“From Scientific Controversies to Brand Communities: Welcome to a Branded World!”

24rd IMP Conference (2008)

Bernard Cova Professor Euromed Marseilles & Visiting Professor Bocconi University Milan
Domaine de Luminy, BP 921, 13288 Marseille Cedex 9 (France)**,** Phone: ++33 491 827 946;
E-mail: bernard.cova@euromed-marseille.com

Robert Salle, E.M.**LYON,** Marketing Department**,**
23, Av Guy de Collongue, BP 174, 69132 Lyon Ecully Cedex (France), Phone: ++ 33 478 33 77 74 ; E-mail: salle@em-lyon.com

Special Track
For the sake of argument: compelling disagreements in marketing theory

**“From Scientific Controversies to Brand Communities:
Welcome to a Branded World!”**

Abstract

We recently witnessed the rapid emergence of two research streams which came to the forefront as major themes of debates amongst scholars in marketing: CCT (Consumer Culture Theory) and SDL (Service Dominant Logic). Interestingly, these streams are - especially CCT - proposed as brands by their promoters. Thirty years ago, the IMP group did not use the same branding approach at its beginning. In this paper, we develop a comparative history of the three research streams (CCT, SDL and IMP) and we apply the same branding framework to what happened. An attempt to explain for a rise in branding is suggested based on the changing context of research activities over the last 30 years. The consequence of this analysis is a reassessment of IMP strategy and governance.

Keywords: Brand, Branding Strategy, CCT, IMP, SDL,

Introduction

CCT! SDL! These new research streams sound like “supercars” with their three letters (Brown, 2007)! Indeed, there is something new in the air of research in marketing: Brands! We witnessed the rapid emergence of ‘CCT’ (Consumer Culture Theory) and ‘SDL’ (Service Dominant Logic) which came to the forefront as major themes of debates amongst scholars of the discipline. CCT and SDL are brands and are proposed as such by their promoters: “*Our aim is to provide a viable disciplinary brand for this research tradition that we call Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)”*, (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, p. 868). This is far from having a marginal impact on our scientific community: the Vargo and Lusch’s 2004 paper in the JM introducing the SDL and the Arnould and Thompson’s 2005 paper in the JOCR introducing the CCT are both amongst the most read and cited articles of the decade in the field of marketing. These successes are due to the high academic relevance of these papers together with the ability of their promoters to mobilise relevant actors (Latour, 1987) but we cannot avoid thinking that branding strategies have played a part in these instant hits. In fact, CCT and SDL do much more than the myriad of “marketing panaceas” (Relationship marketing, Experiential marketing and so on) produced during the last two decades (Badot and Cova, 2008) which were intended to provide managers solutions to marketing's ills (Brown, 1993): they are not directed to managers but to academics and intend to encapsulate several research streams or schools of thought.

However, we can wonder if this is so new when we think about another supercar: our good old IMP! Having had the opportunity to participate in the CCT and taking the front seat in assisting in the development of SDL, we can ask: is IMP a brand like CCT and SDL? Do all three fall within the province of clearly elaborated brand strategies? But after having answered these questions by “yes”, it is subsequently necessary to ask what impact this can have for our scientific community. The kind of design strategy developed by CCT and SDL produces rapid returns on investment to the brand promoters and to brand communities’ members: articles in A journals and high levels of citation. On the opposite, emergent branding strategies as we deal with the IMP tradition appear to be less efficient on these two metrics - if we take for granted the relevance of these two metrics. Indeed, one of the central questions today is: is it possible for a research community such as the IMP Group to avoid developing a branding strategy alongside its research strategy? In other words, is branding simply the cherry on the cake of a research community searching to increase its visibility in the ocean of research streams or is it more than that?

In this paper, we will accept the new brandscape of marketing research as a postmodern state of fact and we will not discuss all its advantages and disadvantages or ethics. On the basis of the investigation of the launch and development of CCT and SDL coupled with the analysis of the long history of IMP, we will try to find explanations to this phenomenon and to envision what could be the future of the discussions within the marketing scientific community. The consequence of this investigation is a reassessment of IMP strategy and governance.

1. A branded world

1.1. Branding and the postmodern society

Imagine a world without brands. It existed once, and still exists, more or less, in the world's poorest places. No raucous advertising, no ugly billboards, no McDonald's. Yet, given a chance and a bit of money, people flee it. They seek out Budweiser instead of their local tipple, ditch nameless shirts for Gap, prefer Marlboros to home-grown smokes. Studies show that anywhere from one-half to two-thirds of all purchasing decisions in the Western countries are brand driven. We find ourselves today in a society saturated by brand and commercial messages: in 1977 city dwellers saw an average of 2,000 brand names each day when in 2007 they see an average of 5,000 brand names each day (www.yankelovich.com). We live in a branded world (Solomon, 2003), a world in which the brand is everything. Far more than a logo or trademark, ultimately every brand is a promise fulfilled by a total consumer experience (Schmitt, 1999). The author and journalist Naomi Klein (2000), in *No Logo*, chronicles our journey into this branded world where the brand is a common language understood by everyone. She describes the shift in corporate marketing strategies: from promoting commodities based on the needs of the marketplace, to promoting a brand or trademark representing a lifestyle in order to create needs in the marketplace.

We live today in a postmodern society (Cova, 1996; Firat and Venkatesh, 1995), and it is within this reordering of our perceived norms that the potential role for brands becomes magnified (Solomon, 2003). Historically, it was your gender, your class, your age or your place that defined you. Much of your life was mapped out from birth, based on what gender you were and what class you were born into. Today, nothing is certain. Gender, age, race and other such 'definers' are rapidly decreasing in relevance. While empowering the individual, the changes mean that we don't have a set path to follow. Life is what we want to make it.

Consequently, the brand becomes the ultimate expression of self in our postmodern societies (Wipperfürth, 2005) where we are in the market to produce ourselves, specifically our self-images (Firat and Schultz, 1997). Indeed, in postmodernity “life is to be produced and created, in effect, constructed through multiple experiences in which the consumer immerses” (Firat and Dholakia, 1998, p. 96). In this context, brands help shape how we live our life, what we do, what people think about us and what type of person we are (Holt, 2002). This is getting closer to the area that religion has traditionally occupied as Muniz and Schau (2005) demonstrated it about the religiosity in the abandoned Apple Newton brand community.

The concept of branding is much maligned in today’s media and has taken on an almost universal meaning for marketing and its many facets. It has become a surging trend in the 21st century that every firm is taking branding seriously. Branding in today's world is significant to companies as candy is important to a child. Indeed, branding and brand management have become key topics in marketing theory and practice. Branding seeks to distinguish a company, product or service from the competition and create a lasting impression in prospect's mind. In the last edition (12^{th}!) of the *Marketing Management* handbook written by Philip Kotler and Kevin Keller (2006), the branding chapter is positioned in between the segmenting chapter and the positioning chapter. According to Kotler et al. (2005, p. 549), “*branding has become so strong that today hardly anything goes unbranded*”. This highlights the strategic role of brands in today marketing (Elliott and Percy, 2007). For some authors marketing is now all about branding (Brown, 2005).

1.2. The brandization of BtoB and learning

And this is not limited to BtoC contexts as many industrial marketers think. BtoB has become too a brand battlefield. Indeed, in the last three years, we saw the flowering of a dozen of papers that focused on branding in journals such as *Industrial Marketing Management*, the *Journal of Business to Business Marketing* and the *Journal of Brand Management*. More, the first special issue dedicated to ‘Branding in Business Markets’ has been published in 2007 in the *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing* (Vol. 22, Issue 6) and the *European Journal of Marketing* is preparing a special issue on ‘Branding and the Marketing of Technological and Industrial Products’. Branding is now a hot topic in our field of research. We must admit it!

The same can be said for education: we are witnessing the branding of learning. In our realm of universities and business schools, the brand (or brands) plays an ever-more important role. Our institutions are in fact in competition with each other, often on a world scale, in their quest to attract the best resources: students, executives, lecturers and financial resources. Taking about Harvard, Picon (2008) sums this up well: “*Academic moral could already find fault with the way the university label has been assimilated to brands such as Chanel, Vuitton ou BMW. We can measure the extent of this phenomenon in the neighbourhood of the Harvard campus. Wandering through the co-op we find all sorts of baseball caps, T-shirts, lamps, chairs, golf balls, teaspoons and thimbles all bearing the universtiy coat of arms. This is most probably particularly pronounced in the case of Harvard, which has become a real object of cult for millions of potential students coming from China. We could consider that systematically extending the brand image to encompass a range of offers is part of a more general strategy of promotion where the risk of serious deviations is not negligible. Moreover it is symptomatic that the management of the Harvard label is ever-more present in discussions concerning exchanges between the university and its external academic partners. The will to preserve the prestige of the brand sometimes overrides the intellectual and institutional openness*”, (Picon, p. 87). We can put forward the idea that the existence of numerous national and international evaluation devices heightens this competition. Below we have cited several of these devices which have appeared in Europe in the last decade:

- The international accrediting systems for universities and business schools such as the AACSB (USA) and EQUIS (Europe), and for the AMBA diplomas (for MBA programs);
- The national evaluation systems centered on research “quality”. We can name for example the RAE in the UK which allows research budgets to be shared among universities (Macdonald and Kam, 2007);
- National and world rankings. They can be official for example in France there is a classification of reviews by the CNRS (*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*). They can be unofficial but nevertheless very important in the eyes of institutions: for example, the Financial Times ranking of universities and business schools, the ranking of the Higher Education Institute of the university Jiao Tong (known as the Shanghaï ranking)

The production of all these metrics sharpens the competition between different institutions in their quest to access better resources. Brand management is becoming a real issue for these institutions even if voices are beginning to rise to proclaim that the educational system must be saved from this form of “merchandising”. Thereby, in this scope envisaging the emergence of brands in management research is a must.

2. Applying the branding framework to CCT, SDL and IMP

2.1. Three branding strategies?

History of the CCT

In the mid-1980s, the field of consumer research saw a flurry of new activity marking the appearance of anthropological, naturalistic inquiry and semiotic disciplines and methods, and other alternative ways of knowing. Over time, these have been developed and joined by existential-phenomenology, various forms of literary criticism, introspection, autodriving and other projective techniques, critical theory, historical methods, feminist theory, postmodern perspectives and hermeneutics. The successful development of this diverse group of analytic frameworks and methods within consumer research has generated its own set of problems. Although all were once viewed as alternative, each particular area contains diverse and complex discursive and investigative traditions. "*Over the years, many nebulous epithets characterizing this research tradition have come into play (i.e., relativist, postpositivist, interpretivist, humanistic, naturalistic, postmodern), all more obfuscating than clarifying"* (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, p. 868). From this standpoint, disciplinary diversity is a problem because it fosters differing camps, each pursuing their own particularistic questions, whose knowledge claims are unlikely to coalesce. "*In this way, consumer research threatens to become a tower of Babel*" (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, p. 876). As a solution, Arnould and Thompson (2005) offered in their 2005's paper the term Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) as "*an appropriate and compelling academic brand*" (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, p. 868) that would focus on the core theoretical interests and questions that define this research tradition.

"***Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)*** is an interdisciplinary field that comprises macro, interpretive, and critical approaches to and perspectives of consumer behavior. Relative to its maturity and diffusion as a sphere of interest in the discipline of marketing, it has accounted for a disproportionate number of the prize-winning articles published in the flagship Journal of Consumer Research, and is increasingly represented in such other top venues as the Journal of Marketing, the Journal of Marketing Research, and the Journal of Retailing" (CCT website).

This approach basically considers consumption and its involved behavioural choices and practices as social and cultural phenomena - as opposed to psychological or purely economic phenomena. CCT, in the words of the introductory article, "*refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationship between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings*" (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, p. 868). CCT is not only referring to this family of perspectives, but also to an informal group of researchers who to some degree identifies with the cultural approach to the study of consumption and consumers. Thus, CCT also can be said to mean "*Consumer Culture Theor*ists" (Arnould and Thompson, 2007).

CCT must be viewed and understood as a pragmatic branding strategy (Arnould and Thompson, 2007). Arnould and Thompson (2007, p. 4) contend that they "*(thinking as marketers) hoped to create an accessible brand name for this research tradition*". And they succeeded into two years thanks to the introductory article (i.e. Arnould and Thompson, 2005) which is one of the most cited articles in the *Journal of Consumer Research* for the last decade. "*CCT is now well-established in two of the four designated A-level marketing publications (the Journal of Consumer Research and the Journal of Marketing), has a prominent role in the national conferences, and that many of its community members have chairs, sit on editorial boards, and otherwise hold positions of institutional authority*" (Arnould and Thompson, 2007, p. 13). Moreover, the CCT brand has become the institutional category used by the Association of Consumer Research for tracking its doctoral symposium and conference program. More broadly, "*CCT has quickly become a recognized institutional category that represents one of the three major pillars of consumer research, along information processing/BDT (behavioral decision theory) and econometric modelling*", (Arnould and Thompson, 2007, p. 4).

History of the SDL

During a decade, Stephen Vargo joined forces with Robert Lusch, head of marketing at the Eller College of Management in Arizona, then researching resource management. Together they built the framework of *service-dominant logic*, an underpinning *logic* to the way we see value, markets and marketing. The pair released their first paper, "Evolving to a New *Dominant Logic* for Marketing" in the *Journal of Marketing* in January 2004. While most papers present a finished theory, Vargo and Lusch broke with tradition to present a possibility, a work in progress. Even more radically, the paper was accompanied by seven commentaries by top scholars, something unprecedented in the journal's history. It immediately started to be a dialogue. Many academics saw *service-dominant logic* as explaining something they'd sensed but not articulated. While Vargo and Lusch's SDL has not been universally welcomed, the very fact that it has attracted so much debate indicates that it meets some kind of latent scholarly need.

"Service-Dominant (S-D) Logic is a mindset for a unified understanding of the purpose and nature of organizations, markets and society. The foundational proposition of S-D logic is that organizations, markets, and society are fundamentally concerned with exchange of service—the applications of competences (knowledge and skills) for the benefit of a party. That is, *service is exchanged for service*; all firms are service firms; all markets are centered on the exchange of service, and all economies and societies are service based. Consequently, marketing thought and practice should be grounded in service logic, principles and theories" (SDL website).

S-D
Logic

The central premise of SDL (Vargo and Lusch, 2004a) is that marketing inherited a model of exchange from economics, which had a dominant logic based on the exchange of goods, which usually manufactured output. The goods-dominant logic focused on tangible resources, embedded value and transactions. It is also argued by contenders of SDL (Vargo and Lusch, 2004b) that the sub-discipline of services marketing which emerged in the late 70's is built on the same goods and manufacturing-based model: it views services as a special kind of (intangible) product. Consequently, the use of the singular 'service' in SDL indicates a process of doing something for/with someone, whereas the plural 'services' implies units of output which are consistent with the goods-dominant logic (Lusch and Vargo, 2006b). SDL moves the orientation of marketing from a 'market to' philosophy where customers are promoted to, targeted, and captured, to a 'market with' philosophy where the customer and supply chain partners are collaborators in the entire marketing process (Lusch and Vargo, 2006a).

Vargo and Lusch's 2004 JM paper received Harold H. Maynard Award**,** which recognizes the author(s) of the article that made the greatest contribution to the advancement of the marketing theory and thought. The award winner is chosen by the *Journal of Marketing's* Editorial Review Board. It is the most cited article in the *Journal of Marketing*, 2004-2006; Fifth most cited 2000-2006. Vargo and Lusch's 2004) JSR paper is the most accessed article in *Journal of Service Research*, 2005-2006. Runner-up, best article of the year award, *Journal of Service Research***,** 2003-2004. Runner-up, best service marketing article of the year award for 2004, American Marketing Association, Service Marketing Special Interest Group.

The SDL logic turned decades of accepted marketing doctrine on its head in 2004. But, "*the question is why? Why SDL? Why now? (...). Clearly it's not the contents of SDL, because everyone agrees that its eight (sorry nine) foundational premises aren't particularly new. Clearly its' not V&L's crystalline communication of their idea, as attacks on the confusing terminology are legion (…). Well, some students of academic rhetoric will say that it's all down to the way the concept was presented to the scholarly community. Published as the lead article in the field's foremost journal and swaddled in commentaries by eminent marketing authorities – as well as an official endorsement – SDL was conveyed to the community as a controversial piece, as a must-read article, as a significant contribution (…). Ask yourself, would the same paper have attracted so much attention if it had been published, without commentary, at the back of an average issue of JM*" (Brown, 2007, pp. 295-296). Indeed, even if there is no mention of a branding strategy, Brown (2007) contends that SDL has been launched in a quite manipulative manner. Indeed it is rather unusual for JM to have its Chief Editor Rush Bolt inviting seven scholars to comment on a paper. This approach can be related to the launching of postmodern brands (Atkin, 2004; Brown, 2004) with the use of consumers as evangelists and corporate reservists. The existence of a logo which is existing on the SDL website, on the front cover of the 2006 book and on the slides of each presentation made by Lusch or/and Vargo tend to prove that SDL creators are not naïve about branding.

We can trace the postmodern approach to SDL branding strategy in the way Lusch and Vargo used other colleagues to co-create SDL as an ongoing strory telling (Vargo and Lusch, 2008a). Through 2004, *service-dominant logic* was the topic of panel discussions at marketing events in the United States and Europe. It came to New Zealand in November 2005, when David Ballantyne from the Otago University hosted the 1st Otago Forum. In 2006, Vargo and Lusch published *Service-dominant logic*: reactions, reflections and refinements. The book was co-written by around 50 academics responding to the ideas in the original paper, including those who disagreed with Vargo and Lusch. One of the foundational premises of the paper stated that the value of *service-dominant logic* is in its open, collaborative effort. S*ervice-dominant logic* has become part of the conversation in every research-active university marketing department. 2007 and 2008 see the flourishing of special issues on SDL in academic journals such as the forthcoming issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. In the meantime forums are flourishing too such as the Forum on Markets and Marketing: Extending Service-Dominant Logic, December 4-6, 2008, Sydney, Australia (a collaborative effort in conjunction with the *Australasian Marketing Journal, European Journal of Marketing, Journal of Macromarketing, Marketing Theory*) or the 2[nd] Otago Forum, December 9-12, 2008.

History of the IMP

The IMP goes much further back than SDLogic and CCT. Its roots can be traced back to the 1970s. In the IMP research project initiated in 1976, the role of the Uppsala group appears central. According to Mattsson and Johansson (2006), this leadership is rooted in the Swedish tradition in research which initiated in the 1960s.

"***The IMP Group*** was formed in the middle 1970s by researchers originating from the Universities of Uppsala, Bath, UMIST, ESC Lyon and the Ludwig Maximilians University (Munich). The IMP group developed a dynamic model of buyer-supplier relationships in industrial markets (the interaction model) and illustrated its applicability through comparative studies of buyer-supplier relationships within and across a number of European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, UK). The IMP Group is now embedded in a wider community of researchers concerned with industrial marketing and purchasing. Since 1984 the Group has organised an annual conference that has become a important meeting place for all researchers sharing an interest in inter-organisational relationships and networks" (IMP website).

The IMP project positioned itself as a BtoB substitute to the dominant mainstream marketing because *"there were no alternative"* (Hakansson, 1982, p. 29). Hakansson and the IMP Group (1982) explain that *"the project was initiated on the basis of one, somewhat unclear although promising idea held by some researchers with very small resources in terms of both money and time"* (Hakansson, 1982, p. 29). In 1984, the creation of the annual IMP Conference gave a new dimension to the IMP group since throughout the years the participation had been rising (Henneberg, Jiang and Naudé, 2007), with an ever-increasing Scandinavian and British contingent. Each conference gives rise to the publication of a selection of articles compiled in a book or a special edition of a review (most commonly *Industrial Marketing Management*). All this contributes to a considerable number of papers being written (involving several authors of different institutions), to the social network being extended and to the emergence of central actors other than founder members (Henneberg, Jiang and Naudé, 2007). Moreover, following the first collective works in 1982 (Hakansson, 1982), several books were published on a regular basis. At the beginning of the 2000s (in 2003), the Internet site of the IMP Group was created. The interest of the site is to formalise the exchanges which already exist between the community members. It is difficult to appraise the impact of the site on the extension and the community through the few figures available. Nearly 800 names appear on the IMP Group site. The article which has been the most downloaded has been request nearly 5000 time.

The IMP group of researchers has achieved a leading position in today's industrial marketing research (Cova and Salle, 2008). The Editor-in-Chief of one of the top three scientific journals dedicated to B2B marketing (*Industrial Marketing Management*) had no hesitation recently in writing that "*the IMP has been leading the development of a theory of marketing relationships*" (LaPlaca, 2006, p. 1). In addition the web page of the American Marketing Association web site dedicated to B2B marketing (b2b area) offers only a limited selection of links including the respective sites of the top three journals (*Industrial Marketing Management, Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing, Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*) but also the site of ISBM at Penn State and the site of the IMP group. Furthermore, in a recent issue of the *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, the IMP group is presented as the one which "*has been responsible for a considerable amount of research over the last decades in the area of business-to-business marketing*" (Morlacchi *et al.*, 2005, p. 3). The IMP school of thought has largely contributed to our understanding of how industrial markets and industrial marketing actually work (Hakansson and Waluszewski, 2005).

In terms of branding, it is important to note that the manner in which the IMP group has presented itself since its creation has remained very homogenous. The backbone of this presentation is the reminder of the origin of the group (founder members and initial theoretical background), the written scientific production, the call for papers of the annual conference and more recently the group's website. This official presentation is "controlled" by a limited number of participants: essentially founder members. The collective works group together a limited number of authors who are essentially founder members of the IMP group. The annual conferences are organised by founding institutions or by founding members or some of their close confederates who have changed institutions. The rituals in operation (discourse and official speeches) at annual conferences confirm this mode of governance.
However, I, M and P are the letters of which the brand is composed, but their signification is still hazy. At the beginning, the first works of the group in 1982 referred to '*IMP Project Group'* in which IMP designated both International Marketing and Purchasing and Industrial Marketing and Purchasing. This ambiguity has persisted over time without this point having been definitively treated. For Turnbull and Valla (1986), IMP signifies International Marketing and Purchasing. For Ford (1990), it is Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Group. In the introduction of this collective works, Ford explains that the sense is variable: *"The group of researchers became known as the IMP group (Industrial Marketing and Purchasing or International Marketing and Purchasing – depending on the audience)"*. In a recent article, Ford et Hakansson (2006) indicate that there was "*a total of 22 years ago, the first output from the International Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) Group*" (p. 248). In this same period, practically all the authors (Ford, Gadde, Hakansson and Snehota, 2006) present IMP as follows: "The IMP (Industrial Marketing and Purchasing) Group was formed in 1976 by researchers from five European countries". For the IMP Group Internet Site, the exact appellation is: Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Group.
But, above all, as far as branding is concerned, it is important to note the appearance of a logo in 1994. At the 10th IMP Conference organized by Pervez Ghauri and Wim Biemans, in 1994, a mixed logo appeared, integrating both an icotype (a map of the world) and a logotype (IMP Group). This logo, according to Pervez Ghauri (personal exchange with the authors of this paper) was chosen **"**by chance, with some idea from the book series I had just started with Elsevier (Book Series on International Business & Management)". From 1994 to 2002, this logo was identically reproduced during the IMP Conferences, but with variable colors depending on apparently random criteria: black (Bath, 2000; Oslo, 2001) green (Lyon, 1997), green and black (Karlsruhe, 1996) red (Manchester, 1995), blue (Turku, 1998), black and grey (Dublin, 1999). At the 18th IMP Conference in Dijon (France), the logo yet again evolved at the organiser's free will, in this case Robert Spencer. The icotype changed (a 3D map of the world) and the logotype changed (IMP Group is written in another font). The color is blue. According to Robert Spencer (personal exchange with the other authors of this paper)**,** "as I found the old logo ugly and not very professional, I took the initiative to look for more modern and dynamic logo, while still respecting the basic idea. I didn't ask anyone and no-one said anything to me". From 2002, this new logo has been used in the IMP Group's Internet site and for subsequent IMP conferences. However, on collective works of the group it is the logo before 2002 which is used.
In a survey recently conducted, Debbie Harrison (2004) stated: "*What is IMP? It is a tricky question, isn't it? I started thinking this over for myself, and got confused. So I then started to ask colleagues at BI. Interestingly enough, no one gave me the same (or a straight) answer. Hence I conducted a small and extremely unscientific survey, asking researchers in Norway, Sweden, the UK, Ireland and Switzerland "what are the first 3 things that come into your head when thinking about IMP?" And here are the results. Some of the answers are what you might expect – 'networks', 'interaction', 'case studies' – while there are others that you might not – 'the logo'* ". With IMP there are therefore well and truly branding effects but the processes does not seem to be the subject of a "design strategy" but rather of an "emergent strategy" and is focused on the logotype.

The three stories bring out three quite different branding profiles. On one extreme, an explicit branding, organized by two leaders of the CCT; on the other extreme, an implicit and diffused branding in the network of key actors for IMP; and between the two, a less explicit branding but clearly organized by two leaders for the SDL.

2.2. Detailing the branding strategies

In a modern approach to branding (Kotler et al., 2005, p. 549), "*a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of these, that identifies the maker of an offer or seller of the product or service*". "*Brand is a complex symbol that can convey several levels of meanings*" (Kotler et al., 2005, p. 559): attributes, benefits, values, culture and personality. "*If a company treats a brand only as a name, it misses the point of branding. The challenge of branding is to develop a deep set of meanings or associations to the brand*", (Kotler et al., 2005, p. 559). The most lasting and sustainable meanings of a brand are its core values and personality; they define the brand's essence. This is an important statement, but in order to detail the branding strategies of our three research groups we must use an updated framework to understand what is at play with their approaches: a postmodern framework in tune with a branded world.

In a postmodern approach to branding (Elliott and Percy, 2007, p. 43), "*brands can be used as symbolic resources for the construction and maintenance of identities*". Many brands have turned to become "symbolic brands" (Elliott and Percy, 2007), e.g. brands that can play a great role in our lives by providing narratives to help us construct and situate ourselves in time and space. This is typically what the Harry Potter brand is able to provide to consumers: narratives! "*The secrets of Harry Potter's success are fourfold: Narrative, Ambiguity, Mystery and Entertainment. Or NAME for short. If you want to make a name for your brand, NAME's the name of the game*" (Brown, 2005). It is arguable that the Harry Potter brand contains lessons that could be applicable to many other brands. Brown (2005) identifies four success factors for postmodern branding. The first of these is Narrative. Harry Potter epitomizes the storytelling propensity that characterizes contemporary society. The second success factor is Ambiguity. The Harry Potter stories are nothing if not ambivalent. They appeal to adult and child alike. The third factor concerns Mystery. The Harry Potter books are replete with intrigues, both at the overarching level and within each individual volume. The fourth and final factor concerns Entertainment. Whatever else it is, the Harry Potter phenomenon is enormously entertaining. The NAME model emphasizes the necessity of plurality of meanings of the brand through the providing of multiple narratives instead of the search for a coherent meaning through traditional vehicles such as the USP, Unique Selling Proposal. This model applied to our three research brands show that they all could be considered as symbolic brands (table 1).

BRAND **N.A.M.E.**	*CCT*	*SDL*	*IMP*
Narrative	- The Consumer Behaviour Odyssey - The past 20 years (1985-2005) of consumer research	- The 3 phases history of marketing: Goods – Services- Service	- The anti-kotlerian positioning of BtoB developed in any IMP book. - The Swedish roots of IMP
Ambiguity	- CCT is only qualitative research or also quantitative? - CCT is postmodern or not?	- Is it new or old?	- Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Group or International Marketing and Purchasing Group?
Mystery	- Is CCT a tentative to discard European interpretive research?	- What Vargo and Lusch did before 2004? - Why SDL is so successful in attracting major researchers?	-Is there some governance? -How to become a member?
Entertainment	- CCT Annual Conferences - CCT sessions inside other conferences (ACR)	- SDL sessions inside other conferences (AMA) - Forums (Otago) - The annual *Logic and Science of Service Conference*	- IMP Annual Conferences - IMP Asian Conferences

Table 1: A Postmodern Analysis of Research Brands

In looking at how CCT, SDL and IMP have been built as symbolic brands in the marketing community we can turn to the model of branding strategies for symbolic brands (Elliott and Percy, 2007): 1st stage - brand awareness and perceptions of quality; 2nd stage - differentiation and of personal relevance; 3rd stage - social esteem and emotional bond. But, we must differentiate between CCT and SDL on one side, and IMP on the other because, as demonstrated before, they do not present the same pattern of history and the same efforts in trying to design a brand strategy.

The starting point for all brands is developing brand awareness and the development of perceptions about the quality of the brand. In the CCT and SDL cases, this has been done by being "*published as the lead article in the field's foremost journal and swaddled in commentaries by eminent marketing authorities – as well as an official endorsement –*" (Brown, 2007, p. 295). In order to progress to the next brand stage, two vital elements are required, perceptions of differentiation and of personal relevance. Differentiation has been acquired by showing that the brand stands out from the competition as a 'real' paradigmatic shift: "*We (thinking as marketers) hoped to create an accessible brand name for this research tradition; one that rhetorically countered these misconceptions while circumventing some of the semantic dilemmas posed by other commonly employed classifications, such as interpretivist (all research is), qualitative (much of CCT is not), or postmodern (conceptual black hole)*", (Arnould and Thompson, 2007, p. 4). Relevance reflects perceptions that the brand has something that is personally relevant or appropriate to the person. Relevance has been constructed through the selection of references which calls up (or not) people and the progressive mobilization of allied through the development of special forums and special issues. Relevance has also been developed through a co-construction process where everyone can add her/his idea: "*we have always claimed that we do not "own" SD logic but rather that it is more of an open-source evolution that we tried to identify, punctuate, and advance in our initial article and then elaborate and refine through subsequent work, while encouraging other scholars to do the same*" (Vargo and Lusch, 2008a, p. 1). Finally, in order to reach the last stage of branding strategy two further perceptions have to be developed, social esteem and emotional bond. Social esteem implies either social integration or social differentiation. SDL, with its inherent idea of dominance, privileged social integration (see the latest writings of Gronroos or Gummesson who tried to show off their differences but, at the same time, who did their best to feel integrated) when CCT privileged social differentiation emphasizing its marginality: "*CCT researchers are a decided minority at upper tier research schools*" (Arnould and Thompson, 2007, p. 14). Emotional bond involves the development of a person-brand relationship based largely on personal experience with the brand. CCT has done that by the setting up a proper brandfest, i.e. its annual conference since 2006, and the development of local chapters of the CCT such as the French or the Italian ones. SDL has done it through its annual *Logic and Science of Service Conference* since 2005 and through the organization of many forums such as the famous one of Otago. At this latest stage, a community of both passionate and opportunistic people is created around the brand (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). This is what CCT and SDL have already achieved in a very quick manner – in the arch of 3 years!

Such brand strategies have conducted to the takeover of minor brands by CCT or SDL, as in the case of the tentative takeover of ICR (Interpretive Consumer Research) by the CCT: : "*Richard offered the parable of 'My Saab and me'. Richard explained that he loves his SAAB. When SAAB was bought by Ford*[1] *it made him feel uneasy, but he continued to love his SAAB. He felt like something of the original soul of SAAB had been lost but he couldn't put his finger on what was lost. He felt something similar when reading the Arnould and Thompson article on CCT. It made him feel uneasy but he can't say precisely why*" (Arnould, 2006, pp. 606-607). In this case, there is a feeling of disappropriation lived by some researchers in front of the new branding strategy.

Interestingly, these brand strategies also led to tentative co-branding agreements as proposed by Arnould (2006 and 2008) between CCT and SDL (see the last AMA Winter's Marketing Education Conference, Austin, 15-18 February 2008 Session on "Integrating Service-Dominant Logic and Consumer Culture Theory for Strategic Insight"). "*Certainly, it is noteworthy that the consumer research sub-discipline, after decades of loudly declaring independence from big bad marketing has recently returned to the fold with a grand theory of its own (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), a grand theory that its proponents are enthusiastically appending to Vargo and Lusch's Service-Dominant Logic*" (Faulkner, 2007, p. 70).

If we turn now to the construction of the IMP as a symbolic brand, we capture a totally different process. The group - which has been set up in 1976 – waited until 1982 to publish its first works: the book edited by Hakan Hakansson on the interaction approach. In this case, there was just a mention on the cover stating "*by IMP Project Group*". The absence of a deliberated branding strategy at that stage did not impede the evolution of brand awareness through network connections. But the choice of publishing a book - a compulsory choice for such a huge, collective and multiple research as was the first IMP Project - instead of several articles in high-ranked journals did not help the development of a perception of quality by the mainstream actors of our discipline (the AMA's members[2]). Although the content was of high quality and high relevance, the book

[1] In fact, SAAB was purchased by GM and not Ford !

[2] Articles mainly appeared in national journals .

format did not fit with the metrics growingly in use in the community. And this choice has been repeated over the years by the leading members of the IMP Group (from Turnbull and Valla, 1986, to Ford et al., 2006). The publication of a book seemed to be the ultimate aim of any IMP researchers, with articles, communications and working papers intended as intermediary steps in the building of knowledge. This publishing strategy is reinforced by the latest claim of Pfeffer (2007, p. 1338) who writes that "in the organization sciences, many of the major theoretical contributions have appeared in books or less-prestigious journals". Thus, the second stage presents the same non-fulfilment of the symbolic process model: differentiation has been achieved by emphasizing and repeating alternative approaches (interaction and network) to the study of industrial markets while personal relevance has been limited by the scientific choice made by the group in terms of publication. Finally, the third stage shows that IMP performed very well on the emotional bonding criterion and not so well on the social esteem one. At the end, a community of passionate people has been created but in a very progressive manner and with some shortcomings.
In stating that, we do not intend to criticize the initial choice of IMP founders (the history cannot be rewritten and criticizing depends on the criterion selected to do that!) nor minimizing the IMP contribution to the marketing thought. We just want to note that IMP, if thought as a brand, has not been constructed like CCT and SDL. One possible explanation could be that this brand stems from Europe and not from the US with all the cultural consequences of this state of fact. But, we prefer to hypothesize that the explanation must be found in changing times: the pressure of today research context has nothing to do with what it was 30 years ago when IMP project started. The competition between business schools and universities on the worldwide market had lead to an increasing pressure to publish mainly in high ranked journals. So, being part of a highly visible and branded scientific community appears to be important both for individual and organizations.

Thirty years ago, for many researchers the famous rule "publish or perish" was not exactly the same. Then, it has been necessary to publish in ranked journals. Finally, today it is necessary to publish in a high-ranked journal. If we follow the 'best practices' of CCT and SDL, we would add that today it is also necessary to be part of a highly visible and branded scientific community.

3 Research on explanations and branding consequences

Numerous reasons can be put forward to understand bringing a brand into play in our research field. We suggest focusing on two explanations: first, competition dynamics in the business of teaching and management research on a worldwide level, secondly, the possibilities of innovation within the marketing discipline. We then suggest, leading on from these two explanations, anticipating the potential consequences of branding on the individual behaviour of researchers.

3.1 Explanations for the rise in branding : the context change in our industry

The existence of increasing competition between the teaching and research institutions in the world of management is something that we can either agree with or deplore. The behaviour of the group of actors concerned influences how this industry operates: Universities and Business Schools, professors, students, the authorities, companies, accreditation organizations. This competition between institutions results not only in the search for the best professors and students but also for financing: *"Attracting the best professors and students means offering constantly increasing salaries and grants. Add to this construction and equipment policies that are ever more ambitious and the result is fund-raising companies that give the impression of a military campaign"* (Picon, p.88).). We can give the following figures: the endowment represents 35billions $ at Harvard, 22 billions $ at Yale and 10 billions $ at the MIT.
As a result, one of the key points to mobilize the best resources is the reputation of the institution. This reputation will be according to the quality evaluated using a group of criteria (teaching, research….) and how it is perceived by all parties concerned. The level of quality results from the official and unofficial assessments (see part 1.2) that consist of real standards and norms that the institutions exploit. The latter communicate on these assessments which enable the various parties concerned to standardise and prioritize them: for example, students abroad, professors to recruit, fund raising…..
One of the consequences that we have noticed during discussions with a number of colleagues is a greater stranglehold (or taking back under their wing) of the faculties by the institutions. By considering the human capital of the faculty as a rare resource, the institutions are seeking further to control the professors by playing both on a control over their autonomy and over increasingly precise objectives. Thus, Picon (2007, p. 87) points out: « *Contrary to what is current practice in Europe, it is very difficult for example in the United States to manage a thesis under joint-supervision as the brand logic opposes the sharing of PhD students by several establishments"*. We also notice within these institutions a growth in the establishment of individual

objectives in terms of publishing articles in high ranked journals: it is the logic of 'publish or perish' that is at work.

We can therefore formulate the following hypothesis. The professors would consider this framework (rankings, standards, objectives) as a restriction on their autonomy imposed by institutions whose legitimacy to do so could be challenged. The professors would seek to change the nature of the balance of power against these institutions.

They would adopt behaviour conveying membership of a given scientific community that would be considered as an "opposition force" to the institutions. With this approach the brand of the scientific communities would play an important role.

- The scientific community constitutes a legitimate entity (through communication, articles, works, peer evaluation…) that should be promoted, supported and developed in various ways so as to regain autonomy. The brand is then mobilized as a resource both to legitimize and preserve autonomy against the top-down processes of the institutions.
- The membership of a « branded » scientific community gives professors greater visibility and employability and therefore a degree of freedom in the competitive market of the institutions.
- At the same time, joining a « branded » community enables the professor to have access to an increase in his resources through the reputation of the research teams with whom he will be working to produce and publish his works.
- Equipped with resources mobilized within the "branded" scientific community the professor would then be able to use the fame and position of this community to find an "intelligent" compromise with his institution or even to benefit from it (resources to develop research work : budgets, HR, etc.).

Thus, research of autonomy by professors against all this "assessment technology" set up by the institutions, (who are themselves dependant on this framework), would lead the professors into mobilizing the community brand under two logics. First it would be a question of recovering (or creating) autonomy faced with the institutions. Secondly, it would be about taking advantage of belonging to a community known for exploiting the common points of interest between the professor and the institutions.

3.2 Branding explanations : the nature of the work

We can also envisage another possible explanation linked to the characteristics of the marketing discipline. According to Hackley (2003, p. 1341): "*Reinvention is part of marketing's ideological/rhetorical armoury. The marketing concept has to be 'rediscovered' periodically while its attendant tools, frameworks and definitions need to be refreshed for jaded readers*". As a result, what is presented in our discipline as breaking innovations, in the form of paradigm shifts (indeed, this word has been used intensely over the last few years) would very often be "re-inventions". Consequently, the brand would be used in a very banal way, as is seen in BtoC, to accentuate the impression of novelty through a suitable rhetoric. In this way, the marketing discipline would be using the traditional methods that it is spreading. If this were the case, the aim of the same author would find its real direction: "*Marketing authors suffer the anxiety of the influence of previous writers in that they must find a space for their contribution among the countless 'seminal' offerings of marketing 's pantheon of gurus. Marketing management texts maintain a resoundingly progressivist ethos by assimilating ever more developments within the mainstream. Every challenge to the 'core concepts' that conceivably can be re-interpreted as a resounding endorsement of marketing's fundamental rightness. Marketing's tendency to recycle its own myths and to canonize more and more defunct professor into guru-ism makes it increasingly difficult for tyro-gurus to create a space for a 'new' contribution. So perhaps it is understandable that popular marketing management texts reflect a literary craft of platitudinous re-invention, re-cycling and re-animation. Nonetheless, if this is so, it is literary craft that denies it own representational character and therefore constitutes a prime for critical attention*" (Hackley, 2003, p. 1346).

Thus, as there's nothing new under the sun in marketing scientific production, let's brand, there'll always be something left! Therefore, going back to Aaker (2007, p. 23): "*Branding has the potential to own an innovation over time, to add credibility and legitimacy to the innovation, to enhance its visibility, and to make communication more feasible and effective*".

3.3. Consequences for the future of marketing research

These explanations enable us to understand the growing importance of brands in research in the marketing field. However, beyond these explanations, there is the need for a proper reflection in terms of the life of our scientific community. During the three last years we had the strange impression all along the scientific conferences we took part to that the core of our debates has moved from discussing scientific issues to argue brand community belonging/membership or not. The central questions are now: Do I belong or not to the CCT or the SDL community? Are my articles and ideas cited as contributing to this brand community or not? If not, why? If yes, do I agree to be co-opted by one of these brand communities (*"Speaking personally, I'm happy to admit that none of my ideas, such as they are, predated the appearance of SDL"*, Brown, 2007, p. 293)? How can I manage to take part to the on going co-construction of this brand community ("*One unfortunate consequence of our pragmatic branding strategy is a rash of papers… that position their respective studies as making a contribution to the CCT*", Arnould and Thompson, 2007, p. 6)? Research brands are thus becoming attractors for young professors who are looking to make a career. The attraction and the need to belong are all the stronger since there are a lot of big names and the community is wide. Beyond the scientific content, what is important for the young professor is to be counted as a member of the community, a branded one: a brand community (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). If we go back to the previous explanation (3.1), being a member of a branded research community makes it easier to have access to reputation resources

All in all, what it means for research to become branded? It means that researchers would increasingly act like "tribal members" of a brand community and that their behaviours would be more driven by personal feelings rather than by scientific ambitions! These feelings balance between passion and interest. This not totally new: "*Reminiscing about an idyllic time when academics published largely to improve the lot of mankind is a deluding as it is pleasant? There never was such a golden age. Academic publishing has always been ridden with self interest, and academics have always played games to promote themselves*", (Macdonald et Kam, 2007, p. 650). What will be new is the enactment of extreme communal behaviour in the field of research in marketing.

Indeed, we expect that some of the branded research communities could show extreme tribal behaviours (O'Guinn and Muniz, 2005) such as:

- *Oppositional brand loyalty.* The very defining nature of the brand community being its opposition to another brand and its community, the future of research could look just as a religious battlefield where believers of one research brand would discard everything produced by the believers of the opposite research brand.
- *Marketplace legitimacy*. There is a debate around who is a legitimate member of the brand community. That is, who is a true believer, i.e. someone who really sticks to the paradigm connected with the brand, and who is just a free rider trying to gain advantage of the brand umbrella? The belonging of the researcher to a research brand community could be less defined by explicit rules and more and more by implicit rules such as participation to rituals, care for the community, etc.
- *Brand antagonism.* The antagonists to a brand community, such as the Hummer (the huge US SUV) opponents (Luedicke and Giesler, 2007), could constitute a true brand community. More and more research could see the emergence of brand antagonistic movements such as CCT-busters or SDL-busters. In this case, scientific controversies incur the risk to become more and more emotional and less and less rational as the defence of the brand provokes reactions which are close to the one of soccer club fanatics (O'Guinn and Muniz, 2005).

Conclusion: opening the debate

If we trust Harrison's survey (2004), IMP experiences now – without any branding strategic decision - the same postmodern condition we highlighted in the CCT and SDL cases. Do other scientific communities such as the Nordic School of Services Management experience the same condition or not? What are the consequences for the life of these scientific communities? Are these branding strategies compulsory today to compete in 'A' journals? What kind of community governance is it necessary to develop in order to cope with the new challenges brought by these branding strategies? These are some of the questions we would like to debate with discussants from the IMP tradition and members of the young generation. As a matter of facts, the relationship with branding differs according to the generations:

- On the one hand, the oldest members are in a model where the rankings and brand are not essential for them. Putting it plainly, they have the resources and the power to manage their autonomy.
- On the other hand, the youngest members do not have access to the IMP group governance. They take the IMP group for what it is. However, they come under the performance evaluation framework in

their own institutions that request justification, in other words articles and rankings. Given the context they are developing in, the IMP brand, like the other community brands, is a way for them to create their resources. The latter enable them to increase their employability in the market and their autonomy in terms of their member institutions. Thus we can see “nomadic” opportunist behaviour developing that will pick away at where it’s profitable (at the IMP as well as in other communities) given the evaluation methods in use in their institutions.

Another matter of discussion is to be found in the recent advances of the SDL which is doing a kind of move close to the converging strategy adopted by CCT with ICR – on the model developed by GM with Saab (Arnould, 2006). In the most recent paper published in the leading BtoB marketing journal (*Industrial Marketing Management),* Vargo and Lusch (2008b) are initiating a very worrying rapprochement with the IMP background: “Particularly noteworthy in this regard is the *actor resource, activity* (ARA) modem (e.g., Hakansson & Snehota, 1995), which is relatively effortlessly isomorphic with the *integrator/resource/service* model of S-D logic” (Vargo and Lusch, 2008b, p. 257). The IMP community is directly put into question by this move. We foresight three possible answers for our community. First, no change! Second, “accepting” in a reactive manner the isomorphic logic and contributing to the debate and to SDL (when the proactive manner would have been to do the first step as done by the CCT with SDL). Third, “refuting” the isomorphic logic and entering in a controversy on the divergences of the two backgrounds. In terms of branding, in the first scenario, IMP will remain a kind of regional brand. In the second scenario, IMP will slowly disappear under the SDL umbrella brand with a progressive disbanding of our community and the escape of young researchers. In the third scenario, IMP will set up a real branding strategy.

If we select the third scenario, IMP brand must compete at the same level of the other brands, that is in A journals! Knowing the oldest members preferred strategy (books!), we wonder if it is possible to pursue this scenario without changing the governance of the group. To develop such a branding strategy would require vision, desire, interest, efforts and long lasting investments. This opens on several questions. Is the IMP governance able to change? Are youngest members interested in participating to the IMP governance? Does the IMP need to hire a brand manager?

References

Aaker, D. (2007), “Innovation: Brand It or Lose It”, **California Management Review**, Vol. 50, N°1, pp. 8-24.

Arnould, E.J. (2006), “Consumer Culture Theory: Retrospect and Prospect”, in K.M. Ekström, and H. Brenbeck (Eds.), **European Advances in Consumer Research**, Volume 7. Duluth, ACR, pp. 605-607.

Arnould, E.J. (2006), “Service-Dominant Logic and Consumer Culture Theory: Natural Allies in an Emerging Paradigm”, **Marketing Theory**, Vol. 6, N°3, pp. 317-334.

Arnould E. J. and Thompson C. J. (2005), “Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research”, **Journal of Consumer Research**, Vol. 31 (March), 868-882.

Arnould E. J. and Thompson C. J. (2007), “Consumer Culture Theory (and We Really Mean Theoretics): Dilemmas and Opportunities Posed by an Academic Branding Strategy”, in R. W. Belk and J. F. Sherry, Jr. (Eds.), **Consumer Culture Theory**, UK, Elsevier, pp. 3-22.

Atkin, D. (2004), **The Culting of Brands: When Customers Become True Believers**, New York, Portfolio.

Badot, O. and Cova, B. (2008), “The Myopia of New Marketing Panaceas: The Case for Rebuilding our Discipline”, **Journal of Marketing Management**, Vol. 24, N°1/2, pp. 205-219.

Brown, S. (1993), “Postmodern Marketing: Principles, Practice and Panaceas”, **Irish Marketing Review**, Vol. 6, N°1, pp. 91-99.

Brown, S. (2004), “O Customer, Where Art Thou?”, **Business Horizons**, Vol. 47, N°4, pp. 61-70.

Brown, S. (2005), **Wizard! Harry Potter's Brand Magic**, London, Cyan.

Brown, S. (2007), “Are We Nearly There Yet? On the Retro-Dominant Logic of Marketing”, **Marketing Theory,** Vol. 7, N°3, pp. 291-300.

Cova, B. (1996), “The Postmodern Explained to Managers: Implications for Marketing”, **Business Horizons**, Vol. 39, N° 6, pp. 15-27

Cova, B. and Salle, R. (2008), “The Industrial/Consumer Marketing Dichotomy Revisited: A Case for Outdated Justification?”, **Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing**, Vol. 23, N°1, pp. 3-11.

Elliott, R. and Percy, L. (2007), **Strategic Brand Management**, Oxford, O.U.P.

Faulkner, P. (2007), “The closing of the marketing frontier”, **Journal of Strategic Marketing**, Vol. 15, pp. 65-75.

Firat, A. F. and Dholakia, N. (1998), **Consuming people: from political economy to theaters of consumption**, London, Routledge.

Firat, A.F. and Shultz, C.J.II (1997), “From Segmentation to Fragmentation: Markets and Marketing Strategy in the Postmodern Era”, **European Journal of Marketing**, Vol. 31, N°3/4, pp. 183-207.

Firat, A. F. and Venkatesh, A. (1995), “Liberatory postmodernism and the reenchantment of consumption”, **Journal of Consumer Research** Vol. 22, N°3, pp. 239-267.

Ford, D., ed. (1990), **Understanding Business Markets: Interaction, Relationships, Networks**, London, Academic Press.

Ford, D., Gadde, L.E., Hakansson, H. and Snehota, I. (2006), **The Business Marketing Course,** Chichester, John Wiley & Sons.

Ford, D. and Hakansson, H. (2006), “IMP-some things achieved: much more to do”, **European Journal of Marketing,** Vol. 40, N° 3/4, pp. 248-258.

Hackley, C. (2003), “We Are All Customers Now…Rhetorical Strategy and Ideological, Control in Marketing Management Texts”, **Journal of Management Studies**, Vol. 40, N°50, pp.1325-1352

Hakansson, H., ed. (1982), **Marketing and Purchasing of Industrial Goods: an Interaction Approach**, Chichester, John Wiley & Sons.

Hakansson, H. and Waluszewski, A. (2005), “Developing a New Understanding of Markets: Reinterpreting the 4Ps”, **Journal Business & Industrial Marketing**, Vol. 20, N°3, pp. 110-117.

Harrison, D. (2004), “IMP as Fashion: Past, Present and Future”, Unpublished paper, available at www.impgroup.org.

Henneberg, S.C., Jiang, Z. and Naudé, P. (2007), “The network researchers’ network. A social network analysis of the IMP Group 1984-2006”, 23th IMP Conference, September, Manchester (UK).

Holt, D. B. (2002), “Why do brands cause trouble? A dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding”, **Journal of Consumer Research**, Vol. 29, N°1, pp.70-90.

Klein, N. (2000), **No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies**, New York, Knopf.

Kotler, P. and Keller, K. (2006), **Marketing Management, 12th edition**, Upper Saddle River, Pearson.

Kotler, P., Wong, V., Saunders, J. and Armstrong, G. (2005), **Principles of Marketing, 4th European Edition,** Harlow, Prentice Hall.

LaPlaca, P. (2006), “Letter from the editor”, **Industrial Marketing Management**, Vol. 35, N°1, pp. 1-3.

Latour, B. (1987), **Science in Action.How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society,** Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press

Luedicke, M.K. and Giesler, M. (2007), “Brand Communities and their Social Antagonists: Insights from the Hummer Case”, in Cova, B., Kozinets, R.V. and Shankar, A. (Eds.), **Consumer Tribes**, Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 275-295.

Lusch, R.F.and Vargo, S.L., Eds. (2006a), **The Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate, and Directions,** Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe.

Lusch, R.F. & Vargo, S.L. (2006b), “Service-Dominant Logic: Reactions, Reflections and Refinements”, **Marketing Theory**, Vol. 6, N°3, pp. 281-288.

Macdonald, S. and Kam, J. (2007), “Ring a Ring o’ Roses: Quality Journals and Gamesmanship in Management Studies”, **Journal of Management Studies**, Vol. 44, N°4, pp. 640-655.

Mattsson, L.G. and Johanson, J. (2006), “Discovering market networks”, **European Journal of Marketing**, Vol. 40, N°3/4, pp. 259-274.

Morlacchi, P., Wilkinson, I.F. and Young, L.C. (2005), “Social Networks of Researchers in B2B Marketing: A Case Study of the IMP Group 1984-1999”, **Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing**, Vol. 12, N°1, pp. 3-34.

Muniz, A. M. Jr. and O’Guinn, T.C. (2001), “Brand Community”, **Journal of Consumer Research**, Vol. 27, March, pp. 412-432.

Muniz, A. M. Jr. and Schau, H.P. (2005), “Religiosity in the Abandoned Apple Newton Brand Community”, **Journal of Consumer Research**, March, Volume 31, March, pp. 737-747.

O’Guinn, T.C. and Muniz, A. M. Jr. (2005), “Communal Consumption and the Brand”, in Ratneshwar, S. and Mick, D.G. (Eds.), **Inside Consumption: Frontiers of Research on Consumer Motives**, London, Routledge, pp. 252-272.

Pfeffer, J. (2007), “A Modest Proposal: How We might Change the Process and Product of Managerial Research”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 50, N°6, pp. 1334-1345.

Picon, A. (2008), « Pour un enseignement supérieur durable », **Le Débat**, N°148, pp. 86-89.

Schmitt, B.H. (1999), **Experiential Marketing: How to Get Customers to SENSE, FEEL, THINK, ACT and RELATE to Your Company and Brands**, New York, The Free Press.

Solomon, M.R. (2003), **Conquering Consumerspace, Marketing Strategies for a Branded World**, Amacom, New York.

Turnbull, P.W. and Valla, J.P. (1986), **Strategies for International Industrial Marketing**, London, Croom Helm.

Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2004), “Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing”, **Journal of Marketing**, Vol. 68, N°1, pp. 1-18.

Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2006), “Service-Dominant Logic: What It Is, What It Is Not, What It Might Be”, in Lusch, R.F. and Vargo, S.L. (Eds.), **The Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate, and Directions,** Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, pp. 43-56.

Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2008a), “Service-Dominant Logic: Continuing the Evolution”, **Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science**, Vol. 36, pp. 1-10.

Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2008b), “From Goods to Service(s): Divergences and Convergences of Logics”, **Industrial Marketing Management**, Vol. 37, pp. 254-259.

Wipperfürth, A. (2005), **Brand Hijack: Marketing without Marketing**, New York, Portfolio.