



« **European retailers strategies on sustainable development** »

Thursday, June 18th, 2015
14 :30 - 16 :00
D.207

SIG 1 : Business & Society
SIG 2 : Strategic Management

Symposium session chaired by French ANR-ALIDD project DIACODD - Distribution Alimentaire, Consommateurs et Développement Durable -, an analyze of distributors' practices and discourses about sustainable development and consumers' perceptions.

Description

Defined by the Brundtland report (1987) as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, sustainable development has increasingly figured in company policies and is today regarded as an important business goal by many stakeholders (Sheth et al., 2011). This topic concerns also retailers: as active intermediaries between producers and manufacturers, and customers, they can be in a singularly powerful position to drive sustainability (Jones & al., 2007).

Retailers have been implementing various practices that take account of sustainable development,: elimination of plastic bags at checkouts, reduction of CO2 emissions, internal codes of good conduct (e.g.in relation to child labor), improvement of employment practices (male/female wage parity, hiring of handicapped workers, etc.), and so forth. In the UK, Tesco uses wood products from certified sources and Sainsbury’s tries to combating obesity. In France, Monoprix encourages people to change their consumption patterns by purchasing products for their quality-of-life characteristics, including sustainable development in their design. Until now, researchers analyzed only sustainable development from the firms’ point of view but there are still relatively few academic studies that focus on sustainable development in the field of retailing. As said Susan Hackerman: "Retailing with a difference. Retailing with a conscience. Retailing is not about maximizing profits" (quoted by Morrison and Humlen, 2013).

Confronting the views of researchers from different countries (Poland, UK, Spain, Germany and France), this symposium aims to analyze and compare sustainable development strategies in European field of retailing, focusing particularly on store brand strategies During this times of crisis and uncertainty, retailers can choose to focus more on economic topics than sustainable problems. Thus, the panellists will compare different European retailer's strategies in order to analyze the place of sustainable development and its role in economic performance.

The aim of this symposium is to analyze and compare sustainable development strategies in European field of retailing. Seen as a think tank, this symposium will be the time to share the best practices and initiatives of retailers on sustainable development and to imagine and develop new perspectives for tomorrow.

We hope to attract European researchers specialized in marketing or retailing in order to cooperate on subjects of common interest associated to sustainability (such as CSR, ethics...).

The final aim of the symposium will be to prepare a common publication between researchers about retailing and sustainability in Europe.

In this symposium, each speaker will present national case studies that can be considered as the retailers’ best practices in his or her country on this topic. We will try to identify the place and the role of sustainable development in different European food retailer’s strategies, taking account of its environmental, economic and social dimensions. Different topics will be approached, such as the reduction of ecological footprint and the limitation of atmospheric emission, the collaboration and engagement with the various stakeholders (consumers, employees, banks and other financial institutions, manufacturing firms, etc.).

This symposium will try to answer to different following questions:

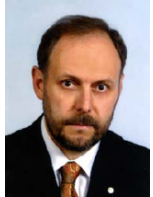
- How the main European retailers are addressing sustainability agenda?
- How they recognize the impact their businesses have on the environment, the economy and society?
- How are they looking to measure and benchmark their performance on sustainable development?
- What is the role of the store brand in the sustainable development strategies of retailers?
- What is the difference between retailers in Europe?
- What is the place of sustainable development in the corporate strategy?
- What kind of benefits for the retailers and the consumers?
- How companies may contribute to a reduction of the environmental footprint with different consumer practices (commuting with private cars, redecorating the house, tourist traveling abroad, dining out, heating and cooling the house, taking a bath, etc.) by incorporating into these practices new rules, meaning, products and technologies as they are gradually becoming available?

Participants



Enrico COLLA

Enrico Colla is Emeritus Professor of International Retailing in Novancia Business School in Paris, currently in charge of Centre for Research in Commerce, where he coordinates research on Marketing Channels, Multichannel retailing, E-commerce and Sustainable Development. He has published ten books and over fifty academic articles in different retail subjects: strategies of international retailers, comparative retailing, industry-distribution relationships and the impact of legislation on retailing. He has mainly based his research on extensive field surveys, with the support of firms and professional bodies.



Tomacz DOMANSKI

Tomacz Domanski runs the Department of International Marketing and Retailing of University of Lodz. He carries out research and teaching programs in international marketing with special emphasis on international retailing strategies and marketing communications.



Laure LAVORATA

Laure LAVORATA is professor at the University East of Paris (UPEC). She supported her HDR in December 2010 on the theme of "the study of applied ethics in marketing: theoretical and empirical contributions" and coordinates an ANR project on the following theme: "Food Retail, Consumption and Sustainable Development". Her research focuses on the ethics of retailers, marketing ethics and sustainable marketing. Her latest publication is "Influence of retailers' commitment to sustainable development on store image, consumer loyalty and consumer boycotts: Proposal for a model using the theory of planned behavior", published in Journal of Retailing and Consumers Services, in 2014.



Maria-Eugenia RUIZ-MOLINA

Maria-Eugenia Ruiz-Molina is Associate Professor in the Marketing Department of University of Valencia, where she earned her PhD in Business Administration and Management. She has been also lecturer at several universities - Universitat Jaume I in Castellón, Polytechnical University of Valencia, University at Albany and the Open University of Catalonia (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya). Her current research interests are retailing, ICT and consumer behavior.



HANNA SCHRAMM-KLEIN

Univ.-Professor Dr. Hanna Schramm-Klein holds the Chair in Marketing at Siegen University, Germany. As vice-provost at the University of Siegen, she additionally is responsible for university Marketing and Research Internationalization. She studied Business Administration and International Business at Justus-Liebig-University Gießen, Germany. She received her Ph.D. and her post-doctoral degree (Habilitation) at Saarland University, Saarbruecken, Germany. She has been lecturer and visiting professor at several universities such as University of St. Gallen (Switzerland), University Gabriela Mistral, Santiago de Chile, University of Graz (Austria).



Leigh SPARKS

Leigh Sparks is Professor of Retail Studies at the Institute for Retail Studies, University of Stirling, Scotland, UK. He was an undergraduate at the University of Cambridge, and completed his Ph.D at St. David's University College, Lampeter. His research concentrates on aspects of the broad areas of structural and spatial change in retailing. Since arriving at Stirling he has been involved in the generation of over c£2m of research funding. This research has been disseminated widely through a number of books, many reports and over 125 academic and professional articles.



ANR-ALIDD DIACODD

- Distribution Alimentaire, Consommateurs et Développement Durable -

The aim of this program is to observe and analyze the retailer/consumer couple and to conceptualize and measure its influence on the growth of demand for sustainable food. It is thus a matter of understanding the impact of the sustainable development practices of different distribution channels on the evolution of consumption behaviour and on *the process of co-constructing the demand for sustainable consumption*.

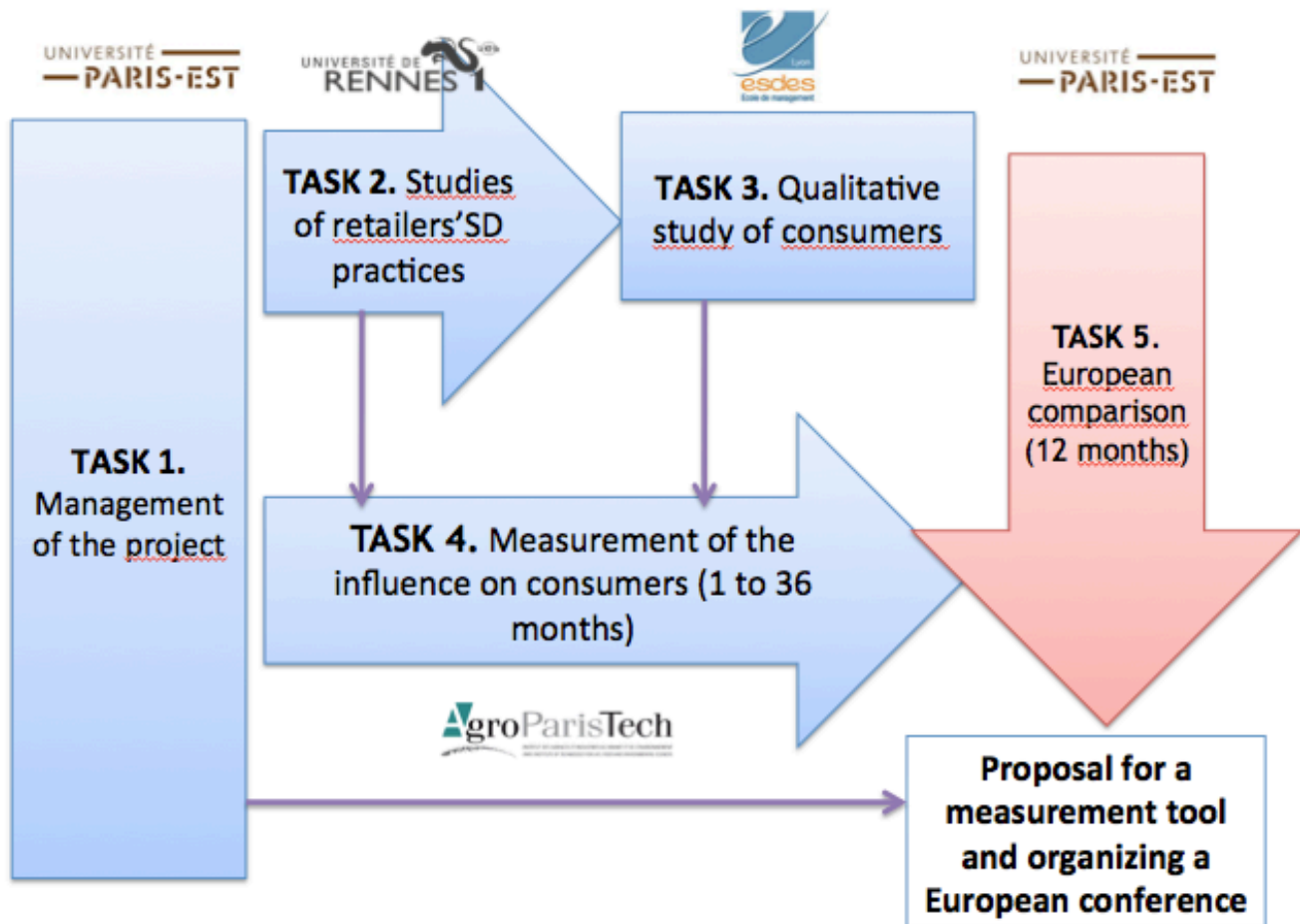
As the intermediary between producers and consumers, retailing plays a key role not only by offering products to consumers that take account of sustainable development but also through the design and introduction of sustainable development own-label brands. However, a number of questions arise. How do the various distribution channels incorporate sustainable development in their practices (and not only in their advertising)? What are the expectations and perceptions of consumers faced with conventional retailers, specialists and new distribution channels (the AMAP network)? How is the relationship between consumer and retailer constructed in view of the latter's sustainable development practices? What co-construction process is deployed within this retailer-consumer dyad? How can we measure the real impact on consumers of retailers' sustainable development practices, using non-verbal measures to avoid social desirability bias? It is questions such as these that the project presented here will endeavour to answer. Consequently, it aims first to gain a better understanding of the impact on consumers of these practices around sustainable development and then to create a tool for evaluating this impact through verbal and non-verbal measurements of the influence of action concepts on consumers' commitment. Indeed, the constant discrepancy between the benefits and good image of sustainable development measured with the public and the difficulty of creating lasting demand likely to favour practices linked to sustainable development prompts us to focus on social desirability bias in surveys on this topic.

The results are first to construct a well-thought out database of practices linked to sustainable development in the different distribution channels, then to establish an evaluation tool using verbal and non-verbal measurements of the influence of action concepts on consumers' commitment. Indeed, the constant discrepancy between the benefits and good image of sustainable development measured with the public and the difficulty of creating lasting demand likely to favour practices linked to sustainable development prompts us to focus on social desirability bias in surveys on this topic. The data on fair trade, for example, reveals a significant - and continuing - disparity between the positive image of fair trade and the growth of purchases of fair trade products by households.

The on-going intention is to contribute to knowledge on the subject of sustainable development not only for researchers but also for all stakeholders, public authorities and local councils, NGOs (consumer associations), the media and, of course, the actors of the retailer/consumer dyad. There is also an incentive aspect, since the dissemination of data on sustainable development performance and its impact on citizen-consumers accessible through the implementation of our tool may be used as a possible barometer of the introduction of a more sustainable food system.

Consequently our long-term objective is to introduce this evaluation tool and apply for a patent on it. The tool will allow us to compare the performance of retailers both in France and throughout Europe in order to help them increase their competitiveness while incorporating the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social).

Research organisation



Partnerships :

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