Some thoughts on Topics and Approaches for Research

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Stephen L. Vargo,
Shidler Distinguished Professor
University of Hawai‘i at Manoa
Visiting Professor
CTF Service Research Center
Summary

- Don’t try to find a topic: let the topic find you
- Do look for the intersections of your interests,
- Do embrace the paradoxes and tensions at these intersections
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”
Science: Striving to Explain the Complex with a Simple Structure

‘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
A Quick look at the Scientific Process

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

- But all good articles are “empirical”
  - In conceptual papers, the data are in the literature and logic
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
- Resolve
Some Approaches to Advancement

- Conceptual Inversion
- Transcendence
- Reframing and Reconciliation
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-
Transcendence

- Defined: “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, RI service-providing actors
Reframing, and Reconciling from an S-D Logic Perspective

- **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
The S-D logic Example

- **History**
  - Entrepreneurial career (esp. marketing)
  - “service” business
- **Academic focus**: “services marketing”
- **Issues:**
  - Can we just now be entering a services economy?
    - What was 300 years ago -- no service?
  - Intractability of goods/services divide
    - Problem with definitions/distinction
    - Need for two approaches to marketing
- **Resolution**
  - Goods/service(s) inversion:
    - “Service” = transcending
    - Goods as service-delivery mechanism
  - Refocus on outcome vs output -- value = transcending
  - Reframe resources: operand vs. operant
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
Thank You!

For More Information on S-D Logic visit:

sdlogic.net

We encourage your comments and input. Will also post:

• Working papers
• Teaching material
• Related Links

Steve Vargo: svargo@sdlogic.net  Bob Lusch: rlusch@sdlogic.net