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Surviving and Managing the Review Process and the role of Conceptual Writing

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The 2004 *journal of marketing* journey

**SO YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD
A TOUGH REVIEW PROESS**



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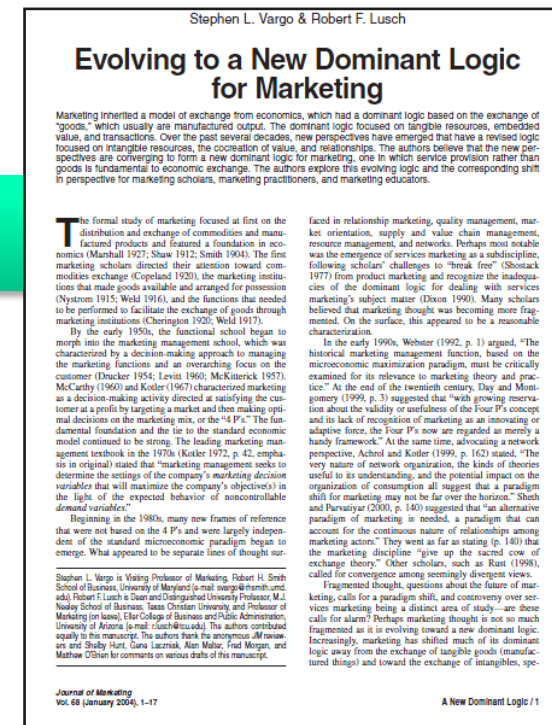
S-D Logic: The Story

The Story and Back Story:

- Vargo, Stephen L. and Robert F. Lusch, (2004) "Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing," ***Journal of Marketing***.
- Submitted: 1999
- Published: 2004

The Back-Back Story (1994-99):

- The dilemmas
 - The idea of a "new service economy."
 - The idea of two marketing approaches.
 - Goods and "services"
- The approach:
 - Read "everything" in the "service(s)" literature
 - Across time
 - Across disciplines
- The insight: The goods/service(s) model is inverted
 - Goods are a the special case; service is the general case



The SD-Logic Publication Process

Timeline

- Initial Draft: 1994/5
- Refinement: 1996-1999
- Initial Submission: 1999
- Invited, "Major, Risky Revisions"
 - 2000
 - 2001
 - 2002
 - 2003
- Paper Accepted: 2003
 - Commentaries invited
- Published: January 2004

Summary

- Four major, risky revisions
- Two editors
- Six reviewers
- One strong reviewer advocated from beginning
 - One against
 - One neutral
- Sixth reviewer suggested publishing, with commentaries



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“Is It All About Services: A Paradigm Inversion” (1999)

“While your manuscript has interesting ideas, the current positioning of the paper leaves one feeling that there is **not much new in the paper.**”

- JM Editor David Stewart (November 1999)

“The author(s) are to be applauded for taking on such an extremely ambitious essay. To propose a true Khunian paradigm shift in marketing and to succeed is to **try to do something that no theoretical paper has achieved** that I am aware of—although historians of science will ultimately be the judges of such matters.”

- JM Reviewer (November 1999)

“Every once in a while a paper comes along that is **truly exciting--that has the ability to change the way people think.** This is one of those papers. If this paper is published in JM, then it has the **opportunity to be a classic in our field. I wish that I had written it.**”

- JM Reviewer (November 1999)



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"Is It All About Services: A Paradigm Inversion" (2000)

- "The primary concern of the reviewers remains focused on the **incremental contribution** of the paper."
 - "...it is probably **too strong** to conclude that all **goods represent services in disguise**."
 - "...identify the **boundary conditions** of your premises."
- Editor David Stewart



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"Is It All About Service" (2001)

- **Revision** of this manuscript has taken...**ten months** to complete
- trying to revise **based on the individual comments of the reviewers** and finally decided to **start anew**.
- [Based on the] **suggestion of reviewer #5**... this manuscript is almost a total rewrite and is now **organized around eight key propositions**, from which we derive thirteen managerial and societal implications.

Stephen L. Vargo & Robert F. Lusch

Resubmission Letter to Editor Stewart

“Transition & Convergence: From an Output to a Process Centered View of Marketing” (2002)



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- “All three reviewers **praise you for undertaking the challenging task of writing a paper that synthesizes a diverse marketing literature (over a substantial period of time)—and attempts to crystallize the debate about the meaning and direction of marketing.**”
- “As you may recall, I invited a **new reviewer (Reviewer 6)**...He/she found the paper “**interesting and provocative**” and rightly observes that it is **unlikely (and perhaps undesirable) for the reviewers to converge in their opinions.**”
- “I ask you to create a **shorter and more focused paper** (that retains your key arguments). Then, if your paper is accepted for publication, it **can provide the basis for invited commentaries by distinguished scholars.**”

- Editor, Ruth Bolton



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Invited Commentaries: Day, Deighton, Narayadas, Gummeson, Hunt, Prahalad, Rust, Shugan

Vargo & Lusch (2004) observe that an evolution is underway toward a new dominant logic for marketing. The new dominant logic has **important implications for marketing theory, practice, and pedagogy, as well as for general management and public policy.** ... The ideas expressed in the article and the commentaries will undoubtedly **provoke a variety of reactions** from readers of the *Journal of Marketing*.

- Ruth Bolton, Editor, *Journal of Marketing*
(2004)



S-D logic: Vectors of Diffusion

Diffusion within marketing

- Branding
- Customer engagement
- Customer perceived value
- Consumer Culture Theory
- International marketing
- Logistics and supply chain
- Marketing communications
- Marketing strategy
- Social marketing
- Value propositions
- Business models
- Sales and sales management
- Etc.

Transdisciplinary diffusion

- Arts & philosophy
- Design thinking/service design
- Ecosystem services
- Education
- Engineering
- Healthcare
- Information systems/CIS
- Innovation studies
- Human resources
- Public administration
- Forestry
- Service Science
- Hospitality/Tourism
- Etc.



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Dealing with Reviewer Comments

- **Always revise** if invited
 - An invitation **increases odds from 10-20% to 60-70%**
- **Don't start** revision **immediately** – let comments settle
 - But don't delay too long – will not get easier
- **Don't be defensive**
 - Most reviewers are trying to be helpful
- **Always respond** to all major reviewer **suggestions**
 - Positively if possible
 - Avoid "space does not permit"
 - Identify page & paragraph for changes
- Pay **particular attention to editor's comment**, especially if conflicts
- **Reserve taking a stand** for **essential** theoretical differences



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Some Keys to successful Academic Contributions

ITS ALL ABOUT THE THEORY



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Crises and Relevance in Marketing

Observation: too little applicable research

Assumption: too much theory

Problem: not enough (positive/basic) theory

- "Unfortunately, over the past few decades, the discipline's deep-seated tradition of publishing high-quality conceptual articles has been broken" (Yadav 2014; see also MacInnis 2011, Yada, 2010)

A Quick look at the Scientific Process



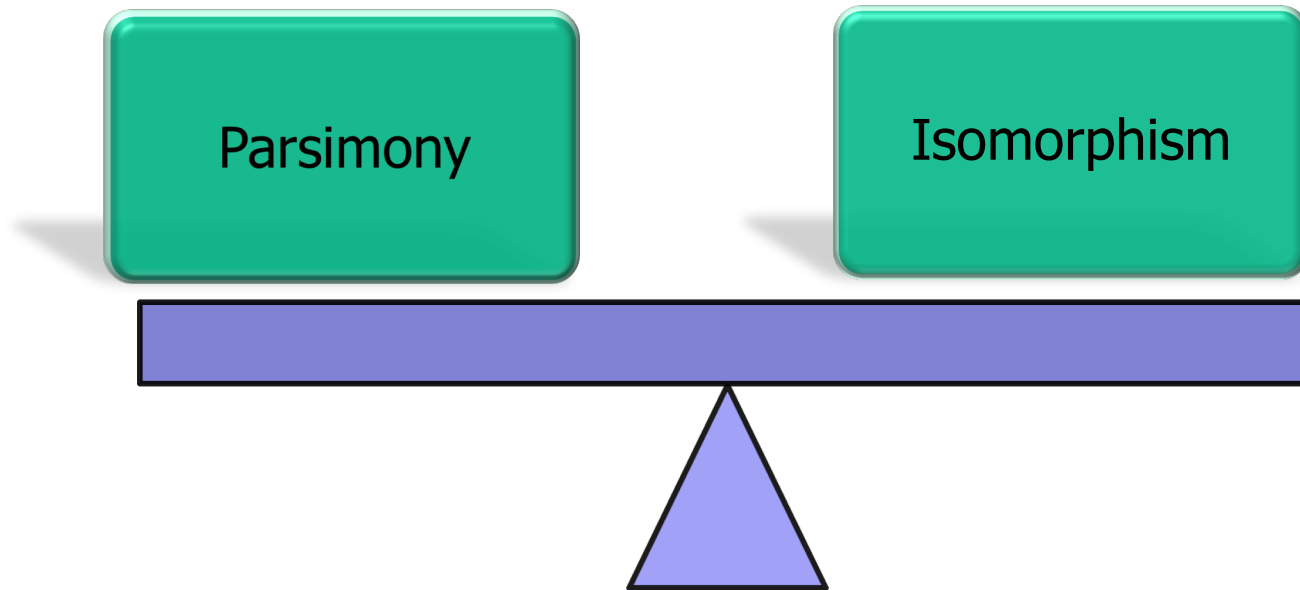
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- **Purpose:** making the complex simple
- **Process:** model building
- **Problems:**
 - Models are purpose specific, restricted
 - Models eventually conflict
- **Progress** = resolution of conflict
 - “Combinatorial evolution” (Arthur 2011)

Science: Striving to Explain the Complex with a Simple Structure



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'The grand aim of all science is to cover the greatest number of empirical facts by logical deduction from the smallest number of hypotheses or axioms'.

Einstein



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Importance of Conceptual/Theoretical Articles

Conceptual thinking: process of **understanding a problem** abstractly by **identifying patterns** or **connections** and **key underlying properties**.

Consistently the “**most highly cited** and most **enduringly valuable** articles”

- (MacInnis, 2016, see also Yadav, 2010, MacInnis 2011)

Successful because they:

- Bring new, “**big-idea**” or “**provocative perspective**”
- Raise and address **foundational questions**
- Provide **conceptual clarity, coherent argument**
 - (MacInnis 2016)



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Topic Discovery

- Don't look for research topic
 - Pay attention to own interests, questions, tensions
- Find the intersections
 - Content
 - context
- Embrace the conflicts
 - e.g., Paradoxes
 - e.g., Intractable questions
 - tension
- Resolve



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Examples: Intersectional Topics

- Toward a Theory of Market Culture: An Investigation of Value Co-creation and the (Re)contextualization of a Global Market Culture
 - Intersections: S-D logic, CCT, practice theory
 - Context: Surfing
- Love in Translation: The Co-creation of Valentine's Day as a Market-mediating Ritual
 - Intersections: S-D logic, Institutional theory, practice theory
 - Context: Valentines Day in Indonesia
- Market Formation and Re-formation in Service Ecosystems: An Institutional Perspective on Incremental and Discontinuous Innovation
 - Intersections: S-D logic, Innovation theory, institutional theory
 - Context: Digital video recorder (DVR) technology/market



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Theoretical vs. Empirical

- All good articles are theoretical
 - Theory is always the purpose
 - The reason we do science
 - Provides the takeaway
 - Empirical results play supportive – verification and exploratory role
- But all good theoretical articles are also “empirical”
 - In conceptual papers, the data are in the literature and logic



Conceptual Data: An Example

- FP3: "Goods Are Distribution Mechanisms for Service Provision"
 - tangible products can be viewed as **embodied knowledge or activities** (Normann and Ramirez 1993)...
 - Prahalad and Hamel (1990, p. 85) refer to **products** (goods) as "the **physical embodiments of one or more competencies**." ...
 - Kotler (1977, p. 8) notes that the "**importance of physical products** lies not so much in owning them as in obtaining the **services they render**." ...
 - Gummesson (1995, p. 251) argues that "**activities render services, things render services**." ...
 - Hollander (1979, p. 43) suggests that "**services may be replaced by products**" ...
 - ...



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The Problem of Problematization

- **Problematization**: The identification of tensions and issues worthy of further exploration

Most used

-usually empirical
-often marginal

- **Gap spotting**: identification of missing elements or variables that could be used to advance understanding

- "tends to under-problematize" (Alvesson and Sandberg 2011)
- Most used

Most needed

Usually conceptual
- often significant

- **Assumption-challenging**: identification of tensions among theoretical perspectives based on contradictory assumptions

- Most needed

(partially adapted from Alvesson and Sandberg 2001; 2013)



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Problematization through Paradox

- **Paradox**: two apparently **contradictory elements** or **tensions** appear to be **true**

(O'Driscoll 2008)

- **Paradoxical tensions** are perceptual – **subjective rather than objective** (Lewis 2000)

- **Epistemological** rather than ontological

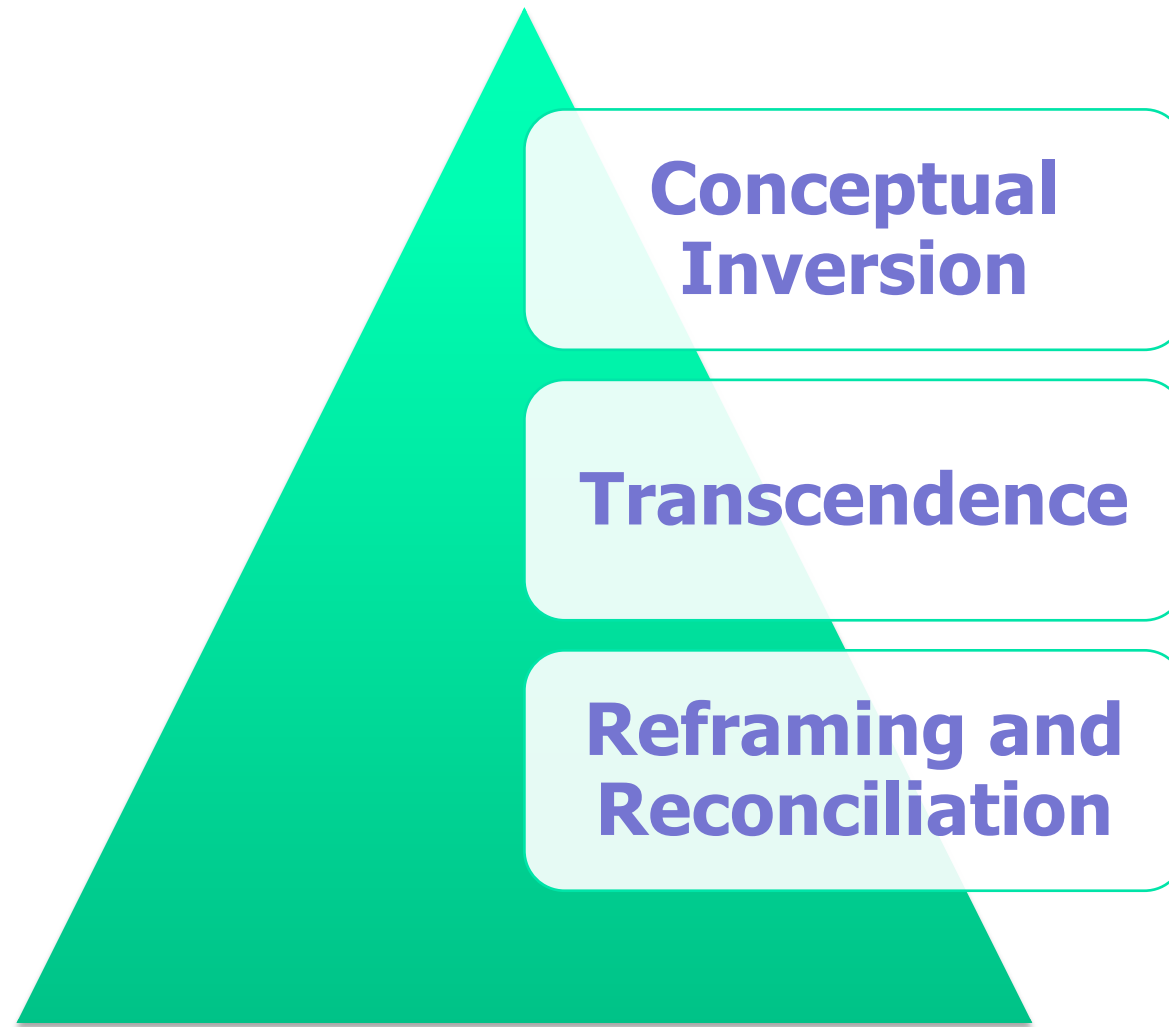
- **Approaches** to resolution (Lewis 2000)

- Acceptance
 - Conflict
 - **Transcendence**



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Resolving Tensions & Paradoxes



See Vargo and Lusch 2017



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The General and Special Case of Marketing: S-D Logic Inversions

General Case

- Managerial
- Predictive
- Manufacturing
- Invention
- Efficiency
- Rationality
- Competition

Special Case

- Entrepreneurial
- Effectual
- Market-ing
- Innovation
- Effectiveness
- Heuristics
- Collaboration

"It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so."

-Mark Twain-



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Transcendence

- “Lying **beyond** the ordinary **range of perception**.” (Free Dictionary)
 - Practically: Creating **higher-order constructs** to resolve tensions/paradoxes from existing constructs
 - Sometimes approached through inversion
- Examples
 - Service/goods => **service**
 - Agency/structure => **structuration**
 - Producers/consumers => **generic actor:**
 - RI, service-providing **actors**



Reframing, and Reconciling from an S-D Logic Perspective

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- Economic (and social) Actors
 - From Bs and Cs to **generic A(ctor)s**
- Markets
 - From a priori to **imagined, created, institutionalized, and performed**
- Market-ing
 - From functional area to **essential function of the firm (actor)**
 - **From marketing mix to value co-creation**
- Value
 - From a property of output to a **co-created outcome**
- Strategy
 - From prediction and control to **effectuation**
- Technology
 - From exogenous variable to **service-provision mechanism**
- Role of Information Technology
 - From tool to a **transformation in value creation processes**
- Innovation
 - From invention to **designing systems for value co-creation**



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Some additional Keys to Success

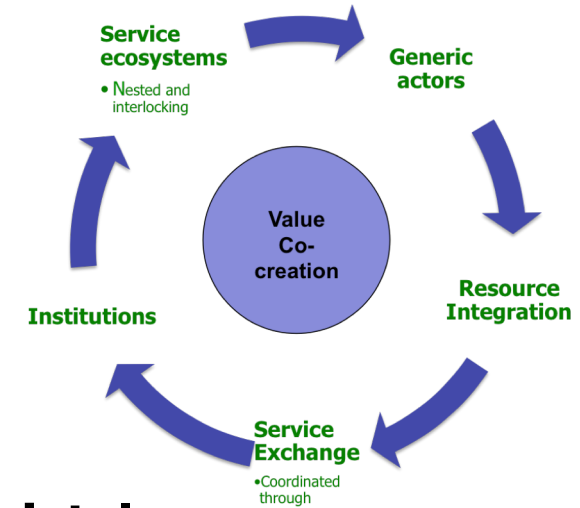
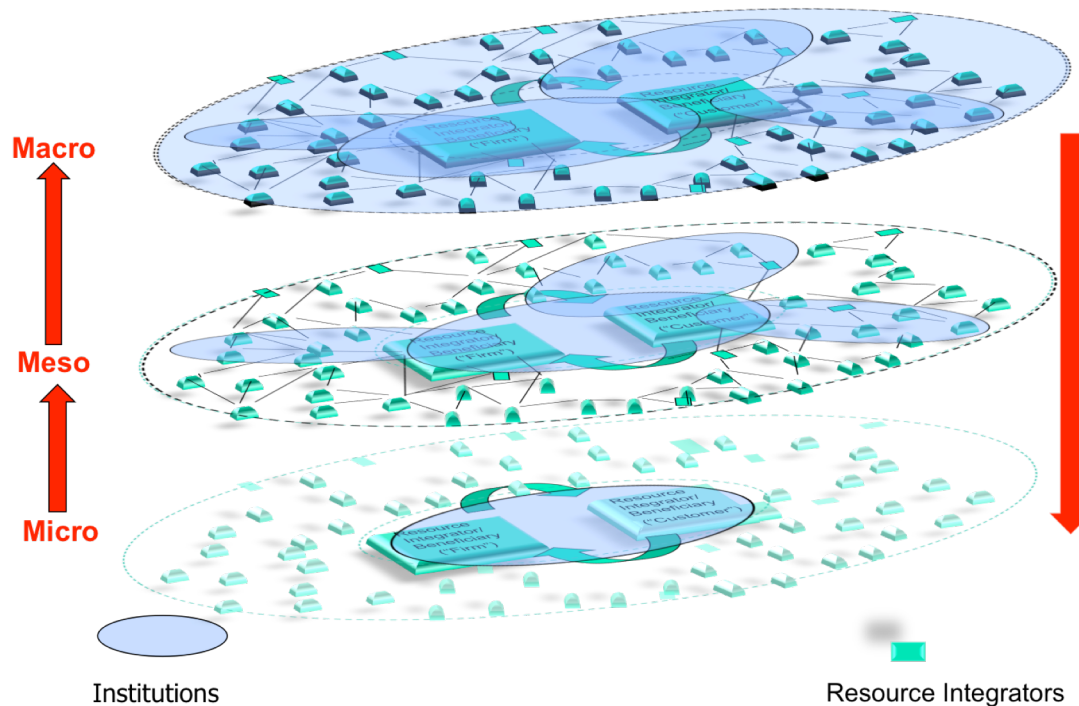
- **Organize** around single theoretical framework
 - **Reconcile** additional **concepts** with it
 - makes cross-platform insight possible
 - Only way to “tell a story”
- Remember all **good conceptual articles**:
 - Provide **clear** and **compelling** narratives
 - **“hip-Pocket”** takeaways



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"Hip-Pocket" S-D Logic

Components
& Structural Perspectives



Societal:
National, Global, etc

(Sub)culture:
Brand, Market, "industry, etc

Exchange
B2C, B2B, C2C, etc

Technology, Market Innovation& Business Models: A Partial Reconciliation

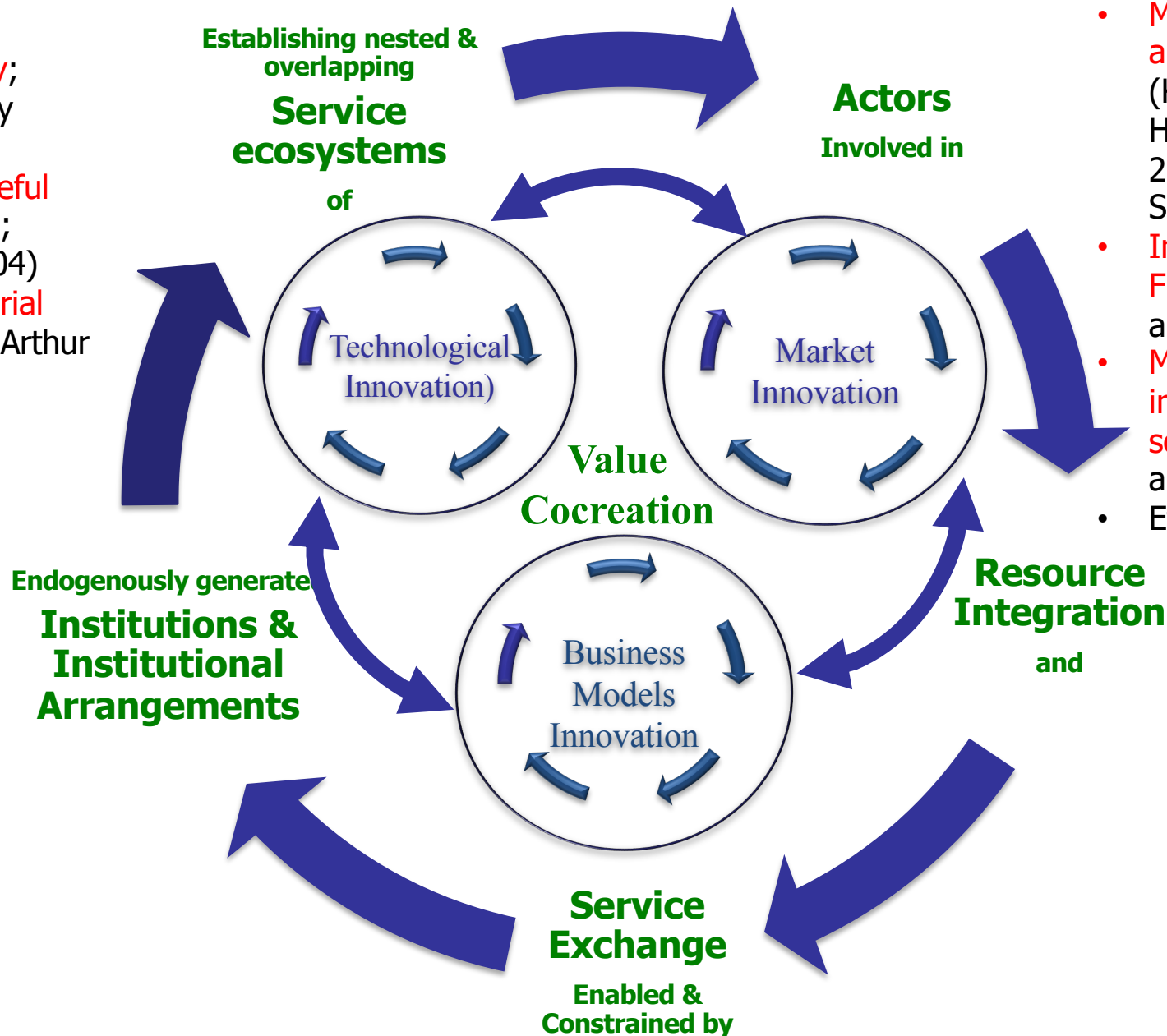


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Technological Innovation	Market Innovation	Business Models Innovation	S-D Logic
Tech as useful knowledge; (Mokyer 2002)	Market practices and performativity (Kjellberg and Helgesson 2006; 2007; Araujo and Spring 2006)	seek to explain how value is created (not just how captured (Zott et al. 2011)	Service Exchange
Duality of Technology; (Orlikowsky 1992) Social Construction of technology (Pinch & Bijker 1984)	Markets as institutionalized solutions (Vargo and Lusch 2014)	The "institutional logic" of the firm (e.g.,Thornton et al. 2012)	Institutionalization
Combinatorial Evolution (Arthur 2011)	Interpretive Flexibility; (Pinch and Bijker 1984	Business model innovation (Chesbrough 2007) Emphasize a system-level, holistic approach (Zott et al. 2011)	Resource Integration/ecosystems
Enables increased density within value constellations (Normann, 2001)	Facilitation of exchange through "institutional arrangements" (Loasby, 2000)	Cocreation through firm and partner(s) activities (Zott et sl. 2011)	Value cocreation

A Fractal Model of Value Creation

- Duality of Technology; (Orlikowsky 1992)
- Tech as useful knowledge; (Mokyer 204)
- Combinatorial Evolution (Arthur 2011)
- Etc.



- Market practices and performativity (Kjellberg and Helgesson 2006; 2007; Araujo and Spring 2006)
- Interpretive Flexibility; (Pinch and Bijker 1984)
- Markets as institutionalized solutions (Vargo and Lusch 2014)
- Etc.



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ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS



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The Process

Getting Started

- Title (Objective)
- Draw the pictures
- Extended Abstract
 - Position for a specific journal and audience
 - Clearly identify the problem & contribution
 - Capture and connect the key theoretical frameworks and concepts – always reconcile
 - FIND THE STORY LINE
 - Connect the dots

The Manuscript

- Draft (elaborate the abstract) and (especially) Craft
- Revise - 30+ times
- Check the story line



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The Process

Invite friendly critical review

Colleagues

Novice(s)

Revise

Submit

Wait for non-acceptance



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Other Key Writing Points

- An effective manuscript is **not a report**; it is a **story**
- Remember that the **purpose** is not to inform the reader about **how much you know** but to **assist the reader in knowing something** s/he **does not know**
- Get the **theory** correct
- Get the **citations** right



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Avoiding Desk Rejection

Based on Kumar (2016)

- **Rigor**
 - theoretical and analytical
 - Definition of key concepts
- **Relevance**
 - Must solve some problem
- **Generalizability**
 - Requires conceptual/theoretical framework
 - Integration of frameworks
- **Managerial Relevance**
 - Must have clear implications for some audience
 - e.g., managers, researchers, educators, public policy makers



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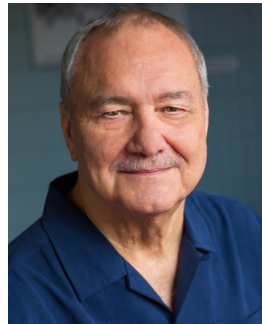
General Orientation: The “Ps” of Career Building

- **Passion**
 - Do what excite you
 - Look for the **intersections**
- **Purpose**
 - Be **focused**
 - Have **theoretical relevance**
 - Avoid incremental “contributions”
- **Perseverance**
 - Be patient
 - **Never let a paper die**
- **Presence**
 - Create a **connected steam of research**
 - “Let your CV tell a story”



**Official Publication of the
Academy of Marketing Science**

**All theory development
All Conceptual**



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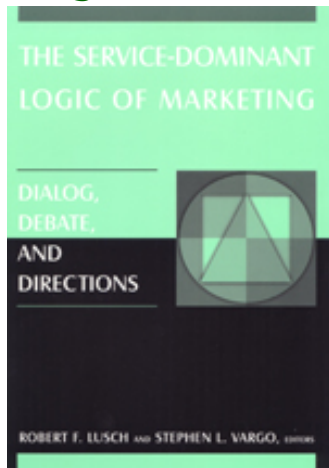


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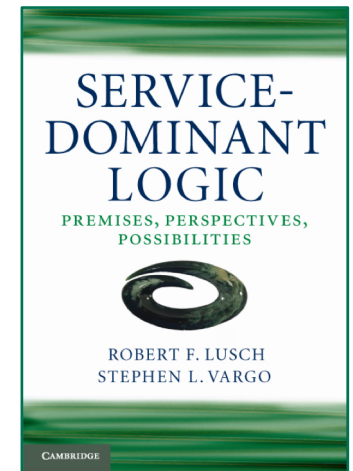
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Thank You!

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We encourage your comments and input. Will also post:

- Working papers
- Teaching material
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