
Brands as Processes

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The co-creation turn (Merz et al., 2009: 340)

“a brand constitutes a collaborative, value co-creation activity involving all stakeholders and the firm”.

Brands are complex social phenomena, comprising brand meaning and brand manifestations that are discursively co-created by brand stakeholders (Mühlbacher and Hemetsberger, 2006, 2008, 2013).



Social representations (Moscovici, 1963; Wagner, 1996)

- “social representation is defined as the elaboration of a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating.” (Moscovici 1963: 251)



Process perspective

companies and their stakeholders interactively construct the *meaning*, the *manifestations* and relevant *stakeholders* of a brand.

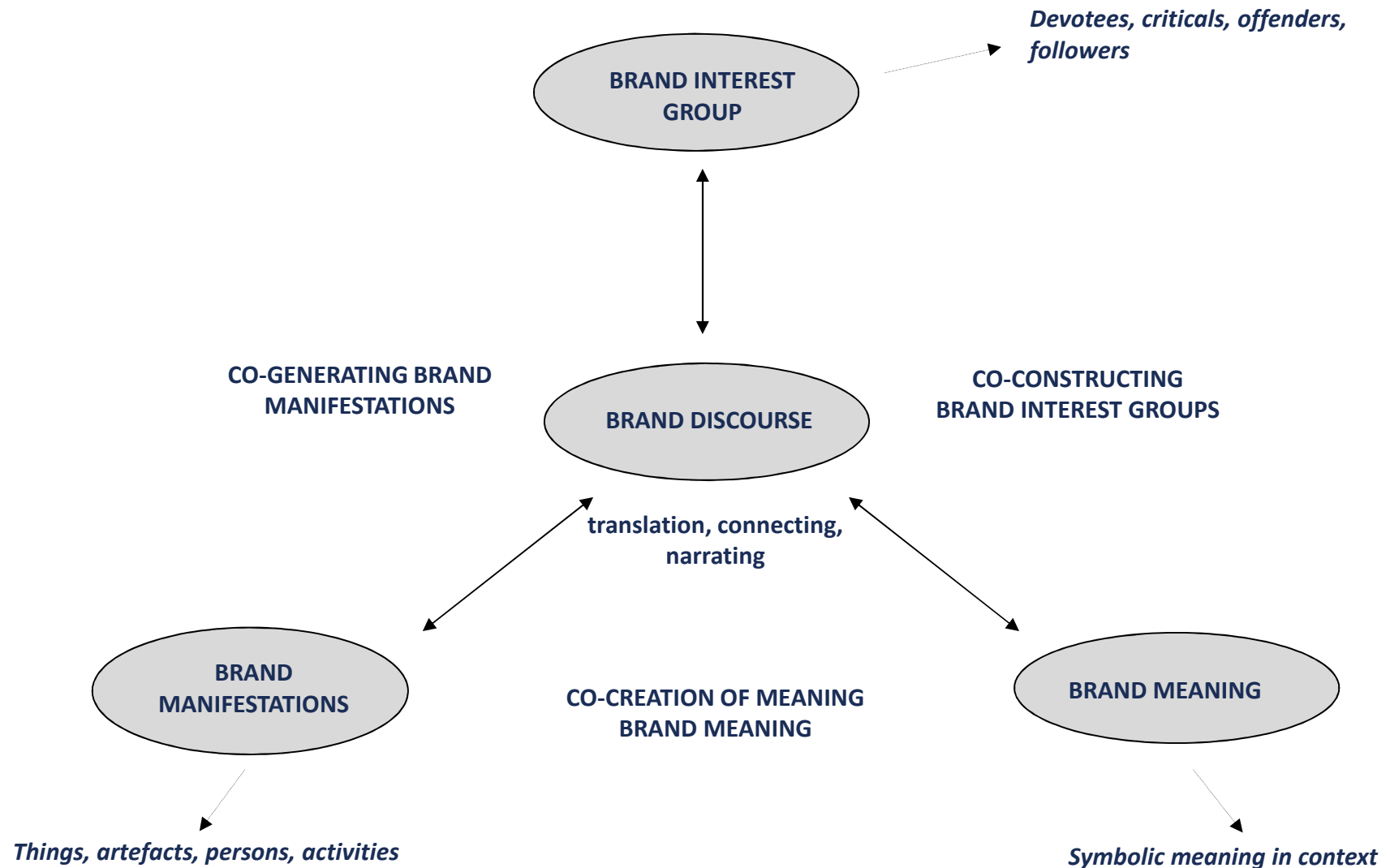


Branding

- *co-creation* of brand meaning
- *co-generation* of tangible manifestations
- *co-construction* of relevant stakeholders



BRAND AS PROCESSES



Source: Mühlbacher, Hans and Andrea Hemetsberger (2012), "Brands as Processes and their Outcomes – A social representations perspective," Festschrift zu Ehren des 60. Geburtstags von Prof Klaus G. Grunert.



Social mediation theory (Jovchelovitch, 1995)

- Processes of communication and social practices
- that mediate the individual and social level of meaning co-construction
- Comprising public dialogue, rituals, patterns of work and production, art, and other social discourses and practices



*Co-constructing
Brand Meaning*



CONSTRUCTING BRAND MEANING

Brand Engagement

- Anchoring
- Objectification
- Documenting
- Negotiating

Impression Management

- Advocating
- Persuading
- Evangelizing
- Antagonizing



*Co-constructing
Brand Interest Groups*



CO-CONSTRUCTING BRAND INTEREST GROUPS

Self-affiliation

- Self-identification
- Internalization

Identification of group members

- Legitimizing
- Role assignment
- Mobilizing
- Recruiting

Networking

- Welcoming
- Socializing
- Sharing knowledge
- Educating
- Empathizing
- Governing



*Co-generating
Brand Manifestation*



CO-GENERATION OF BRAND MANIFESTATIONS

Collaboration

- Customizing
- Co-developing

Brand Use

- Self-representation
- Ritualization
- Emplacement

Collective Co-production

- Initiating
- Publishing
- Advertising
- Product change and extension
- Co-working



DISCUSSION

- Our paper details processes of brand co-creation, -generation and -construction based on a social mediation perspective.
- The social mediation perspective integrates individual and collective processes of (co)-creation, -generation and -construction by describing how these processes are interrelated.
- Contributes a stakeholder-oriented perspective on brands that deeply rests on the importance of discursive brand interactions for participation in socially relevant projects.
- Puts emphasis on social meaning making processes, concretizations of meaning in brand manifestations, and brand stakeholder formation and relations, which we outline as *narrating, translating, and connecting*



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