofer et al., 2016, p. 229).

Based on the practice of food sharing and the legitimization of sustainable practices, Gollnhofer (2016) explains how logics can hybridize, and she defines strategies to combine logics. Strategies to hybridize logics have been identified by the literature (Gollnhofer, 2016; Pache & Santos, 2013; Scaraboto, 2015). Markets can develop from the tension among competing logics (Scott, 2014; Kozinets, 2002). Giesler (2008) shows that the availability of competing logics in the music industry can support and animate consumer quests for change. Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli (2015) explain the evolution of the U.S. Yoga market through the competitive dynamics within markets and the intersection of connecting logics. The marketization of any field relies on the dominance of market logics within it. This study examines mechanisms by which a service relationship established by a market arrangement, and according to market logics, can be humanized.

CONTEXT AND METHODS

A growing population of the elderly increasingly burdens current social security and retirement care systems worldwide. Meanwhile, the estrangement of individuals within a neoliberal society brings loneliness to many people, especially those that are elderly and living alone. Former family constellations like the extended family network, with several generations living under one roof, have become rare in modern society. One possible solution being implemented in Switzerland is ‘Timebanking for the Future.’ The foundation is led by a non-profit organization and financed by the City Government with support from regional church, red cross, and nursing services. The initiative matches individuals aged 60+ (the service provider) with individuals aged 80+ (the service recipient) for the purpose of providing living assistance to the older cohort. The sexagenarians visit their octogenarian counterparts on a regular basis, helping them with activities such as household chores, gardening, social activities, going for walks, and accompanying them to medical appointments. The hours of support are recorded in a timebank for the person aged 60+. The timebank account can reach a maximum amount of 750 hours due to taxation reasons. Excess hours cannot be banked and are ‘invisible’ and voluntary. Once the service providers reach the age of 80, they can ask

for help and make use of their banked time. Hours are guaranteed by the local government. Market logics govern the timebanking with mechanisms such as contractual agreements, quid-pro-quo principles, measurement, and formalized rules.

The first author collected data through in-depth interviews with eight project participants and two project coordinators (duration on average 2,5 hours), and conducted in-situ observation in the homes of the 80+ generation (reflected in 15 single-space pages of fieldnotes). Other data include program statistics (from the coordinators' monthly time sheets), and media reports (newspapers, documentaries, governmental reports) about the initiative. The media reports are systematically gathered and analyzed (Humphreys & Wang, 2017). The author team moved iteratively between empirical data and theoretical background, using open, selective and axial coding, until "subcategories, perspectives and themes" evolved from the multidimensional data (Spiggle, 1994, p. 492). Recurring patterns led to more abstract conceptualizations. Three linked themes provide the structure to our findings. Working as a hermeneutic community allowed us to bring different perspectives to the data and further triangulate the findings. Our data collection is ongoing, but nothing we have learned so far contravenes the findings reported here.

FINDINGS: DO-IT-YOURSELF EXTENDED FAMILY

Point of departure: A market for companionship

Although 'Timebanking for the Future' is nominally about providing assistance to elderly citizens in exchange for assistance for oneself in later life, our data points to consumers that embrace the program in order to address a kind of loneliness or anonymity that is endemic to modern society. Says Martha (65):

The personal contact with people is taken away. I think we all become lonely. Theoretically, we do not need to leave the house anymore. We could do everything with the help of the internet. We would not even need to leave the house. Our social contacts are disappearing. It was different in the past. Extended families used to live together in the same house.

Martha contrasts modern life with a time in which social ties for the elderly were preserved by the structure of the extended family. The case of Katharina (92) – as recalled by her helper, Susan (66) – underscores the problem of isolation:

Many, many years ago Katharina always went to the elderly homes to spend time with the very ill people. She brought them freshly baked cake and coffee. And now, all of a sudden, she is also lonely. Loneliness increases a lot once all friends and closest kin are dead. That's life!

Katharina was an outgoing, socially-connected individual until old age deprived her of the connections she valued. Susan understood and empathized.

Our case of timebanking provides one possible solution to these increasing feelings of loneliness and alienation of individuals. This marketized service relationship was mainly designed to cater to physiological needs—such as cooking, gardening or shopping—with hours banked on a one-for-one basis. Social connection was only one point, among many, of the service. Our informants humanized this marketized service relationship by weaving social logics into market logics. We now describe the three facets of this humanization process.

Moving beyond transactional relationships

When entering the timebanking agreement, both the provider and the recipient of services agreed to market logics, which dominate the early exchanges between them. As expected, they entered a formal contract, measured the time spent on care activities, reported the timebank sheet to the official timebanking organization, and formalized reciprocal behaviors and expectations. It didn't take very long, however, for our informants to begin moving their relationships beyond the boundaries of market transaction and focusing more on social logics than on market logics. Even before maximizing their hours of service, we found our sixty-and-over service providers neglecting timebank reporting requirements and ignoring the institutionalized structures for time tracking. They also continued their 'service relationships' after fulfilling the maximum amount of timebanking hours on their accounts. Klara (71) has been supporting Charlotte (94) for many years now, and has easily exceeded the maximum hours on her timebank account. However, Charlotte elaborates on their timebanking reporting:

Klara is not very conscientious with writing down the hours of all the things she is doing for or with me. It does not matter to us. Otherwise, she would already have achieved the maximum number of hours possible.

For both Klara, the service provider and Charlotte, the service recipient, timebank reporting has lost its relevance. They moved beyond the transactional relationship by de-emphasizing the market logics. This aspect is also highlighted by the Project Coordinator Arlette (47):

750 is the maximum number of hours the participants can acquire in their timebank. For most, it is actually just an incentive. The people that already reached the 750 mark certainly continue to accompany their timebaking partner.

Because they developed a relationship! We see that the timebanking itself is just the starting point of something bigger. That's the interesting thing about it! Her reference to "something bigger" clearly signals a set of values that prioritizes social logics above market logics. Referring to the timebank as a "starting point" underscores our interpretation of the market as a natural place of recourse for connecting with others. The logics of the market do not prevail once a more human connection is established. As we shall see, however, the market logic is not forsaken, even when it becomes secondary. Rather, the social logics of care and companionship are interwoven with the market logics.

Sharing consumption experiences

The weaving together of social and market logics occurs, at least partly, through the sharing of consumption experiences. The partners in timebanking find common ground for connection through hobbies, learning from another, and sharing family stories. Anna's (66) describes the time she spends with Isabelle (93) as follows:

When I get to her home, we hug each other. Then, we start our tour. We drive to the farmers market. Later on I help her to unpack the things. Then we have a coffee and talk a lot. Most of the times we enjoy a little walk outside. If she feels well, we even drive to the park. She has to get out! I also read to her, because she cannot see so well anymore.

Anna does not describe the support in the household as the main activity, but emphasizes throughout the interview the social connection expressed through common consumption experiences. Friedrich (70) similarly emphasizes the shared experiences with his timebanking partner Johannes (91):

My wife and I both have a timebanking account together, where both our hours are adding up. I really like the project. Johannes and I get along so well. I enjoy spending time with him. He is a knowledgeable man with a good memory, and I am trying to keep up with him. It is a great experience. I really want this for my own future. I hope that I can take care of myself as long as possible. But it feels good to have an alternative for the future. Knowing that I can make use of the hours that I gathered, this gives me confidence and hope for the future, because we don't have children. And for now, it is a really nice thing to spend my time on, and I also have responsibility.

Friedrich enjoys spending time with Johannes, whom he appreciates as a person. He and others find unexpected social connection in timebanking, on top of the expected physiological and logistical care attributes. Friedrich continues to enjoy the market

logics behind the program. In fact, none of our informants spoke against the economic logics of timebanking, even if they stopped prioritizing them. Instead, they have continued to appreciate the market logics while embroidering social logics on top of them.

Arlette, in relating the case of George (95) and Daniel (70), also reveals a hybridization of logics:

George's daughter called me and told me that her dad always goes swimming. But at some point he got a scared of slipping in the swimming hall. He also could not put his socks on the wet feet anymore. So I matched him with Daniel, who told me in the beginning that he is not the 'holding-hands' type of guy, which is normally a really difficult criterion to find in a timebanking partner. However, I remembered that he used to work in sports. And this combination works just perfect now! They go swimming together at least once a week. They are great together. And it additionally improves their health!

George and Daniel were a match made in the market and strengthened through shared consumption experiences. For another example of the power of common consumption experience we recur to Ingrid's (72) account of her experience with Barbara (92). Counterintuitively, the older one taught the younger one how to use computer technology.

A few years ago, I became the president of the choir. So I needed a computer to fulfill my duties. And I am a real loser when it comes to technical stuff. But Barbara is really good at that. She has always had the latest technology. So she told me, just buy the computer and I will teach you everything. You have to learn it! And this is what she did. She was really patient with me. And I was fascinated by her knowledge.

Learning consumption skills from one another is another way participants strengthen their human connections. This learning or transfer of skills happens in both directions.

Arlette, the timebanking project coordinator, also acknowledges the importance of common experiences:

More than 60% of the activities of all pairs are accounted to the category: "Leisure time and social time". This refers to going for a walk, drinking coffee together, playing games, reading to someone, tackling the sad aspects of daily life together.

Timebanking statistics support the conclusion that social logics seem to dominate these market-initiated relationships.

Reinforcing social bonds through giving

Our informants established personal relationships that went far beyond the marketized transactional service relationship. Examples can be found in the cases of Isabelle (93) and Anna (66), and of Friedrich (70) and Johannes (91). Isabelle's quote illustrates that she engages in the practice of gift-giving to thank Anna for her care: "She cares so well for me. All out of love and friendship. Well, sometimes she receives a gift from me." Through gift-giving Isabelle reinforces the relationship with Anna. Gifts strengthen personal connections, communicate commitment, and reinforce intimate ties (R. Belk, 2010; Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012). Consider the words of Johannes (91), who is downsizing his belongings because he recently moved into an elderly home. About Friedrich (70) he says:

I admire him! How he tackles everything! I am rather a procrastinator. We are doing the move together from the house I used to live in. In mini steps. Now he helps me to take care of it and get rid of the stuff. I am not married and have always been living by myself. I don't have children. My only sister died 7 years ago. I don't have anyone. He is the only one, so when I see something in the house that meant something to me or if he could use some of the stuff, I give it to him as a gift.

Once complete strangers, Friedrich and Johannes have become like family to the point that Johannes bequeaths his possessions to Friedrich. Price, Arnould and Curasi (2000) studied older consumers' disposition of special possessions within family networks. In our case, the family is a DIY construct among people introduced through a market arrangement.

The DIY extended family

The interplay among the three facets of humanization creates new social structures that approximate, in spirit and form, extended family relationships. A DIY extended family displays strong bonds among individuals that are not related by blood, and that were not known to each other prior to their timebanking contracts. The pattern appears in almost all of our interviews. Not all the participants use the language of family, but the closeness of the emotional bonds is clear. Nicola (65) says of her 89 year-old "client" Charlotte:

Charlotte lives in an apartment and we (the project coordinator and I) visited her for the first time. It was love at first sight, and now we are really good friends. Sometimes I have to cancel our appointments and that makes me really sad. Our friendship is so nice. She is such a lovely lady, always in a good mood, she never

complains and always shines. It's just perfect! I can't explain it. The feeling was just right.

Isabelle (93) and Anna's (66) relationship is similarly special: They communicated by Facetime when one of them went away for holidays. Anna does all of Isabelle's finances. The trust between them is complete.

Other participants use the language of family explicitly to describe their timebanking relationships. In discussing her reasons for timebanking, Regula (67) tells us:

I wanted to participate in the project because of ... maybe my helpers' syndrome? I like to spend time with elderly people. I love their stories, from their families and what they had to go through in life. I never had a grandmother. Mine died when I was very young. I've never had such a relationship with a grandmother. And it's always so interesting for me to meet older people. Additionally, I also benefit from participating in the project. I don't have children and I have a backup plan with this project, in case I will need help later in life.

The initiative provides Regula with a grandmother figure, which is an emotional benefit to her. Moreover, the project allows her to plan for surrogate offspring of her own to assist her when she has need for it in later life.

Klara (71) and Charlotte (94) have assembled an extended family that, for Charlotte, is more meaningful than her living family by blood. In Charlotte's words:

I practically don't have any relationships to my own family anymore. I have one sister, but we keep our peace by not talking to each other. We fought for this peace. That's fine to me. But Klara's family became my family now. Now I am even a great-grandmother to her family. That is great!

It is not especially surprising that people in close, caring relationships come to regard each other as family. What is somewhat surprising is that they use market resources – in this case an institutionalized service contract – to assemble extended family relationships that may span three generations among people with no prior connections. The DIY family is not an accidental or incidental outcome. Many participants felt the alienation and loneliness of old age. They went shopping for companionship and found it through timebanking. To that companionship they brought love, trust, compassion, and generosity. In other words, they wove social logics through market relationships, yielding a new kind of family.

DISCUSSION: ENTREPRENEURIAL RE-CREATION OF THE EXTENDED FAMILY USING MARKET OFFERINGS

In line with previous research, we examine a case where marketization infiltrates a consumer life world that was once considered special or private (cf. Bartlett et al. 2002; Epp and Velagaleti 2014; Hochschild 2003; Illouz 2007; Massey 1997; McAlexander et al. 2014; Thompson 2004). In our case, it is the marketization of elder care, which has traditionally been, and largely remains, the domain of the extended family, and especially women within that widely varied institution (Brody, 1981; Wolf et al., 1997). Our purpose is not to argue the various gendered, ethnic, or class issues in elder care, but rather to show how, in the face of social isolation, consumers may turn to market resources for the purpose of assembling a DIY extended family that is socially and emotionally meaningful.

In contrast to the substantial body of research that pits consumers against the forces of marketization, Marcoux (2009) argues that in some cases consumers turn to markets as refuges from the kinds of social obligation that gift-giving engenders. Like Marcoux, we find people embracing the market. Unlike Marcoux's informants, ours do so in order to create new social relationships and obligations, not to keep them at arm's length. They do it by entering into contractual service relationships, and then proceeding to humanize those relationships by emphasizing social logics over market logics.

The DIY nature of assembling family relationships from market resources is akin to entrepreneurial bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005) wherein entrepreneurs combat resource constraints by repurposing objects and technologies at hand. The difference is that our entrepreneurs are not creating businesses; they are creating surrogate families. They take a market offering, which is primarily economic, and repurpose it for their own social and emotional needs. Their DIY efforts are not focused on producing individual identity (Moisio et al., 2013). Instead they create a new collective identity. Our findings are in line with Huff and Cotte's (2016) research on family assemblages, which finds that a broader family collective can also include elder care services and facilities by making use of various components, including marketplace resources. The difference in our case is that the market resources are being used to create the family itself.

Another interesting feature of timebanking that deserves further discussion is the platform aspect of the market offering. The market arrangement provides a platform for the delivery of services (at a minimum) and also of emotional and social benefits. In most cases, the consumers devalue the economic arrangement over time and extract surplus emotional value from shared consumption experiences and gift-giving, which they prize more highly than the banked hours they earn. None of it would exist, however,

without the market as a platform.

We would like to discuss our findings in their broader cultural and economic context. One might well wonder why elderly consumers in Switzerland, which is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, with an established social security and care system, would choose to take part in the ‘Timebanking for the future’ initiative. We would argue that Switzerland is the archetypal neoliberal society. Rattu (2013, pp. 2-3) writes:

[T]he Swiss administration has worked on neoliberal principles at least since the end of the nineteenth century: the administration was “light” and private initiatives were favoured over massive public interventions ... The importance of their individual responsibility was constantly underlined, for instance, in the implementation of unemployment benefits and health care insurances ... multiple aspects of the Swiss socio-economic life, especially at the local level, have historically been managed in a direct, transparent, democratic and individual-centred way, according to economic rationality and bourgeois morality.

We suggest that it is precisely this long history of governance by neoliberal principles – emphasizing market logics, individual agency, and individual responsibility – that makes market solutions attractive to Swiss consumers. Those same principles arguably also contribute to the loneliness of aging individuals. The irony in the DIY extended family is that, by appropriating market relationships and humanizing them, these elderly consumers use market resources to remedy a problem that was created or exacerbated by marketization in the first place.

Our findings are in line with prior studies on a similar initiative, called ‘Housing for Help’ (Bajde and Ottlewski 2016; Ottlewski 2018). Thus, the humanization of market relationships, and the resulting DIY family relations, can be understood as a broader phenomenon. Given the program’s genesis in a non-profit and governmental initiative, the findings may also support the notion of increasing countercurrents to marketization, and an expanding gift economy. Alternatively, the very fact that participants embraced a market solution and never rejected it could mean the opposite, namely that marketization is so deeply ingrained that it goes mainly unquestioned and unchallenged.

Finally, this investigation may provide marketers and public policy makers with more insight into the needs of elderly consumers, and indicate some of the kinds of market resources consumers might use to craft a solution to the problems of elderly citizens in need of assistance, comfort, and companionship.

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Article 3 - Private and Public Sector Platforms – Characteristics and Differences

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Abstract

Private sector platforms allow for new ways of doing business by connecting different market actors. Recently, public sector platforms have emerged that engage consumer citizens for economic and societal challenges. This paper conceptualizes such platforms, based on a thorough literature review and an empirical data collection. We provide five defining characteristics of platforms and show how private and public platforms differ.

THE PLATFORM ECONOMY

In the Western world, the platform economy – empowered by new and emerging digital possibilities (Porter & Kramer, 2011; Cusumano, 2010; Baldwin & Woodward, 2009; Tiwana, 2013) – has been described as the most profound macroeconomic change since the industrial revolution (Parker et al., 2016; Accenture, 2016). It disrupts existing organizations (Kenney & Zysman, 2016) or even whole industries (Drahokoupil & Fabo, 2016; Accenture, 2016; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Cusumano, 2010; Chaney, 2009) and allows for new ways of doing business by connecting different market actors.

The platform economy is a “broad marketplace phenomenon with internal differences, (...), consisting of disruptive technologies” (Perren & Kozinets, 2018, p. 21). Platforms itself are “markets formed through an intermediating technology (...) that facilitate exchange activities among a network of equivalently positioned economic actors” (Perren & Kozinets, 2018, p. 22). These new trade and exchange structures in the form of online platforms such as *Uber*, *booking.com* or *Airbnb* change consumer life worlds and institutionalized market structures (Colby & Bell, 2016; Haque, 2016). Inherent in the platform economy are new underlying logics such as altered power relationships between market actors through network effects (Cusumano, Kahl & Suarez, 2008), new opportunities to create value and competitive advantage, the empowerment of consumers (Izvercianu et al., 2014), previously unknown digital capacities (Bharadwaj et al., 2013), and a shift from the consumer to the “prosumer” (producer consumer) (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Payne et al., 2008; Grönroos, 2011).

This development is not limited to private platforms but also reaches into regulators' spheres where so-called public sector platforms are emerging (Fligstein & Dauter, 2007). The present paper conceptualizes these public sector platforms. Based on a thorough literature review and an empirical data collection, we carve out five defining characteristics of platforms and show how private and public platforms differ with respect to these characteristics.

Public sector platforms

From e-services to innovative platforms

Until recently, regulators were using the internet mainly to inform citizens in more or less interactive ways about governmental, societal, environmental, and health topics through e-services (Torres et al., 2006). Examples for these predominantly passive e-services include online tools for e-democracy, e-governance, and e-government (Chadwick, 2003), such as platforms for electronic voting (Zissis & Lekkas, 2011), digital tax declarations or issuing birth certificates (Kaliontzoglou et al., 2005), service apps for local governments (Bond, 2015), or public service broadcasting as an alternative to commercial TV channels (Enli, 2008). These e-services aim to overcome “economic, social, and environmental challenges” by “improving collaboration between citizens and government agencies” through “a more open, flexible, and collaborative electronic government” (Zissis & Lekkas, 2011, p. 239). Recently, regulators have started to experiment with the platform economy by establishing new and innovative public sector platforms, for example timebanking initiatives, community development, refugee integration, midwife placement or intergenerational home sharing projects. This way regulators can turn consumers into citizens by allowing them to initiate or boost social change (Kneip, 2012). Public sector platforms can enhance this process of empowerment and responsabilization. For regulators the benefit is obvious: consumers voluntarily take on new responsibilities and tasks, turn into active citizens and this way relieve the government of certain organizational tasks. For consumers, such public sector platforms provide a space for taking an active role in current societal and political concerns, such as the support of minorities or environmental activism, and to shape their own future (Ottlewski et al., 2019). Furthermore, those public platforms facilitate exchange processes among consumer citizens faced with economic or societal challenges and allow for innovative ways to orchestrate collective action. It is important to note here that consumer citizens participate in these public sector platforms voluntarily, without any monetary incentives.

Case study: The public sector platform ‘Timebanking for the future’

One example of a public platform is *Zeitvorsorge.ch* which is also called ‘Timebanking for the future’. *Zeitvorsorge.ch* is a timebanking platform that is managed by a non-profit organization and financed by the City Government of St. Gallen with support from regional church, Red Cross, and nursing services. This public sector platform matches citizens aged 60+ with individuals aged 80+ for the purpose of providing assistance to the older cohort. The hours spent with tasks of elderly care, such as caretaking, shopping, cleaning or other household or leisure activities, are recorded digitally in a timebank for the person aged 60+. Once the 60+ person reaches the age of 80 or requires help, he/she can use the acquired time deposit for his/her own support. Thus, the platform is an alternative to the traditionally funded pension or health care systems (European Commission 2015, 2017). The practical implications of this timebaking platform address recent macroeconomic changes, specifically global aging. The demographic change entails various challenges, e.g., financial pressures on existing health care and pension systems (European Commission 2015, 2017), lack of a qualified labor force (Mai, 2008; Ulrich, 2005), and a caretaking gap (World Health Organization, 2008). Our empirical investigation, consisting of in-depth interviews with timebanking participants and platform managers revealed that the benefits of the timebanking platform reach even beyond its aspired goals. The participants do not only build up a support arrangement, they create new extended families with their timebanking partners and families. These “alternative family structures” are initiated through the platform and allow them to age at home (Ottlewski et al., 2019).

Therefore, we propose that public platforms might be a promising solution for managing demographic change, supplementing the current pension and care system, or addressing other instances in which existing governmental structures are challenged. Based on the empirical investigation of this public platform initiative and an extensive literature review, we gained an in-depth understanding of public sector platforms, its initiators/managers, and participants. Table 1 summarizes definitions and examples of private and public sector platforms resulting from this research.

Type of Platform	Definition	Examples
Private Sector Platform	Online platforms in the private sector (B2C, C2C). These platforms take an intermediary function and connect different parties for profit purposes (Perren & Kozinets, 2018).	▪ Airbnb.ch ▪ Blablacar.de ▪ Ebay.de ▪ Uber.com ▪ Booking.com
Public Sector Platform	Online platforms in the public sector (C2C). These digital platforms are	▪ Timebanking initiatives (www.zeitboerse.ch)

	initiated and financed by the public sector, address societal challenges and allow consumer-citizens to connect and to exchange services.	▪ Associations for neighbors (http://www.zeitgut.org) ▪ Refugee integration (http://so-freiwillig-engagiert.so.ch; http://ankommen-zh.ch/de/angebote) ▪ Midwife placement (https://www.hebammensuche.bayern) ▪ cohabitation projects (www.wohnenfuerhilfe.info)
Hybrid Platform	Online platforms that are sponsored/financed/hosted/initiated by private owners but located in a domain that is traditionally situated in the public sector, e.g., a platform as part of a company's CSR activities or a cooperation with charitable/non-profit partners in a societal context.	▪ Family formation initiative (Familyship.org) ▪ Connecting neighbors in a platform community (Nebenan.de) ▪ Outsourcing caregiving tasks (Betreut.de) ▪ Neighborhood support (Pflegix.de) ▪ Supporting senior citizens with everyday activities (Careship.de) ▪ Renting grandparents (https://www.misgrosi.ch; https://www.rentarentner.ch/v2/index.html)

Table 1. Definitions and examples of platform types

Conceptualizing public platforms

More and more governmental and non- governmental institutions are using public platforms and employing them as part of their digitalization strategy and processes (Fishenden & Thompson, 2013; Brown et al., 2017). Table 2 compares the main characteristics of private and public sector platforms in order to understand how public sector platforms work, how they differ from private platforms and what practitioners can learn from them. We identified those characteristics via a thorough literature review in cross-disciplinary journals with key terms that are closely related to the platform economy and sometimes even used interchangeably: ‘sharing economy’, ‘peer-to-peer economy’ (Denegri-Knott & Zwick, 2012), ‘on-demand economy’, ‘prosumption’ (Humphreys & Grayson, 2008; Ritzer, 2014; Woermann, 2012; Collins, 2010; Comor, 2010), ‘co-creation’ (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004), or ‘collaborative economy’ (Cova & Cova, 2012; Drahokoupil & Fabo, 2016). Out of 87 identified journal articles, we established 32 as highly relevant for characterizing private and public sector platforms. Furthermore, we closely investigated our empirical case study, the *zeitvorsorge.ch* platform, via semi-structured interviews with the elderly participants and the project coordinators, observations, platform statistics, and media coverage. The insights from our empirical research additionally informed our understanding of public platforms, their users, and their dynamics.

Characteristics	Private Sector Platforms	Public Sector Platforms
Platform owner	- Corporations - Start-ups	- Governmental organizations and institutions - Non-governmental institutions - Central, regional and local government
Objectives	- Pricing, matching, and exchange (Sundararajan, 2013) - Profit maximization (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) - Monetizing searches, social networks, professional networks, assets, human activities (Belk, 2014) - Generating competition, dynamism and scale - Monetizing network effects	- Connecting and engaging citizens in current societal, environmental, governmental issues (Torres et al., 2006) - Enhancing consumer well-being (Porter & Kramer, 2011) - Efficiency, inclusion and institutional change - Improving the collaboration between citizens and government agencies (Zissis & Lekkas, 2011) - Synergizing rather than competing (ECIS, 2018) - Integrating inner and outer resources to create decentralized innovation (Vassilakopoulou et al., 2017) - Reaching socio-economic objectives
Exemplary industries	- Mobility - Accommodation - Telecommunications, media, and entertainment - Retail and consumer products - Banking and financial markets - Electronics - Energy and utilities - Healthcare - Insurance - Manufacturing	- Education (Bildungscloud Deutschland) - Housing and community amenities (Wohnen für Hilfe) - General public services (Mobile St. Gallen App; Election Website Switzerland) - Economic affairs (BQ Portal Deutschland https://www.bq-portal.de/en) - Health (National Citizen Health Portal heilsuvera.is) - Environmental protection (umweltplattform.ch; https://www.ecocrowd.de) - Culture and religion (https://kulturverketumea.se/senaste-nytt/) - Integration (https://solinetz-zh.ch/wohnungssuche/) - Defense (Think Cyber – Think Resilience http://istanduk.org/cyber-resilience/)
Business models	Customer Consumers	Customer Overall public

	▪ Participating parties on the platform ▪ Shareholders ▪ Service/product providers on the platform Value proposition ▪ services ▪ stationary offers ▪ digital marketplaces ▪ forums ▪ matchmakers ▪ enablers ▪ hubs ▪ combinations of the above Value chain ▪ engaging different parties on the platform ▪ connecting actors ▪ creating a market ▪ equipping actors ▪ helping them to provide services to other actors ▪ acting as an intermediary ▪ pairing actors ▪ mediating the service flow ▪ providing a platform for centralized exchange (Perren & Kozinets, 2018, pp. 26-27) Profit mechanism ▪ commission for mediating services ▪ revenue as a retailer and service provider ▪ financed by advertising ▪ monetization of platform services (membership fees, user charges)	▪ Citizens ▪ Policy makers ▪ Governmental institutions ▪ Communities, interest groups Value proposition ▪ connecting citizens with other citizens ▪ providing information ▪ receiving help/assistance via the platform ▪ supports the matchmaking function of the governmental institution Value chain ▪ offerings produced by forming alliances ▪ joint cooperation between the central, regional, and local governments ▪ integration of private actors (www.platformization.org) Profit mechanism ▪ value not defined in monetary terms (Bygstad & D'Silva, 2015) ▪ savings for the community by connecting citizens and engaging them in volunteering ▪ financed by the public sector or by private–public partnerships, sponsoring to cover the costs involved
Challenges	▪ scaling ▪ chicken/egg problem (consumer and producer acquisition) ▪ participation of platform users	▪ citizens' perception and actual usage of the provided platform solution ▪ tackling the causes, not the symptoms ▪ active engagement of citizens

Table 2. Summary of key differences between private sector and public sector platforms

For clarity's sake this article focuses on private and public sector platforms only, although mixed forms (hybrid platforms) are also possible. The main differences

between public and private sector platforms are exemplified by means of the following characteristics.

Platform owner

The main and most obvious distinction between a private sector and a public sector platform is the platform owner.

In the case of private sector platforms, the owners are corporations, start-ups or other private sector institutions. Amazon, for example, established an online platform as its own digital trade/retail channel and additionally integrated the Amazon trade platform as an online marketplace for private people and other companies to offer used and new products.

Public sector platforms are established by governmental organizations and institutions, non-governmental institutions, and central, regional and local governments, primarily to address societal challenges and to allow citizens to connect and to exchange services. For example, the local government of the City of Munich finances a midwife placement platform to bring together expectant mothers and available midwives.

Objectives

Another characteristic that distinguishes the two platform types are the objectives.

The general goal of private sector platforms is to provide an online basis for pricing, matching, and exchange processes to suppliers and consumers (Sundararajan, 2013). Private sector platforms are geared for profit maximization (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), e.g. by monetizing searches, the exchange of goods, social networks, professional networks, assets, and human activities (Belk, 2014). Amazon, for example, generates earnings from the platform through online retail, commissions, and advertising.

Public sector platforms address socio-economic challenges (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Charitable organizations, NGOs, public policy makers or regulators provide such platforms to allow for better match-making between different parties, for instance, during catastrophic events (Bird et al., 2012; Houston et al., 2015). Public platforms aim at efficiency, inclusion, institutional change, and improved collaboration between citizens and government agencies (Zissis & Lekkas, 2011).

In contrast to private sector platforms that focus on creating competition and on monetizing network effects, public sector platforms focus on creating synergies (ECIS, 2018; Vassilakopoulou et al., 2017) and on integrating inner and outer resources for achieving socio-economic objectives and decentralized innovation (Platformization,

2020). The goal of public platforms is not to generate profits, but to save on expenditures by delegating activities and responsibilities to citizens.

Exemplary industries

Private and public sector platforms also differ by the industries they are operating in. Private sector platforms can typically be found in large industries of the private sector, such as mobility (e.g. UBER – Bond, 2015; Cusumano, 2015; Cannon & Summers, 2012; Malhotra & Van Alstyne, 2014; Cusumano, 2015), accommodation (e.g. Airbnb – Cusumano, 2015; Hawlitschek et al., 2016; Hamari et al., 2015; Malhotra & Van Alstyne, 2014), telecommunications, media, and entertainment (e.g. Youtube – Belk, 2014; Beer & Burrows, 2010; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Hamari et al., 2015; Fuchs, 2014; Denegri-Knott & Zwick, 2012), retail and consumer products (e.g. Amazon – Cusumano, 2015; Ritzer et al., 2012) as well as banking and financial markets (e.g. Kickstarter – Hamari et al., 2015 and Kiva – Bajde, 2009, 2012, 2013).

In contrast, public sector platforms operate in domains which are typical of the responsibilities of governmental institutions, such as education (e.g. learning, teaching, scholarships – Greenhow et al., 2009), housing, community amenities, aging populations (e.g. Housing for Help – Bajde & Ottlewski, 2016, Ottlewski, 2018; Timebanking for the future – Ottlewski et al., 2019), healthcare, social protection, economic affairs, environmental protection, public order and safety, culture and religion, recreation, and defense (OECD, 2018).

Business models

According to Gassmann et al. (2014), a business model consists of four elements: the customer (who are the target customers?), the value proposition (what is offered to the customers?), the value chain (how are the offerings produced?), and the profit mechanism (why does it generate profit?). The new developments of the platform economy result in new alliances and partnerships on the market, thus new types of business models are developing. However, the resulting business models differ between private sector and public sector platforms.

The target customers of a private sector platform business model are various consumer segments, other participating parties of the platform, and shareholders. The offers of private sector platforms are versatile and include simple services, stationary offers, digital marketplaces, forums, matchmakers, enablers, hubs, or any combination of these (Perren & Kozinets, 2018). These offerings are produced by engaging different parties on the platform, creating a market, connecting, pairing or equipping actors,

helping them to provide services to other actors, acting as an intermediary, mediating the service flow, and/or providing a platform for a centralized exchange (Perren & Kozinets, 2018, pp. 26-27). There are different profit mechanisms such as charging commission fees for mediating services, generating revenue as a retailer and service provider, financing the platform through advertising, or monetizing the platform services by charging user or membership fees.

The target customers of public sector platforms are the overall public, citizens, communities, and interest groups. The offers of public sector platforms are diverse – e.g., matchmaking services, connecting citizens with each other or with public institutions, providing information, and providing or receiving help/assistance via the platform. These offerings are produced through alliances with other public sector platforms, with private sector providers, with the civil society, digital providers, or even with academic bodies and researchers (www.platformization.org). One specific characteristic of public sector platforms and their value chain is the joint cooperation between the central, regional, and local government along with private actors to achieve “socio-economic benefits and innovation, involving a diverse portfolio of systems and registers” (www.platformization.org). Public sector platforms strongly differ from private sector platforms with regard to the profit mechanisms as they are non-profit-oriented by nature (Bygstad & D’Silva, 2015). However, they have a positive financial effect since public expenses can be reduced by entering private–public partnerships, through sponsoring, or by connecting and actively engaging citizens as, for example, in the case of *zeitvorsorge.ch*.

Challenges

A final distinction between private and public sector platforms can be made with regard to the challenges they are facing. Private sector platforms are confronted with problems of scaling, consumer and producer acquisition, and the active participation of platform participants. Public sector platforms are confronted with different challenges, such as the citizens’ perception and actual usage of the provided platform solutions, tackling the causes and not the symptoms, and creating an active engagement of citizens through the platform.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Public attention is mainly focused on private sector platforms that pursue profit maximization objectives. However, public sector platforms have recently emerged providing solutions for socio-economic challenges in our highly disruptive times. They

share some commonalities with private sector platforms, but are fundamentally different in their goals and premises. Moreover, there are hybrid platforms which may blend/mix the characteristics of private and public sector platforms to offer innovative solutions.

MAIN PROPOSITIONS

- The platform economy offers new forms of interaction between different market actors.
- Regulators and public policy makers have started to provide public sector platforms in order to engage consumers/citizens for societal or economic challenges.
- Public sector platforms differ from private sector platforms in five characteristics: 1) platform owner, 2) objectives, 3) industries, 4) business model and 5) challenges.
- Hybrid platforms combine characteristics of both private and public sector platforms.
- Practitioners and public policy makers need to understand the differences between private and public sector platforms in order to successfully design, market, and manage them.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Public sector platforms offer promising solutions for coping with societal and economic challenges.
- Analyzing various platform types according to the characteristics provided above provides unique insights into current best practices in the private and public sector domains.
- Regulators should carefully consider the potential upsides (e.g. reduction of public expenses, sponsorships/partnerships with the private sector) and downsides (e.g. unforeseen externalities, rejection of the solution by the citizens).
- Launching hybrid platforms (e.g., by entering into a traditional public sector domain) may offer new business development potentials for private sector companies.
- The success of the platform solution depends on how actively consumers/citizens and ‘producers’ are engaged on the platform and how well the offered solution fits their relevant needs and objectives.

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Article 4 – Consumer-Driven Social Innovation

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ABSTRACT

Consumer-driven social innovation (CDSI) is consumer's entrepreneurial effort to develop a solution to a particular social problem, where the problem and the solution need to be constructed and legitimated by the social innovator. Drawing on a longitudinal qualitative study of the online platform Familyship.org and Tracey et al.'s (2011) multilevel model of institutional entrepreneurship, we explain why and how consumers actively drive social innovation. Our findings present a framework for consumer-driven social innovation and elaborate on the detailed process of CDSI in the Familyship organization. More specifically, we shed light on how consumers create new individual forms of family based on the platform innovation. We detail the system of CDSI highlighting actors, functions and dynamics. We conclude the paper by discussing our theoretical contributions on CDSI with regard to institutional entrepreneurship, the role & functions of online platforms, marketization of sacred spheres, and templating in Consumer Research.

Keywords: Family Formation, Social Innovation, Online Platform, Templates, Templating, Consumer-Driven Social Innovation, multilevel analysis, Gioia methodology, Consumer Entrepreneurs

INTRODUCTION

“In one of our first conversations we already discussed the questions from an official questionnaire that included important aspects: financial ones, custody, values for raising the child. So, we could already see similarities and aspects that need further discussion. In the beginning of the pregnancy, we went to a notary to commit ourselves to the parental agreement. In normal romantic relationships, people assume that the trust and love between the parents replaces these written contracts and that the love will settle all potential issues. For us, the notary agreement was important to state our objective opinion for important matters concerning the child and how we wish to deal with them in the future.”

Prior research has shown that many consumers feel marginalized or stigmatized by current social and market structures, such as gender/sexuality (Kates, 2002), ethnicity (Luedicke, 2015; Peñaloza, 1994; Üstüner & Holt, 2007), race (Crockett, 2017; Crockett

& Wallendorf, 2004), physical ideals (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), or religion (Sandikci & Ger, 2010). Another case we identify is the meaning of family and the process of family formation, the context of our study.

In Western societies, family is currently undergoing many changes, such as delayed marriage (Furstenberg, 2020; Guzzo & Hayford, 2020; Smock & Schwartz, 2020), re-marriage (Smock & Schwartz, 2020), delayed childbirth (Guzzo & Hayford, 2020), increasing divorce rates/union separation (Härkönen et al., 2020; Kreyenfeld & Trappe, 2020; Smock & Schwartz, 2020), voluntary childlessness (Furstenberg, 2020), multiple-partner fertility (Smock & Schwartz, 2020), increase of unmarried cohabitation (Cherlin, 2020; Guzzo & Hayford, 2020; Härkönen et al., 2020; Smock & Schwartz, 2020), LGBTQ+ unions (Cherlin, 2020; Digoix, 2020; Furstenberg, 2020; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020), variety/diversity of family bonds (Cherlin, 2020; Digoix, 2020; Furstenberg, 2020; Holland, 2013; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020).

Even though prior research and demographic statistics have extensively studied these family trends and acknowledged the wide variety/diversity of family bonds (Cherlin, 2020; Digoix, 2020; Furstenberg, 2020; Holland, 2013; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020) and the de-coupling of marriage and childbirth (Guzzo & Hayford, 2020; Holland, 2013; Smock & Schwartz, 2020), we still find many regulations about family rights and family order that do not reflect the lived diversity of family constellations (Cherlin, 2020; Digoix, 2020). More specifically, even though alternative family models such as LGBTQ+ unions gain more and more legal legitimization (Cherlin, 2020; Digoix, 2020; Furstenberg, 2020; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020), regulations for adoption (second-parent adoption, joint adoption) (Digoix, 2020; Guzzo & Hayford, 2020), assisted reproductive techniques (Digoix, 2020; Furstenberg, 2020), surrogacy and sperm donation lag behind as they are still seen controversial (Digoix, 2020). Moreover, alternative family models have to face powerful social norms/constraints (Cherlin, 2020; Digoix, 2020; Guzzo & Hayford, 2020; Holland, 2013) and religious doctrine/sanctions (Cherlin, 2020).

Interestingly, the taken-for granted norm that romantic partnerships between parents are a desirable basis for creating a family remains almost unquestioned. This is due to the fact that historically, “law recognized marriage as the sole form of intimate partnership that provided clear responsibilities and rights to parents” (Cherlin, 2020, p. 63). Without contestation, “marriage was nearly universal, and no other way of bearing and raising children was morally acceptable (Cherlin, 2020, p. 64). Even nowadays, getting married (Smock & Schwartz, 2020, p. 10), “finding a long-term partner and

having children” (Cherlin, 2020, p. 68) is seen as the “core institution of family life” (Holland, 2013, p. 276).

Consequently, alternative, non-traditional families are facing many challenges that they have to overcome. That includes to “question the heterosexual model of the family” (Digoix, 2020, p. 7), “redefine themselves without the traditional concepts of the family” (Digoix, 2020, p. 6) and finding “alternative pathways to parenthood” (Guzzo & Hayford, 2020, p. 125). Often that means having to “mobilize social and economic capital to succeed in their goal” of becoming a parent (Digoix, 2020, p. 6). Hence, alternative, non-traditional families are “changing family practices in the Western nations” (Furstenberg, 2020, p. 364), re-interpreting the “process of becoming a parent and social meanings of family” (Guzzo & Hayford, 2020, p. 125) and thereby expanding the “definition of the family [...] to include networks of people who establish close bonds” (Cherlin, 2020, p. 75). In contrast to prior work that mainly focused on the individual experiences of marginalized or stigmatized consumer identities, and how these consumers express, experience, adapt, resist, and cope with imminent tensions resulting from prevailing social and market structure constraints; we show how consumers actively seek to address and change prevailing social and market constructions of family, and thus engage in processes of social innovation – the focus of our research.

The introductory quote of this article reflects a new way of understanding and forming family. It is an example for consumers who desire to become a parent but cannot or do not wish to follow the traditional understanding of what family is and who constitutes it. Instead, these marginalized consumers use an online platform to have and raise a child with a former stranger, using business logics to create and manage their family constellation. Moreover, this platform was founded by consumers out of their own desire to become a parent in a non-traditional constellation and consequently, they innovated the meaning of family. Through the platform solution, the Familyship community initiated broader social change.

Creating a new set of meanings around 'the family' and a set of practices in the form of a platform is an example for social innovation. We define (consumer-driven) social innovation as (consumer's entrepreneurial) efforts to develop a 'solution' to a particular social 'problem', where the 'problem' and the 'solution' need to be constructed and legitimated by the social innovator. We propose the following research question: Why and how do consumers drive social innovation?

In order to answer this research question, we theorize consumer-driven social innovation by drawing on a multilevel framework of institutional entrepreneurship and

extend it to a consumer angle. The multilevel perspective enables us to explain not only the entrepreneurial processes of Familyship's platform creation, but also consumer's individual creation of family organizations. We build theory on consumer-driven innovation via a longitudinal qualitative study on the online platform Familyship.org. It is an intriguing context where the workings of consumer-driven social innovation can be observed on various levels: the creation of new forms of family and new means and logics of family creation on a micro level, the foundation of the Familyship platform as a case of institutional entrepreneurship on the meso level, and broader social change on the macro level.

The paper is organized as follows. First, we review literature on creative/resistant consumer movements and collectives as well as research on consumers as institutional entrepreneurs seeking market change. Next, we present a multilevel framework of institutional entrepreneurship for analyzing (social) innovation. We then explain our methodological approach and our research context. Our findings explain the process of CDSI in the Familyship organization and shed light on how consumers create new individual forms of family based on the platform innovation. We detail the system of CDSI highlighting actors, functions and dynamics. We conclude the paper by discussing our theoretical contributions on CDSI with regard to institutional entrepreneurship, the role & functions of online platforms, Marketization of sacred spheres, and Templating in Consumer Research.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: CONSUMERS DRIVING SOCIAL CHANGE

Prior consumer research literature has recognized and explained the ways in which consumers express needs for social change and resist dominant market structures and consumption ideologies. These works can be classified into two main categories based on their theoretical and analytical focus: research on creative/resistant consumer movements and collectives, and research on consumers as institutional entrepreneurs seeking market change.

What both of these streams share in common is how they highlight a variety of phenomena in which consumers embrace an active role in negotiating existing market and society-level tensions, often stemming from experiences of marginalized or stigmatized consumer identities – for example, in terms of gender/sexuality (Kates, 2002), ethnicity (Luedicke, 2015; Peñaloza, 1994; Üstüner & Holt, 2007), race (Crockett, 2017; Crockett & Wallendorf, 2004), body and fashion ideals (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), or religion (Sandikci & Ger, 2010). While earlier contributions have laid

the foundations for explaining how consumers experience, adapt, resist, and cope with imminent tensions resulting from prevailing social and market structure constraints, we show that prior theoretical and empirical examinations are limited in answering specifically how and why consumers engage in processes of social innovation and driving social change.

We equally find that prior literature is limited in addressing a key social construct that serves as an important pillar of all societies and identity work – but which is also closely governed and constrained by dominant market-mediated representations including legal definitions: the family. Prior research has closely theorized how family identities and practices are negotiated and assembled (Epp & Price, 2008, 2010), and how these have important impacts on market offers and services (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014). Yet, little research can be found addressing how consumers may seek to change prevailing social and market constructions of family, and thus engage in processes of social innovation – the focus of our research.

In the following, we first highlight prior research in more detail and then draw on theories of institutional entrepreneurship (Tracey et al., 2011) towards building a suggested conceptual framework and analytical lens for studying the process of how consumers innovate new forms of family.

Creative/Resistant Consumer Movements and Collectives

Creative and resistant consumer collectives have been a staple topic in consumer culture theory since its inception (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Stigmatized (Kates, 2002), ethnic (Crockett, 2017; Crockett & Wallendorf, 2004), migrant (Luedicke, 2015; Peñaloza, 1994) or religious collectives (Sandikci & Ger, 2010), for example, have been highlighted in accounts that address how deeply engrained social structures and dominant/mainstream ideologies are experienced by consumers as constraining. The literature shows how this often leads to resistant consumer expressions, individual coping or adaptation strategies, and often to community building and collective social/political movements that seek to bring attention to the marginalized voices.

These studies, for example, show how immigrant consumers selectively use and resist the repositories of meaning and cultural scripts in negotiating “hybrid” or acculturated consumer identities (Luedicke, 2015; Peñaloza, 1994; Üstüner & Holt, 2007). When confronted with conflicting dominant consumer ideology and sociocultural conditions, these consumers more often than not end up with “shattered identity projects”, especially when lacking social-cultural and economic capital (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, p. 41). Immigrant consumers have been shown to struggle and

cope with how little they were valued as members in their new host country (Peñaloza, 1994), the situated inequality and lack of symbolic or moral “privilege” in relation to indigenous people (Luedicke, 2015), or circumventing the consequences of being associated with stigmatized ethnic clichés (Béji-Bécheur et al., 2012).

Similarly, the question of color has received increasing attention. Research has shown how middle-class consumers engage in racial stigma management (Crockett, 2017) in seeking to make the everyday life more tolerable and bearable. Such strategies include the employment of counternarratives that can help disavow social stigma through status-oriented displays and politics of respectability, often played out through everyday acts of consumption (Crockett & Wallendorf, 2004). Research on gender and gay consumers, on the other hand, has shown how community building practices can play an important role in empowering marginalized and stigmatized consumers (Kates, 2002), and may eventually lead to powerfully resonant social-political movements such as Gay Pride, which through visibility to the LGBTQ+ rights can have a broader normalizing ideological impact. But it is where these literatures are mainly focused is the investigation of how consumers seek to address and negotiate tensions in relation to their gendered identities through consumption or communal affiliation – in hopes for more gender fluidity and less traditional roles. Yet, as stressed by this same literature, typically consumption also tends to precisely work against this, by re-establishing and reinforcing gendered identities and thus creating further tensions to be negotiated (Zayer et al., 2012).

A nascent stream of research that has examined the creative consumer-driven movements as facilitators of new market forms and social change. This literature has shown how consumer-driven movements can actively work towards the creation of new market forms, such as the mini-moto bikes (Martin & Schouten, 2014), craft-beer (Kjeldgaard et al., 2017; Maciel & Wallendorf, 2017), organic food (Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007), music sharing (Giesler, 2008), or the Restaurant Day – a one-day international event in which consumers themselves open up innovative restaurants (Weijo et al., 2018). Yet, only few studies address social change more directly. An exception is the study of alternative food waste organization by Gollnhofer, Weijo, and Schouten (2019). The advantage of this study is the theoretical elaboration of how consumer-driven movement elaborated a strategy to address market change when existing markets alternatives produced a serious value conflict with consumers environmental views. Resonant are also earlier theorizations of creative open-source movements, in which consumers seek a more systemic change by collectively innovating and using open-source code-writing to fight and offer alternatives to the

existing system dominated by large corporations (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Kozinets et al., 2008).

However, we find it is of crucial importance to pay further attention to how consumers and collective movements play a role in triggering social innovations that problematize existing social and market structures and creatively re-envision and mobilize them. These have until now focused especially on issues linking with the breadth or limits of current market alternatives, but in the future could also include a broader set of social and environmental causes and collective movements that are still relatively poorly understood: for example, the social construction and constraints of family.

Consumers as Institutional Entrepreneurs Addressing Market Change

Consumer culture theory work has recently begun to address the institutional perspectives and analytical frameworks to theorize market systems and their change. This work is visible in analyses of market legitimization dynamics (Humphreys, 2010), consumers' institutional work (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), and market-driving entrepreneurs/companies (Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli, 2015; Humphreys & Carpenter, 2018; Maciel & Fischer, 2020). These novel theorizations illuminate the interplay of (historical) institutional forces that hold market systems together (Press et al., 2014) as well as emergent disruptions, often stemming from adjacent institutional fields (Kjellberg & Olson, 2017; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013). Specifically, prior research emphasizes how institutional entrepreneurship and institutional work by consumers can initiate changes in existing markets.

While most studies of institutional entrepreneurship have focused on the activities of entrepreneurs and firms, notable exceptions have examined consumer-driven processes in the field of fashion (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013). The study of influential fashion bloggers advocating more inclusion in the markets for plus size fashion is elaborate in explaining how consumers can act as “institutional entrepreneurs” – i.e. people or groups who attempt to act on their dissatisfaction in order to change the field and challenge the status quo. This perspective is advantageous in that it recognizes how consumers (with various degrees of legitimacy) can provoke change in markets by reinforcing and mobilizing specific institutional logics while unsettling others. Dolbec and Fischer (2015), on the other hand, show how consumers' engagement in institutional work can also translate in important unintended market-level changes or precipitate the formation of new market categories. This research highlights the processes through which avid influencers and

interconnected consumers support and promote institutional change, for example, about the boundaries of categories and actors in a given field. Yet, this research was focused on the “unintended” consequences of active consumers – differently from our research.

What is specifically exciting about these works is how they unpack long-standing trajectories of institutionalized taken-for-granted social, political, historical, and economic logics (of worth/valuation) and how they become destabilized and recalibrated as a result of institutional entrepreneurship, recruitment, and creative collaborative engagement. Yet, what is a notable omission is that these works have mainly addressed consumers and collectives striving for market legitimacy, inclusion, or change, rather than mobilization for other social causes. Equally, as we will explore next, we find that prior literature has also not focused on addressing or theorizing social innovation as an institutional change process.

ANALYTICAL LENS: INSTITUTIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

We found Tracey et al.’s (2011) multilevel model of institutional entrepreneurship to be a particularly promising analytic lens for understanding our context and a valuable entry point for rethinking our data. During the course of our analysis, we identified several levels of our data: consumers innovating individual family units (micro level), entrepreneurs founding the Familyship platform (meso level), as well as a broader societal change (macro level). The interplay of these three levels is highly relevant for understanding the dynamics of consumer-driven social innovation. Therefore, we turn to Tracey et al.’s (2011) model as it enlightens our analysis by providing a detailed process to understand institutional processes on three levels: microlevel, mesolevel, and macrolevel. We apply Tracey et al.’s (2011) model to examine not only the entrepreneurial processes of Familyship’s platform creation, but also consumer’s individual creation of family ‘organizations’. We will introduce the dynamics of these three levels briefly.

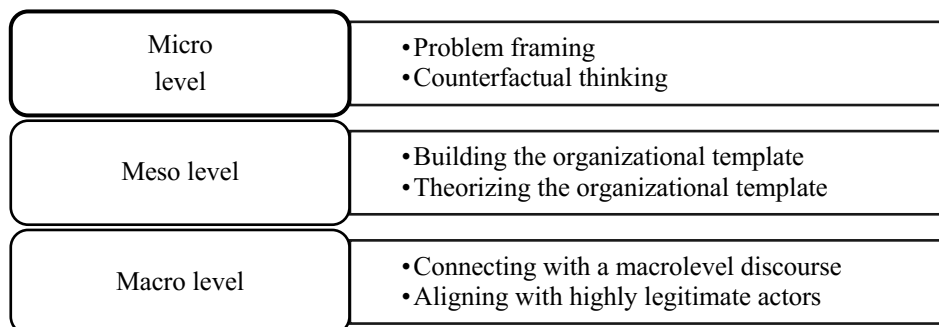


Figure 1: Tracey et al.’s (2011) multilevel model of institutional entrepreneurship

First, the microlevel stands for opportunity recognition, consisting of problem framing and counterfactual thinking. Problem framing is “rooted in the interests and experiences of the institutional entrepreneur” (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 70). These experiences lead to the motivation to consider alternative solutions, such as creating a new organizational form to solve the problem (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 69). Moreover, the “articulation of the newly framed problem [...] is likely to resonate with the interests of other actors” (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 70). Counterfactual thinking refers to “think[ing] beyond the current institutional arrangements and realize that there is an opportunity to combine elements of different logics” (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 71), by “challenging assumptions”, “imagine[ing] alternative futures (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 70), and visualizing new arrangements (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 71). Second, the mesolevel stands for Design of the New Organizational Form, consisting of Building the organizational template and Theorizing the organizational template. Building the organizational template refers to “take[ing] the conventional catalogue and to reconfigure it” (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 71) and “develop[ing] a set of structures and practices that would guide the behavior of organizational members” (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 71). The result is a new organizational template. Theorizing the organizational template refers to articulating, explaining and justifying the new idea and purpose to others (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 71).

Third, the macrolevel stands for Legitimation of the Organizational Form, consisting of Connecting with a macrolevel discourse and Aligning with highly legitimate actors. Connecting with a macrolevel discourse refers to “communicate their views and participate in this societal discourse”, by giving interviews (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 73) to “disseminate their message and to begin to legitimate their new organizational form” (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 73). Aligning with highly legitimate actors refers to “connect with a range of high-profile actors from multiple fields, thereby augmenting the legitimacy of their activities” (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 74).

As such, this model of institutional entrepreneurship is useful for understanding “the relationship between individual, organizational, and societal level institutional processes; and exploring the relationship between entrepreneurship and institutional entrepreneurship” (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 60). In our study, we use this model as an analytical lens to examine both the emergence of an institutionalized social innovation, as well as consumers’ innovative ways of creating new forms of family institutions on an individual level.

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

Familyship

The context we have chosen to study consumer-driven social innovation is the online platform Familyship.org, because it is an intriguing case that resembles many elements of prior work in one context. The case represents marginalized consumers, whose dissatisfaction and entrepreneurial effort eventually lead to societal-level change. It is an exemplar context where the workings of consumer-driven social innovation can be observed on various levels: the creation of new forms of family and new means and logics of family creation on a micro level, the foundation of the Familyship platform as a case of institutional entrepreneurship on the meso level, and broader social change on the macro level.

Familyship.org is an online platform, operating in Switzerland, Germany, and Austria. The former couple Miriam Förster und Christine Wagner created the platform in 2011 for their own purpose. They wanted to have a child together, but the existing options for creating a family did not suffice for their desired family constellation. Over time, they realized that their idea for a marketplace of innovative family formations meets the current zeitgeist.

The idea behind the platform is truly innovative: the platform is designed to assist people in creating new family alliances, with former strangers, in various constellations. The rejection of any particular norms of family composition comes along with the deliberate facilitation of forms that seem foreign to social norms. It is the overall goal of the platform to optimize the experience of the child by helping would-be parents to develop a uniquely child-centric family structure. A unique character of Familyship alliances is that most are based on a friendly co-parenting partnership, not a romantic partnership. Users are looking for ideal co-parenting partners to bear and rear offspring, not for romance or life partners. The concepts of parental relations and partner relations are treated independently.

Platform users can seek various types of co-parents: hands-on parents, parents with more passive aunt/uncle functions, or sperm donors that are minimally involved in the upbringing of the child. It is also possible to ‘mix and match’ these roles according to the desired family constellation. The platform serves singles or couples, LGBTQ+ or straight, who cannot or do not wish to conceive and raise a child the conventional way. It is an alternative path to family creation and child rearing.

As of 2020, around 6200 people have used the platform in efforts to find co-parenting partners, the largest user group being heterosexual women with the desire to separate the concept of parenthood from the concept of a romantic partnership.

However, the Familyship community is diverse with regard to gender, sexual orientation, relationship status, desired family constellation, and geographic location, as the platform provides possible solutions for everybody. This diversity illustrates the robustness of the platform. Familyship users are generally liberal people with an academic background.

To ensure a degree of privacy and ensuring seriousness with the matter, users have to pay an entry fee to the community (1 month- 29 Euros, 3 months- 49 Euros, unlimited access- 60 Euros)(Familyship.org, 2020a). The platform gives access to the Familyship community and connects people like a job pool. Through various tools and functions, the platform provides guidance to form new family forms and educates and informs people about new family forms.

One reason for the success of the platform is the current legislation in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. The laws severely constrain people, including single women, the LGBTQ+ community, patchwork families, and other alternative family constellations, in fulfilling their wish for a child. These groups are disadvantaged. For example, single women and lesbian couples are forbidden to make use of in vitro fertilization; only two parents are allowed to have legal custody of a child; LGBTQ+ couples need to go through second-parent adoption to be a rightful parent for the child; surrogacy is illegal, etc. Another main reason for the success of the platform is rising skepticism about romantic partnerships, as many people have experienced parental divorce and failing romantic partnerships.

Data

Why and how do consumers drive social innovation? To address this question, we conducted a longitudinal study that follows a qualitative interpretive research design. We collected data via a multi-method approach, consisting of semi-structured interviews with platform founders, multiple in-depth interviews over a 1,5-year period with platform users, netnographic data collection, as well as media-coverage analysis to triangulate our findings. Table 1 summarizes our dataset and provides details about data sources and their usage.

Name/Description	Sources	Dataset	Purpose
Interviews with platform founders	Two interviews with the two founders of Familyship.org	1,5 recorded hours 32 transcribed single-spaced pages	Understanding the managerial, entrepreneurial, and holistic perspective on the platform, its development, and its members.
Longitudinal in-depth interviews	Multiple interviews with 24 Families	37,65 recorded hours	Phenomenological perspective of Familyship users

with Familyship users	over a period of 1,5 years	602,5 transcribed single-spaced pages	
Netnography on Familyship.org platform	Netnographic observation since February 2018	11 hours of observation 75 Familyship profiles 20 single-spaced pages of fieldnotes 30 Screenshots about the structure and functions of the website	Understanding for the platform structure, its services, rules, functions, and customer experience navigating on the platform. Getting a deeper understanding of the context, narratives, communal exchanges, online rules and practices, rituals, discourses, as well as innovative forms of collaboration and organization (Kozinets, 2015, p. 1). Additional triangulation for the primary interview data.
Netnography on Familyship Facebook community	Member of the Familyship Facebook community since February 2018	7 hours of observation 10 pages of fieldnotes 25 Screenshots about the Facebook posts and community discussion	Understanding the ‘insider feeling’ within the community; following community discussion and discourses.
Media coverage on Familyship	Newspaper articles, documentaries, podcasts, online blogs, youtube videos	60 articles, documentaries, podcasts, videos, blogposts	Triangulation of interview and netnographic data. Gaining an understanding for societal and legal discourse. Insights on further family cases and details.

Table 1: Summary of data sources

The first author started data collection in February 2018. First, the platform creators were contacted and interviewed, following a semi-structured interview guide (McCracken, 1988). Their perspective was highly important to understand their consumer-driven perspective of their entrepreneurial journey in creating the platform. The main interview took place with Christine as she is the outward voice, the creative visionary, and press contact for Familyship. Miriam provided us with the IT background information, as she is responsible for the IT development and infrastructure. The platform creators’ support was indispensable to further data collection within the community, as the access to the platform was granted for research purposes and with fullest support from the founders. Moreover, the founders helped to recruit participants for the longitudinal in-depth approach. They sent out newsletters to the community and called for participation in the study through Facebook posts. Additionally, the founders

provided further details, statistics, and information upon request throughout the whole research project.

The platform users were recruited through the newsletters and/or Facebook posts of the founders. They contacted the first author voluntarily for a participation in the study. Interviews took place mainly through digital channels, such as Skype, Whatsapp Video, or Facetime Video several times over a 1,5-year period. We continued interviewing participants until we reached theoretical saturation, meaning no new themes emerged in the data (Creswell, 1998). This longitudinal perspective allowed for an in-depth understanding of the development of the family formation. We asked Familyship users about their motivations to use the platform, their desire to have a child, their vision for a family, what family means to them, the process of their family formation, daily family life, pregnancy and birth, their view on the legal and societal situation for alternative family constellations, etc. Our participants have diverse backgrounds with regard to gender and sexual orientation, relationship status, desired family constellation, desired role in the family, geographic location, and status of the family formation. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Table 2 offers an overview of the 24 families, using pseudonyms and providing only descriptions, and no personal details to ensure anonymity.

Our interview data were complemented by netnographic data collected by the lead author on the Familyship platform and the Familyship Facebook Group. Access to the Familyship platform was granted for research purposes. The netnographic investigation included the platform structure, its services, rules, functions, and customer experiences navigating the platform. Netnographic field notes were taken on the variety of user profiles, detailed family visions, and the ‘insider feeling’ within the community. Additionally, a netnographic exploration took place in the Familyship Facebook group. The founders are providing content to the community to inform and to enable discussion. To supplement the interview and netnographic data, media coverage on Familyship and alternative family formations helped to inform our understanding about the public discourse and to triangulate our findings.

Analysis

Our data analysis followed an inductive approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) based on the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2013). It is a well-recognized methodology in organizational science and management studies (Corley & Gioia, 2011; Gioia et al., 2013; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Harrison & Corley, 2011; Rajiv Nag & Gioia, 2012; Rajtv Nag et al., 2007). The Gioia methodology was guiding our data

analysis aiming for “generating new concepts and ideas [...by] applying systematic conceptual and analytical discipline that leads to credible interpretations of data and also helps to convince readers that the conclusions are plausible and defensible” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 15). Following Gioia et al.’s advice (2013, p. 26), the methodology should be seen as a “flexible orientation toward qualitative, inductive research that is open to innovation, rather than a “cookbook.”. Thus, we adapt the methodology to our specific needs of data analysis.

We went through several stages of data analysis. First, we applied open and axial coding, starting with “an analysis using informant-centric terms and codes”. We followed with an analysis using “researcher-centric concepts, themes, and dimensions; for the inspiration for the 1st- and 2nd-order labeling” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 18). We analyzed our data both horizontally (across the families) and vertically (within the family) (Epp & Velagaleti, 2014).

As we progressed with our analysis, overarching themes, as well as “similarities and differences among the many categories” emerged (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 20). We adapted our interview and observation guide to investigate the themes more thoroughly. We varied our perspective/analytical lens to understand the phenomenon and analyzed the involved practices, processes, actors, and assemblages. An important step of our analysis was to iterate the level of analysis, meaning to iterate between customer perspective (Familyship users), organization (Familyship platform), and broader phenomenon (social change). Ultimately, we discovered that integrating these three perspectives allowed us to develop thematic understanding that accounted for all of the data.

An important element of our analysis was the process of visualizing the emerging themes and their interplay. The visualization took place in multiple iterations, until it reflected the research team’s consensual understanding and accounted for all of the data. In qualitative research, it is common to move iteratively (Spiggle, 1994) between data and theoretical understanding (Belk et al., 2012), “to see whether what we are finding has precedents, but also whether we have discovered new concepts” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 21). That means “asking whether the emerging themes suggest concepts that might help us describe and explain the phenomena we are observing” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 20). As a result of the data-theory-iterations, we developed “2nd-order aggregate dimensions” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 20). In our case, the aggregate dimensions are linked to Tracey et al.’s (2011) framework, as it allows to combine our holistic understanding for the interplay of micro, meso, and macro levels. As we started to see repetition and

no additional insights emerged from further data collection, we reached data saturation (Creswell, 1998).

The table below provides a transparent overview of our data analysis as a basis for the findings. It summarizes our data structure, with regard to first-order categories, second-order themes, and aggregate theoretical dimensions.

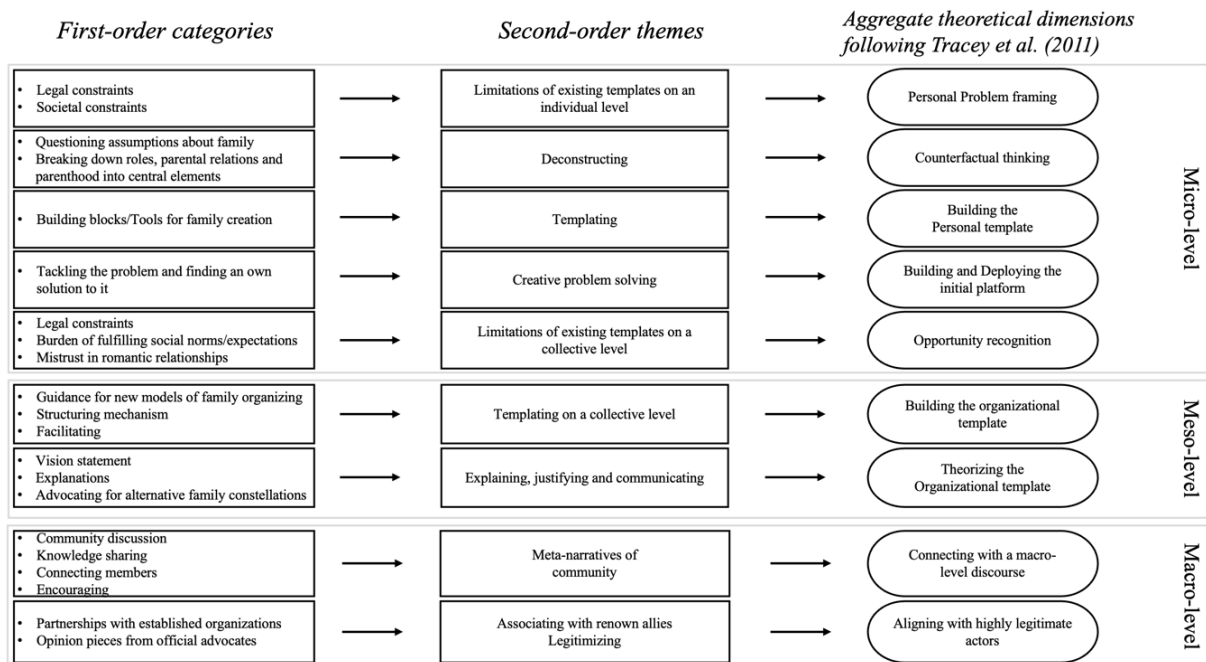


Figure 2: Overview data structure

We triangulated our interpretations within our research team (Spiggle, 1994; Thompson, 1997). The lead author collected data in the German-speaking parts of Europe and conducted the data analysis. A student assistant supported the lead author with the transcriptions of the data and served as sounding board on the meanings of the raw data. The student assistant was asked to write a summary for each interview, such as background information of each family, the development of the family formation, as well as pointing out surprising and counterintuitive elements. The two co-authors challenged the translations and interpretations during the whole process of positioning and writing our research.

We present our findings on consumer-driven social innovation in the next section. In line with the Gioia methodology, “we devote space to explaining each emergent theme and/or dimension, but more importantly, we “zoom in” on the key emergent concepts or themes and hold them up for examination as the core ideas” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 23). It is highly important to include vivid data to represent the voices of our informants (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 17).

FINDINGS

Familyship is a case of social innovation—a novel entrepreneurial solution to a social problem—at many levels, from micro-individual family construction to meso-institutional platform development to a macro-societal rethinking of family as a social construct. A key aspect of Familyship was its development by consumer-innovators acting as institutional entrepreneurs to solve a personal dilemma. Drawing from Tracey, et al.’s (2011) model of institutional entrepreneurship, our study of Familyship yields a detailed understanding of a process of consumer-driven social innovation (CDSI), answering the specific research question, “Why and how did consumers innovate the form and creation of family?” and suggesting answers to the more general question, “Why and how do consumers innovate social constructs?” The answers to these questions ultimately provide a more complete understanding of institutional entrepreneurship and social innovation by consumers in contemporary consumer culture.

CONSUMER-DRIVEN SOCIAL INNOVATION AS INSTITUTIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

We begin by mapping the genesis of the Familyship platform onto the Tracy et al. (2011) model, expanding the model as needed to accommodate the consumer-innovator context. We also examine the platform in use by consumers and in community, demonstrating the micro-meso-macro interactions that establish and legitimize the social innovation. Figure 3 illustrates the CDSI framework.

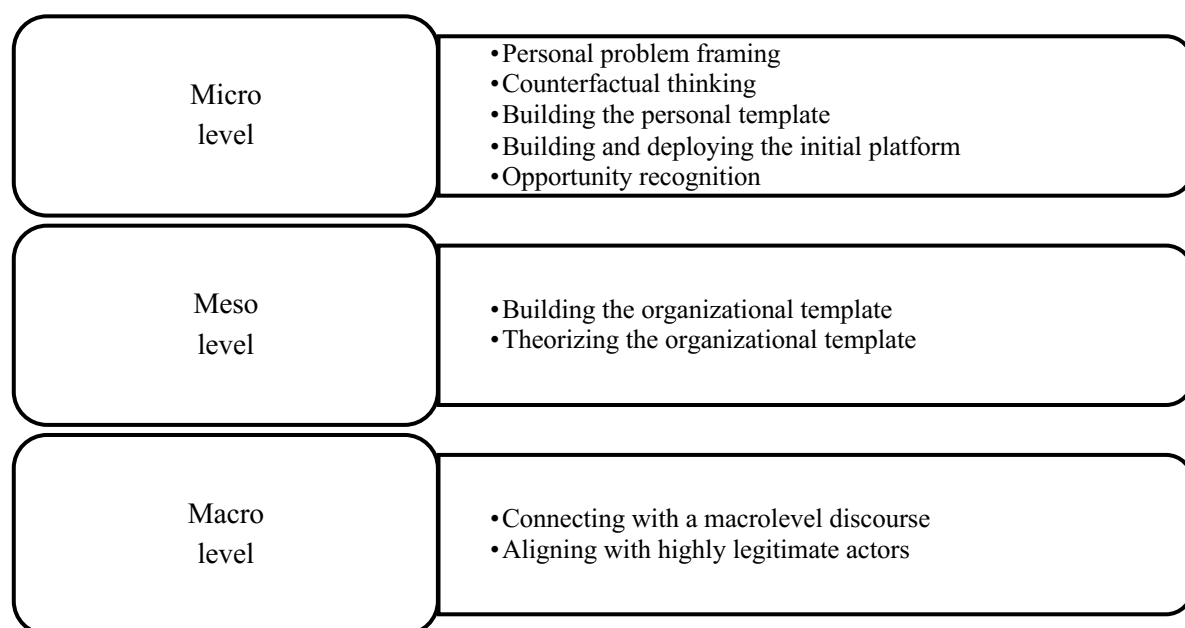


Figure 3: CDSI as Institutional Entrepreneurship

Microlevel Institutional Work: Personal Problem Solving and Opportunity Recognition

Personal Problem Framing

Christine and Miriam, the founders of Familyship, were a lesbian couple that wanted a family. In Christine's words, "One evening, when I was sitting on the sofa, a clear feeling came over me: I want a child... My girlfriend felt the same way. But how could we do that?" The problem was that, as a lesbian couple, they faced serious legal and social barriers to realizing their vision of a family. The legal constraints alone were daunting. Says Christine:

The regulations for family creation in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland are very conservative... For example, only two people can be the legal parents of a child... fertility clinics are not allowed to treat homosexual couples and single women... homosexual couples need to be legally married, and they have to go through a long and difficult process of second-parent adoption to become the legal guardian for their partner's child, whereas heterosexual spouses automatically become the legal parent for the child of their spouse... regulations for sperm donations are restricted and differ within Europe. This legal frame does not leave many options for people who have a vision of family different from the traditional mother-father-child constellation.

In the German-speaking parts of Europe, laws reflect a narrow societal understanding of family and deny institutional support for people with alternative visions of their desired family constellations.

Much like consumers with identity challenges in other aspects of life, Christine and Miriam turned to the market and, in particular, to the internet for possible solutions. After lengthy discussion, they decided they also wanted a father for their future child, ideally a gay man who would provide sperm and also take an active role in childrearing. Internet searches led them to gay dating-and-mating sites and to sperm donor pages, but they found nothing that met their needs.

The lack of societal, legal, institutional, or market-based solutions to their problem meant that there existed no ready templates for Christine and Miriam to follow in forming a family to raise a child. The lack of existing templates led them to clarify their individual objectives, which they did in a way that exemplified problem framing, which Tracey, et al. (2011, 70) describe as the, "identification and expression of a novel understanding of the problem at hand and refocusing attention on alternative aspects of a complex issue". In framing their own problem as "no clear path to family formation", the Familyship founders began to question the dominant meanings of family, and they

began to rethink their options for family formation. At this point the women were not acting or thinking as social entrepreneurs. They were simply a couple seeking a solution that neither society nor the market could provide.

Counterfactual Thinking

In beginning to conceptualize an ideal family for themselves, Miriam and Christine were already engaging in counterfactual thinking, which Tracey et al. (2011) describe as an active and cognitive process of “imagining alternative futures” (p.70) and “visualizing new arrangements” (p. 71). Problem framing and counterfactual thinking were not discrete steps. They informed and fueled each other. Initial problem framing led the women to imagine alternatives. This led them to research possible solutions. Their research further enriched and informed their problem framing, which similarly enriched their counterfactual thinking.

An important part of the counterfactual thinking was the deconstruction of the received understanding of family. Part of that deconstruction involved questioning the role of romantic entanglement in family formation and childrearing. Christine explained, “It was now obvious to me that this separation between the desire for children and partnership had to happen. This traditional coupling was also deeply rooted in my mind.” A second aspect of deconstructing family was considering its various components and how they might be reassembled into different configurations. Not only did they question the meaning and structure of family, they also questioned the meanings and roles of key family members, such as mother, father, aunt, and uncle. Once they had deconstructed the idea of family, with all the possible pieces and relationships isolated for inspection, the task became one of designing a new template for their own family formation.

Building the Personal Template

A template is a conceptual and a practical tool, a structural manifestation of a particular logic, and a guide for construction or assembly. With their idea of family sufficiently deconstructed, Christine and Miriam created a template for the family they desired. From among the potential building blocks of family they produced a new form. They considered possible roles and role combinations with regard to their individual objectives and searched the web/market for possible models. They borrowed elements from existing templates (e.g., mother, father, child), but they redefined and reconfigured the roles (e.g., active mother, active father, mother with aunt-like function) and their combinations to suit their personal desires for family experience. The template they settled on was decidedly child-centric, with each family role defined in terms of its

relation to the child. They would strive for a child with two lesbian mothers, one taking a maternal role and the other an aunt-like role, and a gay biological father with an active, but not live-in, parenting role.

Not merely structural, the template was also well elaborated in terms of desired activities and emotional tenor. Says Christine:

We aspired to a friendship with family traits towards the father of the child. [We imagined] talks about life and death, values and aesthetics, relationships and visions, education, names, clothes, films, and music. To be able to read a book side by side, knowing what's going on with the other without always having to talk about it. Being able to leave the other one alone and still have the impression that the other one is there when you really need him. Also, a closeness ... with different needs than in a (romantic) partnership, and the knowledge of a long-term relationship with the necessary respect for it. A relationship with platonic love and the similar hope that it will last forever. And who knows, maybe in our old age we'll be sitting at a table between the other seniors in some home and hoping that our daughter will come to visit us sometime.

This specification of a potential-family template resembled the process of forming, assessing, and elaborating a possible self as theorized by Schouten (1991), but at a shared, family level rather than an individual level. As Schouten (1991) found, once a desired possible self is sufficiently elaborated and deemed achievable, it motivates instrumental behavior. In this case the behavior was the recruitment of a suitable father.

Building and Deploying the Initial Platform

With a family template in mind, Miriam and Christine focused more creatively on the mechanisms for bringing it about. Because the market offered no access to potential fathers meeting the women's needs, they set out to craft their own solution. With skills in web design, Miriam and Christine crafted a web page for the purpose of recruiting and screening potential fathers. Christine discusses the creative process:

It was always after work, or on the weekend, or before going to work... Our monitors flickered constantly. Teacups, coffee cups, empty cigarette packets on the table... Next to them stacks of paper with sketches, organization charts, calculations... Our first flyers had the title: Family wanted? They were accompanied by a pimped-up retro picture of our own great-grandparents, grandparents and parents when they were very young, in black and white and, most importantly, the picture was upside down.

Christine and Miriam treated recruitment as a creative business exercise. The businesslike approach was evident in their use of tools such as “organization charts” and “calculations”, along with the marketing-oriented activity of constructing an online “flyer” to advertise their interest and recruit for their open position. The creative bricolage—such as using inverted family photos from their own past—helped them to communicate the alternative vision of family that had emerged from their counterfactual and deconstructive thinking.

Still focused purely on meeting their own needs, Miriam and Christine pulled the initial Familyship platform together quickly and with available resources. Says Christine, “With a lot of work, little capital, and a new logo, Familyship had a quick birth. Four weeks passed from the original idea to contact with the first candidate.” Expressions of interest rolled in, and the women eventually chose the father of their future child. Meanwhile, the success of the recruiting platform surprised them. Registrations through the portal were abundant.

Opportunity Recognition

Miriam and Christine realized there was a widespread need for what the Familyship platform offered. This realization of opportunity turned the couple into social entrepreneurs. In Christine’s words:

Well, we had founded it for our own needs. When that was actually over, we considered closing it down, because we didn't need it anymore. But then we saw that there were so many people on the site, and there were always new registrations, although we did almost no advertising. Can we really close it down? No, we cannot create this site and leave all these people alone with their searches. We ran it for, I think, three years altogether, completely at our own expense, simply out of belief and conviction, because we thought we just couldn't shut it down. Then at some point we decided: Okay, then we'll do it right. If the demand is there, then we'll try to cover it, so to speak, and to raise it a bit more professionally. And that's when the site came into *real* existence.

The number of ongoing registrations on the Familyship site signaled that the case of the founders was not idiosyncratic but, rather, shared with others and possibly systemic. The efforts of two consumers innovating for their own consumption purposes suddenly revealed unanticipated demand and the opportunity to help other consumers with similar needs. Their decision to “do it right” was not a determination to make a profit. It was born from a philanthropic desire to help other, similarly marginalized people realize the

dream of forming families and raising children. Doing it right, however, required serious institutional work.

Before mesolevel institutional work could begin in earnest, the Familyship founders needed a better grasp of the whole social problem they were trying to address. The platform they created had awakened something, and the extent of that awakening was revealing itself through early user activity, which underscored not only the fact of demand for the service but also the nature of the demand. Potential consumers all desired to have and raise children, and they all faced systemic barriers to doing so. In addition to the legal constraints mentioned earlier, many faced social constraints as well. A common social barrier was the prejudice against same-sex couples, especially as parents. Consider the story of Leonie (Family #18):

We have been together for over ten years. At first our family and friends tried to believe we were just best friends, but when they received our wedding invitations people were shocked and started to distance themselves from us. We live in a small conservative village. Everyone is going to church and people ignored us from that moment on. It got even worse over time. People who used to be our friends were sending us messages that the devil had possessed us. Even our families stopped talking to us for many years. Now that we have our daughter, my mother and brother started to visit us again, but they are still very clear about their opinion of our family.

The very idea of marriage and family for Leonie and her wife met with formidable resistance from members of their families and community. Ironically, perhaps, the addition of a child, through the help of the Familyship platform, began to thaw, if not normalize, the relations with some extended family members. That particular dynamic illustrates the power of a conflicting social imperative, namely, to reproduce and create a genetic legacy.

The expectations to have a partner, get married, and have children are deeply entrenched in our society (Fischer et al., 2007). People who cannot or do not want to fulfill these expectations are often sanctioned by society through stigmatization, as illustrated in the story of a single woman, Claudia (Family #19):

After my second long and serious relationship broke up in my thirties, my parents and my friends kept asking me what I would do now. They told me over and over again that I didn't have much time left and that I should hurry up to find a husband, as my biological clock was ticking. They introduced me to single men and registered me on partnership websites. They didn't understand that I was done with it. I explained it many times, but they didn't

believe me. They thought I reacted so strongly due the pain of the break-up. They kept telling me that I would eventually find the love of my life and that I would have a family soon. They couldn't accept that I wasn't going down that path anymore. I chose a different way.

The “different way” Claudia chose was Familyship, where she found a gay man to father her child and assume the role of an active co-parent, without the complications of a romantic relationship.

Many Familyship users are drawn by the desire to reduce the risk inherent in romantic relationships. Their perceptions of risk are based on their experiences with parental divorce, on the breakdown of their own romantic relationships, or on statistics, such as high divorce rates. Regardless of the reasons, they mistrust romance as the basis for a solid family. Consider the story of Emilia (Family #4):

I always knew I wanted to have a family and to become a mother. Experiencing the power of nature, growing a baby in your own body, and being a companion for the child's whole life—that has always been my dream. But at the same time, my worries about whether I would ever reach this dream grew and grew. My parents got divorced, as with so many other families. I see the marriages of my friends and the unstable relationships children are born into. And if you look at the official statistics, the divorce rates speak for themselves. To be honest, I don't believe in this family constellation anymore. It is too risky to base a family on romantic emotions between two people. If we look back in history, we find many other formations in tribes that are certainly not based on the romantic love ideal of the 21st century. That's why I have decided to follow another path. I want to find a stronger basis for my child's future.

Like Claudia, Emilia mistrusted romance as a basis for parenting. Also like Claudia, she found a suitable father and co-parent in a gay man, who had turned to Familyship for a solution to his own thwarted desire for a child.

Before we turn our attention to the mesolevel work of institution building, it is worth noting that the microlevel work done by the Familyship founders was in large part replicated by the users the platform attracted. The platform, even in its earliest manifestation, served as a beacon and an invitation to other consumers with thwarted desires with respect to childbearing and childrearing. It invited them to do their own version of problem framing, with results such as Claudia's or Emilia's determination to pursue family without romance. The platform also validated and supported potential users in their own exercises of counterfactual thinking about

family, its meanings, its composition, and the means for its construction. In this way the innovative microlevel work of Christine and Miriam served as a catalyst for similar work by other consumers, freeing them to think about their own desires for family in ways that, until the discovery of Familyship, had impetus without real hope or direction. In effect, platform users consumed problem framing and counterfactual thinking as a benefit of the service.

Mesolevel Institutional Work: Design of the New Organizational Form

Building the Organizational Template

The task of designing new organizational forms proceeded at multiple levels. At one level, both the Familyship founders and the subsequent platform users were organizing innovative families in terms of form and substance, that is, in terms of persons, roles, and relationships. At another level, the task was to create a viable Familyship organization with the ability to serve the needs of its potential customers. At yet another level arose the task of organizing a supportive online community that included, but was not limited to, the founders and users. Each level of organizing required a template.

Miriam and Christine broadened their idea to offer multiple templates for family formation in a flexible, creative platform. They did this by “taking the conventional catalogue and reconfiguring it” (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 71) to allow for the flexible design of organizational templates for individual families. Figure 4—a direct product of the conceptual deconstruction of family—is a graphic depiction, from the Familyship web platform, of the various roles and relationships from which a new family might be formed. Possible roles include a mother with an aunt-like function and a father with an uncle-like function (both with supportive but rather passive involvement in the upbringing of the child), an active mother and an active father (who may or may not live-in with the child), and a sperm donor. Although based on a familiar terminology and structure, these templates represent new building blocks for family formation.



Figure 4: Templates for Potential Family Roles

The Familyship founders created mechanisms and pathways for mobilizing components to facilitate novel family formations for platform users. In terms of Tracey et al. (2011), they “developed a set of structures and practices that would guide the behavior of organizational members and that became the basis of the new organizational form” (Tracey et al., 2011, p. 71). Figure 5 depicts a tool from Familyship.org that facilitates applicant screening and family planning. Platform users are required to provide information about themselves and their desired family constellations upon registration. Categories such as profile picture, age, gender, sexual orientation, desired role in the family, desired roles for the co-parents, and city/area all help users to think about family composition and functioning.

L-y-d-i-a

Suche in der Community

Mein Profil

Nachrichten

Merkliste

Blockliste

Einstellungen

Abmelden

ROLLE IN DER FAMILIE

☐ Mutter

☐ Mutter mit Tantenfunktion

☐ Vater

☐ Vater mit Onkelfunktion

☐ Yes-Samenspender

ORIENTIERUNG

☐ Homo

☐ Hetero

☐ Bi

☐ Queer

☐ Trans

INTERESSE AUF FAMILYSHIP

☐ Familie gründen

☐ Große Liebe finden

☐ Mich mit anderen austauschen

Wohnort od. PLZ mit Länderkürzel (z.B. 10245 DE)

Umkreis 100km

☐ Speichern und als Suchabo verwenden

Wenn du diese Option nutzt, wird die aktuelle Suche als Suchabo gespeichert und du erhältst eine wöchentliche E-Mail mit passenden neuen Nutzer/innen.

AKTUALISIEREN

FILTER

Figure 5: Planning Template/Filter

Users apply these templates in the form of filters during their search for co-parents. First, they need to select the desired role (i.e., mother with an aunt-like function, father with an uncle-like function, active mother, active father, or sperm donor). It is possible to select more than one option. They need to state the sexual orientation, as well as the interest/goal for Familyship (e.g., family creation, finding a romantic partner, exchange with others). Filters allow the users to specify their geographic locations. In practice, family formation using the Familyship templates is a mutual process that involves planning, resume-building, recruitment, organizing, and contract negotiation.

The organization-level template emerged with the development and refinement of the web-based platform. In effect, the template is the platform itself. The only personnel are the founders. The content and functioning of the platform have materialized the processes of family planning and organization, serving users as a structuring mechanism as well as a source of ideas and inspiration. Eventually, the founders also instituted a revenue model. Users pay a fee to use the platform and access the Familyship community. Prices were set at 29 euros or one month, 49 euros for three months, or 60 Euros for unlimited access (Familyship.org, 2020a). Revenue generation implies a social enterprise business model. Fees help maintain the online service, and any profits are donated to organizations voted on by the Familyship community.

Familyship used a well-established template to build a community that resembles many other online brand communities. The core community consists of the founders and customers, interacting on the platform itself. An extended community, including other supportive members of the public, interacts as members of a Facebook group. The community functions as a support group for Familyship users and also, as we shall see, an important locus of social discourse about non-traditional families.

Theorizing the Organizational Template

Once a new organizational template is in place, its very novelty often requires additional explanation or justification in order to “‘make sense’ to stakeholders who were accustomed to different structures, practices and systems of meaning” (Tracey, et al. 2011, 72). Tracy et al. (2011) refer to this as theorizing the organizational template. Familyship accomplishes this meaning-making through a variety of activities that explain and justify the values and ideas behind the organization and show how alternative family formations can work. The vision statement on Familyship.org clearly states the goals of the platform:

Welcome to your path to your own family! You want to become a parent?
Are you possibly single, gay or lesbian? Whether co-parenting, rainbow

family, multi-parenting or single parenting: create the family that suits you! Familyship is a social community. Here people are getting in touch with other people who are interested in founding a family via a non-traditional way. Your journey can be about finding a co-parent, exchanging with like-minded people, men who want to become active fathers or women who want a sibling for their firstborn, sperm donors, rainbow families, singles or multi-parent families. Familyship is the place where families are born! Familyship is all about one thing: your wish to create a family. On Familyship, people get to know each other and start a family on a friendly basis. Sexual orientation or marital status are of secondary importance. The platform provides information on alternative family models and is the largest active German-speaking community in co-parenting.

Among its messages, the vision statement conveys the ideas and mission behind Familyship. It specifically lists different family constellations, and it clarifies that romantic partnerships are not required to start a family.

Tracey et al. (2011) emphasize the importance of organization storytelling as a means of communicating novel organizational logics to various stakeholders. We saw ample evidence of this on Familyship.org. The platform creators share their own story on the website, including such episodes as the development of the online platform, the creation of their family, and descriptions of daily family life. The story is presented as a diary-like blog documenting how they found and selected their co-father, the process of getting pregnant, the first weeks with a newborn, daily family life, and the dynamics of new romantic partners. Sharing these intimate details about their private life establishes trust and models a functioning co-parenting relationship to interested Familyship users. Figure 6 is an illustrative excerpt from the founders' blog.



Figure 6: Storytelling to Theorize the Organizational Template

Advocating for alternative families through family portraits and bedtime stories is an additional element of theorizing the organizational template. The website features a diversity of family portraits based on Familyship experiences. Figure 7 illustrates the feature. The various family portraits cover the wide range of possible family constellations and describe the story behind each family in detail through combinations of text, photograph, and video. They embody the innovative logics for family creation and present them in a friendly, relatable fashion.

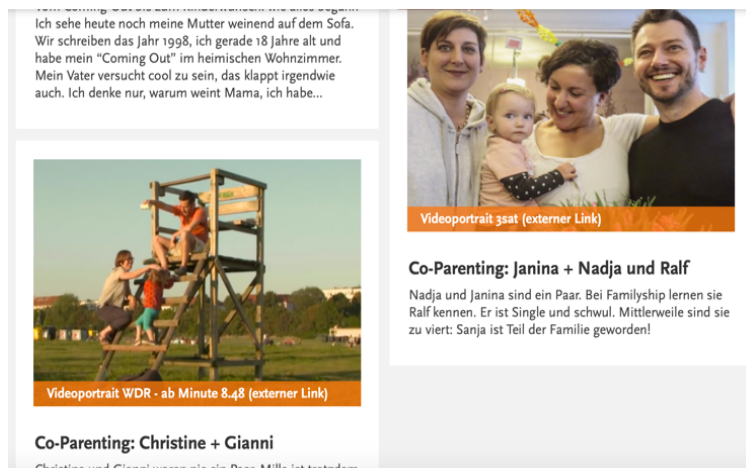


Figure 7: Sample Family Portraits

The platform also functions as a source of generative storytelling to advocate for alternative families. It does this through ready-to-tell bedtime stories for children. The website states that, "as different as the children's stories may be, what they all have in common is that the characters do not grow up in a classic nuclear family" (Familyship.org, 2020b). Figure 8 illustrates this storytelling feature.



Figure 8: Bedtime Stories

The Familyship platform has come to stand for innovative family formations, rethinking social norms, and revolutionizing a conservative society. Familyship is a brand with a clear message: Family is what you make it. The platform presents a flexible solution for a variety of family constellations. Its fundamental logic includes: 1) treating parenthood and romantic partnerships independently, 2) optimizing the experience for the child (rather than for the couple), and 3) creating a family from a variety of resources provided through the platform. At this point we have witnessed social innovation at two levels: that of individual families, complete with alternative structures and logics, and that of a social enterprise with the purpose of facilitating and advocating for such alternative family arrangements. Carrying the social innovation to a societal level—that is, generating the kinds of social changes that make alternative families more acceptable to mainstream consumers—required institutional work at a still broader level.

Macrolevel Institutional Work: Legitimation of the Organizational Form

Connecting with a Macrolevel Discourse

Tracey, et al. (2011) stress the need for new institutional forms to establish legitimacy if they are to be successful. One way they suggest doing this is by “draw[ing] on a wider macrolevel discourse” and “tapping into [existing] macrolevel narratives” (p. 73). A common means of connecting with a macrolevel discourse is to give interviews and promote one’s idea and organization through the media. Familyship is quite present in German-language media, as the founders actively engage in communication activities. Figure 9 lists examples, from Familyship.org, of recent interviews, podcasts, blogs, and documentaries about the organization.

Familyship in der Presse

Wir wurden oft gefragt. Warum? Wie? Wer mit wem? Was sagen die anderen dazu?
Und dann? Was wir darauf geantwortet haben, haben wir gesammelt.

[Pressefotos / Pressekontakt >](#)



2020

- **Co-Parenting und Familyship: Gay Mom Talking, der Podcast über Regenbogenfamilien**
Medium: Gay Mom Talking Podcast
Datum: 15. März 2020
- **Co-Parenting: Wie Singles ohne eine Beziehung Familien gründen**
Medium: Oberhessische Presse
Datum: 20. Januar 2020
- **Co-Parenting – Wie schwule Männer ihren Kinderwunsch erfüllen**
Medium: DIE WELT
Datum: 06. Februar 2020
- **Von Bedeutung ist die Beziehungsqualität, nicht die Familienkonstellation.**
Medium: Werte-Index Blog

Figure 9: Familyship in the Press

Another way to connect with legitimizing macrolevel discourse is to participate in relevant competitions and award programs. For example, Familyship founders received an award from the national ‘Germany – Land of Ideas’ initiative. Such mainstream honors confer legitimacy, not only on the organization, but also on the cultural ideas for which it stands.

The broader Familyship community also plays an important role in connecting with a macrolevel discourse. The Familyship community—including Familyship users, supporters in the Facebook group, and the platform creators—operates on the level of collective innovation. The effect of all these actors communicating, advocating, influencing, and telling their stories is to alter or expand the societal understanding of family and to broaden the impact of social innovation. The community takes an important role in building the metanarrative that constitutes the Familyship brand. Members are connected in their motivation to either become parents or to support successful, loving childrearing by those that choose parenthood. Through the Facebook group, the founders actively provide relevant news articles to the community, initiate discussions about controversial topics, and engage the community in feedback. Figure 8 features two of Familyship’s Facebook posts. One is an article about ‘family models and the end of the nuclear family’, and the other is an article about a gay-fathers couple on the cover of Men’s Health magazine.



Figure 10: Contributing to the Metanarrative of Familyship

In community discourse, Familyship users discover that they are not alone in facing constraints to family formation. The platform fosters and magnifies the impact of discourse and creates a safe for people to share their challenges and successes. Formerly silent complaints or yearnings can be voiced. With a safe base of support in the

Familyship community, individual members can feel free to express their opinions and experiences in society more broadly.

Aligning with Highly Legitimate Actors

The last step of Tracey et al.'s (2011) model is the alignment with highly legitimate actors. At the very least, alliances with already-respected people and organizations confer a kind of halo effect. At best, they lead to valuable advocacy. Familyship established formal partnerships with renowned and already legitimized organizations, such as local and national institutions for rainbow families (see Figure 11). Familyship also connects to and draws momentum from the LGBTQ+ movement, as it represents a potential target group for the platform, and it is easy for people to draw parallels to something that is already established as legitimate.



Figure 11: Partnership with Legitimate Actors

Familyship also connects with prominent people from fields such as law, sociology, psychology, and politics, and invites them to present their perspectives on the Familyship website (see Figure 12). In the space called “The Family in Transition”, selected individuals present their views on family in favor of the online platform. Maria Arlamovsky, for example, is a well-known screenwriter and director of documentary films with a keen interest in parenting and human reproduction.



Figure 12: “Family in Transition”

In their discussions, Tracey et al. (2011) limit their scope to the legitimacy of the new organizational form. Familyship, however, is not only working to establish and maintain its own legitimacy as an organization. It is helping to legitimize a whole innovative way of thinking about family formation and childrearing.

The Platform in Use: Consumption and Community

The preceding section established our understanding of CDSI primarily from the perspective of the institutional entrepreneurs of the Familyship organization. This section takes the perspective of platform users and focuses on how they consume its benefits and resources in the formation of new families.

Discovering the Platform

In many ways, consumers' tasks of alternative family creation mirror and replicate the institutional entrepreneurship undertaken by the founders of Familyship. The platform's consumers engage in their own problem framing and counterintuitive thinking; they create and theorize their own organizational (family) templates; and they add their own voices to the swell of legitimizing discourse in the Familyship community. The difference is that, for its consumers, Familyship provides one-stop shopping for all the logic, plans, structure, technical assistance, and emotional support needed for their DIY family-creation projects.

Harboring similar desires and facing similar constraints as those that launched Christine and Miriam's journey, consumers go to the web/market seeking solutions. There they may find Familyship. In the words of Carlotta (Family #13):

At some point I just started to google for an alternative solution and found a concept called co-parenting, and it made total sense to me. I continued to read and google, and I discovered Familyship. I couldn't believe that after all this time of worrying and thinking, my solution was right there in front of me, online! I got registered for a small entry fee and from one moment to the next the burden fell away, and I felt so relieved to see a realistic option for having a child.

Others hear about the platform from friends or acquaintances or read about it in the newspaper. Regardless of the medium, people experience relief in the discovery of Familyship. Tobias (Family #14) has this to say:

The platform was the best thing that could have happened to me, and it was so easy to use. You have access to all the profiles, and you start reading people's profile descriptions. I was surprised to see that people are very open

about their desired family constellations. Based on my geographic location and my desired role in the family, it was easy to filter the pool of potential co-parents. I sent a message to everyone I wanted to get to know, and the feedback was very friendly. I met a few of these people in real life, after exchanging and agreeing on the basic terms and conditions for a potential family.

Similar expressions of discovery and relief reverberate throughout the interviews and the ethnographic data. Once consumers decide to go forward with family creation, they sign on and create their profile descriptions. These constitute their introductions to the rest of the community.

Opening Gambits: Personal Problem Framing

Consumers bring their own sets of needs and resources to the Familyship platform, hoping to find complementary needs and resources among the pool of applicants. They are explicit about what they want and what they can provide. Profile descriptions constitute problem framing exercises, covering information such as jobs, hobbies, and financial resources, and clarifying applicants' preferences for parenting roles, custody arrangements, living situations, and childrearing philosophies. We illustrate some of the variety with the following four profiles:

Profile description 1 (male)

Hello, My name is Max. Short and sweet: I'm in a happy patchwork family relationship, stepfather of two children (13 and 20 years). My wife doesn't want any more children and I would like to have a natural child. With the full support of my beloved wife, I am looking for a co-parenting partner(s) to fulfill my desire to have children.

Profile description 2 (female)

Hey, I am 26 years old and have a strong desire to have children. Even if some people think that I am still quite young and still have plenty of time to become a mother, I see it a little bit differently. I have a secure job, an apartment where a child would have enough space and his or her own room. I have both feet firmly planted in life, and I am ready for the great adventure of "child". I am supported from all sides, be it friends or family, so that the child would be really well taken care of. If you would like to help me to fulfill my long-awaited wish, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to your messages.

Profile description 3 (female)

Hi daddies, for some time now, the desire for a child has been growing in me. I am looking for someone who is willing to take up this adventure with me. However, I have never been the type of woman who orients her whole life towards a potential future family. I have a good job, many friends, and I travel a lot. Just sitting at home, raising kids and waiting for the father to come every other week, or just for the holidays, is not my life. I'm looking for someone who will actively raise the child with me and who will also do his half of the raising. I have in mind the change model, where the child is with one parent at equal intervals. Alternatively, if you would like to take over the care mainly, I would support you financially. If you feel intrigued, please contact me :)

Profile description 4 (male & female)

Hello, we are A. (40 years old, certified teacher, wife) and C. (32 years old, doctor of chemistry, husband). Unfortunately, my wife cannot carry a natural child with reasonable risk. Due to her health problems in everyday life, she could not fulfil her role as a mother on her own as she would like to. We generally think rather unconventionally and progressively. We would therefore like to join forces as cooperating parents with a woman or couple who wants to have children. ... I would like to share duties and rights with the mother. The child may have its core life with the mother, but we would like see the child (and gladly also the mother) on a regular basis and to have custody on agreed weekends and parts of the holidays. We desire a colorful, functioning patchwork family in which we take on the role of an active, biological father and godmother for the child and are very good friends with the biological mother. The child should be born into and grow up in a sustainable and functioning community. Insemination should only take place privately, without sexual intercourse (e.g. via cup and self-injection). Very important for us are a constructive approach by all participants, the necessary willingness to compromise from all sides, roughly similar views on how to raise children, and acting together in terms of a common goal and long-term project to give life to a child and raise it together. ... For us, co-parenting is not just a business or functional relationship. A platonic, honest, and sustainable friendship and affection between the co-parenting partners is essential for a lasting sense of well-being for all parties involved, for long-

term success and, ultimately, for the well-being of the child. If you are seriously interested, we are very happy to receive your messages.

Familyship users have concrete scenarios for their ideal families, and they communicate them clearly. Our data show that, over time, many Familyship users adjust their profile descriptions, elaborating and refining their templates based on their experiences during the search and screening.

Family Planning: Selecting Templates/Mixing and Matching

A central element of individual family formation is selecting a template or mixing and matching parts from templates featured by the platform. Consumers become parenting bricoleurs, drawing from the logics and tools of Familyship. Felicitas (Family #6) illustrates this creative process nicely:

My boyfriend and I were still together until a few months ago. At some point he told me that he did not want to start a family with me. So I decided, quite pragmatically, that we could outsource the child project from our love relationship. I would have a child with someone else in a co-parenting constellation while still being in the romantic relationship with him. And he really did not expect me to do it! He was shocked. He expected me to give up my wish for a child for him. This showed us that we really did not match. So I was on my own until I discovered Familyship. At first, I was looking for a father as co-parent. But I discovered that a lot more women are registered on the platform. Why would I want to compete for a man? That's why I changed the desired role for my co-parent in my profile description. I decided to do it a little differently—a detour so to speak—and now I am looking for a co-parent mother, even though I am not a lesbian. In this constellation, we certainly need a male sperm donor, but the co-mother and I will be responsible for raising the child together. And I can find both the co-mother and the sperm donor on Familyship.

This kind of creative bricolage is common among Familyship consumers. Table #2 below summarizes the variety of roles and constellations in the 24 families we studied over an eighteen-month period.

Family	Family constellation	Roles of Parents	Status	Details
1	Lesbian couple and a gay biological father	Active mother, Active father, Mother with aunt-like function	Child	Lesbian couple split, but family constellation of active mother, active father and their child stayed the same

2	Lesbian couple and a heterosexual sperm donor	Active mother, Active mother, Father with uncle-like function	No child in this constellation	Several conception trials, but sperm donor found a romantic relationship with another woman; Distanced himself from Familyship and the lesbian couple
3	Heterosexual woman, heterosexual man	Active mother, active father	1 Child; 2 miscarriages afterwards	Initially, the father was planned to be solely a sperm donor. However, the parents fell in love and now live as a patchwork family with their own child and the other two children of the mother.
4	Heterosexual woman, homosexual man	Active mother, active father	Child	Well-functioning co-parenting constellation
5	Heterosexual woman	Active mother	Miscarriages	Illustrative case for the strong desire to become a parent; all financial means and different constellations were tried, but no enduring pregnancy; currently back in a romantic relationship
6	Heterosexual woman	Active mother, sperm donation	Child	Tried a variety of different family models; decided to become a single mother by choice
7	Heterosexual woman, gay male couple	Active mother, Active father, active father	Conception phase	Mother already has a child from a romantic relationship; patchwork constellation
8	Heterosexual woman	Active mother	Many foster children; "Village mother"	Illustrative case for an even more distant mother role; other solutions were too intimate/strong for her; takes freetime & vacation from her mother-like role
9	Heterosexual man	Sperm donor	100+ children	Mass-Sperm-Donor; uses the platform to "spread his generic material"; no involvement in raising the child, just "production"
10	Homosexual man & his partner with a lesbian couple	Active father, Active father, Active mother, Active mother	Child	Ideal case for a well-functioning co-parenting relationship; 4 active parents (two gay couples) living together and raising their child together

11	Heterosexual woman	Active mother	No child	Tries everything to realize her wish to become a mother; time critical, increases pressure; tensions between the wish to have a romantic relationship and an alternative solution
12	Heterosexual man	Father with uncle-function	No child	Businessman with little time for a family/relationship; trying to become a father with minimal involvement
13	Bisexual woman, homosexual man	Active mother, active father	Child	Numerous conflicts between the co-parents; mediation to solve conflicts
14	Heterosexual man and lesbian couple	Active father, active mother, active mother	Conception phase	Successful businessman in a happy marriage with two children, but wife does not want any more children; wants to extend his family; diminished father role after the negotiations; less responsibilities as desired;
15	Lesbian couple	Active mother, active mother	Conception phase	Anonymous sperm donation; IVF odyssey in foreign country due to legally complicated ROPA method
16	Lesbian couple and homosexual man	Active mother, active mother, father with uncle function	Conception phase	Developed a strong friendship; father well-integrated into the families and friends of the lesbian couple
17	Lesbian couple and homosexual man	Active mother, active mother, father with uncle function	No child in this constellation	Parents could not agree on their roles in the family; the non-biological mother changed her mind on taking on a more active role; potential father was not willing to give up his right of custody/legal guardianship
18	Lesbian couple	Active mother, active mother, sperm donation	Child	Experiencing stigmatization/exclusion from society/Rejection from friends and families
19	Heterosexual woman, homosexual man	Active mother, active father	Child	Tensions during the pregnancy; Father was not involved as desired

20	Homosexual man, lesbian couple	Active father, active mother, active mother	Child	Live together in 2 separate apartments, but in the same home; equally care-taking of the child
21	Heterosexual woman	Active mother	Child from a previous romantic relationship	Experiences with romantic family constellation led her turn to Familyship; wants a second child but in a co-parenting constellation; currently searching
22	Heterosexual woman	Active mother	2 children (1 from prior romantic relationship, 1 from Co-Parenting)	Both fathers left her alone with the children, even though they promised support; now she is a single mother of two children
23	Heterosexual woman	Active mother	No child	Family creation was thwarted by health problems; currently taking a break in her search for co-parents
24	Heterosexual woman, heterosexual man	Active mother, active father	Child	Well-functioning co-parenting; established herself as co-parenting blogger

Table 2: Overview family variety and constellations

Family Creation: Organization & Management

Family creation is the last step of the individual innovation. It happens outside the platform sphere and can be a time-intensive process. A striking finding was the prevalence of business logics in use. Our data reveal numerous activities such as information gathering, preparing vision statements, screening and recruiting co-parents, various kinds of analysis, marketing, negotiating, contract formation, financial planning, and risk management. The entire Familyship process is essentially one of designing, staffing, and managing an organization. Despite the diversity of users and their desired family constellations, the majority approached family formation with business-like tools and thinking.

We saw earlier that Familyship's founders used marketing techniques to recruit a suitable co-parent father. Andreas (Family #12) refers to certain marketing-like activities with an edge of criticism, saying, "Some of the people on the platform present themselves as if they are on a dating platform: height, size, weight, illnesses, like 'I'm the right horse to bet on'. They are also focused on presenting how much they earn:

facts, facts, facts.” Johannes (Family #2) was unapologetic for his own self-marketing. He said,

Before even contacting the first co-mothers, I put a lot of effort into gathering all my health information, doing health checkups, and receiving a semen analysis. The women on the platform really appreciated all the effort I made. And of course, they were really happy that my health certificates and semen analysis are in a perfect condition.

Apparently, Johannes was happy with the quality of the product he offered, and he made assurances to mitigate what he believed might be perceived risks on the part of his potential co-parents.

Risk and its management are important considerations for consumers looking to assemble a family for long-term commitment to a child. Carlotta (Family #13) said, “At the first meeting, we already had a kind of questionnaire, where you could discuss very important points.” Claudia (Family #19) also conducted research as a way to mitigate risks. She reports, “In one of our first conversations we discussed the questions from an official questionnaire, designed for co-parenting, that included important aspects such as: finances, custody, and values for raising the child.” Financial risks and resources require special attention. Patricia (Family #3) discusses her approach to financial analysis and planning:

I knew that I wanted to have another child, so my friend recommended to me, “Why don’t you calculate the financial support you would receive from the government if you become a mother this year or next year?” And that’s what I did. I realized that I needed to become pregnant within the next three months to receive the highest possible financial support. It sounds a bit strange, but this financial aspect helped me to decide on the timing for the conception with the co-father.... We discussed the financial support of the child. I told him the amount of money that would facilitate my life, and he agreed to pay for it. That was the financial part of our agreement.

Some financial agreements were tied to work schedules. Carlotta (Family #13) reports:

Our parental agreement includes the official acceptance of the child and its custody. Regarding the time and financial commitments for the child, we decided to aim for a 50:50 distribution, so it is fair for both sides. We also agreed that if we do not reach this aim of 50:50, the parent who needs to take more care of the child will receive financial support from the other parent.

The agreements among co-parents covered not only financial and time commitments but also stretched to topics such as naming rights, education plans, and religious affiliation. Family #13's agreements cover these and more. Carlotta reveals the scope to include:

... educational intentions ... important cornerstones ... 50% of the upbringing each ... we don't live together ... the center of our child's life should be here with me, with her mother in the apartment ... day-care and school in the vicinity of the mother's apartment ... doctor ... where is the school and so on ... it was very important to me that she gets the last name from me and it was very important to the father that she gets baptized. That is how we did it.

Agreements in many cases were drafted into parental agreements. Claudia (Family #19) explains the importance of written contracts in terms of the Familyship logic that separates childrearing from the romantic ties between parents:

In the beginning of the pregnancy, we went to a notary to commit ourselves to the parental agreement, and he officially accepted the fatherhood for the child with all its rights and responsibilities. In normal relationships, the trust and love between the parents replaces these written contracts. They just assume that the love will settle all potential issues. But I can only recommend this process to any normal family as well.

While marriage contracts, such as prenuptials, are not uncommon in general, Familyship consumers provides numerous other examples of business logics supplanting those of romantic love and coupling.

One reason business logics and contracts prevail in the Familyship model may be because they offer a heightened sense of security in an inherently risky-seeming enterprise, made even riskier by the lack of societal support for alternative family arrangements. Another possible explanation is that, in an age of the marketization of everything, business offers templates (e.g., for recruiting and interviewing job candidates) and terminologies that are already familiar to many people. The widespread usage of business vocabulary by Familyship members may be another element in connecting their social innovations with macrolevel discourse. Adopting the logic and language of business—especially of marketing, risk management, personnel management, and contracts—may confer greater legitimacy on the enterprise because it encourages people to draw parallels to something that is already established as legitimate, more so for being taught in business schools the world over. Scholars have discussed market forces in maintaining family relations, but no one has ever suggested the radical idea that a market/business logic could actually replace the dominant romance logic at the heart of the modern family.

The System of Consumer-Driven Social Innovation

We began by examining Familyship as a social-enterprise startup—privileging the viewpoint of its founders—as a special example of institutional entrepreneurship undertaken by consumers whom the market and other institutions were failing. We found a process of consumer-driven social innovation that accounts for micro, meso, and macrolevel activities and impacts. We then assessed the phenomenon more squarely from the perspectives of consumers of the Familyship platform, finding that users mirrored many of the patterns of institutional entrepreneurship displayed by the founders, in large part because the platform provided templates for their behavior. In also attending to the interactions between Familyship and its community of stakeholders, we were able to understand CDSI as a system within a larger societal context. That system is the subject of Figure 13. The framework allocates the activities of CDSI development to the main actors responsible for them, and it shows the dynamics and relationships among those actors.

CDSI begins with consumers who have compelling social needs or desires that are not being met by existing institutions, including the market. In the case of Familyship, consumers desiring to become parents were thwarted in their parental-identity projects by laws and social norms that denied them access to necessary resources for family formation (13.1). By reframing their problems and thinking counterfactually about them, creative consumers deconstructed the traditional template for a nuclear family and, from the pieces, created a new template to meet their own needs (13.2). They materialized their new template in a simple web-based platform meant to attract potential co-parents for their personal family project. The success of the platform as a recruiting mechanism uncovered a broader, more systemic set of unmet needs among people who also desired to start families, but for whom traditional paths and forms were unsuitable or unachievable. For the founders, the opportunity to solve a sticky social problem emerged and, by choosing to address it, they became social entrepreneurs. The Familyship platform, with further development by its founders, provided basic templates and other resources, inspiring other, similarly marginalized consumers to organize novel families of their own through creative bricolage (13.3). New families routinely add their stories to the growing Familyship metanarrative, reinforcing the platform, and expanding and deepening the repertoire of templates available for others to consider (13.4).

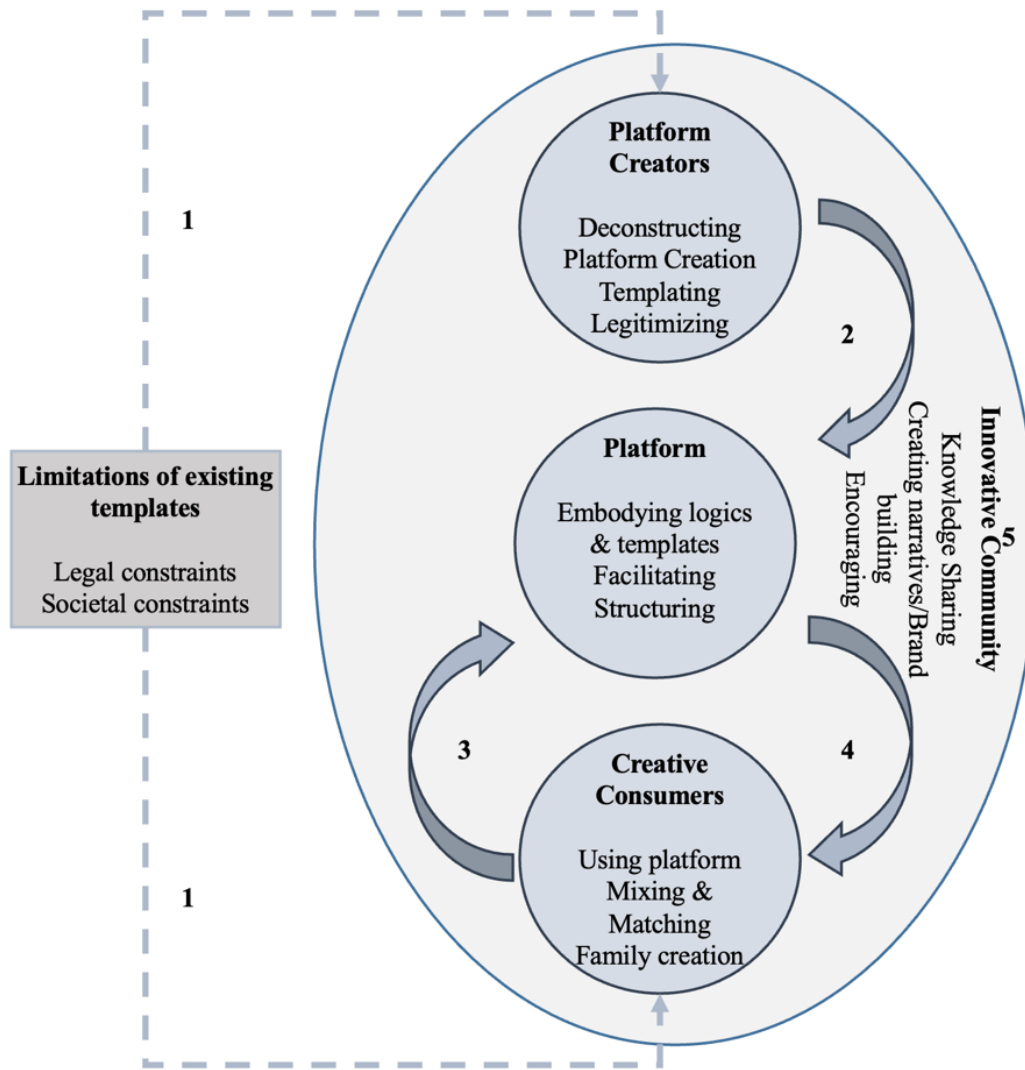


Figure 13: A General Model of CDSI

All of these interactions, conducted in and through the Familyship platform, occur in the context of a growing community (13.5). The community, comprised of Familyship founders, users, and fans, helps to provide a safe and supportive environment for innovative family formation. Within the community people share knowledge, support, and stories, all the while contributing to a growing metanarrative about alternative approaches to family formation and childrearing. The community also reaches, through many of its members, into other realms of influence, allowing Familyship to accrue legitimacy through associations with and endorsements from highly legitimate organizations and individuals. The result of this entire process is social innovation at the levels of 1) individual families, 2) the Familyship platform, and 3) the meanings of family in contemporary culture.

DISCUSSION

Our findings explain the process of CDSI in the Familyship organization and shed light on how consumers create new individual forms of family. Moreover, we presented the system of CDSI highlighting actors, functions and internal dynamics. This section discusses the article's contributions and implications relating to the following: CDSI and institutional entrepreneurship, CDSI and the role & functions of online platforms, the marketization of sacred spheres, and templating in consumer research.

CDSI and institutional entrepreneurship

We have discovered and described a process of consumer-driven social innovation. In doing so, we have shown that consumers play a central role in initiating and creating social change. In this section we elaborate the implications of our framework relating back to Tracey et al. (2011)'s multilevel model of institutional entrepreneurship, that served as starting point and basis for our analysis. Introducing Tracey et al.'s (2011) multilevel model of institutional entrepreneurship to consumer research and Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) is an important contribution, as it offers a new perspective to understanding and explaining the processes of social innovation through institutional entrepreneurship.

Tracey et al. (2011) offer a multilevel perspective of micro, meso, and macro level. We also observe dynamics at all three levels in our findings, but with more interaction and bidirectional influence. For example, Familyship does not just draw legitimacy from connecting with a macro discourse; it changes the discourse and drives social innovation. By adapting Tracey's (2011) model and introducing further steps to it, we extend the framework from an institutional angle to a consumer-driven angle. For example, in our study, consumers/entrepreneurs are not just building an organizational template (Tracey et al., 2011), they build a template for their own individual family organization, but they are also broadening it to offer multiple templates in a platform: These templates then can be mixed and matched by Familyship users to create their desired family constellation. Moreover, we extend the application of the model not only to the formation of an institution/organization, but also how consumers create new social units that run counter to prevailing norms. Tracey et al. (2011) focus on an enterprise-type organization which begins and ends inside the conceptual "box" of an organization. We are focusing on families that are outside the normal "box" of family in their respective societies. These contextual differences are important because they contribute to different disciplinary priorities. Also, what works in a controlled and bounded organization doesn't necessarily work in the far less bounded and structured context of

ordinary life. Almost equally interesting as the differences are the similarities between management- and consumer-driven processes. The most striking and counterintuitive similarity is that they both draw their templates from business-management. Usually, one would not expect business and market logics in the sphere of family creation and daily family life. We discuss the compatibility of business logics with marketization and the use of business logics in templating non-business social forms in the section ‘Marketization of sacred spheres’.

CDSI and the role & functions of online platforms

Our findings introduce the system of CDSI highlighting actors, functions and dynamics within the system of CDSI. A central element of our framework is the online platform. Even though prior work acknowledges the relevance of platforms, as well as their diverse application areas (Kenney & Zysman, 2016), such as “business, politics, and social interaction” (Kenney & Zysman, 2016, p. 62), the explored role of platforms is rather narrow and we do not learn about the relevance of platforms in social innovations. For example, studies in marketing and consumer research offer insights about platform-based B2B exchange (Chakravarty et al., 2014), online crowdfunding platforms (Fan et al., 2020), value creation through offerings as digitalized networked arrangements of artifacts, persons, processes, and interfaces in form of platforms (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018).

Some studies explore the role of the platform in more detail. For example, Tian et al. (2014) study the platform’s service design of healthcare delivery, such as the role of platforms for patients in managing diseases and trauma, the daily struggles of patients; a tool for a virtual health community, and a forum to receive information and guidance (Tian et al., 2014). Figueiredo & Scaraboto (2016) investigate value creation of consumers networked through platform-based business models for collaboration. However, here the platform is a sole mediator for online and offline aspects of the collective value creation (Figueiredo & Scaraboto, 2016). Weijo et al. (2018) describe digital platforms in their study of the Restaurant Day as virtual tool to share pictures, tags, comments, and GPS coordinaties on social media to promote restaurants and meals and to facilitate navigation towards them (Weijo et al., 2018). Again, the role of the platform is limited to that of a promotion and information tool. Eckhardt et al. (2019) highlight platforms as a central defining characteristic of the “sharing economy”. However, the role is mainly described as “platform mediation” (of transactions) (Eckhardt et al., 2019, p. 7) and a “technology-based matching platform” (Eckhardt et al., 2019, p. 8). Hence, the role of the platform is limited to mediator and matchmaker.

Perren & Kozinets (2018) explore the different roles of platforms in more detail. They offer a typology of platform types, distinguishing between consociality and platform intermediation: “forums connecting actors”, “matchmakers pairing actors”, “enablers equipping actors”, and “hubs centralizing exchange” (Perren & Kozinets, 2018, p. 27). Even though they describe the platform functions in more detail and illustrate real-world cases, we do not learn about the functions of platforms and their role in social innovations.

Our findings extend knowledge about platforms and their relevance in social innovations. We found that the online platform is a central element and catalyst for social innovation that pushes and enables the innovation to a new level, for several reasons. First, the online platform is the first milestone of the social innovation, representing an institutionalized form of the innovation. Second, it embodies the logics and templates for additional social organizing and provides the resources for further innovations on an individual level. Third, the platform facilitates the innovation and structures the activities for innovating. Fourth, the platform enables (con)social support, shared narrative construction, leading to a broader legitimization. Through these functions, the platform takes a central role in shaping the realities for new ways of social organizing.

Marketization of sacred spheres

Our research presents an online platform for the creation of families. It can be seen as a service offering for assisting the assemblage of family members; for having and raising a child together. Moreover, we found that the majority of Familyship users approach this process with business-like tools, such as information gathering, vision statements, screening, recruitment, analysis, marketing, negotiating, contractualizing, financial planning, and risk management. These findings contribute to an ongoing discussion in consumer research about the involvement of the market into consumers’ sacred spheres.

Recent studies conclude that the involvement of the market into consumers’ sacred spheres is highly contested. Reasons for that are conflicts with consumers’ understandings of privacy and intimacy, leading to tension and threats. For example, Epp and Velagaleti (2014) find that parents engage with childcare providers to facilitate everyday family life, but with that convenience comes the fear of losing the intimacy and trust associated with providing care themselves. McAlexander et al. (2014) found that tensions between logics of faith and logics of business and marketing in the Mormon Church

challenged some members' fundamental identities and family relationships. Barnhart, Huff and Cotte (2014) found that outsourcing eldercare compromised the emotional intimacy with family members. The result was contested inclusion and exclusion of caretakers as members of the family construct. Barnhart and Peñaloza (2013) focused on tensions the elderly face from having to accept increasing levels of external help—tensions that families must negotiate on an ongoing basis. Whereas prior literature identifies marketization as a negative development that harms and threatens consumers, our research finds consumers actively choosing to embrace market solutions. In contrast to prior work, Familyship users do so without experiencing the tensions described by prior consumer research.

Our findings contribute broadly to sociological discussions in the realm of the economics of intimacy and sociology of emotions. Leading sociologists in the field explore the blurring boundaries between economy/market and intimacy: “commercialization of intimate life” (Hochschild, 2003, 2012), “emotional capitalism”(Illouz, 2007), and “connected lives” (Zelizer, 2005). Writing about the commercialization of intimate life, Hochschild (2003, 2012) concludes that emotions are increasingly commercialized and managed. Market and instrumental relationships are colonized so deeply into people’s private spheres that it is difficult to find a space that is not touched by market spheres. Illouz (2007), finding that economy and intimacy are so strongly connected that they cannot be separated, suggests a construct called emotional capitalism. Emotions and economy intermingle increasingly at the workplace, in the family, and within social relationships (Illouz, 2007, p. 13). Connected lives: economy and intimacy are increasingly connected (Zelizer, 2005). According to Zelizer (Zelizer, 2011, p. 167) “people constantly mingle their most intimate relations with economic activities”. In line with sociological assertions, our findings show that Familyship users actively turn to a market offering to satisfy their desire for a child. Moreover, they use market instruments and business logics to create and manage their families. Moreover, they do not experience the tensions described by prior work. Therefore, our study contributes an extreme case to the discussion on the blurring boundaries between market/economy and intimacy in arguably one of the most sacred—and traditionally non-market ruled—sphere of life, the creation of a family.

Templating in Consumer Research

The notion of templates/templating proved to be a particularly useful concept in the realm of our study, as it offers a very nuanced and specific meaning and serves as an analytical tool that has not been used in consumer research before. Organizational

studies and management science regularly use the notion of templating for studying replication of knowledge transfer (Jensen & Szulanski, 2007; Winter et al., 2012), strategy (Winter & Szulanski, 2001), evaluation/stereotyping/demographic categories (Hall et al., 2019), scaling business models (Chliova & Ringov, 2016), and organizational routines and processes (Szulanski & Jensen, 2004).

Prior studies in organizational studies and management science define a template as a “replica” (Winter & Szulanski, 2001, p. 736), a “working example as a point of reference” (Winter & Szulanski, 2001, p. 736), or an “existing routine or example, that serves as the point of departure and as the reference for crafting a replica” (Szulanski & Jensen, 2004, p. 351). A template consists of “an (organizational) practice that is currently in existence, observable, composed of a single or connected set of processes, and consciously used in the replication process” (Jensen & Szulanski, 2007, p. 1727). It is “customized to meet specific needs” (Szulanski & Jensen, 2004, p. 352) and “additions and extensions to the original template” can be made, “consolidating a new template” (Winter & Szulanski, 2001, p. 736). Based on an article from Winter and Szulanski (2001), Chliova & Ringov (2016) present two phases of replication: “creating and refining” the template and “stabilizing and leveraging” (Chliova & Ringov, 2016).

Our findings reveal templating as an essential component of CDSI. Templating took place on the micro level (Building the personal template), and on the meso level (Building and Theorizing the organizational template). The Familyship platform served as a carrier of templates for social organizing. Through the platform, creative consumers have access to a variety of templates that can be adapted to their needs. Broadening our perspective on templates, we can find many examples in our society, especially templates for transition during rites of passage for transitions (marriage, college). These social templates guide our behavior and offer practices, scripts, structures to be followed. It is commonplace to guide people to certain goals, but it is new that people are figuring out how to make and market new templates that are not socially apparent or that don’t match with existing social norms. This appears to be crucial to social innovation.

Our research introduces and shapes the notion of template/templating in consumer research. We envision the usefulness of the concept in various studies, such as Weijo et al.’s (2018) study on Restaurant Day. The template for a pop-up kitchen festival was developed in collective action by the founding members in Helsinki. It was developed as a resistance movement to the strict legal regulations with regard to food in Finland. The template for this self-organized event consists of consumer creativity logics, offering diverse food offerings and new dishes in pop-up kitchens, mobile restaurant carts, tastings, “occupying public spaces [...] to ensure pedestrian access and visibility.”

(Weijo et al., 2018, p. 258). In the beginning, 40 restaurants in Finland followed the Restaurant Day template. The logics of the template became institutionalized through digital tools and an official website. The template was recreated and refined based on the experiences of the first year for further repetition of Restaurant Day festivals in the following years. Over time, the template was reproduced all over the world through what Weijo et al. (2018, p. 259) call “sharing of knowledge and best practices”- in our understanding, templating. The notion of templating serves as a useful mechanism to understand the dynamics of the Restaurant Day movement. Moreover, we envision the usefulness of the notion templating for classical marketing research. Templating is well established in the management and organization literature to explore scaling business models (Chliova & Ringov, 2016), which relates to the idea of innovating and scaling in marketing (management).

Transferability

Based on our findings, we are able to theorize more broadly about the phenomena of consumer-driven social innovation. Prior research only partially covers aspects of the broader phenomenon. We find literature that elaborates in detail on the individual experiences of marginalized and stigmatized consumers, but we do not learn about the processes of collective change. Other studies focus on consumer movements/collectives and institutional entrepreneurs with regards to developing markets, brands, or products, but we do not learn about actual social change. Our research suggests a holistic multilevel perspective that integrates the marginalized/stigmatized consumer perspective (micro level), institutional entrepreneurship (meso level), and broader social change (macro level). The consumer-driven social innovation we observe in the case of Familyship may play out analogously in other cases as well.

For example, the case of Restaurant Day also starts with dissatisfied consumers facing constrained regulations with regard to food consumption. The creation of the collective movement was facilitated by the momentum of “bourgeoisie activism” and “citizen enlightenment” (Weijo et al., 2018, p. 261). Digital tools, such as a central website and social media helped to organize the movement, as the online platform in the case of Familyship. Templates were created to convey the logics of the Restaurant Day movement. Lastly, legitimization was leveraged through “marketplace allies with mainstream credibility helped legitimate RD and territorialize production” (Weijo et al., 2018, p. 267). As illustrated, our framework on consumer-driven innovation could enlighten prior studies, such as Restaurant Day. However, Restaurant Day is a collective movement for only one day, whereas real social change is lasting/sustainable.

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