List of Solvay Management Research Seminar guests, 2013-2014

Frank de Bakker (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam):
“More than words? Examining the added value of corporate citizenship. ”

12/11/13, 12:15 : VUB - Busi Raadzaal (C 2.07 A)
In discussions about corporate social responsibility (CSR), the political role of firms is often debated and in these debates one cannot neglect the increasing attention for the concept of corporate citizenship (CC). Introduced as a notion to help understanding how firms influence and participate in the creation of governance solutions in the international arena, the concept has rapidly gained in prominence in the business and society literature, sometimes seen as an add-on to the debate on CSR and sometimes seen as an alternative to overcome conceptual difficulties the CSR concept has been facing. In this paper we examine the concept of CC as it is used in recent literature, focusing on CC definitions, CC behavior, reasons for CC behavior and CC terminology. Doing so contributes to our understanding of the added value of CC, providing input for the ongoing debate on business-society relations.

Nicolas Kervyn (Université Catholique de Louvain & SBSEM):

26/11/13, 12:15 : VUB - Busi Raadzaal (C 2.07 A)
A growing body of research suggests that consumers have relationships with brands that resemble relations between people. We propose that as it is the case for social perception, consumers perceive brands along the two dimensions of warmth and competence. Building on the Stereotype Content Model, we introduce and test the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework. This model allows us to explore how social perception theories and processes can predict brand purchase interest and loyalty.

In three studies we tested our hypothesis that a brand that caused a disaster would be judged more harshly if its warmth rather than competence reputation was called into question. Indeed our results showed that framing the cause of a corporate scandal in terms of low warmth resulted in harsher judgments toward the brand than framing the cause as related to incompetence.

In another line of research, we use the Brands as Intentional Agents Framework to systematically investigate the influence of brand perception on experienced taste and consumer behavior toward food products. The brand’s perceived warmth and competence independently influenced taste, both when it was measured as a belief and
as an embodied experience following consumption. Importantly, taste mediated the link between brand’s warmth and competence perceptions and buying intentions.

Based on these three lines of research we discuss how social psychology can inform our understanding of brand perception.

Marco Meneguzzo (University of Rome 2 - Tor Vergata):
“1+1=3: How Can Social Innovation Change Cultures and Create shared value? A Mediterranean Comparative Multiple Case Study”
21/01/14, 12:15 : ULB - R42.4.118
In recent times the term “social innovation” has been used by politicians, academics and professionals in a number of different ways reflecting a general fashion which is far from capturing the true essence and meaning of this concept.

But what actually is social innovation? To avoid the distortions of their common sense – “social” is often associated to the nonprofit world, “innovation” to technological advances – a theoretical framework for understanding their meaning is provided. In order to analyse the whole phenomenon of “social innovation”, we will start by separately investigating what “social” and “innovation” mean.

Once recognized its relevance, in this paper some different experiences of social innovation in three Mediterranean countries have been provided as case studies (the ESADE Institute for Social Innovation - Spain; the Hub network - Spain and Italy; Nova School of Business and Economics (SBE) - Portugal)

These experiences, which can be considered as social innovation incubators, have been analysed through a comparing model composed by a dedicated set of variables (Networking, Relational governance, Self-financing, Knowledge ateliers).

Katja Brunk (ESMT European School of Management and Technology, Berlin):
“Good brand? Bad brand? An experimental exploration of the formation of consumers’ un/ethical brand perceptions”
25/02/14, 12:15 : VUB - Busi Raadzaal (C 2.07 A)
Companies are increasingly concerned about their ethical image and that of their brands. This research builds on the recently emerging literature on consumer perceived ethicality (CPE) and quantitatively explores how consumers form moral impressions of brands. Our analysis suggests that the process is consistent with the configural model of impression formation rather than following an algebraic information integration approach. We furthermore provide empirical evidence for the presence of a negativity bias by showing that unethical information is highly diagnostic in CPE formation.
Alain Verbeke (Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary): “Burying Seven Myths about Global competition”

18/03/14, 12:15 : ULB - R42.4.118
In this seminar Alain Verbeke will give a summary talk of his most recent papers, entitled "Burying Seven Myths on Global Competition". This is an ideal opportunity for both junior and senior academics and interested executives to get up to speed with the latest thinking in the field of international strategy.

Alain Verbeke ranks amongst the top scholars in international strategy of the last two decades. Both his journal publications and books are amongst the most cited in his field. He currently holds the McCaig Research Chair in Management at the Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary.

Kenneth Bertrams (ULB):
“Industrial Innovation through History: the Case of the Multinational Chemical Company Solvay (1863-2013)”

25/03/14, 12:15 : VUB - Busi Raadzaal (C 2.07 A)
This presentation intends to recast the major steps of the history of industrial innovation through the special case of the chemical business Solvay. Created as a family company in 1863, Solvay soon became one of the first giant multinational in the chemical industry. The presentation will seek to explore to what extent the role and mechanisms of innovation were instrumental in reaching – and keeping – competitive positions over the years.

Kris Hardies (Universiteit Antwerpen):
“The gendered production of audit quality”

22/04/14, 12:15 : ULB - R42.4.118
In his PhD-work Kris Hardies reveals the gendered fundamentals of ‘doing audit’ and ‘being an auditor’. Triangulation of results of quantitative analyses and themes that emerged from in-depth interview data, show how masculine practices create the paradoxical situation in which female auditors face greater difficulties to appear professional, yet seem to provide higher levels of audit quality. This work powerfully illustrates that differences between female and male auditors are not ‘essential’ but created. As such the results of this study can be used to understand the organizational micro-practices by which gender differences and hierarchies are (re)produced within
audit firms, which eventually affect the production of the audit and by consequence audit quality.

**Chris Forman (Georgia Institute of Technology):**
“The Digital Reorganization of Firm Boundaries: IT Use and Vertical Integration in U.S. Manufacturing”

*29/04/14, 12:15 : ULB - R42.4.118*

We investigate complementarities between external uses of information technology (IT) and firm boundary decisions following the diffusion of the commercial Internet.

Using detailed plant-level data covering roughly 2,500 establishments from the U.S. Census of Manufactures, we focus on the decision to allocate production output to either downstream plants within the same firm or to external customers.

Using a differences-in-differences design, we find that IT-enabled coordination with external supply chain partners is associated with a significant decline in downstream vertical integration. Our results are robust to extensive time-varying controls for both internal and external downstream demand, as well as instrumental variables estimation. In addition, we find that the upstream and downstream uses of digital coordination are complementary to each other; the magnitude of the effect is greatest when both suppliers and customers are granted greater visibility into the focal plant’s operations.

**Paul Vaaler (University of Minnesota / Oxford Law School):**
“Economic Informality and the Venture Funding Impact of Migrant Remittances to Developing Countries”

*2/09/14, 12:15 : VUB - Promotiezaal (D2.01)*

In developing countries, weak institutional capacity to observe and regulate the economy discourages foreign capital inflows vital to venture investment. This informality effect may differ for migrant remittances, inflows less reliant on formal arrangements. We use institutional and transaction cost theories to propose that informality shifts migrant remittances toward venture funding. Analyses in 48 developing countries observed from 2001-2009 support our proposition. When the informal sector exceeds approximately 46% of GDP, remittances increase venture funding availability. Migrants and their remittances are vital to funding new businesses and entrepreneurially-led economic growth in developing countries where substantial informality deters other foreign investors.